To avoid frequent teachers strikes create a penalties market

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There is need for a Bill that insures the country against losses that occur from strikes

BY MACHARIA MUHUNDE AND TASHITA NDEJUNGU

One of the growing socio-economic threats is the neglected state of the child in the drive to promote the girl child. Such neglect involves the existence of serious mental disconnect at all levels of governance. At national, village and the home.

The disconnect leads society to ignore the damaging effects of discrimination on the child and on the long-term national interests. Although the damage is visible in many parts of the world, it appears to be acute in the Kenya region that is undergoing depopulation as a result of the tribulations of the boy child.

The drive to promote girls was a well meant global phenomenon to deal with traditional habits of putting limitations to what women could or should do.

In the US, the anti-sweat cruelty of the 19th Century and the civil rights campaigns of the 1960s sparked feminist movements. There, however, there was little consensus among the movements on whether to stress equality with men or to be anti-men. Equity advocates wanted removal of artificial obstacles and to retain natural social peculiarities that tend to emphasise traditional relations between men and women. Some of the anti-sweat women were sexualised and implied that men were irrelevant. These two versions were exported to Africa and were, at times, embraced uncritically.

The subversion of anti-sweat feminism hit Africa and had appeared to emphasise anti-Africanism. The gender agenda, the former accusing Naxalite boss Josphot Kibaki used to declare was "not our agenda" as much as it helped to destroy the African social fabric. All along the destructed social fabrics was the relationship between the boy and the girl. This created an inability on the part of the boy to secure the girl who too developed an inability to entertain the boy’s increasingly limited interests. To Kibaki, the gender agenda had destroyed the African family. How had that destruction come about?

There was general agreement on the need to empower women in the socio-political field by giving special recognition to the girl child to overcome traditional inhibitions. In the process, we sang the same song about girl-child discrimination and everybody got down to business of getting the girl child educated.

There was a problem with this emphasis because it tended to engage in social isolation of the boy from the girl.

In the process, the girl was conditioned to reject her grandmother’s ways and to embrace something else. We did not consider giving the same encouragement to the boy who was also faced with similar challenges of overcoming traditional inhibitions related to the expectation of what boys and girls should do together or separately. In many ways, the boy still retained some of his grandmother’s ways for he was not prepared for the new realities associated with the new girl. This failure to accommodate the boy, or the welfare of the boy child was particularly pronounced in Kenya where the boys seemingly became despised.

The daily activities involve in several ways, among them in churches and schools which have broken down and are no longer places of refuge and respect in times of distress. They are, for instance, proliferations of “Churches” that provide little solace and severe desperate women seeking spiritual escape from domestic chains. The ticklish specialisation deepens desperate women spiritually, financially, materially and socially. Learning institutions are little better than the church where they have problems providing the needed guidance. Instead, they have lost prestige so teachers are often absent from schools or are regularly on the streets shouting “hale yake”. Some engage in unbecoming behaviour that is publicised in the media for the youth to read, hear and watch. With the emphasis on girl-child education and the neglect of the boy, the number of boys in school has dropped drastically. At the university level, it is normal to have 20 per cent to 30 per cent of the students being boys while the girls are more serious than the boys, who show less discipline and are easier to manage.

In some schools, boys for girls, the students reportedly were motivated to “beat” boys in particular schools in national examinations or mummies. This implication was that the girls want to relate to boys who are intelligent equals or better rather than in engaging in the lowering of socio-intellectual expectations.

The consequence of ignoring the boy is social dislocation and the Mt Kenya region has been hit hard. Boys were well educated and ambitious women ignore their less successful boys, some get attracted to men old enough for their parents because they are no longer well educated and the environment is down as many become demoralised and the females of the 20th Century.

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There is, therefore, need to reconsider the neglect and to end the tribulations, of the boy child quickly and as a threat to national interests.

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