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**Master's Thesis of International Studies**

**Gender Gap Reversal in Education in  
the Philippines: Examining Historical  
Trends and Government Responses**

필리핀 교육의 성별 역전 현상: 역사적 동향과  
정부 대응 분석

**August 2022**

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# **Gender Gap Reversal in Education in the Philippines: Examining Historical Trends and Government Responses**

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# Abstract

Around the world today, gender equality refers to reducing the inequality gap that has kept females discriminated and disadvantaged over men. However, the Philippines shows a reversed gender gap where girls have been outperforming boys in all education levels. In fact, the education rate of girls has advanced so high that today boys must catch up with the girls. Until recent years, the reverse in gender gap has widened significantly demonstrating the stagnation of boys' educational attainment in primary, secondary, and tertiary education. This has created a concern for the Philippines in recent years. Since the crossover 50 years ago, the gap has not shown any indication of narrowing down. With lower enrollment rates and higher school dropouts found in boys, boys continue to be challenged to complete their basic education. To present this unique phenomenon seen in the Philippines, this research explored the historical data on gender disparities in education and analyzed the Philippine legislations and policies issued by the Department of Education. The policies were first analyzed to examine how the government has dealt with the situation to reduce the widening gender disparities between boys and girls.

This research aimed to examine how the government has responded to such phenomenon. However, upon examining the policies, this study found that there were no cases where the reverse in gender gap was addressed in policies. Rather, the government has shown to have neglected to mandate policies responding to the situation and challenges of boys. Throughout the education related policies issued from 1990 to 2020, no policy or programs have responded to the boy's underachievement and low participation in education to reduce the widened gender gap reversal.

**Keyword :** Reversal in Gender Gap, Gender disparity, inequality, education, education policies, Philippines

**Student Number :** 2020-23671

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# **Chapter 1. Introduction**

## **1.1. Background**

The fight for gender equality and women's rights has a long history since after the Second World War. Although, the fight for equal rights for women is still ongoing on most parts of the world, respect for women and their rights have increased widely. Since then, international organizations, non-governmental organization, and every national community began to enhance the rights of women and saw women in development. Women empowerment became an important agenda for world leaders to accept and ensure that all human regardless of color and gender are treated equally. Around the world today, gender equality refers to reducing the inequality gap that has kept females discriminated and disadvantaged over males. Global efforts to reduce this gender inequality gap usually begins with equal access to education for girls. This view was influenced by the discrimination experienced in the Middle East, China, Africa, and other states where girls and women are mostly underprivileged. This discrimination was most prominently seen in rights to education, basic needs, and labor market that kept women far from being a respected human being. Thus, global leaders and the international community began to address the gender inequality embedded in traditional cultures, institutions, and policies. The Philippines, however, shows a different situation from the rest of the world mentioned above. Far from our expectation, the Philippines shows a noteworthy situation



where girls have been outperforming boys and in reversely more boys are out of school. In fact, the education rate of girls has advanced so high that boys now must catch up with girls.

This phenomenon was first seen in the 1970's where girls surpassed boys in obtaining higher education. Findings from the education completion data from 1970-2015 showed that the percentage of people who has completed higher level education was greater on average for females than males.<sup>1</sup> Similar results are seen in primary and secondary level as well. This though has created a concern in the Philippines as since the crossover, the gap has not shown any indication of narrowing down. With lower enrollment rates and higher school dropouts found in boys, boys continue to be disadvantaged from education resulting to a reverse gender inequality. Thus, this research explores the data on gender disparities in education and examines how the Philippine government has dealt with this phenomenon by analyzing the policies throughout the past half century.

## **1.2. Significance and Purpose of Research**

The purpose of the study is to analyze the data on the education obtainment of males and females since the overpass in 1970 and analyze national policies from the government to address the issue. By identifying the data and identifying national policies implemented over the last 50 years, this

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<sup>1</sup>Philippines Statistics Authority. Consensus of Population 1948, 1960, 1970, 1975, 1980, 11990, 2000, 2015. BCS Survey of Household Bulletin 1956, 1965; Labor Force with Education attainment data

research will provide a wider and better understanding on how the Philippine government has dealt with the reverse gender inequality where boys are rather disadvantaged over girls in education.

There are several significances this research contributes to the academia discussion on gender disparity in education as well. The first significance is by focusing on this unique situation of women's higher rate of education in the Philippines, this study will raise more awareness and clarity about the meaning of gender equality in education. Especially in situations where women's education attainments are much higher than that of men. There is a lack of research in this phenomenon and more research is needed in situations where a reversed gender inequality exists leaving boys behind in education attainment. The second significance is that his study will contribute to achieving a more inclusive objective to address the issue. By identifying and analyzing the problem, a more evidence informed strategies and tools may be applied for future policies. The third significance lies in the fact that it is important to study phenomenon because this pattern has been going on since the crossover in 1970. A long time has passed since its opposite widening gap in the female and male educational gap. If the country fails to address this phenomenon, the country may lose valuable opportunities to solve the problem in which in the long-term it may result to low economic concerns. Therefore, this in-depth study on the gender gap in education in the Philippines will show the importance for the international community to address men lagging behind women in attaining higher education and also

identify blind spots the government should intervene and pay more attention to.

This study is not at all a comparative study of male versus female but rather a study which bring light to the struggles of boys and men in participating and completing their basic education. The State has full responsibility to ensure that all children are given the rights to education therefore, it is important to ensure that regardless of gender, both girls and boys, women and men, are guaranteed full access to quality education.

### **1.3. Research Topic and Research Design**

My research identifies a phenomenon of a reversed gender inequality in education in the Philippines, where girls have significantly surpassed boys in obtaining primary education all throughout higher education and raises the problem of boys underachievement in education and the higher number of school dropouts found in boys. Although the Philippines has succeeded in providing girls equal access to education while the rest of the world are still struggling to do so, boys on the other end are struggling to accomplish their studies. This trend has been ongoing for the last fifty years with no signs of the gap narrowing down. Thus, there is an urgent call for government leaders acknowledge the problem.

This research is developed through literature reviews and data gathering from the Philippines Statistics Authority (PSA), the Department of Education, the Bureau of Alternative Learning Systems (BALS), that

oversees education programs designed for out-of-school children and youth, and Commission on Higher Education (CHED), which is the main authority in tertiary education. Data was also collected from World Bank and policy documents from government ministries in the Philippines.

This research does not identify the factors to the reverse gender inequality, nor does it identify reasons to why boys fall have lesser odds to attending school from primary and higher education as well. This research is a preliminary research that highlights the need to acknowledge the trend and phenomenon that has been existent for the last fifty years and examine how the Philippines government has addressed the issue to reduce the reversed gender gap by analyzing and comparing government policies implemented by the different administrations and policies issued from the Department of Education.

The study is focused on the education obtainment of students in the Philippines in the timeframe of 1970 to 2020. This time period is selected according to the time where women's education obtainment began to overpass that of males starting from the 1970s. Therefore, this is an in-depth study on the gender gap in education in the Philippines. The chapters are divided into five chapters. Chapter 1 contains an overview of the background to understand the reverse of gender equality in education that has long been in existence since the 1970's. Following the background, the chapter introduces the significance and the purpose of the research, emphasizing the importance of this paper. Chapter 2 contains prior research on the reverse gender gap

phenomenon in education visible in other nations as well. Prior studies on the topic have contributed to the study of this reverse gender obtainment of female and male, however, research on policies to address the phenomenon still lacks research. Along with the literature review, the chapter provides an overview of the education system in the Philippines, as well as the puzzling phenomenon of the reverse gender gap in the Philippine context. The chapter also discusses the analytical framework used to make an argument for this research. Chapter 3 provides statistical data and analysis on the gender disparity evident in basic education from K to 12 and into higher level education and above. Chapter 4 provides an overview of government policies and an analysis on the education related policies throughout the years to examine plans, projects, programs aimed to address the unique situation of boys and thus, reduce the gender gap reversal prominent in Philippines. Finally, Chapter 5, concludes the research by reviewing the finding from chapter 3 and chapter 4.

## **Chapter 2. Gender Gap Reversal in Philippines Education**

### **2.1. The Puzzling Phenomenon of Gender Inequality in Education**

According to UNESCO, 129 million girls are out of school around the world in which 32 million girls are of primary school age, and 97 million from secondary school age. Especially in low- and middle-income countries, girls are still behind boys in completing their basic education. A World Bank report states that girls are still 2.5 times more likely to be out of school than boys due to poverty, cultural norms, practices, poor infrastructure, and violence. Therefore, continues efforts from the international community are necessary to fight for the gender equality for girls and women in education and all aspects of development.

Opposite from most low-income countries, two-thirds of the world has seen an improvement of gender parity in enrollment in primary and secondary school for both boys and girl. These improvements are seen in developed economies where girls have caught up with boys in education attainment throughout history. In fact, more girls today obtain higher education and more girls remain in school completing their basic education. In other words, there is a growing phenomenon of a gender gap reversal in education where more female students complete their studies into higher education compared to their male counter parts among developed countries. If we look into the OECD countries, 66 per cent of women entered university

in 2019 while only 52 per cent of men progressed into higher education (OECD).<sup>2</sup> Since 2019, this gap has continued to widen. In Europe alone, 42 per cent of female from age 30-34 completed college in 2015, while only 34 per cent of males in the same age range did.<sup>3</sup> This same phenomenon of the reverse gender equality is also visible in the Philippines. It was first seen in the 1970s where women began to overrepresent men in college attainment. This is quite an interesting phenomenon for the Philippines, as unlike the OECD countries, the Philippines is still a low-income and developing country.

In the 1990s, scholars began to recognize the ongoing concern which even grew the gap wider since. However, this issue has never reached the interest of the development community and this observation of boys being left behind in obtaining education were often ignored. In the 1990s, similar case of this phenomenon was reported on Northern Brazil.<sup>4</sup> However, due to the lack of similar experience found in other countries beside the Philippines, unfortunately, the issue has not gained much importance. This is an understandable reaction as viewing from the feminist agenda, ensuring fair treatment focusing on boys and their equality does not come as a priority issue. The international community has yet to solve the global challenge of raising women's status parity with men.

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<sup>2</sup> OECD: Education at a Glance 2021: OECD Indicators, OECD Publishing, Paris, 2021

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Paqueo, Vicente B.; Jr., Aniceto C. Orbeta. 2019. Gender Equity in Education: Helping the Boys Catch Up. Philippine Institute for Development Studies. <http://hdl.handle.net/11540/10145>

This issue has continuously been ignored by the international community, until recently, the United National Girls' Education Initiative (UNGEI), recognized the issue and reported on the reverse gender equality in education in the Philippines, Malaysia, Mongolia, and Thailand. Mainly focused on the Asia Pacific, this report raised concern and greater awareness on the issue especially, the lack of boys' education in college level.<sup>5</sup> The study focused on the question about the boys' education rate scoring much lower than girls' education obtainment. This study and report are quite important for this paper as it acknowledges the existence of the problem and also proves that the issue is not unique to the Philippines but are seen in other parts of the world as well. Including Northeast Brazil and the four countries, studied by the UNGEI.

The report from the UNGEI showed interesting results to its study. In all four countries, families played a central role in their children's education achievement and poor families tended to withdraw boys from school rather than girls.<sup>6</sup> This is quite interesting, as in most developing countries, parents tend to send boys to school rather than girls. South Korea for example had the tendency to send boys to school rather than education girls as well. This was valid until a few decades ago. Girls were not treated equally with education as it was generally widely perceived that girls did not need schooling to make

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<sup>5</sup> UNGEI (n.d.), Why are Boys Under-performing in Education? Gender Analysis of Four Asia-Pacific Countries, Report Commissioned by EAP United Nations Girls Education Initiative (UNGEI) Secretariat.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.



a living. Another new finding reported showed that school environment is not gender neutral where a gender bias hinders male students' potential and achievement in schools. (UNGEI).<sup>7</sup> This third finding has also been studied by other scholars. Terrier (2016), studied the imbalance of education obtainment and reasons behind why boys are behind girls. Her study confirms that female teachers are core factors that affects the academic achievement of boys.<sup>8</sup> Testing the widely discussed hypothesis in literature among various scholars, her study found that teachers favored girls when grading. The favoritism from teachers lead to long-term consequences for boys as with lower math grades and gender-biased grading, boys made less progress in their academia in the next three years. Favoritism by teachers are one of the strongest arguments studied by scholars affecting progress and enthusiasm for boys to progress into higher education.

Aside from the UNGEI report, there has also been studies on the high pressure on boys in school to leave school and support their family. In 1992 Bouis's study reported that more pressure is placed on boys to drop out of school than girls to help their parents earn income and support the family. Due to more opportunities in agriculture for boys to work at a younger age, a large number of boys drop out of school compared to their female counterparts. The study by King and Domingo, Lynch and Makil, and Hollnsteiner, also

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Terrier, Camille (2016), "Boys Lag Behind: How Teachers' Gender Biases Affect Student Achievement," IZA Discussion Paper No. 10343, Institute for the Study of Labor (IZA), Bonn.

revealed that parents tend to rely more on their daughters compared to their sons to achieve higher education and study conscientiously resulting to stable jobs, earnings, and consistent support when in their old age.<sup>9</sup> Compared to their male siblings, parents preferred to invest on the education of their daughters. While male on the other hand were often pressured to drop out of school to support their family with the needed income. Globally, girls make up the majority of out-of-school children. But in the Philippines, we see that boys account for the majority of school dropouts. A study by Grootaert and Patrinoc connected child household labor and declining school participation in the Philippines.<sup>10</sup> Their study suggested that a combination of social norms and poverty forces boys to leave school without high-end skills and enter the labor force at an early stage.<sup>11</sup> This is linked to non-secure work such as low-wage work and family based economic activities.

As seen above, there are prior studies particularly on the reverse gender equality in education in the Philippines. However, this trend is observed in other countries as well. For example, in industrialized countries, this gender gap is explained as the overrepresentation of males among secondary school dropouts and overrepresentation of females in tertiary

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<sup>9</sup> Bouis, H. (1992). Adolescents in Farm Households: Their Nutrition, Education and Contribution to Family Welfare, Paper presented to the IFPRI-World Bank Conference on Intra-Household Resource Allocation: Policy Issues and Research Methods, February 12-14, Washington, D. C.

<sup>10</sup> Grootaert, C., & Patrinos, H. (2002). A four-country comparative study of child labor. *The Economics of Child Labor*.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*

education and school graduates. Likewise, the Global Education Monitoring Report from 2018 found that males are disadvantaged in terms of education outcomes because of the school environment, gender bias and expectations, and poverty.<sup>12</sup> Accordingly, families in poor households tend to pull boys out of school with the expectation that unlike girls, boys could easily find a job in the unskilled labor market. In addition to family pressures, the school environment that disseminate traditional gender norms also contribute to the disengagement of boys from schools.<sup>13</sup> This incongruity of gender expectations at an early age, puts boys at a distinctive disadvantage in terms of human capital formation and prospects for a productive future.

Prior studies have identified the problem of this phenomenon where boys fall behind girls in education keeping them behind in achieving their full potential. Scholars have brought up reasons from parents' preference, reliance and expectations from girls, and reasons such as boys having little interest in their studies due to low performance. Yet, although many studies were conducted to identify the reasons behind the trend, no studies aimed to identify the policies and initiatives taken by the government to address the issue. The Philippines has been seeing this trend since the crossover in 1970 which is close to almost fifty years. Still, the gap between girls and boys in finishing their education throughout higher education has rather widened overtime.

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<sup>12</sup> Global Education Monitoring Report. Gender Review 2018

<sup>13</sup> UNESCO. Leave No Child Behind: Boys' disengagement from Education

## **2.2. Basic Education in the Philippines**

The education sector in the Philippines has long been one of its top agendas for every new administration in office due to continues concerns on education quality, school dropouts, access to education, education gap among different income groups, and low access to education for minorities. Thus, throughout history, the Philippines placed greater importance on improving its education system. In 2017, the Philippine Development Plan 2017-2022 was published by the National Economic and Development Authority of the Philippines. This Plan included details on the countries aspirations for the five year span. The plan projected the Philippine's to become an upper-middle income country by the year 2022, therefore, to achieve such goal, the government emphasized the need to focus on the human capital development as its key strategy and this has been the motivation behind various political reforms in the past years as well. In term of education, the recent educational reforms have also focused to enhance enrollment rates, graduation rates and mean years of schooling in both primary and secondary level education, and to enhance the quality of higher education in the Philippines as well.

Many of these reforms were adopted to respond to the declining educational standards in the Philippine education system during. According to the UNESCO report of Southeast Asian education system published in 2008, the report found that participation and achievement rates of school aged children in basic education has reduced dramatically due to chronic

underfunding.<sup>14</sup> After rising strongly from 85.1 percent in 1991 to 96.8 percent in 2000, the enrollment rates in primary level had dropped back down to 84.4 percent by 2005 and its completion rate was estimated to be below 70 percent that same year. At the secondary level, similar problems were present as well. The enrollment rate in secondary education in 2005 dropped to 58 percent, after increasing to around 66 percent between 1991 and 2000. In terms of the country's youth literacy rate, while still being high by regional standards, fell from 96.6 percent in 1990 to 95.1 percent in 2003, making the Philippines the only country in South-East Asia with declining youth literacy rates.

Therefore, to address these problems, in recent years, the Philippine government has initiated structural changes to its basic education system and significantly boosted its education expenditures. Most significant changes were the Kindergarten Education Act in 2011 and the Basic Education Act 2013. The prior act stipulated a mandatory pre-elementary year of Kindergarten education in means to and the Basic Education Act also extended the primary education and secondary education cycle from 10 years to 12 years. The 12-year education cycle added two years of mandatory senior secondary schooling. This marks a significant change for the Philippines. Before the reforms, the Philippines was one of only three countries in the world that kept up with a 10-year basic education cycle. Therefore, to improve

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<sup>14</sup> Asia and the Pacific Education for All (EFA) Mid-Decade Assessment: Insular South-East Asia Synthesis Report. Bangkok: UNESCO Bangkok, 2008

global competitiveness, the K-12 reform was an essential step to bring the country up to international standards.

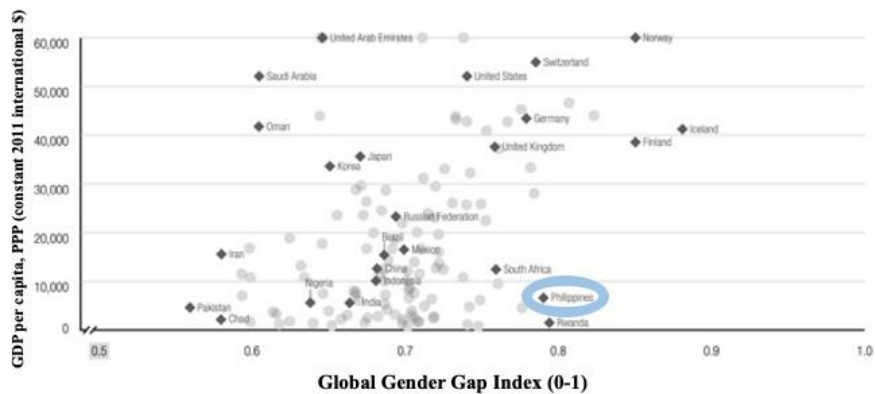
### **2.3. Gender Equality in the Philippines**

There is a distinct bias in education attainment in countries with low level of economic development. Unlike higher-income countries and developed societies, where female's enrollment exceeds male enrollment, in most poor countries, female enrollment in education is lower than male enrollment.<sup>15</sup> The graph presented below shows the relationship between the Gender Development Index and Income per capita by plotting the ratio of female HDI and male HDI against the GDP per capita. The ratio rating below 1 in the GDI are mostly positioned in lower income societies, while as the GDI ratio increases, it tends to be in societies that are richer and with higher income per capita.

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<sup>15</sup> Heath, R., & Jayachandran, S. (2017). The causes and consequences of increased female education and labor force participation in developing countries. In *The Oxford Handbook of Women and the Economy* (pp. 345-367). Oxford University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780190628963.013.10>

**Figure 1. Relationship of Gender Equality and Income per capita**



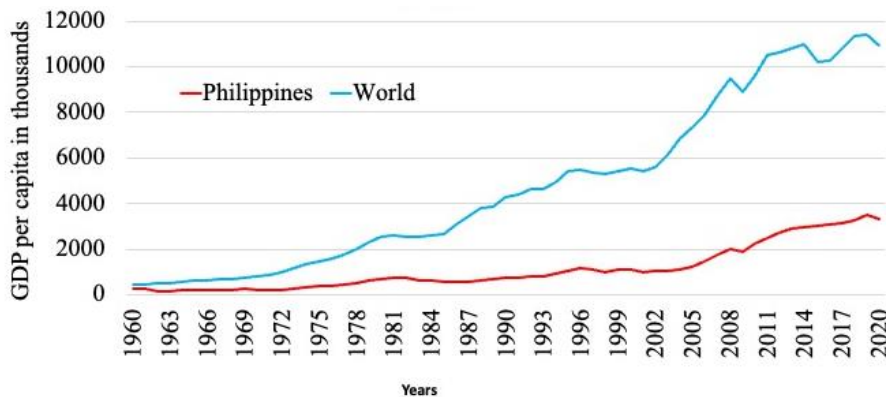
Source: Retrieved from UNDP

The same pattern is seen in girls' education. As countries develop into higher levels of economic development, more girls are sent to school for education and in fact, developed countries show gender parity where female enrollment rather exceeds that of males. Since the global efforts to reduce gender parity in education and women empowerment, the education level for both genders rose rapidly over time in especially in countries that have achieved gender parity. This trend is noteworthy as indicated, as women exceeds males in education and obtaining higher education.

With such framing from prior trends, the Philippines noted as a developing country have actually seen a growth of female's education grow rapidly since the crossover in the 1970s. In other words, the female enrollment in school exceeds male enrollment as a developing country while in other countries, this phenomenon and trend is vastly seen in richer economic countries. The Philippines did not have a high GDP per capita, nor did it

advance into a high level of economic development however, since 1970 with a GDP per capita of \$186 US dollar women already exceeded men in school enrollment.

**Figure 2. GDP per capita Philippines 1960-2020**



Source: The World Bank World Development Indicators (WDI)

This research will approach this trend with the framing discussed above and examine the unique situation experienced in the Philippines. To identify the existing phenomenon, this research will analyze the statistic on education for the last fifty-years and the national policies and reforms in education that were implemented throughout the different administrations.



## Chapter 3. Gender Disparity in Education

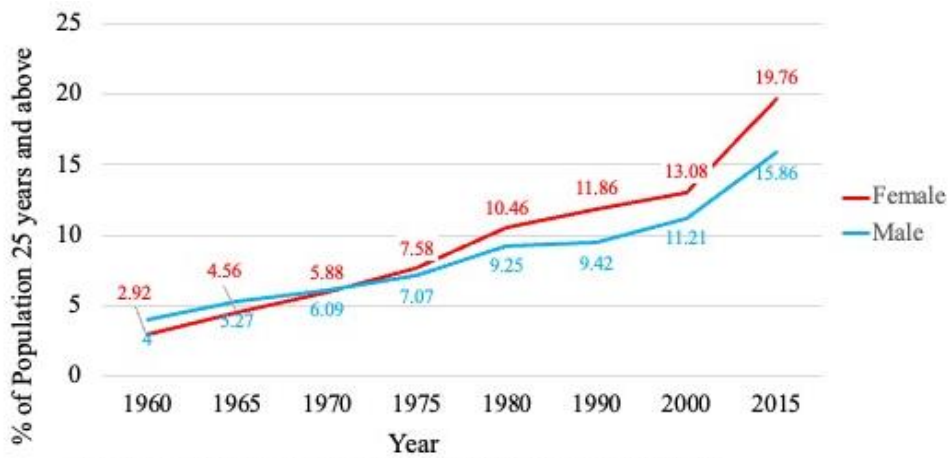
Education is said to be the mirror of historical changes. Changes in the social, economic, cultural, and political fields are forces that the educational system has to comply with. Any school system that fails to align its modalities to the needs of the times, problems, and interests of the students may lead to educational deterioration.

Since the higher education obtainment crossover in 1970's, where females have surpassed men in college completion rate, women today continue to have dominant presence in higher education institutions. According to the Philippines Institute for Development Studies, a higher ratio of males completed their studies from years 1948 throughout 1969.<sup>16</sup> Although the gap has been reducing throughout these years, males predominately obtained higher education and finished college. However, as seen in the figure below, females began to surpass males in the early 1970s. Since its crossover, female's college completion rate has seen been much higher. The gap does not show any signs of reducing, rather we see that from 1980s to 1990s, there has been a slowdown in the education rate of males while females continued to steadily increase.

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<sup>16</sup> Paqueo, Vicente B.; Jr., Aniceto C. Orbeta. 2019. Gender Equity in Education: Helping the Boys Catch Up. Philippine Institute for Development Studies. <http://hdl.handle.net/11540/10145>

**Figure 3. Proportion of Population of College Graduates 1960-2015**



Source: Census of Housing and Population 1960,1970,1975,1980,1990,2000,2015

Note: Data for year 1965 was collected from the BSC Survey of Household Bulletin: Labor Force Survey with Educational Attainment data

Women surpassing men in their education attainment in higher education is an interesting achievement that needs more study. In theory, such phenomenon is shown in richer countries that have achieved an optimal level of economic growth and in countries that are still developing with low levels of economic development, men's education is usually much higher than that of women. However, although the Philippines still shows low levels of economic development, women's education level has surpassed that of men early in the seventies. Prior studies have suggested various explanations such as the school environment to be gender biased and not gender neutral which impedes boys' higher achievement in education (UNGEI).<sup>17</sup> Studies were also conducted by the United Nations Girls Education Initiative that addresses

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<sup>17</sup> UNGEI (n.d.), Why are Boys Under-performing in Education? Gender Analysis of Four Asia-Pacific Countries, Report Commissioned by EAP United Nations Girls Education Initiative (UNGEI) Secretariat.

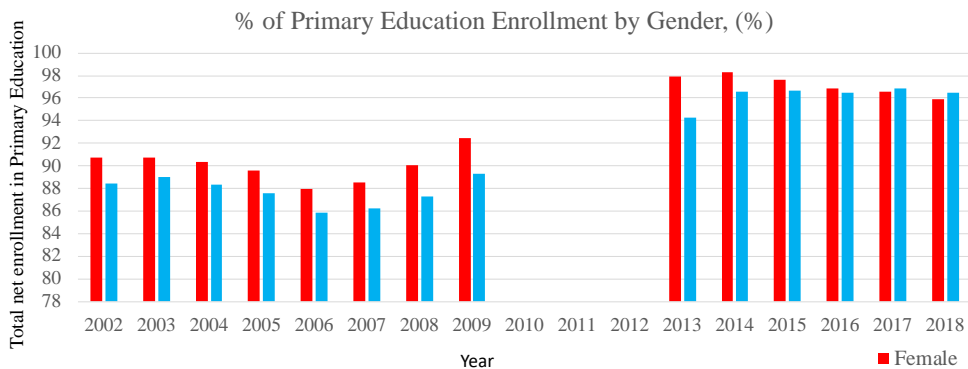
the importance of this issue however, it was not until recent years that the government of the Philippines and the international community has officially addressed the problem. The Philippine government was aware of girls' education overpassing that of men and the fact that the gap does not show any signs of decreasing. Yet, the issue never drew the attention of the government officials to address the issue. Similar phenomenon was also visible in Brazil, but yet again, despite Brazil's effort to raise awareness, the international community did not give this issue much attention. It is understandable for the international community to not take this issue as their top priority as the world was fighting for women's rights and women's empowerment. In most cases in the world, women were still fighting for their equal rights. However, to avoid any consequences from the imbalance of men and female's education attainment in higher education as seen in the Philippines, it is urgent for the Philippines government to strictly address the issue. In addition, there is a need to analyze the factors responsible for the widened gap in educational outcomes between males and females.

### **3.1. Gender Based Data in K-12 Education**

Throughout the years, the basic education sector has improved significantly in terms of school participation and completion. However, looking closer at the performance of the enrollment rate and completion rate by gender in the last 20 years, there is a substantial gender disparity in basic education in favor of females. This is evident in the Figures shown below. In

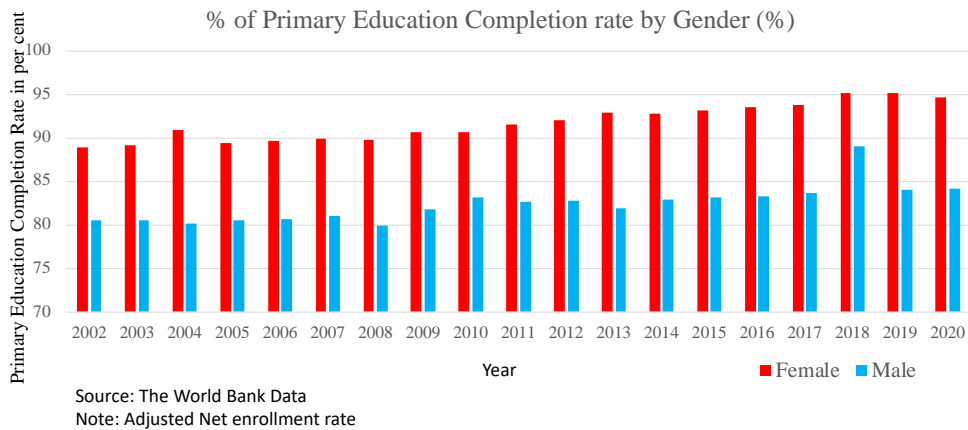
2002 to 2016, the percentage of female net enrollment in primary education was slightly higher than that of males. With the exception of more male enrollments in 2017 and 2018, female students had the advantage in primary education enrollment. However, when it comes to the completion rate of students by gender, there seems to be a significant gender disparity. The enrollment rate in primary education by gender shows close to an equal balance between males and females, however the completion rate of primary education by gender shows a more substantial gap disparity. Female students show a higher survival rate in primary school and male students show a higher rate of incompleteness and dropouts.

**Figure 4. % of Primary Education Enrollment by Gender**



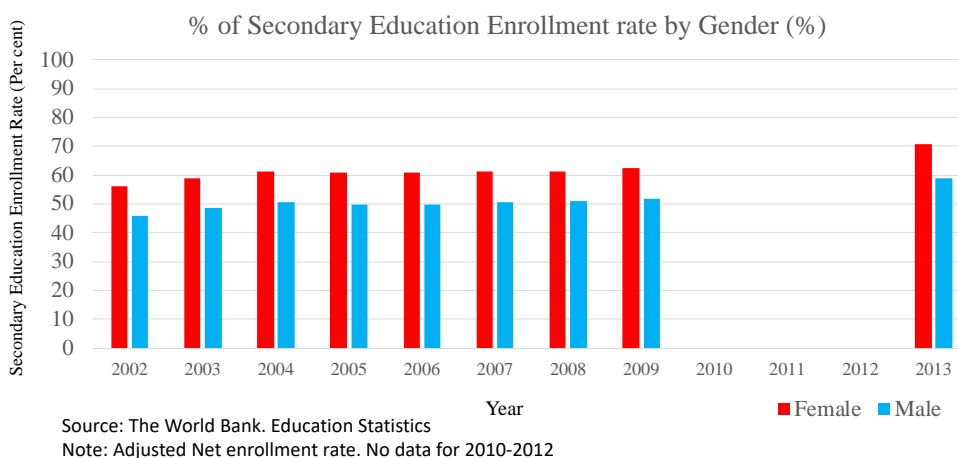
Source: The World Bank. UNESCO Institute for Statistics  
 Note: No data for 2010-2012

**Figure 5. % of Primary Education Completion Rate by Gender**

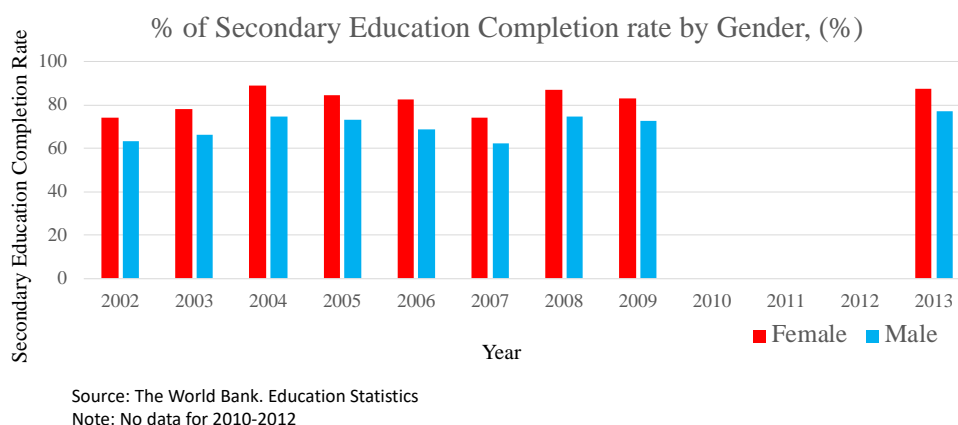


The enrollment and completion rate in secondary education is not so different from the trends we see in primary education. A higher percentage of female students enrolled to school compared to their male counterparts. Thus, a higher percentage of female students have also completed secondary education as well. The gender disparity is more evident in secondary education where females show a higher survival rate while males show a high incompleteness rate. In other words, there are more male student dropouts which results to the low rate of completion. These disparities have already been observed prior to 2002. More male students have been falling behind female students not only in school enrollment and completion but underachieving in learning performance as well.

**Figure 6. % of Secondary Education Enrollment Rate by Gender**



**Figure 7. % of Secondary Education Completion Rate by Gender**

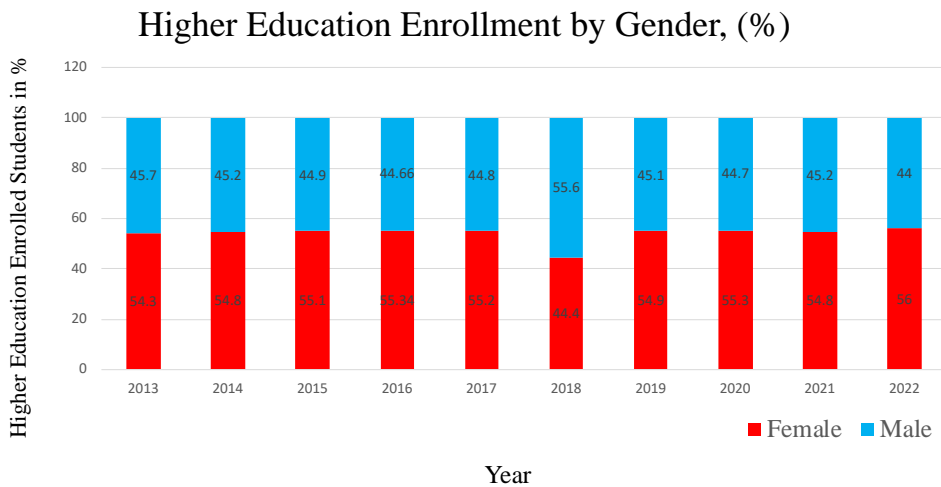


### 3.2. Gender Based Data in Tertiary Education

The proportion of females with a college degree is much higher than that of males. This reflects the low number of male enrollment and graduate rates in both its primary and secondary level. In 2013, a higher number of 1,648,761 female (54.3%) students enrolled to college while only 1,385,226 males (45.7%) enrolled. This trend is shown continuously all throughout year

2022 where 2,046,648 females (56%) newly enrolled while only 1,596,870 males (44%) have enrolled to higher education. This trend since the 1970's continuously shows an increase of females education widening the gap between male and females in their educational attainment.

**Figure 8. Higher Education Enrollment by Gender, (Percent)**



Within higher education, women are not only more present in college programs, but more female students are enrolled into masters and doctorate programs. In FY 2015-2016, there were more female students enrolled in baccalaureate, post-baccalaureate, masters, and doctorate programs. Within post baccalaureate and master's programs, the number of students is double of that of male students. The gender disparity is most significantly evident in higher education in favor of females.

**Table 1. Higher Education Enrollment by Program Level and Gender**

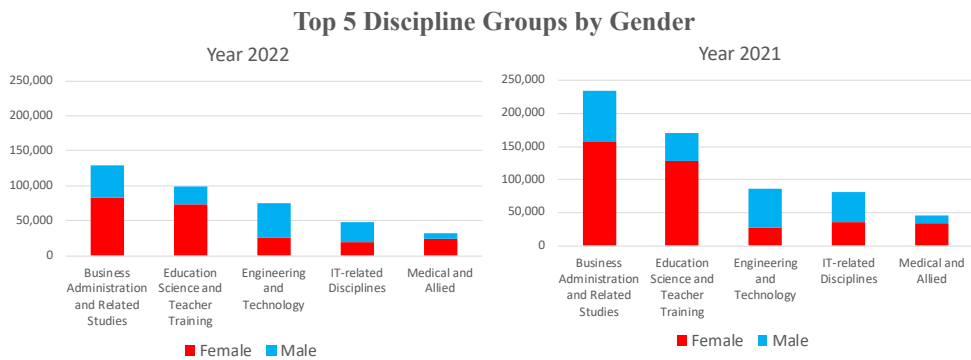
<b>Higher Education <u>Enrollment</u> by Program Level by gender 2015-2016</b>			
<b>Program Level</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Total</b>
Baccalaureate	2,030,532	1,628,950	3,659,482
Post Baccalaureate	8,346	4,137	12,483
Masters	111,950	58,641	170,591
Doctorate	13,493	8,977	22,470
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>2,266,419</b>	<b>1,838,422</b>	<b>4,104,841</b>

Source: CHED

According to prior data, more female student seemed to be interested in enrolling into higher education, therefore the data on the selection of major and colleges by genders were studied to see the trends in their choices. From 1974 to 2000, the most popular studies were from the business, medical, education, engineering, and social sciences. And in 2015, most students enrolled into business administration, education, engineering, IT, and medical field. The choices of courses and majors have not changed drastically since the early seventies as students pursuing higher education today remains to prefer to study business, education, engineering, and medical related.



**Figure 9. Top 5 Discipline Groups by Gender**



Source: The World Bank

However, among the most selected courses, males and females show different preference in their choices of major. In 2021 alone, 156,898 females selected business while only 78,296 males selected the same major. Females were more dominant in the education and medical field as well with 127,809 students in education, and 33,758 students in medical related. As for males on the other hand, the engineering & technology, and IT-related disciplines were dominated by males with 59,819 male students graduated from engineering and technology while only 27,264 female students graduated from the same field. The latest data from AY 2022 also shows the same trend in male and females top choices of discipline. More female graduates were from the business, education, and medical discipline while more male graduates were from the engineering and IT related discipline.

### 3.3. School Dropout and Out-of-School Children

**Table 2. Primary and Secondary Education Performance Indicator by Gender and Year**

<b>Primary Education Performance Indicator by Gender and Year</b>						
	<b>2002-2003</b>		<b>2005-2006</b>		<b>2008-2009</b>	
	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>
Cohort Survival	0.655	0.739	0.546	0.651	0.774	0.784
Dropout	0.017	0.010	0.018	0.010	0.013	0.008
Repetition	0.029	0.016	0.038	0.020	0.033	0.018
<b>Secondary Education Performance Indicator by Gender and Year</b>						
	<b>2002-2003</b>		<b>2005-2006</b>		<b>2008-2009</b>	
	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>
Cohort Survival	0.567	0.712	0.475	0.620	0.563	0.681
Dropout	0.089	0.043	0.090	0.044	0.081	0.040
Repetition	0.044	0.013	0.057	0.019	0.052	0.017

Source: Philippine Statistics Authority

The dropout rate and out-of- school children and youth (OOSC) in the Philippines is another important measure to assess the gender disparity in basic education and higher education. As shown on the table above, the dropout rate of males are significantly higher than that of female dropouts. In 2008-2009, the rate of male dropouts in primary education were at 0.013

while for the females the rate was at 0.008. The gap is more evident in secondary education with a rate of 0.081 in male dropouts and 0.040 in female dropouts. Twice as more males tend to drop out of school compared to their female counterparts. Aside from the dropout rates, the repetition rates and failure rates are also all observed to be nearly twice as higher for males than for females at the primary level. The disparity between genders is shown to be even higher at the secondary education, with males showing a rate three times more than females in school repetition rates. Across the different indicators of cohort survival, school enrollment and completion, repetition, and dropout rates, the followings are observed. First, males are performing much worse than females. Second, the gender disparity in all indicators show that the male students perform worsens from primary to secondary education.

Aside from the school dropout rates, the out-of-school children and youth indicator also shows that two-thirds of the out-of-school children and youth were males. That makes up 65% of the out of school children. Females showed a higher likelihood of attending school than males and just as shown in the dropout rates, the gender disparity in OOSC widens significantly as age progresses. In primary education, the OOSC rate for females (3.4%) were lower than males (5.4%). In secondary education, males nearly doubled at 8 percent while the rate of females were at 3.1. percent. Overall, there is a widened gender gap in OOSC with more males out of school.

It should be emphasized that the problem of the underperformance of male students have been ongoing and has worsened throughout the years. For

instance, not only do males have higher dropout rates than females particularly in secondary education, but various census and labor force survey data also show that the proportion of adult population 25 years and above with college education has been higher for females than males since 1975 (Orbeta 1995).

**Table 3. Rate of Out-of-School Children by Gender 2017**

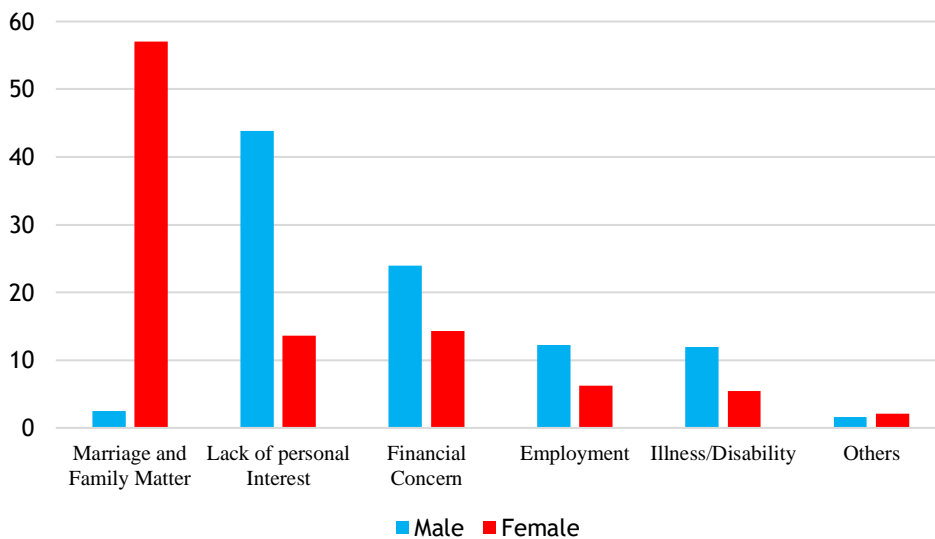
Age by years	Out-of-School Children and youth Rate	
	Male	Female
5 yrs. Old	9.1	8.9
6-11 yrs. old	5.4	3.4.
12-15 yrs. old	8.0	3.1
16-17 yrs. old	22.3	11.6
5-17 yrs. old	10.7	5.7

Source: 2017 Annual Poverty Indicators Survey (PSA 2017)

The reasons for dropping out of school by gender also showed fascinating results. According to the 2017 Annual Poverty Indicator Survey conducted by the Philippines Statistics Authority, the most common reasons of out of school children for not attending school were marriage or family matters with about 37%, the lack of personal interest which took up 24.7%, and finally, the high cost of education and financial concerns with about 17.9%. Among these, the main reasons male students reasoned for not attending school was the lack of interest while for the female students the main reason came from marriage and family matters. As of the lack of interest, 41% of the males stated such reason for not attending school, while only 24%

of female students stated the same reason. And in terms of marriage and family matters, 57% of females reasoned such while only 2.5% of male students reasoned family matters as the main reason for not attending school. As we can see from the survey in 2017, males and females have very differing reasons for dropping out and not attending school.

**Figure 10. Main Reason for Not Attending School, 2017**



Source: 2017 Annual Poverty Indicators Survey (PSA 2017)

Out of school children and the increasing dropout rates of males in education is another important measure that indicates that there is a growing gender disparity problem in the Philippines basic education system. Data in this chapter showed that males are at higher risk of dropping out of school and are less likely to complete their education both in primary and secondary

education. Thus, government interventions are crucial to keep boys in school to complete their schooling just as much the female students are achieving. The next chapter analyzes government policies in education to examine plans, projects, and programs addressing the concern of boys underachievement in education.

## **Chapter 4. Examining Philippine Government Responses to Gender Gap Reversal in Education**

Any human regardless of age, race or gender have the basic right to education. However, gender disparities in access to education, equal opportunities and career choices are reflected all around the world. In the Philippines, the Philippine Constitution of 1987 specifies that the State shall promote the rights of children to quality education and take appropriate measures to make education accessible. In 2001, this regard for education was once again emphasized through the Governance of Basic Education Act which provided a free and compulsory primary education and free secondary education as well. Since then, it can be observed that the policy orientation in education lies on the very fundamental goal to meet the country's 'Education for All' objectives. However, despite the constitution of 1987 and the country's efforts on providing education for all, there is a visible gap between the male and females educational attainment today. As discussed in the previous chapter, boys are falling behind girls in school enrollment, school completion, school participation, performance, and achievement. Thus, this chapter examines the education policies implemented in the last decades to examine how the government has responded to address the gender gap reversal issues and boys' unique challenges in education.

## 4.1. Overview of Philippines Education Policies 1970-2020

**Table 4. List of Education Initiative by Administrations from 1965-2020**

Administration	Education Initiatives
<p><b>Ferdinand Marcos (1965-1986)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Educational Reforms: emphasis on basic education/ Bilingual Education/ access to education</li> <li>- Emphasized national development through educational reforms.</li> <li>- The commission report, Education for National Development in 1970's provided the basis of presidential Decree No. 6-A. The Educational Development Degree of 1972.</li> <li>- Four-Year Development Plan (1974-1977) – programs of manpower and educational reforms mainly aimed toward developing the needed skills for future needs of the economy.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Corazon Aquino (1986-1992)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- RA 6655: Free Public secondary education act of 1988</li> <li>- RA 6728: Government assistance to students and teachers in private education</li> <li>- The 1987 Constitution: Education, Science and Technology, Arts, Culture and Sports.</li> <li>- DO 2, S. 1992, 1989 Proclamation No. 480 “Declaring the Period 1990-1999 as the Decade of Education for All”</li> </ul>
<p><b>Fidel V. Ramos (1992-1998)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- RA 7687: The Science and technology scholarship law, 1994</li> <li>- RA 7743: Establishment of municipal libraries and barangay reading centers</li> <li>- RA 7784: Law establishing centers of excellence in teacher education</li> <li>- RA 8496: Philippines science high school system</li> </ul>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- RA 7796: TESDA Act of 1994- an act creating the technical education and skills development authority, providing for its powers, structure and for other purposes</li> <li>- RA 7722: Act creating the Commission On Higher Education. This law separates colleges and universities from the department of education providing its own independence, having the right to practice academic freedom and exercise such policies granted for its benefits</li> <li>- RA 7731: act abolishing the national college entrance exam</li> </ul>
<b>Joseph Estrada (1998-2001)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Presidential Commission on Educational Reform: budget feasible reforms and policy recommendations on education.</li> </ul>
<b>Gloria Macapagal Arroyo (2001-2010)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Executive Order No. 358: Mandates TESDA and CHED to develop and implement a unified national qualifications framework for efficient transition and progression between TVET and higher education.</li> </ul>
<b>Benigno Aquino (2010-2016)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- RA 10533 Enhanced Basic Education Act 2013: Program introducing the K-12 curriculum. Added two years to the basic education</li> </ul>
<b>Rodrigo Duterte (2016-2022)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- RA 11448 Transnational Higher Education Act:</li> <li>- Republic Act No. 11650</li> <li>- Republic Act (RA) 11713: Excellence in Teacher Education Act: The law strengthens the Teacher Education Council and establishes a scholarship for students in the teacher education program.</li> </ul>

The efforts and contributions of each administration focused on the education sector since the 1970s were first analyzed. It was observed that while the gender disparity in education between men and women has been widening since the crossover from the 1970's, the each of the administration had its own concerns and issues in terms of reforms in the education sector. Since the system of education was established in the Philippines, the school had been a strong agent as drivers for economic development and social change. The education rate in the Philippines has continuously been rapidly growing but in the 1960's there were concern regarding the quality of the education. Thus, in response to this concern, the Ferdinand Marcos's administration made educational reforms to improve the education quality. This was during the declaration of the martial law by President Marcos who aimed to create a "new society" in the Philippines. With presidential commission in 1969 confirming that the education system in the Philippines was not contributing much to the national's goal of economic development, the commission created a set of recommendation to improve the educational system. In this process, there were reforms made to the education sector. The education system was newly shaped through the Education Development Decree of 1972. This decree also known as the Educational Development Decree was significant because it aimed education to contribute to national development efforts. This meant that the quality of education had to be improved with fundamental changes such as changes in curriculum to make education beneficiary to the people and the national needs. The report on the

Educational for National Development clearly stated that, “*the education system, must undergo a change in its goals, structure, content and methods to become relevant to the changing society.*”<sup>18</sup> The commission in 1969 addressed the fundamental flaws and imbalances in the education system by clearly defining the objectives and purpose of education. And by defining the objectives, a Ten-Year Educational Development Program was formed to improve the quality of education. This program made reforms to improve its curricular programs and the quality of teaching, enhancing academic standards by selective admission, accreditation process and guidance and counselling programs, and grants and loans to institutions and scholarships to students. During the Marcos administration, educational reforms were made to improve the quality of education and to make education more relevant by meeting people needs. While the Marcos administration focused on education to enhance the country economy, the succeeding president Corazon Aquino focused on women’s equal rights and education access for all. A new constitution was drafted in 1987 which emphasized the right of all citizens to quality education at all levels and access to education. The constitution also noted to establish and maintain an education system of free public education in primary and secondary levels. This constitution made elementary education compulsory for all children of school age. Yet, despite President Aquino’s efforts to create a gender equal society, there were no efforts to address boys’

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<sup>18</sup> Commission Report, Education for National Development, pp. 97-98.

decrease in education enrollment and graduation, nor efforts to help boys finish their schooling. Rather, there were efforts to improve women's participation in education and the labor force. During Fidel V. Ramos' administration, a lot of reforms were made to the education system. With the signing of the RA 7964 and RA 7722, the Technical Education and Skills Development (TESDA), and the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) was established in which the CHED separated college and universities from the Department of Education giving its own independence. President Ramos like the former presidents emphasized quality education, global competitiveness, and universal access to education for all students. As with the founding of CHED and TESDA, President Ramos aimed to make structure reforms in higher level education to be more focused and efficiently monitored. During this presidency, the Gender-Responsive Development Plan was developed to ensure gender equality in the Philippines. The first few pages of the Plan on education discussed the achievement of gender parity in access to education between males and females. The plan recognized that access to education was no longer a problem for females compared to their male counterparts. However, despite the growing achievement of females in education, the plans remained to focus on the situation of women and enhancing women's equal rights in other areas such as the labor force and men dominated fields.

The Aquino administration and former president Duterte's administration, policies were established to enhanced basic education and

make reforms in higher education by internationalizing higher education in the country and attracting talented students and faculty to improve the nation's overall human resource. Most recently, during former president Duterte's administration, the Gender-Responsive Basic Education Policy was developed to ensure gender equality in basic education. The first few pages acknowledged that gender is not only an issue of girls and that boys are falling behind girls in fulfilling their studies. However, the examined policy showed no plans directly addressing the issue of boys and males. Rather, the plans were mainly focused on the situation of women and mainstreaming gender equality in the educational realm through changes in school curriculums, training teachers and instructors to be more gender responsive, and creating suitable school environment for teen mothers etc. The policy is further discussed in the section below.

## **4.2. Absence of Responses at the Policy Level**

To examine the responses the government has initiated to address the gender gap reversal of boys falling behind in school enrollment, school completion, participation, and performance, the education related policies issued by the Philippine legislations and by the Department of Education from 1990 to 2020 were analyzed. Upon thorough examination of the policies, only ten policies have shown to have gender responsive components and among these policies only three policies have spoken about the gender gap reversal phenomenon in the Philippines. However, while the aim of this policy review

was to analyze the policies targeting boys, none of the policies have shown to have target issues of boys' disadvantage or improving the situation of boys.

**Table 5. List of Policies that have Gender Responsive Components in the Education Sector**

<b>Policy</b>	<b>Gender Responsive Component</b>	<b>Strategies for Gender Gap Reversal (GGR)</b>
Executive Order No. 348 Approval and Adoption of the “Philippine Development Plan for Women for 1989 to 1992	Plans and projects to ensure gender equality in education and training	<b>X</b>
Executive Order No. 273 Philippines Plan for Gender-Responsive Development 1995-2025	Development goals and strategies to make gender equity innate in public programs and policies all sectors	<b>X</b>
RA 9710 Magna Carta for Women	Pursue measures to eliminate all forms of discrimination against girls in education, skills development. Guarantee that all girl-children have access to quality education, good health, and skills development	<b>X</b>
DO. 48, s. 1990 Adoption of the Programs and Project Outline in the Philippines Development Plan for Women in the Annual Plan	Enhance the effectiveness of education in bringing about gender equality and an improved status of Filipino Women	<b>X</b>
DO. 63, s. 2012	GAD Plans incorporating	<b>X</b>

Guidelines on the Preparation of Gender and Development Plans, Utilization of GAD budgets and Submission of Accomplishment Reports	Programs, Projects, and Activities must be issue-based resulting from gender analysis and research ensuring that different concerns and issues of both women and men are equally addressed in the GAD plans and budgets.	
DO. 27, s. 2013 Guidelines and Procedure on the Establishment of DepEd Gender and Development Focal Point System at the Regional, Division, and School Levels	Ensure gender mainstreaming in government offices, agencies, and local government units.	<b>X</b>
DO. 32, s. 2017 Gender-Responsive Basic Education Policy	Ensure that equal access to education and learning opportunities is given to men and women equally by eliminating gender-based barriers.	<b>X</b>
DM. 19, s. 2004 Gender and Development Programs	Eliminate gender stereotyping in textbook and raise gender awareness to enable a responsive gender equality	<b>X</b>
DM. 49, s. 2006 Gender and Development Programs	Raise gender awareness among participants to enable them to be more committed and responsive to gender equality	<b>X</b>
DM. 140, s. 2012 Establishment of the DepEd Gender and Development Focal Point System	Ensure and sustain the agency's critical consciousness and support on women and gender issues	<b>X</b>

First of all, in the case of the Philippines, gender related issues and concerns were long lived problems that were raised for decades. However, it was not until 1986 when Corazon C. Aquino was elected as the first women president of the Philippines that the government made new grounds in raising gender equality, women's rights and issues as a collective concern for the country. In response to achieve gender equality, gender mainstreaming was first introduced as the government's key strategy in 1994. In 1995, a plan known as the Philippine Plan for Gender Responsive Development 1995-2025 was mandated for all agencies, departments, bureaus, government owned corporations, and offices to institutionalize gender and development efforts in their planning, programming, and budgeting process to promote a gender equal society.<sup>19</sup> The main objectives and goals for the Plan to mainstream gender ranged from human development sectors such as education, health, nutrition and family planning, social welfare, and labor and employment, to sectors of economic and industrial development, violence against women, and gender stereotyping. The Plans response to the urgent need for mainstreaming gender was founded on the belief that the government should address gender issues. Therefore, since the introduction of gender mainstreaming in 1994 and the Executive Order No. 173 Philippines Plan for Gender-responsive Development 1995-2025 which were government initiatives to pursue full equality and development for men and women, these

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<sup>19</sup> Philippine Plan for Gender Responsive Development 1995-2025



mandates have become the foundation of all aspects of development, policies, and programs in the Philippines.

Since the government has adopted gender mainstreaming as its key strategy to address gender inequality issues in the 1990's, 2 Executive Order, 1 Republic Act, 4 DepEd Orders, and 3 DepEd Memorandums were identified to have gender responsive components in the education sector.<sup>20</sup> Upon detailed examination of the policies, the policies and plans were found to be gender responsive to address gender inequality in education however, unlike its objectives to form a gender equal society especially in education, the policies and plans mandated did not have any specific interventions aimed on the gender gap reversal. Correspondingly, no policies were directly addressed towards the underachievement of boys in education as well as the low enrollment rate, completion rate, participation, and overall achievement in school. Since the 1970's, more women have attained higher education and more female students have survived to complete the basic education than male students. Yet, the policies stipulated by the Philippines legislation and the Department of Education shows to have continuously focus on gender issues and concerns of women while on the other hand have neglecting boys' educational participation, achievement, and the widening gender gap reversal.

Among the plans and policies identified above, only three of the issued policies have noted and acknowledged boys falling behind girls in

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<sup>20</sup> See Appendix

educational obtainment and performance. However, among the three identified policies, no detailed plans or projects were stipulated to address this concern. The Philippines Development Plan for Women in 1989 was the first policy to have voiced the gender gap reversal found in boys and girls in educational enrollment. Chapter 6 in the Plan provided programs and projects for education and training. The first page of the plan included an overview of the latest available sex-disaggregated figures on both males and females from 1970's to 1980's. The Plan elaborates on the fact that female enrollment in school is fared in comparison with males. According to the Plan, in the year 1982-1983, the elementary school population reached 95.8 percent in its gross enrollment ratio. In these figures, the female gross enrollment rate was 96 percent composing one half of the total enrollees. The proportion of female students attending secondary schools in 1970-1971 was not any different. Female students in school enrollment fared with those of males. In the tertiary or college level as well as graduate level, the data obtained showed that more females are present at the higher education level than males. These were the sex disaggregated data presented in the Plan. Although this plan was developed for the development plan for women, the plan demonstrated that the government had full understanding of the gender disparity found in the education sector. Not only did girls outnumber boys in enrollment and completion rate in primary level to tertiary level, but more female students performed better than male students as well showing this unique pheno

menon of gender gap reversal. As quoted in the Plan:

*“Local studies indicate that, generally, females perform better than males in school. At both elementary and secondary level, they demonstrate lower repetition and dropout rates. Likewise, they manifest 50 percent less incidence of failures.” (Philippine Development Plan 1989-1992)*

Consequently, the plan acknowledged the favorable situation of women in education and the gain discussed earlier.

The second time the gender gap reversal was acknowledged into the education policy is the Gender-Responsive Development Plan 1995-2025 which was developed by the Ramos administration. This plan aimed to address gender inequalities and inequities in the nation as well. Not only focused on education, the Gender Responsive Development Plan also aimed to enhance the life conditions for both women and men in all aspects of development. Among the many chapters, Chapter 3 was dedicated to the education and human resources development on males and females. The chapter included an overview of the educational situation in the Philippines. Once again, the situation analysis on education stated that sexes' unequal access to education is no longer a problem for the females. But rather, women showed to have the advantage over men in tertiary education. Just like it was previous noted on the Philippines Development Plan for Women, the government had full knowledge on the fact that education attainment between

males and females were close to equal. However, the plan placed greater emphasis on girls and women as the disadvantaged group and stipulated plans to enhance other areas to development in terms of women's education such as diversifying women's participation in male dominated discipline courses in tertiary level. Despite the education indicators demonstrating the fall backs of boys in school and reverse in gender gap, the Plan continued to focus on girls and women's educational situation in areas such as increasing literacy rates, education outputs in various courses and fields, the low number of female students in rural areas, and the lack of female professionals in male dominated fields due to stereotypes. Nowhere else in the Plan did it include direct interventions to help the boy's disengagement and underperformance in education, demonstrating the neglect from the government to perceive this issue as a serious problem to address. Through examining these two major policies, the government has demonstrated that the government's key focus groups were women's advancement despite all education indicators showing of fall of boys participation in education.

Economist Vicente Paqueo pointed out in a forum conducted by the state think tank Philippine Institute for Development Studies (PIDS that while the country has progressed to reduce gender gaps among female and males, male students have lagged behind their female counterparts in human capital development. He highlighted that due to the focus mainly given on girls, public support and recommendation for gender biases has benignly neglected

boys. This is proven to be true when examining the policies discussed above. Despite all education indicators illustrating low and poor performance of boys in education, policies have failed to pursue strategies that address boys while gender advocacy for females have predominated.

The most recent policies issued demonstrate a clearer neglect from policymakers in addressing the gender gap reversal hurtful to the boys. In 2006, the government approved the “Education for All 2015” Plan which aimed to ensure that every Filipino citizen has full access to basic education. The Plan itself addressed the gender disparities and the widening gap of educational attainment between men and women and stated that if the trend of widening disparities against boys continues, the Philippine society in the near future will have male citizens who are disadvantaged. The statement is expressed as the followings:

*“If the trend of widening disparity against boys continues, Philippine society in the future will have male citizens who may liabilities. World EFA Goal No.5 which hopes to eliminate gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005, and achieve gender equality in education by 2015 is far from realization, **unless the DepEd implements most effective approaches to address the specific needs of male children.**” (Education for All 2015: Implementation and Challenges)*

The Plan emphasized the need for DepEd to implement the most effective interventions to address the needs specific to male children. However, reviewing the “Education for All Review Report” in 2014, the assessment once again directly recommends policymakers to address the widening reverse in gender gap. The review emphasized that boys are still at a disadvantaged situation in all of the education indicators which is a case that is different from the majority of developing countries where girls are at the disadvantage. Therefore, due to the fact that boys leave school before completing their basic education, it is recommended that a development of policy addressing the situation of boys is crucial. Issues of boys’ disengagement in school and the high dropout rates of boys were once again emphasized. The recommendation from the review is stated as the following:

*“Develop specific policies and program to address **boys’ lack of interest in attending school**, and the larger number of males dropping out of school.” (Education for All 2015 Review)*

The recommendations to address “boys” as a target group is emphasized in both times of the plan in the Education for All 2015, acknowledging the serious concern of the gender gap reversal. However even after the call for the DepEd to implement strategies to address the needs of male students, the 2014 review demonstrated that no specific intervention were made towards them. From both documents in 2006 and 2014, it has reported the urgency to address boys directly with specific policies and

programs. However, in the following years still no policies were developed responding to the recommendations.

The neglect from the government and policymakers in education to address boys is reflected in the 2017 Gender-Responsive Basic Education Policy (GRBE). Issued by the Department of Education in 2017, this policy was issued in line with the Gender and Development mandate as specified in the Philippines Constitution 1987 to eliminate all forms of discrimination against the varying gender bias and gender related discriminations in girls and boys, and men and women. Unlike the previous gender-responsive development plan discussed in the previous section; this policy solely focused on the gender issues found in the education system of the Philippines. Focused on the basic education, this policy aimed to integrate the principles of gender equality and non-discrimination in the delivery of basic education. Here, gender responsiveness refers to the recognition of the needs of girls and boys, or men and women, to prevent any gender-related discrimination or gender bias in the educational environment.

Prior to the development of the GRBE policy, the United Nations Girls' Education Initiative reported the importance of analyzing the educational policies concerning both boys and girls because policies affect both genders. And as the UNGEI has previously raised this issue of the growing gap in the Philippines, the Department of Education took action and developed the Gender-Responsive Basic Education Policy to ensure gender equal and quality basic education in the Philippines as well. The Gender-Responsive

Basic Education Policy made the following statements:

- a) **Boys are underperforming in key education indicators compared to girls**
- b) Indigenous people are behind in enrollment data and experience discrimination
- c) Higher Education degrees manifest gender-segregation
- d) Gender biases and stereotypes remain and are embedded in the curriculum, instructional methods, materials, and learning media
- e) Women and girls continue to be vulnerable to sexual harassment and violence inside of school.

The policy repeatedly expressed the shift in gender patterns in basic education with girls outnumbering boys in primary and secondary levels, and the reversed gender gap of boys underperforming in key education indicators compared to girls. Two main goals and objectives are demonstrated in the policy. First, is to integrate the concepts of gender equality and sensitivity into the basic education. Second, is to create an education system that is presented into a more equal manner. These goals are to ensure that the rights of children and those marginalized are protected such as the indigenous groups, and to protect children from bullying, abuse, and discrimination due to gender differences. It is visible that the policy is strongly focused on eliminating gender-based barriers in education to ensure equal access to education to men and women. Hence, it can be understood that the highlight of this policy is to ensure that both women and men receive fair treatment and opportunities in



education. However, despite the DepEd's analysis of males underperforming compared to their female counterparts, and acknowledging that gender is not just about girls, the responses and gender equity mechanism provided in the policy were not aimed at the situation of boys but were highly focused on the situation of females. For example, to provide equal access to education, the policy includes enforcement of non-expulsion of women who become pregnant outside of marriage, formation of policies to enhance women's participation in sports, and enhancement of the school environment to accommodate teen mothers. The policy definitely contains good and positive intentions however, as discussed throughout the paper, women are actually doing very well in terms of school participation compared to men. According to the Manila Bulletin report, women in the Philippines are faced with issues that go beyond just access to education. In fact, women are performing much better than men and enjoy equal access to education showing a reversal in gender gap. In this case, when it comes to the issue of equal access to education, more emphasis should be placed on the access of boys and males since boys have been falling behind in education with a high possibility of dropping out of school than girls for the last 50 years. Especially since the policy itself has recognized the fact that gender is not only about girls, and it has repeatedly reported in the first few pages of the policy that boys are behind girls in education, it is comprehensible for the government to have made interventions that are targeted towards boys. Yet, once again no policy measures aimed towards the reducing the widening gender gap between boys

and girls. The policy instead focused on other areas of trying to get the school curriculum, the school environment, school materials, and school teachers and instructors to be more gender sensitive and inclusive. However, these mechanisms are too vague to address the reversal of gender gap nor does it provide any specific strategies to improve the situation of boys as well. While these plans may create a less discriminative school environment for both girls and boys, the policy itself does not tackle the problem itself. Among the examined list of plans provided in the policy, no single plan directly tackles the reversed gender gap and the issue of boys underachievement and incompleteness of education as indicated in the first few pages of the policy. The plans that are proposed rather seem to be too ambiguous which does not help either girls or boys. Gender-responsive Basic Education the policy is very limited in terms of what it can do to improve the gender gap reverse seen between girls and boys. Although the policy has its good intentions to enhance and enforce a more gender equal environment in the education system, it does not provide plans to directly tackle the growing problem of the gender gap reversal.

It is relatively puzzling and difficult to understand why education policies have not directly responded to this unique situation of boys despite the widening gender gap reversal. Mainly because the government has been aware of the gender disparities and has even addressed its seriousness in policies since the early 1990's to the latest policy of the Gender-Responsive Basic Education Plan in 2017. In 2019, economist Vicente Paqueo pointed

out in the forum conducted by the state think tank Philippine Institute for Development Studies the gender gap reversal favoring female students. He highlighted that while the country has progressed to reduce gender gaps among female and males, male students have actually lagged behind their females. In support of this argument, he addressed the government's main focus given on girls throughout history has resulted to gender advocacies benignly neglecting boys.

On this note, the education policies were examined to reveal where the policies have relatively been more responsive to instead. As DepEd issuances influence all aspects of education, examining official policies reveals the current focus groups and its direction and objectives. To begin with, certain groups were attended as key groups to target to ensure equity, inclusion, and access to basic education. Especially with the national goal of achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by 2015 and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030 to address educational equity and inclusion, various inclusion policies were adopted in educational policies as a response. These groups were mainly the Muslims, indigenous people, people with disabilities, and women. These groups were directly addressed in national policies and the Department of education with specific programs to enhance their participation in education. For example, first, there were specific interventions targeting Muslim's that are out-of-school and Muslims that are at a higher risk of dropping out and uncompleting their education. In 2010, the Department of Education issued the "Basic Education

Madrasah Programs for Muslim Out-of-School Youth and Adults” to respond to the needs to Muslims and ensure that Muslims are not excluded. Secondly, the “National Indigenous Peoples Education Policy Framework” was issued to strengthen policies of the indigenous people education and implement an IP education program for a more inclusive education. Thirdly, as for people with disabilities, the “Magna Carta for Disabled Persons” and “SPED Programs”, were developed to ensure children with disabilities are not left behind. Finally, educational policies on girls and women were issued constantly exhibiting girls as one of the key focus groups of DepEd. Throughout these years, a large number of education related policies from 1990 to 2019 were directly responding to the concerns and disadvantageous situations of these key groups for a more inclusive education system. Correspondingly, the Philippine legislation and DepEd issuances indicates that Muslims, indigenous people, person with disability, and women were its priority over the situation of men, consequently leading to the absence of policy responses towards the gender disparities leaving boys behind.

**Table 6. Policies for Equal and Inclusive Basic Education**

Policies for Equal and Inclusive Basic Education				
Muslims	Indigenous People	Person with Disability	Gender Gap	
			Focus on Girls and Women	Focus on Boys and Men
Philippine Decree 1083 (Code of Muslim Personal Laws of the Philippines)	DO 62, s. 2011 (Adopting the National Indigenous	DO 26, s. 1997 (Institutionalization of SPED	DO 32, s. 2017 Gender-responsive Basic	<b>X</b>

<p>Executive Order 570 (Institutionalizing Peace Education in Basic Education and Teacher Education)</p> <p>RA 9997 (National Commission on Muslim Filipinos Act of 2009)</p> <p>DepEd Order 41, 2004 (Policy Guidelines on Madrasah Education in the K to 12 Basic Education Program)</p> <p>DO 57, s. 2010 (DepEd Order 57, s. 2010 (Implementation of the Basic Education Madrasah Programs for Muslim Out-of-School Youth and Adults)</p> <p>DO 40, s. 2011 (Amendment to DepEd Order No. 51, s. 2004)</p> <p>DO 41, s. 2017 (Policy Guidelines on Madrasah Education in the K to 12 Basic Education Program)</p>	<p>Peoples (IP) Education Policy Framework)</p> <p>DO 103, s. 2011 (Creation of Indigenous Peoples Education Office)</p> <p>DO 21, s. 2014 (Guidelines on the Recognition of Private Learning Institutions Serving Indigenous Peoples Learners)</p> <p>DO 32, s. 2015 (Adopting the Indigenous Peoples Education Curriculum Framework)</p>	<p>Programs in All Schools)</p> <p>DO 29, s. 2018 (Policy on the Implementation of Multi-Factored Assessment Tool)</p> <p>DO 21, s. 2019 (Policy Guidelines on the K to 12 Basic Education Program)</p>	<p>Education policy</p>	
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Several Philippine legislations have passed to respond to Muslim education and their active participation and access to basic education. The Presidential decrees and DepEd policies have issued specific strategies directly addressed to Muslim groups and students to respond to their disadvantageous situation challenging their access to education and school completion. To ensure that no one is left behind, the Philippine Degree 1083 Code of Muslim Personal Laws of the Philippines, the Executive Order No. 570 known as the Institutionalizing Peace Education in Basic Education and Teacher Education and RA 9997 National Commission on Muslim Filipinos Act were issued responding to Muslim education. In response to these policies, the Department of Education issued corresponding orders that developed a standard school curriculums for public elementary schools and private Muslims schools as early as 2004. And as the Enhance Basic Education Act of 2013 included strategies on access to quality education for all of Filipino students, DepEd has also responded to this law by releasing two DepEd Orders. The Basic Education Madrasah Programs for Muslim Out-of-School Youth and Adults (DO 57, s 2010) and the Policy Guidelines on Madrasah Education in the K to 12 Basic Education (DO 41, s. 2017) were released in response to ensure a more inclusive education for every child. There were five significant laws and five corresponding DepEd Orders released by the government directly addressing the needs and challenges of the Muslims groups. Examining the policies released by DepEd, these policies illustrates that the laws and policies have attended Muslim groups as key focus groups

as well.

The indigenous people (IP) which are also part of DepEd's band of inclusive education programs, released several policies to respond to their needs and challenges as well. The Indigenous People's Rights Act of 1997 was released to ensure that indigenous people have equal access to all levels and forms of education. Understanding their challenges in attending regular classes in school, the Act stated that education for the indigenous people should be provided in their own language and in a manner that is appropriate to their cultural methods of teaching and learning. As a response to these laws, the Department of Education issued the Adopting the National Indigenous People's Policy Framework (DepEd Order 62, s. 2011) and the Establishment of the indigenous Peoples Education Office (DO 203, s. 2011) which corresponded to the laws above. In recent years, to respond to the Enhanced Basic Education Act 2013, Guidelines on the Recognition of Private Learning Institutions Serving Indigenous Peoples Learners (DO 21, s. 2014) and the Adopting the Indigenous Peoples Education Curriculum Framework (DO 32, s. 2015) were released to directly respond to the indigenous people. Two national laws and five DepEd Orders were released specifically to attend the indigenous people as part of the nation's collective goal in achieving successful inclusive education programs.

As part of DepEd's inclusive education goals, people with disability were also one of the key focus groups DepEd has actively responded to. Along with the Muslim education and indigenous people's education, special

education which were for person with disability were also developed as part of DepEd's inclusion program. First, the Magna Carta for Disabled Persons (RA 7277) and the Filipino Sign Language Act (RA 11106) were released in relevance for the people with disability. These significant laws responded to the needs and challenges of the people with disabilities. The Filipino Sign Language Act declared the Filipino sign language developed as the national language for the deaf. The Department of Education has also released two significant orders which institutionalized special education programs (DO 26, s. 1997) and implement regulations from the Basic Education Act of 2013 (DO 32, s. 2013) and guidelines of the K to 12 Basic Education Programs (DO 21, s. 2019). These orders from DepEd provided strategies to correspond to the needs of people with disabilities and provide special education applicable to people with disabilities. As for responding to the challenges of people with disabilities, four national laws and three DepEd orders have shown to have directly respond through these policies.

Another most significant group of an inclusive education program in the Philippines is girls and women. As discussed earlier, gender equality and gender gap has been a long existing challenge in the Philippines. As efforts were made by the government to reduce gender gap between men and women in education, policies have mainly focused on women. Thus, the Department of Education has mainly released orders that provided strategies and implementation plans for women. The Gender-Responsive Basic Education Policy which is the first policy that aimed to integrate gender and basic



Education into one policy illustrates the focus on women. To elaborate, the policy was established to ensure equality and respond to the gap in formal education among men and women. However, to respond to the gender gap, the plan mainly focused on reducing the gap through improving and attending the situation of girls and women, especially those in the informal and indigenous sectors to have access to quality education. In other words, the plan was a result of the government's efforts to eliminate discrimination towards women and as a result reduce the gender gap between men and women in education. Aligned with these intentions, the plan implicated strategies and plans mainly to ensure that women get fair treatment and opportunities. Such interventions were non-expulsion of schoolgirls who become pregnant outside of marriage, improving school infrastructure to attend young mothers among the students, and finally relevant policies to boost women's participation in school sports. The policies issued through national laws and DepEd orders illustrates that the government has made efforts to reduce the increased gender gap in education. However, mainly focused on girls and women, the government has benignly neglected to address the situation of boys. Despite consensus that boys are underperforming in education and that the Philippines is now experiencing a reversal in gender gap, no policies were developed nor were there any corresponding interventions to address them.

Through examining the policies issued through national laws and Department of Education issuances related to education, the policies revealed

that the government mainly focused on inclusive education programs focused on Muslims, the indigenous people, person with disabilities, and gender gap issues limited to women. The policies have revealed the direction and objectives of the Philippine's educational goals were facing towards these key groups rather than the situation of boy's underperformance and reversal of the gender gap.

The initial aim for the policy analysis on this chapter was to focus on education related policies targeting boys. However, there were very few cases where the reversed gender gap was demonstrated in policies and in fact, not a single policy was directly targeted towards boy's underachievement and underperformance in education. Even where the wide disparities of boys and girls are acknowledged in policies, the plans and strategies for education did not refer to boys nor did it have strategies to improve the situation of boys. Despite evidence of boys' disengagement and low performance in education resulting to a reversal in gender gap, educational policies, planning, and strategies have retained heavily on other focus groups.

### **4.3. Absence of Responses at the Program Level: Dropouts and Out-of-School Children**

As much as the reverse in gender gap raises a serious concern, school dropouts and out-of-school children are an alarming problem that the Philippine education system is faced with. Referring back to the data shown

in Chapter 3, there is an urgent need to keep school aged children in school. The Philippines shows a rate of 83.7% meaning that there are about 2.13 million dropouts in college education alone (Manila Bulletin). Among the student proportion of dropouts and out-of-school children and youth, boys showed a higher proportion compared to girls. The main reasons for school dropouts and out of school children are still areas that need further research however, according to the 2017 Annual Poverty Indicator Survey conducted by the Philippines Statistics Authority, the lack of interest, marriage and family matters, high cost of education and financial concerns, and employment/work were the most significant reasons for both males and females. As discussed earlier, the lack of interest was the most common reason found in the boys (43.8%) while for girls (57%), marriage and family matters were the most common. As demonstrated in these survey, school dropouts and out-of-school children and youth are an important issue and problem that needs to be addressed. To refer to what was discussed in Chapter 3, twice as more males tend to drop out of school compared to their female counterparts. Therefore, to significantly reduce the alarming rate of school dropouts and out-of-school children, programs that properly target the high dropout rates among boys through responding to the causes of their dropouts are crucial. However, upon examining the programs implemented, no programs have been developed to mitigate the high dropout rates of boys in line with the causes and reasons they do not attend school.

One of the programs implemented to address the increasing number of dropouts and out-of-school children, is the conditional cash transfer program also known as the Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps). The program provided cash of monthly stipends to extremely poor families only on the condition that their children are sent to school. This program aimed to assist children from poor families in breaking out of the poverty cycle through investment on human capital. However, this program fell short in responding to the boys' early school dropouts and underachievement in school. Especially with the survey reporting that the main reasons for dropping out of school and not attending school was due to the lack of personal interest, cash transfer programs do not mitigate the underperformance of boys in school nor does it properly restrict boys from dropping out of school. This program rather responded to the extremely poor families with children that aspired to continue their studies but could not due to financial reasons.

Another program implemented is the government-initiated program known as the Dropout Reduction Program (DORP). This program aimed to reduce the high dropout rates and improve the learning outcomes in the Philippines using formal, non-formal, and informal approaches. In response to the unresolved high dropout rate, the program included the following objectives:

- a) Reduce, if not eliminate school dropout*
- b) Increase retention rate*

- c) *Significantly increase the achievement level of the students-at-Risk of Dropping Out*
- d) *Retrieve learners who are out of school*
- e) *Increase the capability of schools to establish, implement, monitor, evaluate and continuously improve the DORP*
- f) *Design and continuously improve DORP practices and learning materials*
- g) *Benchmark the best DORP practices*

As a strategic component of the Dropout Reduction Program, flexible learning options were developed to provide other means of accessing education and equip children with the basic literacy tools and contents that are essential for living, growth, and development as a person. Thus, to equip every child with the basic literacy tools and to reduce the increasing dropout rates, Alternative Delivery Modes (ADMs) were established.

**Table 7. List of Alternative Delivery Modes to Reduce Dropouts and Out-of-School Children**

<b>List of Alternative Delivery Modes to Reduce Dropouts and Out-of-School Children</b>		
<b>Alternative Delivery Modes (ADMs)</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Program responses to boy's high school dropout and out-of-school rate</b>
<b>Home School</b> - DECS Memo 126, s. 1997 Home School Education	Student unable to go to school but has someone home capable to teaching and instructing	<b>X</b>

<b>Nigh High School</b> - DO 23, s. 1986 Promotion and Classification of Secondary Nigh High School	For high school students to attend regular classes during the day	<b>X</b>
<b>Open High School</b> - RA 10665 Open High School Act  - DO 46, s. 2006 Guidelines on the pilot Implementation of the open High School program)	For high school students capable of self-study to complete their education through quality distance education	<b>X</b>

The Alternative Delivery Modes were developed containing learning modalities which follow the K-12 curriculum content however, they differ from formal education in terms of time, duration, and most importantly method and place of instruction. This gives the student flexibility in staying on track with the school curriculum in their own convenience. By giving the student the flexibility, students are encouraged to remain of track with the regular class programs, decreasing the chances of dropping out of school. Several programs fall under the ADM. Home schooling, night high school, and open high school programs. Home schooling allows children to continue their studies at home with someone who can deliver the instructions. The Nigh High School Program on the other hand, provides classes at night to high school students who are unable to attend the regular classes during the day. And finally, the Open High School Program offers high school students to complete their basic education through quality distance education

independently. These ADM programs were particularly designed for students that can manage self-paced learning independently and are not able to attend school physically due to reasons that restrain them from participating school with the regular school schedule. This programs also gave lenience to students that struggle to show up to school due to personal reasons and thus, restrain from dropping out of school.

The second component of DORP is the Effective Alternative Secondary Education (EASE), an alternative mode of learning for short-term leavers and absentees in the regular class programs due to personal circumstances such as part-time jobs and sickness in the family. For these students, modules are given out for the lost time and lessons in school.

The Dropout Reduction Program was successful in introducing alternative ways to provide and improve learning outcomes of the country using formal and informal approaches thus giving students in difficult circumstances the chance to complete their secondary education. However, in the case of the Philippines where boys take up the majority of the school dropout rate and out-of-school children, the program did not present any mechanism in accordance to the unique situation of boys. To elaborate, prior data from the Philippines Statistics Authority on dropouts and out-of-school children clearly showed that boys are much in disadvantage in terms of its likeliness to drop out of school. However, DORP only focuses on providing alternative delivery modes which are aimed to deliver basic education to

students that are interested in continuing their studies. The program does not align with the most common reasons children drop out of school. As discussed above, the 2017 Annual Poverty Indicator Survey reported that the most common reason boys dropout of school was due to the lack of interest. About 43 percent of boys dropout of school because of such reason therefore, if this is the main cause, more specific interventions should have been carried out to address this. Conversely, DORP does not provide any solutions for boys that have lost interest in school but rather aims for students attending school and students that are interested in continuing their students from dropping out and stepping out of the educational system.

These programs were implemented to tackle the problem of the alarming increase in school dropouts in general and not at all to target the boys specifically. Given the fact that boys are more likely to drop out of school in the later ages hence make up most of the out-of-school children, the absence of a gender perspective in implementing solutions is a concern that needs to be addressed. Disregard for the widening reverse in gender gap especially where boys are falling behind stagnates the progress for their full potential.

It would be tempting to argue that the implications for these programs trickle down to the situation of boys and therefore, downplay direct interventions to respond to the widening gender disparities not in favor of the boys. However, today we see a serious problem present in boys' education



and their high dropout rates. It is not just the numbers that are alarming but this means that half of the Philippine student population is not completing their studies, not fulfilling their best human capital development, and also widening the gender gap with one subgroup achieving higher education. Disparities regardless of subgroups of the society, whether it be Muslims, indigenous people, people with disabilities, men or women are still imbalances and inequalities that needs to be addressed by the government and the DepEd. Each of these subgroups including boys require policies and programs to reduce these disparities because eventually, these widened gaps of inequalities will return with serious consequences in the future.

As discussed in the previous section, national laws and policies have focused on other key groups such as the Muslims, indigenous people, person with disability, and women. The Department of Education and national laws have managed to issue direct policies and programs addressing them. However, examining the programs implemented to reduce school dropouts and address out-of-school children and youth, there were no direct programs that targeted boys to mitigate the high dropout rates found mostly among them. Most importantly, there were no policies that aimed to reduce the dropout rate of boys through addressing the reasons or the challenges that cause boys to leave school. While no programs have directly aimed to address the boys, programs to address the dropouts and out-of-school children in direct programs such as the Muslim Out-of-School Programs and strategies under

the Magna Carta for Disabled Persons which developed non-formal education for the disabled, programs to ensure indigenous people are provided education in their own language for a more efficient delivery of curriculum, and programs to enhance girls' participation in education through creating a women friendly school environment who girls who are at higher risk of dropping out or remain out-of-school due to pregnancy, discrimination, marriage and family matters, and sexual violence.

Several programs under policies and plans were issued to reduce the dropout rates and out-of-school rate which are already very high at an alarming level. The issued policies reveals that many of the programs have aimed to reduce the dropout rates through providing alternative delivery modes which allows students to continue their studies in alternatives ways that are more convenient to their circumstances. In fact, some programs have directly responded to address the challenges of subgroups like the Muslims, indigenous groups, people with disabilities, and women. However, programs have no responded to the situation of boys, specifically their underachievement and insufficient participation in education. There is an urgent need to directly address the situation of boys through programs that respond to the underlying causes. Therefore, more research and programs should be focused on boys' high dropout rates and directions on how to go about in achieving gender equality through reducing the gender gap reversal is crucial.

## **Chapter 5. Conclusion**

As early as the 1970's, the Philippine education has seen the advancement of women's access to education and gender parity in terms of school enrollment and school completion in primary and secondary level education. In tertiary level as well, women began to overpass men in higher education obtainment and eventually until this day, women are predominant in higher education compared to their male counterparts. The enrollment and completion rate of basic school is in favor of girls, while boys are challenged with problems restraining them from staying in school, risk of dropping out of school, and completing their full education course which every child as the basic right to. Acknowledging the unique problems that boys have been experiencing for the last 50 years, this research aimed to examine and analyze government policies to see how the government has dealt with the intensifying problem of gender disparity in education. Especially as the gender gap in education has been widening for the last fifty years with boys falling behind girls, the study aimed to find policies that directly addressed the problem throughout the years. However, the findings of this study clearly showed disregard and negligence from the government policymakers in addressing this problem despite of its awareness.

As discussed in Chapter 3, the proportion of student enrollment and completion rate from primary level to higher education showed that the proportion of girls was higher than boys. The concern though is that this

creates a problem because it also means that boys are left behind and do not get to finish their education. We witness a reversed gender gap where boys are not receiving the full education as they are expected to. Though this trend was first witnessed in the 1970s and was called to attention by scholars in the 1990s, no government policies were implemented to narrow down the gap between males and females in education. From the Marcos administration that emphasized educational reforms for national development to the Duterte administration focused on quality education and transnationally competitive higher education, the national government has failed to address the rapidly increasing gap between males and females in education. It was not until 1986 when the first women president Corazon Aquino was elected that gender became a collective issue and concern for the country. Although the efforts from this administration focused on the rights of women, the study and developed of women's study enhanced sex-disaggregated data showing the advancement of women in education and the stagnation of men in education.

The finding through examining the Philippine legislations related to education and the policies issued by the Department of Education revealed that the government focused heavily on quality education and providing access to education for all to meet national and global goals. All the administrations in the last fifty years placed strong efforts on improving providing access to education for all students through policies that provided mandatory enrollment to primary level education and providing free education as well. However, among the many policies, only two Executive

Orders, one Republic Act, 4 DepEd Orders, and 3 DepEd Memorandums were identified to have gender responsive components. The Executive Orders, Philippine Development Plan for Women for 1989 to 1992 and the Philippines Plan for Gender-Responsive Development 1995-2025 were mandated to integrate and mainstream gender issues and concerns in all phases of development. This was the first step of institutionalizing gender concerns to areas in education. These policies contained components acknowledging the situation where boys are stagnant and rather falling behind girls in education attainment and performance, however the detailed plans and procedures presented did not address the challenges of boys at all. No plans were directly targeted to ease their challenges and needs. The negligence from the government is clearly demonstrated in the 2017 Gender-Responsive Basic Education Plan which is the first major policy that integrated gender issues into the educational system of basic education. The plan did not specify any gender equity mechanisms or strategies addressing the reverse gender gap that has been repeatedly stated in previous policy reviews. The Education for All 2015 directly recommended the Department of Education to address the specific needs of male students and boys' lack of interest in attending school. For over two occasions including the policy review in 2014, the seriousness of gender disparities in education was called for attention. However, the Gender-Responsive Basic Education Policy clearly demonstrated the disregard from policymakers in implementing strategies and equity mechanisms targeted towards the boy's unique situation through only

presenting strategies referring to girls. Examining the policies, the study showed an absence of direct policies responding to the education of boys.

The policies were also further examined to reveal where the national laws and issuances from the Department of Education have focused instead of responding to the reverse in the gender gap which has been ongoing for the last 50 years. The analysis revealed that strong efforts were made by the government to ensure that every Filipino child had equal access to education and that it provided an inclusive educational programs. Especially with its national goals to meet the UN Millennium Development Goals and the Sustainable Development Goals in education, education policies and programs were highly addressed to subgroups such as Muslims, indigenous people, person with disabilities, and women. Towards these subgroups, Philippine legislations and DepEd Orders were issued directly responding to their situational needs. For example, these policies developed guidelines and interventions to address out of school Muslims, ensure indigenous people with the equal rights to education through being teaching them in their own language, provide special education programs for children with disabilities, and responding to gender concerns girls are faced in school. However, among the policies mandated that are related to education, gender, and inclusive education, none of the policies have directly responded to address the educational situation of boys. The absence of policies thus presents a serious problem and concern especially since the gender gap reversal has widened constantly with no signs of narrowing down since the 1970s.

As much as the reverse in gender gap raises a serious concern in the Philippine education, school dropouts and out-of-school children are serious challenges as well. The Dropout Reduction Program was introduced to provide alternative modes to access education and remain in school. This program showed positive results as it encouraged students to stay in the education system instead of dropping out however, these programs mainly applied to students that were interested in continuing their studies. In the Philippine's case where the most common reason boy's dropout of school is due to the lack of interest and marriage and family matters are the major reasons for girls, in this case, the program does not align itself with the fundamental reason boy's dropout of school and why they face the risk of dropping out. Thus, more direct programs and plans are crucial to specifically address the challenges that boys are facing and as a result reduce the gender gap reversal.

Examining the programs for school dropouts and out-of-school children, DepEd has implemented programs to reduce school dropouts and out-of-school children of Muslims, indigenous people, person with disability, and women. Since disparities are also visible in these subgroups of the society, direct programs were implemented to respond to their needs. However, while responding to the disparities of these subgroups, the government has failed to respond to the gender disparities unfavorable to the boys. The absence of programs to directly respond to the high dropout rate of boys and their underachievement in education has resulted to the widening gender gap

reversal between genders.

Disparities regardless of subgroups of the society, whether it be Muslims, indigenous people, people with disabilities, men or women are still imbalances and inequalities that needs to be addressed by the government and the DepEd. Each of these subgroups including boys require policies and programs to reduce these disparities because eventually, these widened gaps of inequalities will return with serious consequences in the future

The findings in this study conclude that priorities differed by each of the administration since 1970 to 2020 and throughout this period where the reverse in gender gap has been widening, no specific policies were mandated to address the situations of boys and their underachievement in school. Efforts were made to integrate gender issues and equality in education however, much of the focus were referred to the situation of girls and women. In addition, in national efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals and the Sustainable Development Goals, inclusive education programs were implemented however, these were mainly focused on subgroups such as Muslims, indigenous people, people with disability, and women. As opposed to the positive advancement of girls in education and enhancement of educational inclusion programs for Muslims, indigenous people, and people with disabilities, the education of boys has been stagnant leaving the boys behind for the last 50 years. The absences of policies and program illustrates a serious problem and the reversal in gender gap should no longer be disregarded and neglected. There is an urgent need for the Philippine



government to implement policies specific to keeping boys in the education system and helping them complete their studies as all child has the basic right to.

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## Appendix

List of Philippine Legislation Relevant to Education				
Year	Legislation		Objectives on Education Sector	Gender Responsive Components
1989	RA 6728	Government Assistance to Students and Teachers in Private Education Act of 1989	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- To promote and make quality education accessible to all Filipino citizens</li> </ul>	<b>X</b>
1991	RA 7277	Magna Carta for Disabled Persons of 1991	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Encourage learning institutions to consider the special needs of disabled persons with respect to the use of school facilities, class schedules, physical education requirements, and other pertinent consideration.</li> </ul>	<b>X</b>
1992	RA 7610	Special Protection of Children Against Abuse, Exploitation, and Discrimination Act of 1992	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Aimed at promoting the intellectual, moral and vocational efficiency of working children who have not undergone or finished elementary or secondary education.</li> </ul>	<b>X</b>
2001	RA 9155	Governance of Basic Education Act of 2001	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- To protect and promote the rights of all citizens to quality basic education.</li> </ul>	<b>X</b>



			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Education shall include alternative learning systems for out-of-school youth and adult learners. It shall be the goal of basic education to provide them with the skills, knowledge and values they need to become caring, self-reliant, productive and patriotic citizens.</li> </ul>	
2008	RA 9710	Magna Carta of Women	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– To eliminate discrimination against women by recognizing, protecting, fulfilling and promoting the rights of Filipino women, especially those in the marginalized sectors</li> </ul>	✓
2011	RA 10157	The Kindergarten Education Act of 2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– In consonance with the Millennium Development Goals on achieving Education for All (EFA) by the year 2015 to provide equal opportunities for all children to accessible mandatory and compulsory kindergarten education that effectively prepares them for formal elementary schooling.</li> </ul>	X
2013	RA 10533	Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Enhancing the Philippine basic education system by strengthening its curriculum and</li> </ul>	X

			increasing the number of years for basic education and appropriating funds accordingly.	
2013	RA 10618	Rural Farm Schools Act of 2013	– Promote sustainable agricultural productivity and rural development by empowering the human capital in the countryside through access to avenues of learning suited to the needs and realities of the rural agricultural communities.	<b>X</b>
	RA 10665	Open High School System Act	– To make education more accessible to the out-of-school youth and adults by providing them with an alternative secondary education program.	<b>X</b>
2019	RA 11206	Secondary School Career Guidance and Counselling Act of 2019	– Aimed to institutionalize a career guidance and counseling program for students in all private and public secondary schools “in order to provide them proper direction in pursuing subsequent tertiary education.	<b>X</b>

**List of Polices issued by the Department of Education 1986-2019**  
**(Department Order and Memorandum)**

Date	Policy		Gender Responsive Components
1990	DepEd Order 84, s. 1990	Adoption of the programs and Projects Outline in the Philippine Development Plan for women in the Annual Plan	✓
1997	DepEd Order 26, s. 1997	Institutionalization of SPED Programs	X
1999	DepEd Order 30, s. 1999	Revised rules on the Exemption of Girls Scouts from the Citizens Army Training	✓
2002	DepEd Order 36, s. 2002	Education for All (EFA) 2015 Plan Preparation	X
2003	DepEd Memorandum 37, s. 2003	Workshop on Matching the Entry Points of the Gender and Development Teaching Exemplars and the Peace Education Modules with the Revised Basic Education Curriculum	X
2002	DepEd Order 41, s. 2003	Values Education in the Basic Education Curriculum	X

2004	DepEd Memorandum 19, s. 2004	Gender and Development Programs	✓
2006	DepEd Order 46, s. 2006	Guidelines on the Pilot Implementation of the Open High School Program [OHSP])	X
2006	DepEd Memorandum 49, s. 2006	Gender and Development Programs	✓
2007	DepEd Order 1 s. 2007	Strengthening the Information Communication Technology [ICT] Governance of the Department of Education	X
2010	DepEd Order 57, s. 2010	Implementation of the Basic Education Madrasah Programs for Muslim Out-of-School Youth and Adults	X
2011	DepEd Order 62, s. 2011	Adopting the National Indigenous Peoples Education Policy Framework	X
2012	DepEd Order 16, s. 2012	Guidelines on the Implementation of the Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education	X
2012	DepEd Order 32, s. 2012	Implementing Rules and Regulations of Republic Act No. 10157, Otherwise Known as The Kindergarten Education Act	X

2012	DepEd Order 40, s. 2012	DepEd Child Protection Policy	X
2012	DepEd Order 54, s. 2012	Policy Guidelines on the Implementation of Alternative Delivery Modes [ADMs]	X
2012	DepEd Order 63, s. 2012	Guidelines on the Preparation of Gender and Development (GAD) Plans, Utilization of GAD Budgets and Submission of Accomplishment Reports	✓
2012	DepEd Memorandum 140, s. 2012	Establishment of the DepEd Gender and Development Focal Point System	✓
2013	DepEd Order 14, s. 2013	Strengthening the K to 12 Basic Education Program Delivery System for Elementary Education	X
2013	DepEd Order 27, s. 2013	Guidelines and Procedure on the Establishment of DepEd Gender and Development GAD Focal Point System at the Regional, Division and School levels	✓
2013	DepEd Order 43, s. 2013	Implementing Rules and Regulations of Republic Act No. 10533, Otherwise Known as the Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013	X

2013	DepEd Order 44, s. 2013	Moratorium on the procurement of Supplementary Reading, Reference and other Instructional materials	X
2013	DepEd Order 55, s. 2013	Implementing Rules and Regulations [IRR] of Republic Act 10627 Otherwise Known as the Anti-Bullying Act of 2013	X
2013	DepEd Memorandum 105, s. 2013	Directing All Concerned Government Agencies to Adopt the Gender Equality Guidelines in the Development of their Respective Media Policies and Implementing Programs in Order to Promote Gender Equality	✓
2015	DepEd Order 8, s. 2015	Policy Guidelines on Classroom Assessment for the K to 12 Basic Education Program	X
2015	DepEd Order 13, s. 2015	Establishment of a Policy Development Process at the Department of Education	X
2015	DepEd Order 32, s. 2015	Adopting the Indigenous Peoples Education Curriculum Framework	X
2015	DepEd Order 36, s. 2015	Implementing Rules and Regulations of Republic Act 10618	X
2015	DepEd Order 44, s. 2015	Guidelines on the Enhanced School Improvement Planning [SIP] Process and the School Report Card [SRC]	X

2015	DepEd Order 46, s. 2015	Detailed Guidelines on the Implementation of the Senior High School Voucher Program	X
2015	DepEd Order 52, s. 2015	New Organizational Structures of the Central, Regional, and Schools Division Offices of the Department of Education	X
2015	DepEd Memorandum 56, s. 2015	Reconstitution of the DepEd Gender and Development Focal Point System	X
2016	DepEd Order 10, s. 2016	Policy and Guidelines for the Comprehensive Water, Sanitation and Hygiene in Schools [WINS] Program	X
2016	DepEd Order 18, s. 2016	Policies and Guidelines on the Implementation of the Government Assistance to Students and Teachers in Private Education Program Effective School Year 2016–2017	X
2016	DepEd Order 35, s. 2016	The Learning Action Cell as a K to 12 Basic Education Program School-Based Continuing Professional Development Strategy for the Improvement of Teaching and Learning	X
2016	DepEd Order 42, s. 2016	Policy Guidelines on Daily Lesson Preparation for the K to 12 Basic Education Program	X

2016	DepEd Order 47, s. 2016	Omnibus Policy on Kindergarten Education	X
2016	DepEd Order 55, s. 2016	Policy Guidelines on the National Assessment of Student Learning for the K to 12 Basic Education Program	X
2017	DepEd Order 13, s. 2017	Policy and Guidelines on Healthy Food and Beverage Choices in Schools and in DepEd Offices	X
2017	DepEd Order 32, s. 2017	Gender-Responsive Basic Education Policy	✓
2017	DepEd Order 39, s. 2017	Operational Guidelines on the Implementation of School-Based Feeding Program for School Years 2017–2020	X
2017	DepEd Order 41, s. 2017	Policy Guidelines on Madrasah Education in the K to 12 Basic Education Program	X
2017	DepEd Order 42, s. 2017	National Adoption and Implementation of the Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers)	X
2017	DepEd Order 43, s. 2017	Teacher Induction Program Policy	X
2017	DepEd Order 46, s. 2017	Framework for the Pilot Implementation of the Alternative Learning System–Education and Skills Training [ALS–EST]	X



2018	DepEd Memo 144, s. 2018	Creation of the Alternative Learning System– Education and Skills Training [ALS–EST] Project Management Team	X
2018	DepEd Order 29, s. 2018	Policy on the Implementation of the Multi-Factored Tool	X
2019	DepEd Order 21, s. 2019	Policy Guidelines of the K to 12 Basic Education Program	X

**List of Policies on Reducing Dropouts and Out-of-School Children and Youth**

Policy	Plans	Gender Responsive Components
RA 9155 Governance of Basic Education Act 2001	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Act to include Alternative Learning systems of Out-of-School youth and adult learners.</li> </ul>	<b>X</b>
RA 10665 Open High School System Act	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- To make education more accessible to out-of-school you and adults by providing Alternative Secondary Education Program</li> </ul>	<b>X</b>
DO 34, s. 1989 Increasing Survival Rate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Teachers to accept that it is the schools responsibility to help students reach its full potential in school and thus, exert efforts to decrease dropout rates and increasing survival rates.</li> </ul>	<b>X</b>

<p>DO 46, S. 2006 Guidelines On The Pilot Implementation Of The Open High School Program (Ohsp)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Retain in school potential dropouts.</li> <li>- Encourage out-of-school youth of high school age (12-16) to return to school.</li> <li>- Contribute to the accomplishment of the Education For All (EFA 2015) target which is 100% participation rate and zero dropout rate by 2015.</li> </ul>	<p><b>X</b></p>
<p>DM 464, S. 2008 Dropout Reduction Program (Dorp) At The Secondary Level</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Implement the Dropout Reduction Programs at the secondary level.</li> <li>- Aims to develop and expand school models for reducing school dropouts.</li> </ul>	<p><b>X</b></p>
<p>DO 74, S. 2010 – Guidelines On Mainstreaming The Dropout Reduction Program (Dorp) In The Public Secondary Schools</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Encourages all schools to mainstream and integrate DORP to formulation of their school improvement plan in all public secondary schools.</li> </ul>	<p><b>X</b></p>
<p>DO 57, s. 2010 Implementation of the Basic Education Madrasah Programs for Muslim Out-of-School Youth and Adults</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Programs aimed to ensure access to education for the Muslims through Arabic language and Islamic values education in public schools. Alternative Learning Systems are also available which provides basic literacy programs to Muslim illiterates and school dropouts.</li> </ul>	<p><b>X</b></p>

DO 54, s. 2012 Policy Guidelines on the Implementation of Alternative Delivery Modes (ADMs)	– To address the problems on classroom congestion, situations, and circumstance which prevent children from going to and staying in school.	<b>X</b>
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## Abstract in Korean

오늘날 남녀의 ‘성 평등’을 위한 노력들은 여성이 남성에 비해 차별받거나 불이익을 받는 것에 대한 격차를 줄이는 것에 초점을 두었습니다. 이러한 격차를 줄이기 위한 국제사회의 노력은 여성의 교육 접근성과 교육 참여를 높이는데 집중해왔습니다. 그러나 필리핀은 다른 현상을 보이고 있습니다. 교육에 있어서 여학생들이 남학생들을 능가하는 역전된 성별 격차를 보여줍니다. 최근까지 성별 격차의 역전 현상이 크게 확대되어 초, 중, 고등 교육에서 남학생의 학력 정체를 볼 수 있습니다. 이러한 역전 현상과 남학생들의 낮은 교육률 및 높은 고등학교 중퇴율은 필리핀 교육 제도에 있어서 큰 악영향으로 보여집니다. 이 연구는 필리핀에서 볼 수 있는 독특한 현상을 분석하기 위해 교육의 성별 격차에 대한 역사적 데이터를 탐색하고 교육부에서 발표한 필리핀 법률 및 정책을 분석했습니다. 정부가 이러한 성별 격차를 줄이기 위해 어떻게 대처했는지 살펴보기 위해 정책을 먼저 분석했습니다.

본 연구는 이러한 현상에 대해 정부가 어떻게 대응하고 있는지 살펴보는 것을 목적으로 하였지만 정책을 검토한 결과, 정책에서 성별 격차의 역전을 다룬 사례는 없었습니다. 오히려 정부는 남학생들이 겪는 문제에 대응하는 정책을 세우는 것을 소홀히 했음을 보여줍니다. 1990년부터 2020년까지 발표된 교육 관련 정책 전반에 걸쳐 확대된 성별 격차를 줄이기 위한 정책이나 프로그램은 남학생들의 낮은 교육률에 대응이 없었습니다.

**Keyword** : Reversal in Gender Gap, Gender disparity, inequality, education, education policies, Philippines,

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