

Towards Gender Equitable Schooling: Insights from Rural Teachers' Voice in the Local Context

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ABSTRACT This paper foregrounds local teachers' views to understand how we could address gender inequalities in schools. It asks: How do teachers' constructions of gender shape gendered social relations? What are the implications of these on gender equitable schooling? The paper draws from semi-structured interviews with 12 teachers in three South African primary schools. The findings denote how essentialist teachers' constructions, which polarised children into masculine and feminine beings, had the likelihood to compromise the quality of children's schooling experience. The existing dominant (and cultural) discourses of gender were found to inform how teachers socialised girls and boys into inequitable gender relations. This affected the expectations that teachers place on children's behaviour, choice and performance. The study recommends the need to embrace the multiplicity and fluidity of gender qualities, and to support girls and boys to develop to their best human potential, regardless of their gender.