

ASSESSING GIRLS' EDUCATION IN NORTHERN NIGERIA:

STUDIES FROM SELECTED
COMMUNITIES IN SIX STATES



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Abbreviations



ATC	Arabic Teachers' College
BC	British Council
CBOS	Community Based Organisations
DFID	Department For International Development
EFA	Education For All
ESSPIN	Education Sector Support Programme In Nigeria
FME	Federal Ministry of Education
FBOS	Faith Based Organisations
GEP	Girls' Education Project
GCE	Girl Child Education
JSS	Junior Secondary School
LGA	Local Government Area
LGEA	Local Government Education Authority
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
NCE	National Certificate Of Education
NDHS	Nigeria Demographic and Health Survey
NECO	National Examination Council Examination
SBMCS	School-Based Management Committees
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SAVI	State Accountability And Voice Initiative
SPARC	State Partnership For Accountability Responsiveness And Capability
SSCE	Senior School Certificate Examination
SSS	Senior Secondary School
STSB	Science and Technical Schools Board
SUBEB	State Universal Basic Education Board
TDP	Teacher Development Programme
UBE	Universal Basic Education
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
WASSCE	West African Senior Secondary Certificate Examination

Foreword



The Girls Education Advocacy Research Network (GEARN) was convened by the British Council to encourage home-grown research and advocacy as a strategy for promoting girls' education in northern Nigeria. Adopting a multi-sectoral approach, the Network brought together teams of practitioners from government ministries, academic institutions and civil society organizations for better understanding of the realities of girls' experiences, deep-rooted local contexts, traditions and practices that reinforce gender inequity in education. The overarching purpose of the projects was to provide lived realities of schooling experience for girls in northern Nigeria, identify the barriers to achievement and assess the effectiveness of girls' education initiatives.



The reports from six states across northern Nigeria are part of British Council's ongoing commitment to support the development of research capacity which contributes to ensuring that no girl is left behind. The findings are intended to make recommendations to impact policy and further action for the advancement of girls' education. We are very grateful for the knowledge, skill and commitment of the members of the GEARN, the experts that have contributed to the research workshops, and the communities that have contributed their views and data for these research works.

Louisa Waddingham
Director Programmes



Assessing girls' education in northern Nigeria:

A synthesis of GEARN studies from six states

Introduction

As national and international efforts are being intensified to achieve the goal of universal basic education for all in Nigeria, one of the critical issues remains the education of girls in northern Nigeria. Statistics and literature have documented low indicators that characterise the Nigerian educational scene. National averages according to the 2013 NDHS survey reflect that 40.4% females as against 29.5% males have never attended school (NPC/RTI, 2014). The figures for females are higher in northern states than in the south. About two-thirds of females never attended school in north-east and north-west compared to about one-eighth of females in south-west and south-south. The wide disparity in access is further exacerbated for girls by factors such poverty and rural residence.

The attempt to address the problem of gender inequity in access and achievement has attracted substantial research and interventions through the collaboration of international development partners, civil society organisations, local communities and government. Interventions such as the Girls Education Project (GEP) and ESSPIN, which focus on improving education of girls in northern Nigeria, have been widely publicized (Adediran, 2010). To what extent have these initiatives been impactful? Although there have been claims of significant benefits of the various interventions, there is limited evidence apart from the few quantitative studies and evaluation reports undertaken by funders (Humphreys & Crawford, 2014). Further, there is a need for a better understanding of the impact of the interventions so as to inform policies for

action, improvement or scale up. Therefore, the Girls' Advocacy Research Network (GEARN), supported by the British Council, sought to fill the gap by conducting research to examine the impact of selected gender initiatives, illuminate inequalities in processes and the implications for girls' education outcomes. The GEARN projects in this report comprised of seven research studies conducted in Jigawa, Bauchi, Kano, Niger, Plateau and Zamfara states. This summary presents a synthesis of the projects, findings and recommendations.

The GEARN projects

Given the persistence of gender inequality in access to education for girls in northern Nigeria, what lessons can be learnt from existing gender initiatives in order to be better equipped to address structural inequality and effectively achieved gender equity in education? The GEARN was created to encourage home-grown research and advocacy as a strategy for promoting girls' education in northern Nigeria. The innovative project explored a capacity and synergy building framework in which practitioners from government ministries, academic institutions and civil society organisations formed research and advocacy teams for better understanding of the realities of girls' experiences, deep-rooted local contexts, traditions and practices that reinforce gender inequity in education.

Purpose

The overarching purpose of the GEARN project was to provide lived realities of schooling experience for girls in northern Nigeria, identify the barriers to achievement and assess the effectiveness of girls' education initiatives in order to make recommendations to impact policy and further action to advance girls' education in the region. Specifically the projects aimed to:

1. Examine the impact of girls' education initiatives on girls' education outcomes such as enrolment, attendance, achievement and completion in schools with GEP and SBMC support as well as government girls' science schools.
2. Examine the realities of girls' experiences

in various circumstances and illuminate process of inequities.

3. Examine the perceptions of stakeholders including teachers, government officers, school age girls and community members on the intervention programmes and their impact.
4. Identify factors and activities that contribute to successes or hinder achievement of desired education outcomes for girls.
5. Highlight the implications of the findings for further interventions and policy actions.

Method

Apart from the initial study on barriers to girls' education, which adopted a purely qualitative design, all the six projects employed mixed method design involving quantitative and qualitative methods. Each of the studies used a wide range of qualitative techniques such as in-depth interviews, key informant interviews, focus group discussions and case studies and observation. The quantitative techniques involved surveys using questionnaires, one-on-one interviews, school records and document analysis. The projects also involved a wide variety of participants: government officials, pupils, out-of-school girls, parents, teachers, School-Based Management Board members, mothers' associations, and community leaders including traditional leaders. In most cases, the research sites were selected to ensure that the all senatorial districts were represented. Research instruments were designed, pretested and peer reviewed by other research teams. Permission for data collection was obtained from appropriate governmental units and community leaders. Research assistants were trained to work with team leaders for data collection. Training of research team members, advocacy, community and stakeholders' meetings were integral parts of the research projects. Members of the research team went through three levels of intensive research training designed and facilitated by a team of international and local facilitators. Community dialogues were also conducted in

some states to create enabling environment for data collection or serve as part of data collection process. For all the six projects stakeholder dialogues were conducted where initial study findings were shared with government, community and education stakeholders. The findings from the six studies and background research on barriers to girls' education are synthesized below.

Findings from the GEARN studies

Impact of girls' education initiatives on education outcomes

Table A presents a summary of impact of the girls' education initiatives across the states.

Increase in enrolment and attendance

Five of the projects, conducted in Bauchi, Zamfara, Niger, Jigawa and Kano, examined the impact of intervention projects (such as SBMC school grants, ESSPIN-support, Teacher Development Programme TDP and government girls' science schools) on girls' enrolment and attendance. Results were unanimous in the observed improvement in girls' enrolment before and after the initiative, or over periods of five or ten years. Similarly, increases in gender parity were found; there were improvements in the proportion of girls relative to boys across all the studies. In most cases, the observed enrolment and attendance were higher than the state averages. However, there were variations in the observed increases between and within states. In general, increases in enrolment and attendance were higher than increases in gender parity. Qualitative data from all the states corroborated the patterns reflected in the school statistics with very favourable responses in support of the impact of SBMC grants in the communities. Despite the general improvement in enrolment, a decrease was also observed, in some cases, a year after the grants. Narratives associated this drop with cessation of grants and reflected that participants were not happy that school grant had been stopped. They emphasised the importance of the grants provided by ESSPIN through SBMCs and the fact that it had been of much help to schools in the community. However, the need to consolidate on gains from

interventions from the grants is amplified by the uneven increases observed. Also efforts should be sustained towards minimization of gender gaps among primary schools' pupils beyond grant intervention periods.

Increase in transition and completion of girls in junior secondary school

The general trend shows an increase in the number of males and females who completed junior secondary schools over the two years in Bauchi State. Although more males completed junior secondary schools than females, an increase in the number of girls who completed junior secondary school was observed. Also, there was an increase in gender parity over the sessions; the proportion of females to males in 2014/15 session increased from values ranging from 31% to 37% to values from 35% to 40% in 2015/16 session.

Girls retention, drop out and low enrolment in communities experiencing conflicts

Usable data from school records that reflect attendance and retention were unavailable in the Plateau State study. However, qualitative data from various stakeholders associated incessant conflicts in the community with low enrolment and retention rates and high drop out. Similarly, in Bauchi State, the lowest completion rates in the secondary schools was observed for communities closest to the towns bordering neighbouring states experiencing conflicts. This is because incessant conflicts led to forced migration from fear of safety and engagement in various forms of labor for economic and family sustenance.

Gender differentials in science and mathematics achievement

The Kano state study revealed gender differentials in science and mathematics performance of girls and boys who attended the special science schools. Findings showed that more boys had credit pass in the second year of the senior secondary school qualifying examination than girls in three of the four subjects; girls and boys were at par in biology. The performance gap was wider in mathematics with

82% boys obtaining credits as opposed to 56% girls. For physics and chemistry the gaps were smaller at 5% and 4% respectively. A comparison of West Africa Senior Secondary School Certificate Examination over a five-year period also shows that although performance was generally uneven in the period, more boys performed better than girls. Three distinct

patterns were reflected over the five years; the widest gap in performance was observed in mathematics; the proportion of boys and girls who had credits pass in biology and physics witnessed a gradual drop; girls' performance in chemistry and mathematics improved with the gender gap reducing, suggesting the need for sustained effort to bridge gaps in performance.

Table A: Summary of Impact of the girls' education initiatives by state

Impact	Initiatives
<i>Increase in enrolment</i>	SBMC school grants, Bauchi, Niger, Zamfara ESSSIN/ TDP, Jigawa
<i>Increase in gender Parity</i>	SBMC school grants, Bauchi, Niger, Zamfara ESSSIN/ TDP, Jigawa
<i>Increase in numbers of girls and gender parity of pupils who completed junior secondary school</i>	SBMC school grants, Bauchi,
<i>Increase in gender parity of number who completed junior secondary school</i>	SBMC school grants, Bauchi
<i>Increase in number who transited to next class</i>	SBMC school grants, Bauchi
<i>Improved girls' performance, girls participation in class</i>	SBMC school grants, Bauchi ESSSIN/ TDP, Jigawa
<i>improved teaching styles, and classroom engagement styles</i>	ESSSIN/ TDP, Jigawa
<i>Boys performed better than girls in science and math in particular</i>	STSB Kano
<i>Low enrolment, high drop out for girls</i>	Conflict situation, absence of girls education initiative, Plateau

Specific programme activities associated with girls' enrolment

Most of the respondents from communities including teachers linked the increase in enrolment to activities involved in the girls' education initiatives (school grants, SBMC activities and teacher training initiatives). See Table B. Specifically, the activities can be categorized as community, pupil and school focused. All four states that examined the influence of school grants and SBMC activities unanimously listed community-focused activities such as enrolment campaigns, community sensitization, mobilizing and encouraging parents towards enrolling girls into school and in addition, Niger state mentioned discouraging hawking during school hours as activities that

contributed to enrolment increase. In all the concerned states, student-focused activities primarily involved provision of instructional materials, school uniforms, books and school bags. The most frequently cited school-focused activities involved construction of separate female toilets. In some cases (Jigawa and Niger) constant supervision by ESSPIN officials and monitoring of pupils and teachers' attendance during visits to schools were associated with girls increased enrolment. Community-focused strategies involving campaign against early marriages, community sensitization and in some cases provision of security personnel tended to be associated with improved completion.

Table B: Summary of Activities associated with the girls education initiatives by state

Activities	Girls' education Initiatives/ State
Learning Materials: <i>provision of learning materials for Pupils</i>	SBMC school grants, Bauchi, Niger, Zamfara
<i>Teaching materials</i>	ESSSIN/ TDP, Jigawa
<i>Teacher training</i>	ESSSIN/ TDP, Jigawa, Niger, Zamfara
<i>Single Sex Girls Science and Technical Schools</i>	ESSSIN/ TDP, Jigawa
<i>Curricula and Extracurricula: sporting facilities and organising debate and quizzes.</i>	STSB Kano
<i>Skill acquisition</i>	SBMC school grants, Bauchi
For Pupils <i>Uniforms school bags</i>	SBMC school grants, Bauchi,
<i>Cash Transfer Project</i>	Bauchi, Jigawa, Niger, Zamfara
Facilities <i>separate female toilets</i>	SBMC school grants, Niger
<i>Repair chairs, desks</i>	SBMC school grants, Bauchi, Niger
Community Level Activities: <i>Enrolment campaign</i>	ESSSIN/ TDP, Jigawa
<i>Community sensitization</i>	SBMC school grants, Bauchi, Niger,
<i>Advocacy</i>	ESSSIN/ TDP, Jigawa
<i>School Inspection, monitoring</i>	Jigawa, Niger
	SBMC school grants, Niger,
	ESSSIN/ TDP, Jigawa

Factors that influenced achievement

Of the five projects that examined the impact of girls' initiatives on girls' education outcomes, three assessed performance directly or indirectly through perceptions of achievements. Majority of the respondents indicated that school-focused activities such as monitoring of instructional activities, provision of books, bags and sporting facilities for girls, clubs and societies to motivate students, intra- and inter-class debates, exercises and quizzes organised by SBMCs improved girls' performance. Improvements in girls' disposition to school and performance were also attributed to the interventions which involved training of teachers and improved teaching methods as well as application of grants to employ more teachers to complement existing efforts.

The Kano State case examined the differences in science and mathematics achievements of girls and boys in the science schools. Although boys schools generally performed better in that a higher proportion of boys had credit passes than

in girls schools, one of the three girls' science schools consistently outperformed the boys schools. A plausible reason is that the school was a relatively new college with more adequate facilities at the time. Indeed the school related reasons given for poor performance in the girls' science schools tend to underscore the impact of adequate facilities. Qualitative data indicated that the observed gender gaps and poor achievement were related to school and family related factors. School related factors were: overpopulation in girls' schools; inadequate female teachers; inadequate laboratory practices; poor toilet facilities; and, inadequate innovative programmes. This suggests that while the idea of special science and technical colleges to prepare pupils in science and engineering occupations is commendable, poor facilitates can hinder the effect or create a contrary effect. The burden of household chores and lack of academic support from parents constitute the family related factors.

Effectiveness of SBMCs in promoting girls' education outcomes

SBMCs were established to facilitate the implementation of Universal Basic Education through a more decentralized and participatory school governance system that reflects adequate community representation. Previous literature has shown that although the initiative has the potential to be effective, especially in enhancing access and equity in girls education, the performance of SBMCs have been generally below par as a result of inadequate funding (e.g. Adediran, 2010). However, some international development initiatives have focused on providing support and training to SBMCs in some state school communities to enhance their functionality towards increased girls' education outcomes. The GEARN studies conducted in Zamfara, Niger, Bauchi, and Jigawa states and to some extent Plateau State attempted to examine how various aspects of SBMC operations, roles, activities, functionality and effectiveness impact on girls' education in GEP, ESSPIN, TDP beneficiary schools.

The findings showed that SBMCs were perceived as performing several roles, the primary one being resource mobilization (including raising funds and making financial contributions in cash and kind). Others were community advocacy and sensitization, project execution, monitoring and evaluation of school programmes. SBMCs were generally perceived as effective in donor supported schools and many favorable outcomes were attributed to their activities: increases in girls' enrolment, retention, completion; increased sense of community ownership of schools; better interaction between parents and teachers, and; more favourable attitude towards girls' education. In some communities, SBMCs engaged volunteer teachers with payment of incentives. However, unavailability of teachers particularly for mathematics and science subjects seemed to be a persistent problem especially in the rural areas.

There were marked differences between funded and non-funded SBMCs. Most of the funded

SBMCs had: received training; held meetings twice per term on the average; adequate representation of stakeholders (including gender and pupils); more resources from grants and locally generated sources; provided significantly more support towards girls' education; engaged in more varied activities to improve girls enrolment, and; effected more school development initiatives. SBMCs' activities associated with increased girls' enrolment included community sensitization, enrolment drive, house to house visits, monitoring of school activities including pupils' attendance registers, provision of support materials. Funded SBMCs were also involved in Cash Transfer Programmes, mothers' associations, school-based teacher development and student tutoring, mentoring and counselling programmes. Unlike the non-funded SBMCs, the members in the funded SBMCs were conversant with their roles and responsibilities and readily showed progress recorded in terms of projects that they have executed.

In terms accountability and transparency, funded SBMCs had records mostly of payment receipts, budget templates and SBMC minutes book but rarely records of distribution, list of beneficiaries, ledger files or financial records books. While, the availability of records of payments may imply some degree of transparency in executing school projects, the dearth of pertinent financial records may imply a need for training and skill development in financial record keeping and incentives for compliance.

SBMCs were stronger, better trained and more functional in communities that benefitted from grants and school improvement initiatives. School grants were associated with appropriate training and guidance necessary for their performance. In addition, funded SBMCs were exposed to only one-time training and replacement or new members were not exposed to training, thus, there is a need for repeated or continuous training to expose members to new ideas, identify and fill gaps and update their skills in light with new developments. Majority of the

members of supported SBMCs felt that funds were critical in effective running of the schools and were wont to solicit for additional grants from local sources than those from non-funded schools. Perhaps the exposure to grants and associated training increased their collective efficacy to source for more funds for the achievement of their priority targets. Thus, school grants may have the tendency to strengthen and develop SBMCs for future engagements.

The role of women in facilitating girls' education and consequently their potential for expanded SBMC activities was evident in funded school communities. Through representation in SBMCs and mothers associations, women were more engaged in house to house visits, enrolment drives, cash and in-kind contributions to school development projects. Their collective and individual efforts through community altruistic behaviors reflect increased community engagement to promote girls' education.

Community Perceptions about girls' education initiatives

Many respondents were favourably disposed to girls' initiatives in their schools. They agreed that the activities of SBMCs, ESSPIN and teachers who went through the TDP training were impactful in terms of improved enrolment, attendance, transition and completion rates. Girls' responses were generally favourable, particularly with regards to provision of learning materials, uniforms, skill acquisition and cash transfer project. TDP was linked to improved performance and more positive attitude to schooling. Parents, especially in rural communities, were supportive of the provision of learning materials because under the prevailing harsh economic conditions the grant system reduced some expenses they were required to render for their children's education. Activities such as enrolment campaigns, provision of essential learning materials, constant supervision were believed to lead to increased awareness of the need for girl child education advocacy, more positive views about the importance of literacy and increased collaboration supportive climate

for girls' education.

SBMC activities were also seen as impactful among young married women who benefitted from adult literacy classes in Niger state. This has both immediate and future beneficial effects for the girls and the supportive roles towards their children education, thus reducing cycle of illiteracy.

Some respondents, especially government officers felt that the marked increase in enrolment could not be entirely attributed to grants, as there were other government initiatives such as advocacy and sensitization to promote girls education on ground before the grants. To what extent were the government initiatives effective in bringing about marked enrolment changes? The Plateau State study may be seen as a baseline or control group in that it examined communities experiencing conflicts which did not benefit from school grants or funded SBMCs. Respondents from such communities emphasised that despite the several governmental policies to improve quality of education, provisions to address the policies were weak. There was little or no governmental support to fund required changes and the effects were amplified for girls in communities experiencing conflicts. Thus, the lack of economic means by these parents tended to lead to the halt of educational attainment for the girl child in particular and poor infrastructural facilities such as overcrowding of classes, poor laboratories, poor quality of teaching made supposed governmental efforts unproductive.

The grants were not sufficient to address all the dominant infrastructural problems. Although in many funded communities, community members were satisfied with positive changes brought by the girls' education initiatives, they were not happy with number of teachers, classes and the discontinuation of school grants. The respondents felt that sustained support was required to address the major problems of community schools: inadequate number and quality of teachers, lack of fencing, overcrowded,

inadequate and dilapidated classes, lack of seats, unusable toilets in some schools and lack of water supply.

Teacher-related factors and impact of initiatives on girls' education outcomes

In general, teachers' assessments of the utilization and impact of school grants were positive. They believed that grants were effective in bringing about increased enrolment of girls, provision of learning materials, enrolment campaign, provision of separate female toilets, provision of school bags and uniforms and encouraging parents to send girls to school. Similarly, they acknowledged that the ESPPIN multi-pronged approach (teacher training, teaching materials including learning aids, learning materials support to students to school development) exposed them to appropriate teaching skills, improved classroom engagement styles, motivated teachers and led to improved performance of pupils including the way girls learned in class and ultimately their performance. However, poor facilities and associated problems of overcrowding made applications of training difficult.

Lack of training and poor training were implicated in teachers' lack of competence, poor quality of teaching and students' lack of appropriate skills. Despite governmental policies that support training to enhance the implementation of the Universal Basic Education programme, teachers in non-befitting schools lacked adequate training and little or no exposure to gender-sensitive programmes. The reasons given for the low levels of exposure to training among teachers were nepotism and lack of government commitment to the professional welfare of teachers. Many teachers also emphasised lack of transparency and unprofessional practices in selection for training and issues of procedural justice in selection of participants for training. Consequently, teachers who lack appropriate skill in the subject area or appropriate technical skills are selected.

In addition to teaching style, teachers'

approachability increases positive attitude to schooling and is extremely important for girls as they often face physiological and emotional challenges in greater dimensions than the males. Therefore, a teachers' ability to listen and counsel endears the girl child to the teacher and can serve as motivation for them to stay in school (ISERT, 2013). Furthermore, teachers with little or no exposure to in-service training tended to express more pessimistic and negative attitudes to girls' education, particularly in the rural communities. In general, although findings from surveys reflect that teachers expressed favourable attitudes and socially desirable responses with respect to girls' education, qualitative data reflects strong gender stereotypes and gender insensitive attitudes. The consequences of significant others, like teachers, who consciously or inadvertently communicating such attitudes to girls can be harmful.

The persistent absence or low proportions of female teachers in many of the schools under study exacerbate problems of girls' education in northern Nigeria. With the exception of Plateau state where some schools had more female teachers, there were about one tenth of female teachers in some schools while in others, there were none. Of particular significance is the paucity of female mathematics and science teachers in girls' science schools. Yet, female teachers are needed to serve as role models, provide support and give credibility to the call for girls' education.

Girls' views about the impact of girls' education initiatives

Consistent with the pattern observed in this study, many girls (including those who were out-of school) agreed that there has been a recent increase in the number of girls enrolled in schools. Although their awareness of the sources of funding was low, they acknowledged that girls were given learning materials and uniforms that assisted their parents who would ordinarily have found it difficult to provide the resources. Some however stressed that even if they are allowed to attend primary schools, the reluctance to allow girls' transition to secondary schools still persists

due to preference for educating boys and weak perceptions of the importance of educating girls, particularly at the secondary level. Negative stereotypes about roles of girls relative to boys lead to the setting of different educational goals and outcomes based on gender with girls having inferior goals. For example, teachers and girls in science colleges for girls share negative views that science and mathematics are difficult for girls. Such stereotypes held by family members, and to a considerable extent teachers, as well as girls, communicate low expectations for success and proffer more socially desirable alternatives in form of early marriages. This coupled with pressures to get married early, overcrowding, poor infrastructure, few role models and female teachers contribute to low self-concept and poor performance. These were very evident in the Kano study that found that despite the availability of girls' science colleges, girls were still outperformed by boys. Although more girls are attending schools now than before, narratives from primary school girls and out-of-school girls confirmed that fathers' preference for the education of male children still persists in the rural communities.

The process of weakening girls' attention and motivation begins from initiating dialogues of matrimony. Qualitative data reveals that from such moments, the girls' self concept changes from pupils to young wives and soon-to-be mothers rather than conscientious students. They are thus distracted, confused, experience role conflicts and are less motivated to exert effort given that the outcome of academic achievement may no longer be relevant to their future status. The girls who are motivated to aspire to higher levels of education are those who have friends that have bad experiences (or critical incidents) and who have vicariously gleaned the down side of early marriage. In addition to community sensitization, communities need to discourage early marriage. Girls' sensitization and counseling services are required and should include example of critical incidents or success and failure stories.

Distance is a barrier to girls who do not have

secondary schools in their communities because of additional costs and fear of safety, sexual harassment and violence. This makes transition to secondary school a challenge, particularly in rural communities. Yet, there were cases of parents and pupils who persisted in face of this difficulty and undertook the daily long travels to get to school. Host communities of secondary schools exhibited community prosociality by providing accommodation for girls from neighbouring communities to enable them attend school. Thus, enlightenment, sensitization and enrolment campaigns, need to be continuous, sustained because high levels of resilience was expressed by girls and parents who were convinced about the need for education girls. The findings from qualitative data revealed that skill acquisition (such as tailoring) was considered very important outcomes and valued incentives to attend school particularly in rural area. It may also reflect a lack of appreciation of the benefits of Western education as an end in itself. Stakeholders including students observed that more investment in terms of facilities and teachers are required to achieve the desired level of impact.

Given that many girls expressed concerns about the burden of household chores, which reduces their availability to adequately engage with their studies, the boarding school, as reflected in the case of girls science schools in Kano, would seem a viable solution to provide adequate time for girls to devote to their studies. However, constraints such as overcrowding and uncomfortable boarding facilities create a contrary effect. Again, this highlights the need for adequate governmental funding of what should ordinarily be effective education policies.

Perceptions of governmental support and impact of initiatives on girls' education outcomes

School grants were associated with increased interaction between school management and government officers in funded schools. Government officers engaged in advocacy and sensitization, resources mobilization and

consultations with community members and meetings with SBMCs and mothers' associations. They also assisted with organising enrolment drives and community sensitization on importance of girls' education. Such collaborative activities should be sustained to achieve greater impact. Non-funded communities did not experience such level of government-community interaction, yet such collaborative activities are needed to achieve government initiatives.

One of the key activities identified by stakeholders as important to ensure that grants achieve their goals is government monitoring of SBMCs' activities. Stakeholders including desk officers stressed the need to monitor activities of SBMCs to ensure: consistency with priorities identified through Whole School Development Plans; adequate involvement of stakeholders, and; transparency. However only a minority felt that government officials engaged in adequate monitoring. This underscores the need for improved monitoring of grants to ensure that the main objective of enhanced girls' enrolment and retention is achieved. There were also suggestions for increased advisory support on how communities can increase participation of stakeholders and sustainability of projects.

Findings across several states highlighted the fact that non-implementation of potentially laudable government initiatives due to inadequate funding and poor levels of commitment constituted a major problem for girls' education. For example some stakeholders in Plateau State felt that government was yet to fully implement free education especially for junior secondary schools given the range of fees charged across several schools in the state. Girls in conflict situations, particularly those orphaned and vulnerable as well as internally displaced require special attention from the government. In others states, pupils from non-supported schools felt that they did not receive much support from government. Stakeholders bemoaned overpopulated classes, dilapidated classrooms, inadequate and mostly damaged chairs and desks and lack of water, sanitation and hygiene

facilities. Although some states like Kano provided support such as payment of school fees for deserving students (based on merit) in science schools, inadequate funding of facilities created problems of overcrowding and associated problems of poor learning environment and boarding facilities.

Barriers to girls' education attainment in northern Nigeria

Qualitative data from the seven studies explicitly and in some cases implicitly examined the obstacles to girls' educational attainment in the six states. In-school and out-of school obstacles were identified based on how frequently they were cited (summarized in Tables C). The in-school barriers in decreasing frequency of citations were: poor facilities (including classroom overcrowding), lack of female teachers, distance to school, conflict situations (including displacement), poor funding, lack of toilets for females, poor quality of teaching, teachers' negative attitudes and teachers' prolonged strike actions.

Out-of school barriers included those associated with family, community or the girls themselves. The most frequently cited and pervasive problems seemed to be associated with issues of poverty, cost of education and inability to pay school related fees as well as general negative attitudes to girls' education such as general lack of interest in girls' education, early marriage, negative gender attitudes and stereotypes. The pervasiveness of unfavourable attitudes to girls' schooling is also reflected in similar often cited obstacles such societal stigma for resisting early marriage, fear of girls' exposure to sexual harassment and rape, aversion to Western education and child labour. Although findings generally showed that negative attitudes were changing, the frequency of citations reflect that the change is slower than required to impact more significantly on girls' educational outcomes by the year 2030 (set for SDGs). Other obstacles associated with girls (although to a lesser degree) were low levels of self-concept, early pregnancy, fear of divorce and lack of autonomy in decisions

about life choices. Findings reflect that the most significant influencers of girls' education were grandmothers, fathers, male relatives and teachers; these categories of people need to be taken into consideration for sustained efforts to change pervasive negative attitudes to girls' schooling.

A good understanding of barriers to girls' schooling can also be gleaned from what was considered as incentives to girls' increased participation in the study communities (see Table D). Consistent with the most frequently cited barriers, the following incentives were

considered most the important incentives for the observed increase in girls' schooling: provision of uniforms and school supplies; provision of learning materials, and; advocating and sensitizing parents, community, religious leaders on the importance of the education of the girl child. Also, skill acquisition, collaborative support (cash and kind) from women and community groups and provision of female toilets were sometimes stated as valued incentives. These factors should be sustained and expanded to achieve higher levels of girls' educational attainment.

Table C: Barriers to girls' schooling from a synthesis of the GEARN studies

Out -of –School issues			
	Family	Aversion to Western Education	◆◆
		Fear of exposure harassment, rape	◆◆
		Poverty, inability to finance school cost	◆◆◆◆◆
		No interest in girls’ education, negative gender attitudes stereotypes	◆◆◆◆◆
		Child labour, hawking	◆◆
	Community issues	Societal stigma for resisting early marriage	◆◆
		Early marriage	◆◆◆
		Courtship practices	◆
		Ignorance of free education policy	◆
		Aversion to marriage with educated women	◆
		Lack of role models	◆
		Absence of girls’ education initiatives	◆
	Girls	Low self -concept: discouragin g attitudes about girls’ competence	◆
		Lack of autonomy	◆
Fear of divorce		◆	
Early pregnancy		◆	
In-school issues			
	Location	Distance; absence of secondary school in the community	◆◆
		Conflict situation: displacement, migration	◆◆
	Teacher	Lack of female teachers	◆◆
		Poor quality of teacher/teaching	◆
		Teachers’ Negative attitudes	◆
		Teachers prolonged strike actions	◆
	Physical infrastructure	Lack of toilets for females	◆
		Poor facilities, overcrowding in classrooms	◆◆◆
	Poor funding	Poor funding	◆◆

How frequently cited: ◆ Occasionally; ◆◆ sometimes, ◆◆◆ Frequently; ◆◆◆◆ Usually; ◆◆◆◆◆ Every time

Data

In the course of this research, efforts made to obtain information on enrolment, attendance, transition and completion figures at school and local government level were not without problems. In some cases, there were issues of unavailability of reliable and usable data as well as incomplete and inconsistent records. Yet, meaningful initiatives to promote girls' education

depend largely on the availability of accessible, reliable and complete gender disaggregated data, beginning from the school level. While the field experience across the studies implies that the data from school records be treated with caution, there is also a need to strengthen the capacity and motivation of school management to engage in adequate record keeping.

Out of School		
Parents/community	<i>Advocating and sensitizing parents, community, religious leaders on the importance of girls child education</i>	★★★
	<i>Mobilization by key persons in the community</i>	★
	<i>Collaborative efforts of women community groups</i>	★★
Girls	Knowledge of success and failures stories. Role models	★
	Opportunity to socialize and make friends	★
In-School		
Teaching	<i>Skill acquisition</i>	★★
	Gender sensitive school environment	★
	Quality of Teaching	★
	<i>Monitoring of teachers and students attendance</i>	★
	Provision of learning materials	★★★
Facilities	Provision of female toilets	★★
	<i>Improved school facilities</i>	★
School supplies and initiatives	Provision of Uniform and school supply	★★★★
	<i>Cash Transfer Project</i>	★
	Single sex schools, boarding facilities	★
	<i>Second chance opportunity</i>	★
	<i>Presence of girls' education initiatives in the community</i>	★
	<i>Free transportation</i>	★

Table D: Incentives for going to school (synthesis from findings across all the studies)

How frequently cited: ★ occasionally; ★★ sometimes, ★★★ frequently; ★★★★very frequently

Conclusion

This collection of seven studies conducted in six northern Nigerian states is the result of the first phase of the GEARN project. The studies examined the impact of girls' education initiatives, such as, SBMC school grants, ESSPIN supported schools, teachers development project and attendance at science and technical schools, on girls education outcomes. Other projects such as the Plateau State study examined how girls' education opportunities are further limited by experience of conflict coupled with the persistent in-school and non-school barriers. The findings documented the positive impact of the initiatives on desirable girls' education indices, community sensitization and sense of ownership. They highlighted what activities were associated with observed changes, perceived incentives for school and persistent barriers to girls education that need to

be addressed by innovative strategies. The attainment of the SDG on girls' education may be feasible with sustained effort and expansion of initiatives as well as increased funding, government commitment and community attitude change.

Recommendations

The findings from the GEARN studies conducted across the six states have programmatic and policy implications. The following are the recommendations that cut across the states:

1. The results show that girls' education initiatives assessed in this study positively impacted on girls' education outcomes, effectiveness of the SBMCs, community attitudes and enthusiasm as well as government- community synergy. This underscores the need to build on initial gains

through adequate funding and expansion of initiatives and compatible, laudable government policies for sustainable and maximum impact.

2. Although increases in gender parity were observed in many communities, overall, increases in parity were lower than observed increases in enrolment and attendance. Thus, innovative and effective strategies are paramount and urgent in implementing interventions and activities to achieve gender parity and meaningful outcomes in girls' education in northern Nigeria.
3. As observed in previous studies, there is dearth of useful and reliable data on girls' education outcomes. School management should be appropriately trained and guided to main good records of relevant education indicators.
4. One of the key significant persons and influencers in girls' life choices are their teachers. Most of the teachers in non-supported schools were not exposed to in-service and gender-sensitivity training. They tended to exhibit gender stereotypes with regards to girls' educational achievement. The consequences of teachers consciously or inadvertently communicating such attitudes to girls can be discouraging and counterproductive, irrespective of the laudability of the girls' education initiative adopted. Therefore pre- and in-service teacher training that incorporates gender sensitivity should be given priority. Most importantly innovative approaches (behavioural change communication messages) should be adopted to continuously emphasise the need to engender increased approachability and more positive gender attitudes in classroom interactions.
5. Absence of female teachers was consistently emphasised as a problem, particularly in rural communities, and for mathematics and science subjects. Female teachers serve as

role models, increase comfort levels of students and parents and their presence give credence to the campaign for girls' education. A systematic process of increasing the number of female teachers should be undertaken to address the dearth female teachers.

6. The findings across several states have demonstrated the effectiveness of supported SBMCs in promoting girls' education. Therefore, SBMCs in all communities need to be strengthened to enhance their functionality and effectiveness in communities through regular training, refresher training for new members, creating platform to share experiences with other communities, documenting best practices and providing incentives for performance.
7. School age girls face tremendous challenges of negative stereotypes about girls' education, cultural practices and family's financial circumstances which impact negatively on their self-perceptions, their educational attainment and life chances. It is recommended that girls' mentoring and support programmes be incorporated into the skills training courses which has found to be an important incentive for girls' school attendance.
8. Girls' exposure to critical incidents, success and failure stories of girls' achievement (including accomplishments in science and mathematics) and interaction with admired and respected role models should be incorporated as extracurricular activities to motivate girls' school attendance and performance.

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The impact of School Based Management Committee grants on girls' enrolment, completion and performance in Bauchi state junior secondary schools

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Abstract

In an effort to encourage parents to send girls to schools, the School-Based Management Committees (SBMCs) in Bauchi State were supported by UNICEF grants to maintain school infrastructure and facilitate girls' education processes through the Girls' Education Project. This study examined the impact of SBMC grants on girls' enrolment, completion and performance among junior secondary school students in Bauchi State. The study adopted a combination of qualitative (interviews, focus group discussions) and quantitative designs (surveys, archival records) for data collection. Target population comprised government officials, SBMC members, women, schoolgirls and teachers. The study randomly selected two local government areas from each of the three senatorial zones from which two junior secondary school were also randomly selected. The results revealed that there were increases in girls' enrolment and gender parity in enrolment when compared to enrolment before the provision of the SBMC grants. Survey results showed that teachers believed that SBMC grants were effective in that increased enrolment of girls were

associated with the provision of learning materials, enrolment campaign, provision of separate female toilets, provision of school bags and uniforms and encouraging parents to send girls to school. The numbers of girls and gender parity of pupils who completed junior secondary school also increased. In addition, more than two-thirds of the teachers indicated that all the girls in their class transited to next class as a result of grants. Most of the respondents indicated that the provision of books, schoolbags, sporting facilities and organising debates and quizzes improved girls' performance. About three-quarters indicated that the grants were effective in improving girls' performance in junior secondary schools. Recommendations were highlighted, among which were the strengthening of SBMCs to enhance activities for improved girls' enrolment, completion and performance and increased gender parity in educational attainment.

Introduction

Background

The attainment of basic education for every individual is a major foundation for socio-economic development of every society. Therefore, investing in education is a necessary step in the process of transformation of a society because of the consequent positive and productive changes in the economic prosperity of individuals and the nation. Education improves the living standard of individuals and allows them to meaningfully contribute to social, political and more importantly the economic development of the nation; it is also a human right crucial to an individual's personal and social development and wellbeing. Despite these successful inclinations attached to education, Nigerian girls and women are often being marginalized and deprived of their fundamental right of being educated. Given their critical roles in the family, social and economic spheres, depriving girls and women from education means potential economic and political catastrophes that can lead to national malaise. This supports the popular saying that destroying a nation does not require bombs or missiles but only requires reducing the quality of education; when education collapses the nation also collapses. Thus, to functionally develop, the country requires the provision of quality education that can meet the learning needs of her

citizens including those of women and girls.

In realization of the importance of education globally, there has been concern for the attainment of functional and qualitative education all over the world. This was reflected in the inauguration of education for all (EFA) at Dakar in 2000 and was followed by a meeting called by the 56th General Assembly of the United Nations to implement the Millennium Development Goals (Sofowora, 2010). Countries including Nigeria signed and pledged to provide quality basic education at all educational levels for all children, youth and adults irrespective of gender by 2015 (UNESCO, 2011). Furthermore, it is also stated that basic education shall be of nine year duration comprising six years of primary education and three years for junior secondary school. This makes basic education a fundamental human right of every individual irrespective of age, gender, home location, family background or religious affiliation. Bukar (2006) asserts that basic education is the foundation for sustainable life-long learning that provides reading, writing, and numeracy skill, which allow individuals to function well in the community.

Although the national policy on education does not reflect gender in basic education, effort was made to bridge the gender gap. Government has set up model secondary schools for girls and strived to put a legal framework for addressing the problem of women education through the

laws for retaining girls in school (Udoh, 2007). The national policy on gender and basic education was developed and implemented by the Federal Government of Nigeria in the context of Girls' Education Project (GEP), United Nation Children Educational Fund (UNICEF) and the Department for International Development (DFID), to integrate gender issues in education through the provision of financial support as a contribution to the pursuit of EFA and Universal Basic Education. Despite the effort of the Nigerian government and the financial support rendered by donor agencies in getting a gender-balanced participation at all levels of education, the enrolment rates of girls in many states in the north remains significantly low. Gender disparity in educational participation exists at all levels of formal education with fewer girls than boys participating in and completing their basic education and continuing into post basic education (e.g., UNDP, 2009; British Council, 2012a, 2012b).

There are large geographical and gender disparities between the northern and southern Nigeria with the northern region showing less favourable education indicators. Within the northern region, the Federal Office of Statistics (2004) shows that, literate women constituted only 20% from the north-west, 20% north-east, and 45% from the north-central region. This indicates how educationally disadvantaged women are as compared to men in northern Nigeria. The National School Census (2006) reported that the number of children out of school in northern Nigeria is particularly high and the proportion of girls to boys in schools ranges from 1 girl to 2 boys and even 1 girl to 3 boys in some states. The education of girls in the northern cluster has always been a problematic and unresolved issue.

With an estimated 10.5 million out-of-school children, Nigeria has one of highest figures in world (UNICEF, 2015). About 60% of out-of-school children are in northern Nigeria. Thus, the country

Nigeria grapples with increasing number of out-of-school children annually. This trend varies from zone to zone. For instance, in some communities in the south-east, there is low boy-child enrolment in school as compared to girls. This is because the boys are sent for apprenticeship in trading which is the dominant occupation of the people. The opposite is the case in northern Nigeria where there is low girl-child education as compared to boys.

The National School Census (2006) also revealed a net enrolment ratio of 80.6% suggesting that a substantial proportion (19%) of primary school age population between 6-11 years are not enrolled in primary schools nationwide, and this represents about 5 million of Nigerian children of the age bracket of 6-11 years old that do not have access to primary education. Given the problem of transition, particularly for girls, this implies that fewer girls are enrolled in junior secondary schools in the north. Furthermore, Africa has the lowest school completion rates in basic education and half of the world's out-of-school children are concentrated in 15 countries including eight sub-Saharan African countries (Ibrahim, 2012). Nigeria is one of the eight countries.

Bauchi State: Gender disparity in basic education

The situation of gender disparity in education is worse in the north-east Nigeria including Bauchi state, the study area for this research. Bauchi State shares geographical boundaries with Plateau, Jigawa, Gombe and Yobe states (see Figure 1.1 for the map of Nigeria). There are three senatorial zones and twenty local government authorities and the major languages include Hausa, Fulfulde, Jarawa, Sayawa and Warjawa. According to 2006 population census, Bauchi state has a population of 4.3 million (representing 3.26 per cent of Nigeria's population) and the predominant occupations of residents are farming, fishing, hunting, blacksmithing, crafts, and trading.



Figure 1.1: Map of Nigeria

Bauchi state is considered one of the educationally disadvantaged states especially with respect to girls' education (UNICEF, 2011). About 62.3% of females have no formal education, 17.5% have some primary education while only 7.3% completed primary schools (2013 NDHS). According to UNESCO (2012) the female literacy rate across the state was 35.3%, Gender Parity Index stood at 0.3%. Similarly the Annual School Census (2011/2012) indicated that there were 581 junior secondary schools in Bauchi state at the time, with a total population of 737,505 students and only 41.3% of the population were female students while 58.7% were males. It is estimated that about 58.2% of school age children are out of school in the state (UNICEF,

2012), a trend that is highly pronounced in rural areas, where poverty is likely an inhibiting factor. It might also be associated with fewer female teachers whose presence serves as role models (Okojie, 2012). There is a dearth of female teachers in schools, particularly in the rural areas is problematic. The population of female teachers is less than quarter of primary schools teaching workforce. (Akuki, 2016; EFA Nigeria Review, 2015).

Bauchi state has the lowest junior secondary schools enrolment in the northeast. It has low literacy rate and most girls and women in the state miss out on education because of early marriage. It also has one of the highest

percentages of unqualified teachers in both primary and secondary schools (ActionAid, 2011). The ratio of boys to girls at each level of education in the state consistently shows fewer girls than

boys are enrolled in schools. Table 1.1 shows the nature of gender disparity in junior secondary school (JSS) enrolment in the year 2010 to 2013 in Bauchi state.

Table 1.1: JSS school enrolment by gender 2010-2013 (number and %)

Year	Female		Male		Total	
	N	(%)	N	(%)	N	(%)
2010/2011	38345	(37.9)	62840	(62.1)	101185	(100)
2012/2013	51990	(38.1)	84583	(61.9)	6573	(100)

Source: Compiled from Bauchi SUBEB 2015 data

Although gender disparity in enrolment exists, there is a slight increase in female enrolment in the period between 2010/11 and 2012/13. Adediran (2010) opined that the increase in girl enrolment is as a result of increasing attitudinal change in many communities, which was also influenced by the active support of traditional and religious rulers as well as gender sensitive utilization of the School –Based Management Committee (SBMC) grants system. Studies in the north have revealed increases in the proportion of girls completing (i.e. registered to sit) their final junior secondary school examination and performance (exams pass rate) generally by 6%, from 77% in 2008 to 83% in 2012 (Para-Mallam, 2010; Humphreys & Crawford, 2014).

There are many reasons for gender disparity in education in the state and these include, poverty, early marriage and cultural bias against girls. ActionAid (2012) reports that about 41% of girls do not go to school as a result of poverty; 20% stay away from school as a result of early marriage. Gershberg, Rai, Ezegwu, Nnodu, Ojo, Panguru, Aleshin, Nugroho, Hearle and Elacqua (2015) identified religious misinterpretation, cultural practice, illiteracy, and inadequate school infrastructure as some of the factors militating against girl-child education. To many parents, the

education of girls is less important because no matter what level of education the girl attains, their hope is to see the girl get married.

Based on the factors mentioned above, government and other stakeholders in education in Nigeria have strongly advocated for community inclusion in school management through the establishment of SBMCs as an incentive to facilitate better service delivery of qualitative education in schools.

SBMCs and School Grant System

SBMC is a statutory legal management structure to empower members to oversee the management of schools in their respective communities. It is a strategy to improve education by transferring significant decision-making authority from state and district offices to individual schools. SBMCs were established to assist the head teachers and principals on issues relating to school administration and welfare of pupils, students and teachers, with a view to decentralizing school governance to community level. This is done under the support and supervision of the State Universal Education Board (SUBEB).

The provision of qualitative education in schools involves the management of human, financial and other resources depending on government preference. Adediran (2010) opined that a key element of any school-based management system is for the higher authority to specify and provide resources for the school-community level for effective functioning of the SBMC structure. Although the federal government and states spend far less than required in the education sector; in 2016, the spending on education by federal and state governments was 6.0% and 10.7% of their budget, far less than the 26% benchmark for developing countries (Abdallah, 2016). This shows that there is a need for strong political will from the side of the government for the enhancement of SBMC functionality in order to achieve its goals.

Indeed, the goal of SBMC as an initiative varies from country to country. A common feature of the goal is to engender a sense of local community interest and ownership in school affairs by increasing the participation of parents and communities and building local level capacity for effective anticipatory and school ownership. They provide communities with a new mechanism through which they can demand accountability from school managers. SBMCs provide support for the school management through effective management at school level and improving quality and efficiency of schools to improve pupils/student achievement level. In addition, they also help the school in the formulation of its mission and vision; provide and update school development plan (SDP) as well as legal and policy framework for planning, monitoring and evaluation of education at the school level.

SBMCs have several roles and responsibilities (Bawa, 2012; Federal Ministry of Education/ESSPIN 2015). They are expected to sensitize and mobilize parents on enrolment, attendance and retention of their children or wards in school including community support for the school. In this wise, they also serve as means of effective

and timely communication between school and its host community as well as ensure transparency and accountability in school management. They monitor several aspects of school activities: staff and pupils with regards to school attendance; SDPs in accordance with guidelines; and physical facilities for proper maintenance and report to the local government education authority on a regular basis on development in the school. SBMCs identify staff and schools need and means of addressing them and support the head teachers in innovative leadership and effective management of school.

The establishment of SBMCs should be carried out with heads of schools in consultations with key community leaders, traditional leaders and relevant government units. Representation of the SBMCs should be drawn from all strata of the school host community to enhance inclusiveness.

In general, the composition and working arrangement of the SBMCs should comply with the national guidelines, which have specified the group from which the membership should be drawn to ensure a balance of interest and gender. Members of the SBMC are not entitled to remuneration.

By identifying the goal and responsibility of SBMCs, significant progress has been made in establishing the SBMCs across the states in Nigeria. Considering the success recorded by different interventions and programmes in recent times, especially in the North, the Federal Government of Nigeria has given "lump sum" to SBMCs, to be spent as it deems fit. Although some states have not invested adequately in the school grant system for their SBMCs, other states including Bauchi have funded their schools. The state government in collaboration with UNICEF GEP provided the grants which was disbursed by the department of school services. Although the SBMCs had a free hand to execute school financial activities, school service department was responsible for monitoring how the grant was to be utilized. The provision of the school

grant system enabled the SBMC to address some of their priority needs. The grants also enabled the SBMCs and their immediate communities to serve their schools and provide financial, human, material and time of the schools improvement. The implementation of the school grants and SBMCs led to the provision of girl-child friendly school environment by promoting quality education. One of the major challenges facing the implementation of school grant systems is the

non-adequate contribution of the state government. Table 1.2 shows the contribution of four state governments to the school grant system between 2008 and 2012. According to TEGINT report, schools that took more action on girls' education have received the most intensive intervention and have made positive difference to school gender sensitivity of the total grant made available by the state government (ActionAid, 2011).

Table 1.2: Grant contribution by four states (2008)

State	Contribution (Naira)	%
Bauchi	131, 000,000	88
Niger	15,000,000	10
Katsina	30,000,000	2
Sokoto	Not available	-
Total	149,000,000	100

Source: Adapted from Adediran (2010)

Table 1.2 shows that the four states contributed only N149,000,000 amounting to 12% while Bauchi state government contributed N131,000,000 amounting to 88% of the grants (Adediran, 2010). In the face of contribution, there is a need to examine whether the grants have influenced girls' educational processes; enrolment, completion and academic performance in Bauchi State.

Study rationale

Previous studies have examined the effectiveness of SBMCs and have linked functional committees to improvement in quality of education (e.g., Baba & Usman, 2015), however, there is a dearth of studies on the impact of the SBMC grants on girls' education, particularly in terms enrolment,

completion and performance in Bauchi State. An evaluative study was conducted to assess SBMCs, grants utilization and effectiveness in four states (Bauchi, Katsina, Sokoto and Niger) and to generate baseline data on the relevance of SBMCs in comparison with other states. The findings, which highlighted the importance of SBMCs to community participation in girls' education, underscored the need for more in-depth assessment of how SBMCs operate in the communities and the features that promote girls' educational attainment (Adediran, 2010). Previous studies have also stressed the impact of funding and availability of grants on the effectiveness of SBMCs (e.g., ESSPIN, 2012). Given the vital role SBMCs are designed to play in improving access to education, there is a need for state-based study such as this present one to examine the impact of grants on girls' education

as this will provide an insight into processes and activities for proper implementation of policies relating to girls and women. In order to find out the effectiveness of the committees' funding for girls' education, this study sought to examine the effect of SBMC grants system on girls' enrolment, completion and performance of junior secondary school students in Bauchi state.

Objectives and research questions

This study aimed to examine the impact of SBMC grant system on girls' enrolment, completion and performance in junior secondary school students in Bauchi State.

The study sought answer to following questions:

1. What is the impact of SBMC school grants on girls' enrolment in junior secondary school in Bauchi State?
2. What is the impact of SBMC school grants on girls' completion of junior secondary school in Bauchi State?
3. What impact does the school grants have on girls' performance in junior secondary school in the state?

The findings of this study would contribute to the needed literature on the effectiveness of SBMCs and strategies for improving girls' education in northern Nigeria. The effectiveness of SBMCs' grants policies on the promotion of girls' education will provide insights for stakeholders to review the functionality of the SBMCs in areas where they are not functioning.

Literature review

The Theoretical Framework. The framework of this study was based on the theory of feminist economics. The theory assumed that the reproduction and domestic labour of women form the foundation of economic survival, albeit not included in the Gross Domestic Product. It suggested that as it is presented today, economics lacks any basis in reality as it leaves

out the very foundation of economic life. That foundation is built on women's labour; first her reproductive labour which produces every new labourer (and the first commodity, which is mother's milk and which nurtures every new consumer/labourer), secondly, labour composed of cleaning, cooking, negotiating social stability and nurturing, which prepares market and maintain each labourer. This constitutes women's continuing industry by enabling labourers to occupy positions in the workforce (White, 1984). The implication is that gender equality and empowerment are vital for the effectiveness of interventions and policies needed to achieve social transformation. Thus, a gendered analysis of processes and issues is necessary to gain deeper of understanding of patriarchal power and entrenched structural causes of gender inequalities (Floro & Willoughby, 2016)

The effect of grant on enrolment and completion of girls. Education of the girl-child has become an issue of concern in Nigeria. Despite the many advantages of educating girls, boys are still much ahead of girls in enrolment especially in the northern states' secondary and post-secondary schools. In this part of the country, parents prefer to educate their sons rather than daughters. School grants are made available to schools in the form of conditional cash transfers aimed at encouraging parents to send their children to school. There examples of effective utilization of grants, form of feeding programmes, cash grants etc, in the improvement of enrolment and attendance, lower drop out rates and higher success rates in National Examination among school age children in developing countries (e.g., Deffous, 2011; Osei-Fosu, 2011)

Bukar (2006) states that although the number of girls in both Nigerian primary and secondary schools continue to rise annually, a good number of them find it difficult to complete due to poverty and unsupportive environment. Similarly, despite the efforts made by the Kenyan government to retain learners in schools, in 1998, many girls were enrolled, but only a few (barely 47%) completed. A recent report on the education sector review reveals that school grant could

further increase the completion gender parity in enrolment and completion have increased by 15% to near parity overall since 2008 in junior secondary schools (ActionAid, 2011). Although school gender profile score increased from 0.88 in 2008 to 0.93 in 2012, the literacy rate in the north-east recorded lowest score (23% girls; 51% boys) compared to the south which recorded 80% for girls, 90% for boys (NPC/RTI, 2011). This shows variation in gender parity across geo-political zones and state. For this reason, many of the gender initiatives have focused on access; getting more girls and women into and through school with a view to eliminating gender disparity in enrolment and completion.

According to Adediran (2010), utilization of school grants has encouraged parents their daughters to schools because learning materials are provided freely. The TEGINT study reported an overall of 15% improvement in gender parity of

both primary and junior secondary school enrolment and completion (ActionAid, 2011). Yet enrolment data for Bauchi in the GEP phase II evaluation indicated that, while girls enrolment increased as a percentage of total enrolment from 41% in 2007/08 to 44% in 2010/11, total enrolment for both girls and boys had decreased (UNICEF, 2012), so also the attendance rate (ActionAid, 2011). The decline in both enrolment and attendance might be associated to prevailing insecurity challenges in some parts of the north-east. Activities of insurgency created panic in both parents and students and discouraged many parents from sending their children to school. Although there is a significant increase in gender parity in secondary school enrolment, the completion rate is progressively decreasing. This was evident in the enrolment of 2015/2016 session of one of the junior secondary schools visited in course of this research (see Table 1.3).

Table 1.3: Class enrolment 2015/16 for a junior secondary school

Class	Male	Female	Total
JSS 1 A	62	60	122
JSS 1B	62	59	121
JSS II A	57	53	110
JSS II B	54	51	105
JSSIII A	53	29	82
JSS III B	45	32	77
Total	333	284	617

Source: JSS Kafin Madaki, Ganjuwa Local Government Area

The continual decrease in completion for both male and female at each level is quite disturbing because it was not clear whether it was attributed to performance as some students may tend to perform below the promotion score or to early marriage which could be exclusive to girls.

The effect of grant on girls' performance. School

grants serve as a bridge to reduce the impact of social class on students' academic performance. Given the levels of poverty in most homes in towns and villages in northern Nigeria, parents cannot afford to procure necessary and adequate learning materials for their children. In recognition of the problems associated with poverty and school attendance, Bauchi state has

made significant budgetary allocations as school grants towards promoting girls' education in 2009 and 2010 sessions (Adediran, 2011). The grant was utilized in purchasing quality text books, uniforms, bags, bicycles, shoes, construction of more classes, and separate toilets for female students.

Adediran (2010) stressed that students' academic performance has improved in schools where SBMCs are functional because books and other learning materials are readily available for students. The findings from the TEGINT study suggested that SBMC policies on grant utilization provided qualitative material which will not only supplement curricular practice, but also those that are developmentally appropriate. Consequently, students' academic performance has significantly improved (ActionAid, 2011). Jaiyeoba and Atanda (2003) also asserted that adequate funds enable skilled teachers to achieve greater level of instructional effectiveness, and greater chance for learning and performance to take place.

Much of the existing literature has explored the impact of variables other than school grants on students' academic performance. For instance, differences in students' socio-economic background explain much of the variation in students' academic performance. This conversely indicates the use of funds by parents of high socio-economic status to provide quality learning materials such as books, bags, chess and other electro-visuals to enhance children intellectual growth; school grants are used to purchase some of these learning materials to be utilised by children from poor background. (e.g., Adamu & Dikko, 2017). Thus, it is expected that a positive relationship exists between school grants and academic performance and the ability to achieve higher educational outcomes should be related to a girl-child's exposure to the benefits derived from school grants. Onishi and Wong (2012) found mixed results with no effects for a larger scale incentive programme on learning outcomes; enrolment and attendance improved. The study sought to evaluate the impact of providing capitation grants (a grant per child enrolled) aimed at improving learning outcomes

in Tanzania and the results revealed that children in schools with capitation grants showed significantly better learning outcomes than schools in the comparison group (which did not receive capitation grants). Funds are generally used for procurement of teaching and learning materials, provision of school infrastructure including female separate toilet, and procurement of sporting material, which could be used in the field as some researchers suggested that exercise or physical activities increase executive brain function, such as attention span and working memory (Adeyemo, 2007) and this may have some implications for learning outcomes. In general, although some studies have found no significant impact of school grants on learning outcomes, many of the studies tend to confirm the significance of school grants in improving enrolment and performance. This research therefore seeks to fill a gap in the understanding of the impact of grants on girls' enrolment, completion and performance.

Method

Research Design

The study utilized the triangulation research design to examine the effect of school grants system on girls' enrolment, completion and performance. Consequently, a combination of quantitative and qualitative data collection methods was adopted. Archival method was used to collect interrupted time series data and survey design involved the use of structured questionnaire. The researchers also conducted interviews and focus group discussions with several categories of respondents.

Population and sample

The population of the study comprised government officials (from SUBEB and local government education authority), SBMC members, teachers, students and women. Given the different categories involved, cluster sampling technique was employed. Cohen (2007) explains that cluster sampling is employed when the population is heterogeneous in nature, but containing subjects with similar characteristics.

Simple random sampling was used in drawing the sample size from the population, which was also dependent on the size of the cluster. SUBEB officials were selected at the state level while two local government officers were selected at each of the three senatorial zones of the state; there were six local governments altogether. Two junior secondary schools were also selected from each local government making twelve junior secondary schools. However, one of the sampled schools had not been given grants as at the time of data collection; data was finally collected from eleven schools that benefited from the grants. The study participants consisted of one desk officer from each of the six local government education authorities, the SBMC chairman and secretary, 10 teachers, five students from each of the schools and at least five women leaders from each community.

Instruments

Several instruments were designed to collect data for this study. Structured interview guides addressing students' enrolment, completion and performance was administered to some key officers in SUBEB, local government education authority and community leaders who were members of SBMCs. In addition, students' records on enrolment, completion and performance were sought. SBMCs' financial transaction including records of receipts and pictures of items procured were also collected and captured. The instruments also included Focus Group Discussions schedules on students' and women's views in the communities and questionnaires containing eighteen items with five point response format (ranging from very much, much, little, very little or not at all) to gather teachers' opinions on the impact of SBMC grants on girls' education.

Study site and data collection

First, a pilot study was carried out in a Junior secondary schools in Katagum local government area. The research instruments were validated and refined by the research team and assistants. In addition, the pilot study also involved transcription and analysis of data to confirm the

relevance of data being collected.

The main study was carried out within the geographical area of Bauchi state, and in junior secondary schools from six local government areas. The research assistants distributed and retrieved the questionnaires from teachers while the team members conducted the interview sessions with SBMC officials and FGDs with women leaders and girls. Enough time was given to participants to discuss freely among themselves, as the case may be, without the participation of researchers or assistants so as to allow them express their views freely. Research team and assistants recorded the key points as the discussions were being done in each school. The Research team visited SUBEB and local government secretariats and interacted with relevant officials in their offices. The team leader asked questions and responses were written and recorded by the team members. Research assistants under the supervision and coordination of the research team leader took pictures. These activities were carried out with the consent of persons involved. Students' consents were sought from parents and school authorities and data was collected in the school.

Data Analysis

Key actors at the community level expressed their views in respect of the effectiveness of the grants on girls' education outcomes. Data from the qualitative methods were transcribed and summarized. Also, descriptive statistics were used to analyze the quantitative data from the questionnaires and school records. Frequency counts and percentage of teachers' responses were determined.

Findings

Impact of grants on enrolment

What is the impact of SBMC school grants on girls' enrolment in junior secondary school in Bauchi State? Most of the schools in this study received the grants between 2013 and 2014. Table 1.4 shows the enrolment rate of girls before and after the utilization of the grant.

Table 1.4: School enrolment records before and after SBMC grants (% in italics)

Year	2011/2012		2012/2013		2013/2014		2014/2015		2015/2016	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
CPS Alkaleri	300 <i>72%</i>	118 <i>28%</i>	393 <i>75%</i>	138 <i>25%</i>	462 <i>66%</i>	236 <i>34%</i>	522 <i>71%</i>	209 <i>29%</i>	545 <i>64%</i>	304 <i>36%</i>
UB JSS T/Wada Toro	131 <i>71%</i>	54 <i>29%</i>	230 <i>58%</i>	168 <i>42%</i>	287 <i>61%</i>	182 <i>39%</i>	229 <i>50%</i>	227 <i>50%</i>	238 <i>48%</i>	255 <i>52%</i>
JSS Gyamzu	283 <i>58%</i>	203 <i>42%</i>	248 <i>55%</i>	201 <i>45%</i>	283 <i>57%</i>	217 <i>43%</i>	297 <i>54%</i>	255 <i>46%</i>	309 <i>52%</i>	283 <i>48%</i>
JSS K/Madaki	193 <i>66%</i>	102 <i>34%</i>	207 <i>63%</i>	121 <i>37%</i>	273 <i>59%</i>	186 <i>41%</i>	289 <i>62%</i>	176 <i>38%</i>	338 <i>54%</i>	284 <i>46%</i>
UBKATAGUM	210 <i>69%</i>	95 <i>31%</i>	515 <i>67%</i>	255 <i>33%</i>	519 <i>50%</i>	520 <i>50%</i>	519 <i>58%</i>	376 <i>42%</i>	697 <i>47%</i>	774 <i>53%</i>
UBSAKWA	452 <i>81%</i>	105 <i>19%</i>	152 <i>48%</i>	168 <i>52%</i>	243 <i>59%</i>	167 <i>41%</i>	260 <i>66%</i>	137 <i>34%</i>	435 <i>54%</i>	366 <i>46%</i>
Total (Urban)	1569 <i>70%</i>	677 <i>30%</i>	1745 <i>62%</i>	1051 <i>38%</i>	2067 <i>58%</i>	1508 <i>42%</i>	2116 <i>60%</i>	1380 <i>40%</i>	2562 <i>53%</i>	2266 <i>47%</i>
Gender Parity (urban) **	0.43		0.60		0.73		0.65		0.88	
JSSGABARIN*	174 <i>65%</i>	94 <i>35%</i>	264 <i>50%</i>	262 <i>50%</i>	232 <i>62%</i>	141 <i>38%</i>	160 <i>54%</i>	138 <i>46%</i>	265 <i>63%</i>	155 <i>37%</i>
JSSGADIYA *	63 <i>53%</i>	57 <i>47%</i>	89 <i>68%</i>	42 <i>32%</i>	98 <i>65%</i>	52 <i>35%</i>	88 <i>71%</i>	36 <i>29%</i>	115 <i>63%</i>	67 <i>37%</i>
JSS GOLOL*	158 <i>73%</i>	58 <i>27%</i>	140 <i>50%</i>	140 <i>50%</i>	154 <i>49%</i>	162 <i>51%</i>	226 <i>55%</i>	185 <i>45%</i>	277 <i>54%</i>	232 <i>46%</i>
JSS Darazo*	184 <i>60%</i>	123 <i>40%</i>	209 <i>56%</i>	161 <i>44%</i>	212 <i>61%</i>	135 <i>39%</i>	147 <i>72%</i>	56 <i>28%</i>	147 <i>73%</i>	53 <i>27%</i>
GJSS Badau*	206 <i>56%</i>	160 <i>44%</i>	229 <i>61%</i>	146 <i>39%</i>	197 <i>59%</i>	131 <i>41%</i>	165 <i>58%</i>	122 <i>42%</i>	148 <i>60%</i>	100 <i>40%</i>
Total (Rural)	785 <i>62%</i>	492 <i>38%</i>	931 <i>55%</i>	751 <i>45%</i>	893 <i>59%</i>	621 <i>41%</i>	786 <i>59%</i>	537 <i>41%</i>	952 <i>61%</i>	607 <i>39%</i>
Gender Parity (Rural) **	0.62		0.81		0.70		0.68		0.64	
TOTAL	2354 <i>67%</i>	1169 <i>33%</i>	2676 <i>60%</i>	1802 <i>40%</i>	2960 <i>58%</i>	2129 <i>42%</i>	2902 <i>60%</i>	1917 <i>40%</i>	3514 <i>55%</i>	2873 <i>45%</i>
Total Gender Parity**	0.50		0.67		0.72		0.66		0.82	

*Schools in rural areas **Gender parity estimated as ratio of attendance for females to males
Source: Calculated from data obtained from Bauchi SUBEB

Data presented in Table 1.4 shows that overall enrolment figures in 2015/16 (after the grants) were higher than figures before grants for boys and girls. As shown in Figure 1.2, enrolment growth was observed even before the grants, perhaps due to some other interventions. However, the growth for girls was higher than for boys. In general, the enrolment figures rose from

2354 to 3514 (49.3%) for boys and 1169 to 2873 (59.3%) for girls between 2011/12 and 2015/16 sessions. The graph shows a gradual but slow closing of gap between female and male enrolment numbers in Figure 1.2 and the number of females and males pupils in urban and rural areas as Figure 1.3 reflects. Figure 1.4 also shows an increase in gender parity in the period.

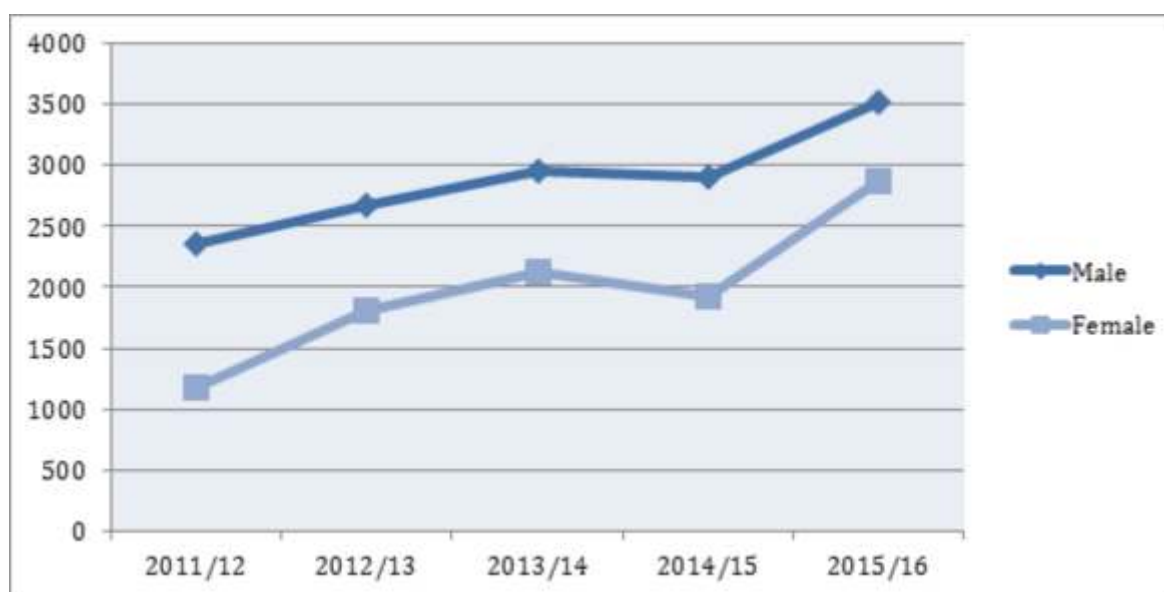


Figure 1.2: Total number of females and males enrolled before and after school grants (2011-2016)

There were variations based on geographical areas; enrolment figures were lower in rural areas. Further, the growth rates in rural areas did not appear to follow a consistent pattern. This may be due to issues of poor records and marked variations in the accessing and utilization of grants.

Overall, the figures reflect increases in enrolment after the grants were received with girls' enrolment figures witnessing a higher increase than boys' enrolment after the grants.

Indeed (except for a few exceptions) the enrolment figures showed that the proportion of girls compared to boys increased remarkably after the grants. In 2011/12 the proportion of girls ranged from 27% to 47%. However, by 2015/16 the enrolment shows ranges of 27% to 53%, implying increased gender parity in the enrolment figures after the grants. A slight dip was observed in 2014/15 that may have occurred from incomplete data.

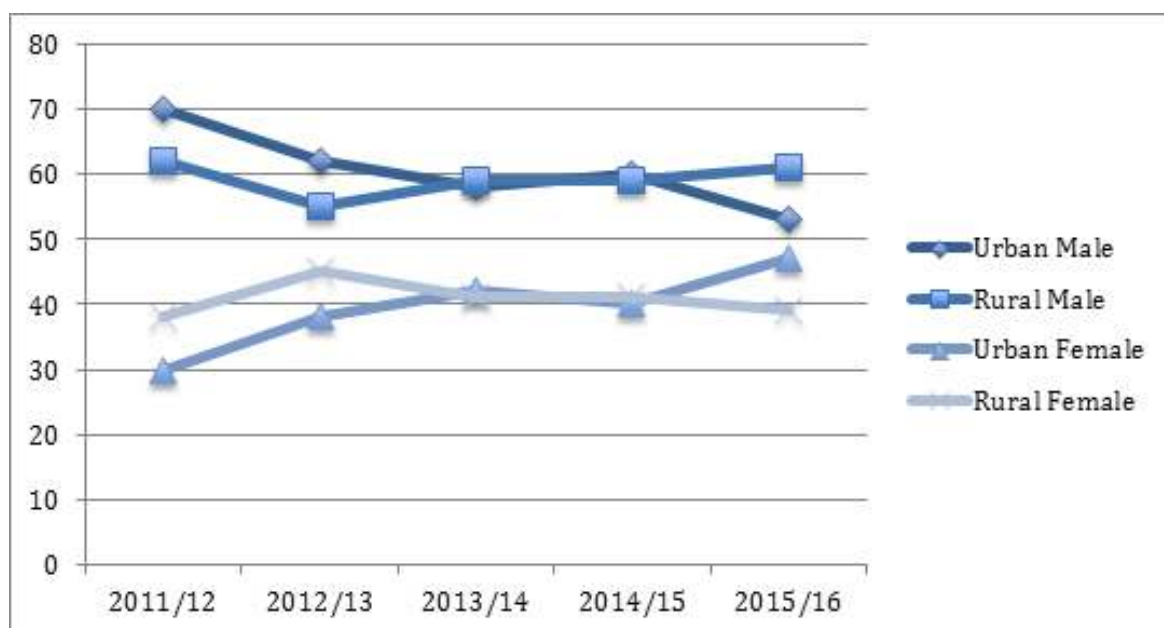


Figure 1.3: Comparison of urban and rural females and males enrolled from 2011-2016 (%)

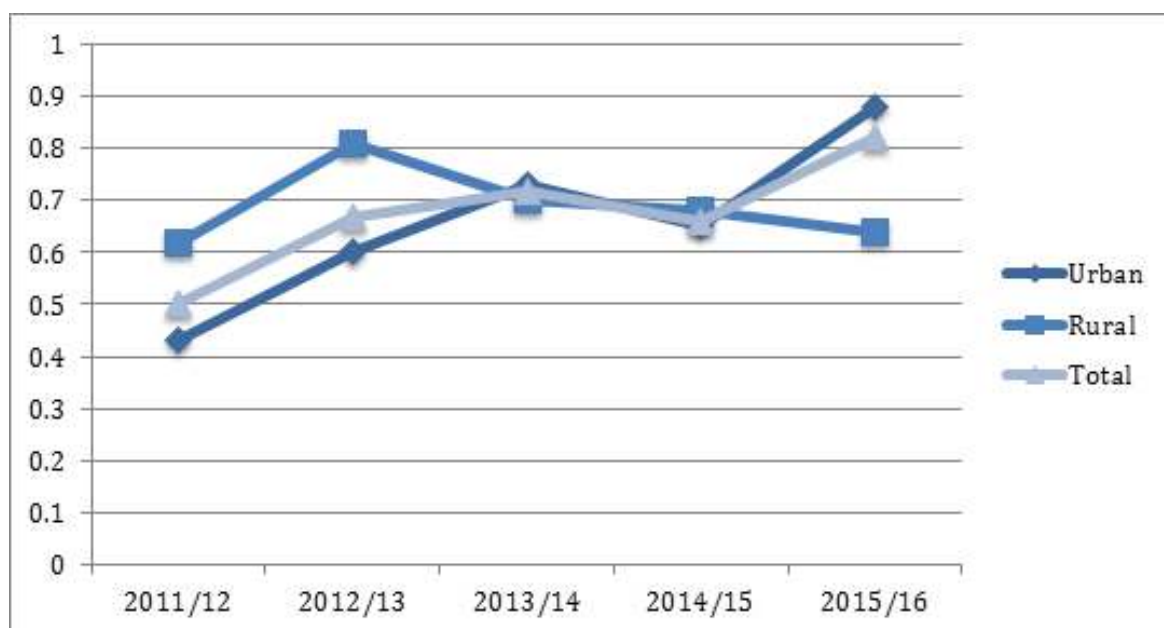


Figure 1.4: Gender parity for urban, rural and total schools from 2011-2016

Table 1.5: Impact of grants on girls' enrolment as reported by teachers

Items	Very much and much so	
	N	%
The enrolment campaign carried out by using SBMC grant increase enrolment	66	82
SBMC used grant in providing female separate toilet; this has increased girls enrolments	58	74.4
Creation of clubs and society increase girls child enrolment	46	62.8
Provision of learning and teaching material encourage parents to send their girls to school	71	90
Girls were given school bags and uniforms; it has positive impact on girls enrolment	59	75.6
Your class size increased as a result of SBMC financial support to girls education	61	65.4
SBMC has provided portable water to students; that increase girls enrolment	53	68
Utilisation of the SBMC grant increased girls' enrolment into schools	52	66.7
SBMC grant is effective in encouraging parents to send girls to schools	59	75.6

Table 1.5 shows the frequency and percentages of teachers' responses with regards to the effectiveness of SBMC grants on girl-child enrolment. In general, there were very favourable responses in support of the impact of SBMC grants in improving enrolment of the girls in the schools visited. These findings show that almost all the respondents (90%) said that using grants to provide learning materials encouraged parents to send their children to school. Similarly, 82% indicated that grants were effective in enrolment campaigns. Three-quarters of the teachers indicated that grants were effective in increasing girls' enrolment through the provision of female separate toilets (74.4%); provision of school bags and uniforms (75.6%); and encouraging parents to send girls to school (75.6%). About two-thirds of the teachers were positive that the grants increased their classes (65.4%) and also improved girls' enrolment through utilisation of grants (66.7%); creation of clubs and societies (62.8%); and the provision of portable water (68%). The research team observed that SBMCs used the grants for the provision of learning materials especially textbooks, skill acquisition facilities (sewing machines) portable water (wells and boreholes), classroom furniture, sporting facilities and separate toilets for girls.

Generally, two hundred and fifty thousand (N250, 000) naira had been distributed to the sampled schools. Most schools received the grants between 2013/2014. Although respondents complained that the amount given was not sufficient, significant school improvement could be observed when compared to years before the

disbursement of grants. The SBMCs did not only use the grants effectively but also contributed or donated personal funds in order to see that funds were sufficient for executing proposed needs. The SBMC chairman of one of the schools in Ganjuwa local government area stated that:

We have witnessed a drastic increase in enrolment generally as a result of the grant policy. Even though the amount given was not sufficient, we managed to provide female toilet and text books for students... We received N250, 000 and generated N36, 000 from the contribution made by the community. This, I think has helped in encouraging parents to send girls to school.

The SBMC chairman explained that the SBMC has also provided sewing machines especially for female students to acquire some tailoring skills, which may serve as source of income in future, especially when they are not opportune to further their education. It was revealed that interested female students learnt the skills from the chairman's wife who was a popular tailor in the community. On the other hand, despite the provision of a sewing machine in one of the schools in Darazo, tailoring session had not started as at the time of data collection due to the fact that there was no experienced female tailor that could teach the skills. The SBMC secretary explained why:

Many of the good tailors we have around are men, they offered to come to school and teach the skills... We are looking for experienced and mature woman who can handle these girls properly.

Although girls were eager to commence the tailoring lessons they were not aware that the machines were procured by the SBMC. One of them stated, while explaining the contribution of skill acquisition facilities on girls' enrolment:

Yes they brought the sewing machine to this school but, actually we don't know whether it was purchased through the SBMC or not; ... we want to start using the machine as many girls are enrolled basically to acquire the tailoring skill.

Provision of female separate toilet is perceived as an important factor that enhanced girls' enrolment. Some of the actors opined that availability of female toilets would reduce the chances of contracting infectious diseases, as girls' biological nature is more prone to infections than boys. Moreover, it is traditionally believed that 'using bush' or open places to defaecate attracts 'evil spirit' or the 'devil'. During the focus group discussion in Gamawa, a female teacher also described her experience on how the grants and provision of female toilets relate to girls' enrolment:

"SBMC has done well in the school, especially by constructing female toilets. Presently I am the only female teacher in the school. Even though the population of girls is more than that of the boys in the school..., I am not sure about the figure but you can see for yourself just looking around.... As a teacher there was no toilet for me to ease myself when I was pressed, talk less of these girls. During the training of the SBMC members, we were asked to open an account... money was deposited which was used in constructing the toilet. Students do not only come to school, but we ensure that they do not run away from school under the pretext of going to the toilet. So students' attendance has now improved".

Despite the fact that there was no adequate data to verify the claim on whether females were more

than males in the school as a result of conflicting records, this could also suggest that more boys are sent to non-formal school or Quranic schools in the community. Nevertheless, the fact that there was only one female teacher in the school indicates a problem that needs further investigation.

Some respondents were sceptical about the grants' contribution to the drastic increase in girls' enrolment into junior secondary schools as opined by one of the desk officers in one local government area:

It is not only the grant that contributed to girls' enrolment. We have been advocating and sensitizing the community and religious leaders on the importance of girls' education even before the grant policy. We are still doing it because parents' attitudes are gradually changing positively.

On the other hand, as a result of positive changes due to growing sensitization campaign by SBMCs, parents seemed to have more positive views about the importance of literacy in the fast changing world, particularly given the prevailing technological advancement. During a focus group discussion in Ganjuwa LGA, a woman explained that:

Nowadays, grants or no grants; no one jokes with education. Obviously we are making sure that our children go to school, if not it would be difficult for them to use handsets ... I am not happy because I can hardly read the names in my contact ... I therefore use symbols instead, and I do not want my children to be in such a situation.

To a large extent, the findings suggest that SBMC grants policy on girls' enrolment has some benefits on girls' access to education. The findings revealed that continued enrolment campaign, the availability of adequate learning materials and gender sensitive school environment are important factors that motivate parents to allow their girls to have access to education.

Effect of grants on completion

What is the impact of SBMC school grants on girls' completion of junior secondary school in Bauchi State? Tables 1.6 and 1.7 as well as Figure 1.5

present the results of research question two. Table 1.6 shows number of students who completed junior secondary schools across the six local government areas visited; records were not available by schools.

Table 1.6: Number of pupils who completed by local government (JSS 2014-2016)

Local Government	Number Completed JSS			
	2014/15		2015/16	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Alkaleri	3681 (69%)	1617 (31%)	4511 (65%)	2448 (35%)
Darazo	5152 (55%)	4262 (45%)	2176 (63%)	1332 (37%)
Toro	8035 (63%)	4913 (37%)	12068 (60%)	8032 (40%)
Zaki	1636 (69%)	753 (31%)	1544 (60%)	1035 (40%)
Gamawa	1372 (66%)	711 (34%)	1492 (60%)	987 (40%)
Ganjuwa	3328 (70%)	1401 (30%)	3500 (70%)	1471 (30%)
Total	23204 (63%)	13657 (37%)	25291 (62%)	15305 (38%)

Source: Bauchi SUBEB

In Table 1.6, all but one local government area recorded increases in the number of pupils who completed JSS. The exception observed in Darazo, a rural community, may be due to inconsistency in data obtained from the school record. The figures showed more males completing JSS than females with the gender gap varying across the local government areas. However, the general trend as reflected in the total scores shows an increase in the number of males and females who completed JSS over the two years. The result showed an increase in the number of girls who completed junior secondary school. Further, the figures in parenthesis in Table 1.6 also showed that an increase in gender parity

was observed over one session from 2014/15 to 2015/16; the proportion of females to males in 2014/15 session slightly increased from values ranging 30% to 37% to lowest of 30% to 40% in 2015/16 session. The rate of increase in four of the six local governments ranged from 3% to 9% over one session. In a community like Zaki, the increase was as high 9% while in Ganjuwa there was no significant change (0%). It is also possible that completion rates may have been higher than reflected in supported schools under study but as indicated earlier, the data presented overall local government figures given the non-availability of school level data.

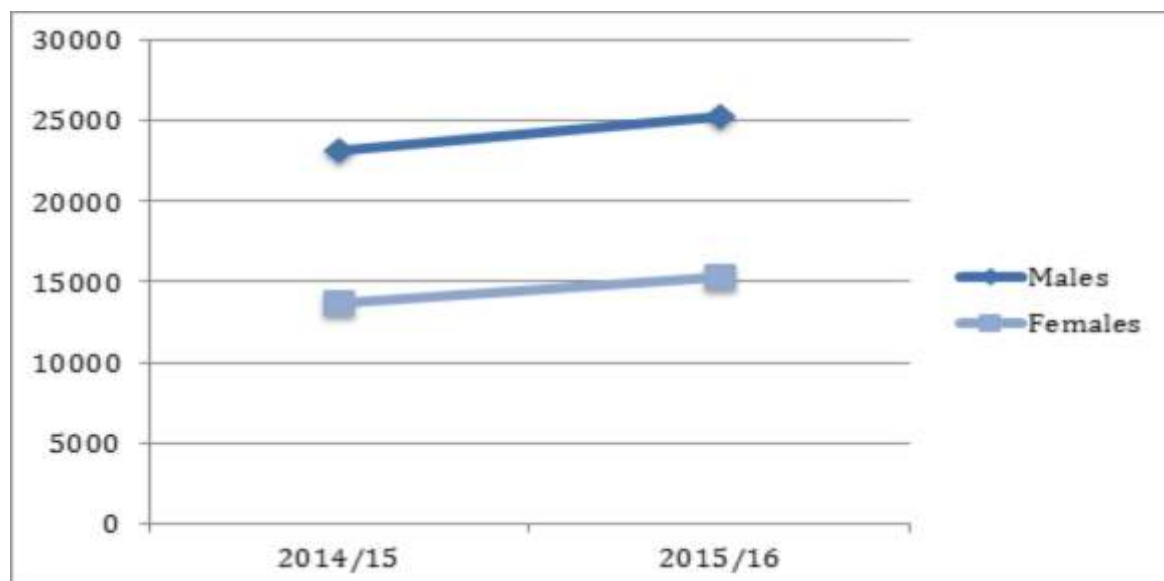


Figure 1.5: Number of students who completed junior secondary schools for 2014-2016

Poverty and early marriage are the major obstacles to girls' school completion. Grants system motivated students to attend school regularly and enhanced parents' positive attitude towards schools generally. Girls' views were sought regarding their aspiration after they complete their education. Some of them aspired to be medical doctors, lawyers, engineers, nurses and very few aspired to be teachers and Hausa film makers. Girls' aspirations and hopes serve as catalyst to higher rate of school completion as indicated by the explanation of a girl in a focus group discussion:

I am in JSS3 and I know the condition of some of my friends that got married before school completion; even the dowry paid was different from that of those who completed their schools. They are not well taken care of by their husbands. It might be possible for the husband to marry an educated woman as a second wife after she has two or more issues [children] because she could not take care of herself. Insha Allah, I shall complete my secondary school and go to nursing school before I get married.

Data gathered on the issue of early marriage has mixed opinions. Some of the respondents said that girls were removed from schools to be married off, while others reported that early marriage is no more a threat to girls' school completion. The SBMC chairman in one of the

communities in Ganjuwa explained:

As far as I know, the issue of early marriage is not a barrier to girls' school completion in this community. Our problem is not completion; the issue at stake now is how to ensure that girls who complete their secondary schools with good grades are supported to secure admission into tertiary institutions, including universities. Some girls have good grades in both NECO and SSCE, but due to poor financial support... as a result of family economic status, parents cannot afford to send their children to school to further their education. There is nothing to be done at SBMC level to assist such girls in making their dreams come true. We wish those NGOs would come in and support these girls.

Contrary to this view, early marriage was perceived as a hindrance to girls' school completion especially in the more rural communities, where many parents remove girls from school and get them married. As one of the respondents in Gamawa stated:

Some parents send their girls to JSS because they use the school as a waiting ground for their daughters to get husbands. If along the line they get one [husband], parents take them away and get them married. This is very disturbing because most of the time the parents do that when girls begin to show progress in intellectual growth. Government should do something...this is becoming so rampant in this community.

Table 1.7: Teachers' responses on the impact of grants on girls' completion

Items	Very much and much so	
	N	%
SBMC grant was effective on campaign against early ? marriage and encourages girls ? school completion	49	62.8
SBMC used grant in sensitizing the community; this was that effective?	50	64.1
All the girls in your class transited to the next class because ? of the utilization of grant	55	70.5
Through the SBMC grant schools were provided with security personnel; this has improved girls school completion	44	56.2

Table 1.7 reflects the number and percentages of respondents (teachers) who showed favourable responses on the impact of SBMC grants on girls' school completion. Majority of the teachers (70.5%) agreed that all the girls in their class transited to the next class as a result of grants. About two-thirds agreed that grants were effective in the sensitization campaign on girls' completion (64.1%) and also against early marriage thereby encouraging girls' school completion (62.8%). Finally, 56.2% indicated that

the grant was effective in improving girls' school completion through the provision of security personnel.

Impact of grant on girls' performance

What impact does the school grants have on girls' performance in junior secondary school in the state? The results of the survey are presented in Table 1.8. Focus group discussions and interviews are also summarized.

Table 1.8: Teachers' responses on the impact of grants on girls' performance

Items	Very much and much so	
	N	%
SBMC used grant to monitor your instructional activities	36	58.8
Provision of books, bags and sporting ? facilities for girls improved their performance	42	81
Debate, quizzes ? organised by SBMC improve girls' ? performance	42	79.5
SBMC used funds to improve girls performance	37	65.4
Utilization of the grant is effective in improving girls performance	36	73.1

Table 1.8 shows the frequency and percentages of teachers who indicated that SBMC grants impacted on girls' academic performance. Most of the respondents indicated that the provision of books, bags and sporting facilities (81%) and organising debates and quizzes (79.5%) improved girls' performance. About three-quarters (73.1%) indicated that the grants were effective in

improving girls' performance in junior secondary schools and 65.4% were positive that SBMCs used funds to improve girls' performance. The table also shows that about three-fifths (58.8%) of the teachers in the survey were positive about the effectiveness of grant utilization to monitor teachers' instructional activities.

With a view to attaining improvement in quality

of education, the SBMCs used the grants in providing classroom furniture for improved class control. When a teacher is in full control of the class he or she has greater possibility for attracting students' attention. Moreover regular monitoring and evaluation strategies of teachers, adopted by SBMC members through the grants, have made teachers to be more dedicated to their work. This included insisting on punctuality, updating lesson plans and notes, adherence to adequate scheme of work and other instructional techniques employed to improve students' academic performance. The SBMC secretary of one of the schools in Toro commented that:

The school administration and the SBMC have taken necessary steps to ensure that students' academic performance is improved. Punctuality and instructional techniques are being monitored on daily basis. We have established clubs and societies to motivate students. Class masters generate intra- and inter-class debates or competitions between boys and girls...if it is a gender-based competition you see female teachers automatically taking sides...we give prize to deserving winners by using grants from the SBMC.

Some respondents commented on the issues regarding qualification of teachers. It was recognised that the quality of academic performance has become the factor that guarantees personal progress; parents also desired that children performed excellently in all academic subjects. High levels of academic performance score are unattainable without adequate and qualified teachers. A desk officer in one of the local governments explained how the SBMC grants relate to students' academic performance:

Grants are useful in every context. Funds are tools through which we operate our daily activities in the school. The issue is that, whatever the amount you have invested, if the school lacks adequate and qualified teachers - teachers who master their fields, teachers who are trained as teachers and have interest in teaching - you will not get the desired performance from the students. In my opinion, in addition to provision of grants, government should also consider the importance of training teachers and employing

more to complement the increasing rate of students' enrolment.

Parents struggle hard to provide food on the table and some of them feel that the grant system has reduced some expenses they need to render for their children's education. A woman reported during a focus group discussion:

We thank God things have changed now that the SBMCs are alleviating some of the difficulties; writing materials are being distributed freely to students, school uniforms are sometimes given out, students have improved academically and they do not have to bother us to buy writing materials.

This statement corresponds to the quantitative findings presented in Table 8, which shows that 81% of responses indicated that the grants have increased the performance of girls through the provision of the learning materials and school supplies.

Discussion

Results showed that there was increase in enrolment of girls when compared to enrolment before the provision of the SBMC grants. Furthermore, increased gender parity in enrolment was observed. Financial support from the SBMCs through the provision of school uniforms, learning materials and female separate toilets have greatly enhanced girls' participation in education. SBMC financial donations in most schools started between the years 2013 to 2014. In some schools, more than 100% increase were observed. For example, Central Primary School Alkaleri witnessed increase in girls' enrolment from 2011/12 academic session with 300 boys and 188 girls to 545 boys and 304 girls in 2015/16. Also in Kafin Madaka Junior Secondary school, a gender-balanced figure of 141 boys and 142 girls in 2011/12 increased to 333 boys and 284 girls in 2015/16. The community generated adequate funds for SBMCs. The Junior Secondary school Gadiya had the least enrolment figures with 74 boys and 38 girls in 2011 to 87 boys and 65 in 2015. The Upper Basic Junior Secondary School in Tudun Wada, Toro had the highest enrolment of

girls from 131 boys and 54 girls in 2011 to 238 boys and 255 girls in 2015.

The observed trend reflecting increases in girls' enrolment, confirmed by the opinion of respondents' from the qualitative data, tend to suggest the effectiveness of the grants on girls' enrolment. This finding supports previous research. For example, Adediran (2010) stated that utilization of school grants have encouraged parents to send their children to school because learning materials are provided freely. Ahmed and Bilal (1994) asserted that grants have been used successfully to increase enrolment and attendance among school-age children in Bangladesh.

One of the problems encountered in the course of this study is the availability of relevant data. The schools and local government education authorities were reluctant to provide data to ascertain the level of girls' school completion rates. Data for completion rates were not readily available, thus, completion figures were calculated subtracting the number of students who repeated or dropped out from transited students into JSS 3 to obtain completion figures of students before and after grant. Nonetheless, the findings showed progressive increase rate of girls' completion.

The highest completion figures of girls was recorded for a junior secondary school in Toro with 86 girls as opposed to 71 boys, a difference of 15 in favor of girls. This confirms a 100% increase in enrolment observed and an increase in gender parity in terms of completion rates over the period. The results also recorded low completion figures for a government junior secondary school in Gadiya compared to other schools. This could be because Gadiya is in the extreme north of Bauchi state bordering Yobe State, and communities were relocating because of fear of insurgency attack by Boko-Haram. It could also mean that more girls are being given away for marriage and this has implications for further research to trace girls who dropped out. Similarly Toro which is in the extreme south, bordering Plateau state had witnessed communal and

religious unrest during the period. Thus, some communities relocated to Toro and parents enrolled their children to school, hence the school in Toro recorded higher girls' enrolment and completion. Nevertheless, higher enrolment rates were recorded after utilization of grants when compared to years before the grant.

Quantitative data shows that non-monetary factors like community sensitization have also contributed to girls' participation in education where about two-thirds of respondents were in support of community campaign against early marriage. This finding was supported by the previous literature that suggested that school grants have further increased gender parity in enrolment and completion to near parity in junior secondary schools as a result of community campaign (ActionAid, 2011). Furthermore, the finding support those of Chege et al. (2008) and Okojie (2008) who asserted that government collaborated with community and religious leaders, significant others and SBMC to encourage families to send their girls to school.

In general, the findings showed that respondents associated grants to improved performance of girls. In one of the schools in this study, there was no marked difference in performance of girls and boys. Moreover, the school recorded a female student as the overall best in academic performance in the year 2015/16 session. This is consistent with Akunle (1996) who opined that provision of grants to school is related to the performance of girls and higher scores on performance tests was achieved by girls who benefited from school grants. This report is also consistent with Ugwu (2004), who found that the performance of girls in school with grants was higher than the performance of girls in school without grants.

Conclusion

Bauchi state is one of the northern states with the highest gender disparity in basic educational attainment. It was estimated that 58% of school age children are out of school in the state and it has the least junior secondary school enrolment in the north-east. Thus, this research investigated

the impact of the SBMC grant policy on girl-child enrolment, completion and performance. Based on the findings, this study concludes that SBMC grants impacted positively on girls' enrolment, completion and performance. There was an increase in the enrolment of girls in many of the junior secondary schools (and local government areas) under study following the implementation of the grants policy. However there are issues that need to be addressed to improve girls' completion rates and quality of education. More grants should be provided in addition to regular supervision and sensitization campaign against early marriage. School records are important for planning, monitoring and evaluation. One of the limitations of this study is the difficulty in obtaining reliable and consistent data as observed in previous literature (e.g., Humphreys & Crawford, 2014). Thus, schools should be encouraged to keep adequate records. The findings have implications for strengthening SBMCs to improve their effectiveness. This study did not examine the impact of SBMC characteristics on the effective utilization of the grants. Thus, further research is needed for a larger scale study to examine the impact of the qualities of the SBMCs.

Based on the findings of this research the following recommendations are made:

1. Education should be free in reality for every girl-child in the state and not partially free; Bauchi state should provide incentives such as learning materials and lunch to pupils to increase educational outcomes in the state.
2. There is an urgent need to increase the number and proportion of female teachers in junior secondary schools in the state to serve as role models and complement the increasing rate of enrolment of girls.
3. The state government should make efforts to involve international donor agencies in facilitating basic education by creating reinforcement scheme for community heads that have larger girls' enrolment and completion rates in their communities.

Government, non-governmental organisations and donor organisations should support girls who have excellent performance in junior and senior secondary certificate examinations to advance their education.

4. The state government should put facilities in place for effective record keeping especially in the aspect of completion and performance of students so as to have easy access to data for planning and monitoring progress in basic education.
5. The findings suggest positive potentials of SBMCs in promoting girls education, therefore, SBMCs need to be strengthened to improve their effectiveness.
6. Further research is needed to examine the impact of the qualities of the SBMCs on girls' educational outcomes.

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A study of the contribution of Education Sector Support Programme and Teacher Development Programme towards girls' education initiative in Jigawa State

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Abstract

The research aimed to assess the impact of Education Sector Support Programme in Nigeria (ESSPIN) and Teacher Development Project (TDP) in the development of girls' education in Jigawa state. Specifically, the study focused on the how the interventions influenced students' performance, girls' school enrolment and participation and whether the interventions in the state helped in meeting the educational needs of the society in three local government areas of Ringim, Dutse, and Miga. Thirty schools, 120 TDP trained teachers, 300 students, community members and parents participated in the study. The findings show that teachers, students and parents felt that the projects significantly helped to improve students' performance. Data showed an improvement in enrolment by gender in favour of girls. There was an almost unanimous agreement on the positive impact of the training on teachers' performance as well as the students' outcomes. Teachers felt that the training exposed them to skills that improved the performance of students and impacted on their method of teaching, increased students enrolment, benefited boys and girls in their classes, improved their teaching styles, and helped in their classroom engagement styles. Most of the teachers believed that the training impacted positively on how girls learned in class and

ultimately their performance. However, only about a quarter of the teachers effectively applied the learner centred approach due to overcrowded classrooms, poor classroom facilities and lack of teachers' knowledge in subject area. Despite the poor infrastructural facilities the community showed positive perceptions about girl child education and community participation. In general, the programmes were seen as significant contributions to meeting the educational needs of the communities. It is recommended that the project should be expanded to include other schools and teachers; teachers for the training should be screened to ensure that they have the prerequisite background in the subject areas they are trained for; governments and non-governmental organisations should look into improved physical facilities of schools and employment of more teachers.

Introduction

Education is a fundamental right of each and every member of the society. However, despite the fact primary school attendance is about 60% in Nigeria, research and available statistics has shown the existence of wide gender inequalities in enrolment and educational opportunities with lower rates observed for rural than urban and northern than southern Nigeria (e.g., Humphreys & Crawford, 2014). In Jigawa State which is located in the north-west of Nigeria the problem is pronounced as reported by UNESCO (2014); 70% of young women (age 15-24 years) did not complete primary school. In addition, only 8% of the poorest girls in Jigawa state complete primary school (WIDE, 2011). Research has shown significant gender inequalities in enrolment in the state (MercyCorps, 2013; Pinnock, 2014) and this may be due to socio-cultural factors such as gender norms and stereotypes, early marriage, misinterpretation of religion, inadequate female teachers and unfriendly learning environment which lead to very low enrolment of girls in formal schools. The population of girls in primary schools is 174,000 (41%) compared to 251,000 (59%) boys and in junior secondary schools 25,000 (34%) girls are enrolled compared to 49,000 (66%) boys (Jigawa State Ministry of Education, 2010). This shows clear inequalities in enrolment by gender in favour of boys.

There is paucity of research on primary school learning outcomes in Jigawa State. However at the secondary school level, reports by the state government on students' performance in West Africa Senior School Certificate Examination

(WASSCE) and National Examination Council Examination (NECO) indicated poor outcomes. For example, from 2013 to 2015, the state's performance was below par. Specifically, 10.4% of students in Jigawa State had at least five credits in WASSCE and 17% in NECO in 2013. In 2014, 4.9% and 18% passed in WASSCE and NECO while in 2015, 4.4% and 38% passed the two exams respectively (Hamagam, 2015).

Intervention programmes geared towards reversing the adverse trend were introduced. Some government interventions were in collaboration with development agencies. The State Basic Education Board (SUBEB) in particular was engaged in collaboration with the UK Department for International Development (DFID) Education Sector Support Programme In Nigeria (ESSPIN) and Teacher Development Programme (TDP) which employed various strategies to boost girls' education and empowerment skills for women generally. In addition, ESSPIN focuses on accountability, governance and service delivery in the area of health and education. The programme provides support to government at both state and federal levels for reforming the governance and improving the quality of education received by children. The programme was designed to span ten years (2008-2017) in support of six states namely; Jigawa, Kano, Kwara, Lagos, Enugu and Kaduna. The aim of the programme is to develop effective educational planning, financing and efficient system delivery that will enhance the quality of teaching and learning as well as schools in general (ESSPIN, 2015). Through its access and equity strategy, ESSPIN guides the

'mainstreaming of gender, equity and inclusion' and supports the implementation of the 'education sector policies on gender, equity and inclusion in basic education' (ESSPIN, 2012). ESSPIN projects are aimed at developing girls' education in Jigawa State, with a view to supporting the state education system in improving the performance of students, increasing girls' enrolment, and ensuring that teachers that were trained in the project adopt the acquired skills at their schools.

TDP is a DFID funded project spanning six years (2013-2019) and designed to assist institutions responsible for pre-service and in-service teacher development at both federal and state levels. The main purpose of the programme is to provide improvement in the quality of teaching and learning of pupils in English, mathematics, science and technology at the basic education level in Jigawa, Zamfara, Katsina, and later Niger, Kaduna and Kano states. The TDP commenced in Jigawa State in 2013 with the aim of providing technical assistance and support to the state for the achievement of its education goals. Thus the TDP provides technical assistance for effective coordination and management of all teacher training activities; provides support to ensure that on-going initiatives, including the capacity to develop educational materials locally and teacher training achieve the best results; complements and supplements on-going programmes, and; monitors the quality of education more systematically. This study seeks to investigate the contributions of ESSPIN and TDP projects in the development of girls' education in Jigawa State with specific reference to performance of students in basic education schools, gender balance in enrolment and teaching methods employed by the teachers in the ESSPIN project schools.

Research problem

Nigeria's education system is bedeviled with multiple problems which include poor enrolment of children, low quality of education, lack of infrastructure, poor quality of teachers and high rate of dropouts (ESSPIN, 2009) and these

problems are apparent in Jigawa State. Research findings show that the percentage of children that are able to read is 26% and the percentage of children between the ages 5-16 years that are numerate is 31% (NPC/ RTI, 2011; British Council, 2014a). Similarly, in terms of gender, 56% of the girls in Jigawa state are out of school with only 44% are enrolled in school. These problems led to various interventions by both government and non-governmental organisations such as the development of Gender Policy in 2013, provision of free uniform to girls, sensitization and awareness campaigns. Currently, little is known about how these interventions have contributed to girls' school enrolment, retention and overall outcome. In general, apart from donor evaluation reports, there is paucity of literature on the impact of the initiatives on girls' education. Some attempts to understand these issues have not specifically examined impact of projects in Jigawa; some of them only focused on selected issues such as funding, school infrastructure and teacher supplies (Coppinger 2009; Antoninis 2010; Dunne et al. 2013; Humphreys & Crawford, 2014). While these studies provided some insights, they did not sufficiently examine the impact of specific projects on girls' education in the state. This research set out to assess the impact of ESSPIN and TDP in the development of girls' education in Jigawa state.

Objectives

The primary objective of the research was to determine the contribution of ESSPIN and TDP initiatives to girls' enrolment and quality of education provided. The specific objectives were:

1. To examine how the interventions influence students' performance.
2. To determine how the interventions impact on girls' school enrolment.
3. To assess how training of teachers on new teaching methods impact on girls' participation and outcomes.
4. To determine whether the interventions in the state helped in meeting the educational needs of the society.

Research questions

Based on the broad and specific objectives of the

study, the following research questions were the focus of the study:

1. What is the impact of the ESSPIN and TDP interventions on students' performance?
2. What is the impact of the ESSPIN and TDP interventions on girls' school enrolment?
3. How did the training on new teaching methods impact on girls' participation and outcomes?
4. In what ways did the ESSPIN and TDP interventions help in meeting the educational needs of the society?

Rationale of the study

Given the importance of the global sustainable development goal to achieve education for all by 2030, the importance of women's education cannot be over-emphasised. As highlighted in British Council Report (2014b) on gender disparity in basic education in northern Nigeria, girls' education is good economics and the best investment in a country's national development. Girls' education creates intergenerational incremental positive effects on social and economic development because women's education is linked to lower maternal mortality and better child health. Consequently, it is expected that the research will contribute to: (1) identifying the degree of parity in enrolment by gender, (2) assessing the quality of education provided, which will pave way for identifying the current status of girls' education, (3) assessing the effectiveness and weaknesses of the training that teachers received in the project, (4) identifying the impact of the project on the life of the students, and (5) identifying societal needs in line with the educational provision of the girl-child education.

In general, the findings from this research will help in identifying the effectiveness of the ESSPIN and SBMC interventions. If the interventions are found effective, they could serve as models for implementation for further scale-up programmes and replication in other local government areas and states. However, if they the results reflect that the interventions are not effective or sufficiently so, it would be

necessary to identify the weaknesses and improve on the interventions. It is expected that local and international organisations will also find the results of the research useful, as it will provide data on current status of education in the state and areas of challenges.

Scope of the study

This research is limited to teachers, students and community members that benefitted from the interventions in Ringim, Dutse and Miga local government areas of Jigawa State. The research was limited to the three local governments because of the nature of the research (in-depth qualitative mixed method) that is time consuming. Taking more than the selected schools, within the time frame, could make the research too cumbersome and could affect the quality of the research.

Literature review

Education in general is a right and provides tremendous opportunities for improved life choices for children (boys and girls), men and women. Section 18 of the 1999 constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria articulated the fundamental principles of state policy, which reflects the commitment of the nation to equality of all citizens irrespective of gender, sex or race. Similarly, the National Policy on Education (Federal Ministry of Education, 2004) recognises that every Nigerian child is entitled to equal educational opportunity. Despite the fact that the constitution made provision for free education for all citizens, the government is not constrained by law or any means to execute it to Nigerians. Where there is failure to provide free education for all, the citizens are not empowered to hold the government and its other tiers responsible for their action or inaction.

According to the 2014 British Council Girls' Education in Nigeria report, educating girls has significant contributions in the development of any nation especially in the aspect of provision of healthy, stable and prosperous state whose citizens would be productive, active as well as empowered. Girls' education is a human right issue and the highest investment a country could

offer to its citizens for national development. It is described as an important tool for economic growth, increased resilience and addressing social injustice (UNICEF, 2007; UNICEF, 2015). Despite Nigeria's stated educational objective of providing compulsory and free education to all children at the basic level, the national primary Net Enrolment Rate for girls in 2010 was 55% as against 60% for boys and the low completion rates persist with girls (at least 53%) constituting more of the out-of-school children. It is important to note that the relevance and contributions of girl child education in Nigeria cannot be over-emphasised and there is a need to understand the drawbacks towards achieving the newly set agenda for sustainable development goals in the country.

Intervention projects for the Improvement of girls' education in Nigeria

Education and school attendance of the girl-child in almost all developing nations lag behind boys. In an effort to boost girls' education and accelerate progress towards Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and Education For All (EFA), various interventions were undertaken by federal and state governments, development partners and civil society organisations as well as communities. UNICEF has collaborated with the Federal government of Nigeria since 1997 through the National Mass Literacy Commission and with other agencies to improve girl-child education. The collaborative efforts involved three forms of non-formal education programme, which target out-of school children, youths, and adolescents between ages 8-18 years that were unable to complete formal primary education. These were non-formal programmes for primary girls' education, out of school boys and Qur'anic Education.

The African Girls' Education Initiative (AGEI) from 2001-2003 was implemented by UNICEF in partnership with federal and state governments, and funded by the Norwegian Government. The programme was directed at 22 primary schools and recorded remarkable progress in terms of enrolment and retention. The project evaluation report revealed 28% increase in girls' education retention and 80% decrease in drop-out rates for

girls (Obaji, 2005). The programme ensured that community assumed ownership of schools, abolished harmful traditional practices, tracked out of school pupils, and advocated for HIV/AIDS prevention. African Girls' Education Initiative (AGEI) led to the formulation for the development of Strategy for Acceleration of Girls' Education in Nigeria (SAGEN) and then SAGEN PLUS, launched in July 2003 by UNICEF and Federal Ministry of Education. In support of the programme, Kano state promulgated an edict to promote girls' education by prohibiting the collection of all forms of school fees in girls' secondary schools while Gombe state promulgated an edict against withdrawal of girls from schools.

The Nigerian Girls' Education Initiative (NGEI) is an affiliation of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and draws its constitution from 13 UN entities. The programme is an offshoot of the United Nations girls' Education Initiative (UNGEI) launched in April 2000 at the world education forum in Dakar by the United Nations. The Nigerian Girls' Education Initiative (NGEI) programme charged all national and international actors to work in line with the programme to obtain universal primary education as well as bridge the gender gap encountered in primary and secondary schools by 2015. UNGEI was a collaborative initiative of the Ministry of Education and development partners to coordinate efforts at improving girls' education in Nigeria.

The Girls' Education Project (GEP) is collaboration between Federal Ministry of Education, UNICEF and DFID that was launched in December 2004, to eliminate gender disparity in education and improve the quality of life of Nigerian girls through a collaborative approach to girls' education. The objective of the project was to increase girls' enrolment and transition rates to junior secondary schools in focus schools by 10% and 20% respectively. The project also sought to reduce primary school gender gap from 17% to 12% and enhance girls learning outcomes by 30%. However, the project achieved 5% increase in enrolment and completion rates in primary schools and non-formal education centres

including integrated Qur'anic schools in focus local government areas; and 4% and 2% reduction in the gender gap in focus schools and focus areas respectively (UNICEF, 2007). ESSPIN, which is a partnership between the federal government and DFID, has been implemented in five states including Kano since 2008. The allied TDP initiative was also launched in Jigawa as one of its three operational states and it is intended to improve the standard of pre-service and in-service training. The TDP expands and supports the programmes and activities of the ESSPIN and the GEP in the focus states.

Gender Policy in Jigawa State

The government of Jigawa State domesticated the National Gender Policy which is referred to as Jigawa State Gender Policy in 2013. The overall goal of the policy is to:

Build a just society devoid of discrimination, harness the full potentials of all social groups regardless of sex, and promote the enjoyment of fundamental human rights. The policy further seeks to ensure the survival, protection, participation and development of women, children, and people with special needs. It also seeks to evolve an evidence-based planning and governance system where human, social, financial and technological resources are efficiently and effectively deployed for sustainable development (Jigawa State Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Justice, 2013:12).

Despite the enactment of the policy, Jigawa State lags behind in terms of harnessing the full potentials of girls in order to fully participate and engage in developmental projects (Kura, 2013).

It is pertinent to note that girls' welfare today is highly important in shaping the prospect of families. The achievement of the policy goals is expected to be directly associated with the improvement of the physical and intellectual condition of girls and young women who are responsible for bearing and preparing the children of the next generation. Within the policy highlighted, it appears that the government focuses more on improving access to school to the detriment of other key areas of the policy. Issues such as harnessing the full potentials of all

social groups regardless of sex, promotion of fundamental human rights, survival, protection, participation and development of women and children have not been given adequate attention by the government (Ali & Ishaq, 2014).

Teachers

Teachers generally are the pillars in the implementation of any curriculum that is designed to produce quality learning in schools. It is therefore paramount to make sure that teachers are well trained and competent in the discharge of their duties. There is a relationship between teachers' qualifications, teaching methods and teacher-pupil ratio and students' outcomes (e.g., Akinsolu, 2010). Research conducted by Unterhalter et al. (2014) emphasised the importance of having thriving teachers who received full support in enhancing girls' schooling through training, education and reflection of attitudes. The poor quality of the new entrants into teacher education programmes and the implications on the quality of graduates produced from colleges of education has been stressed by previous literature (e.g., Akinbote, 2007; Akinsolu, 2009). This may be attributed to several factors including inappropriate teacher education curriculum and inadequate pedagogical knowledge and skills (e.g., Adeosun, et al. 2009). The consequences include poor performance of the children in primary schools and lack of confidence in the educational systems and discouragement of parents from sending their wards to poor schools (Teacher Development Programme, 2014).

One of the major limitations in assessing teachers' competency in many previous studies (e.g., Agu, Onyekuba & Anyichie, 2013; Badau & Sakiyo, 2013 and Ayua & Eta, 2014) is the exclusive use of questionnaire in eliciting information on teachers. A more robust approach is expected to generate more comprehensive outcomes. For example, using mixed methods and specifically observing teaching methods in addition to questionnaire administration has the potential to engender deeper insights into the phenomena as well as evaluate the actual competency of the teachers in terms of pedagogy.

Teaching Methods

Teaching is described as the process of unleashing the inherent potentials of the recipient so as to bring out knowledge from the learner. This task involves the teacher selecting appropriate pedagogical strategies that would provide optimal comprehension of the instructions by the recipient. Studies have revealed that there is a high degree of correlation between method of instruction and assimilation (Duruji, Segun, Olanrewaju & Okorie, 2014). Therefore, the choice of appropriate teaching methods, which is the general pedagogy, principles and management strategies employed for classroom teaching, is of paramount importance in the assimilation by the learner. Stakeholders in education, in recent times, have been consistent in their efforts to engage in programmes geared towards better teaching and provision of learning materials as well as infrastructure in Jigawa state. These included support for in-service training mainly for primary school teachers through Universal Basic Education Commission, Teacher Professional Development (TPD) programme, Millennium Development Goals, State Universal Basic Education Boards and other externally funded programmes. Despite all these inputs made towards improving the system, the learning outcomes of the students is highly insignificant (Davison, 2010). In view of this, the study conducted by ESSPIN (2010) shows that poor teaching due to inappropriate teaching methods is one of the factors that caused truancy, poor performance, non-enrolment and dropout from the schools. Some research findings suggest that there is very little variation in the structure of teaching across levels or subjects, with predominantly traditional didactic methods used by the teachers. However, in some states (Jigawa State inclusive) that were supported by development partner projects, some changes towards more learner-centred and interactive teaching has been observed (Davidson, 2010). There is little research conducted on the quality of teaching and learning at either primary or junior secondary school level in Jigawa State. There is also little in-depth study of the process of teaching and learning at basic level, especially on

the specific learning interaction that is more helpful to the male and female learners.

Summary. The review of the relevant literature has highlighted the challenges associated with girl child education in Jigawa state. Research has shown a wide range of educational problems associated with the state in particular and the efforts made by various government and non-governmental agencies towards increasing the rate of enrolment, retention and completion of primary education in the state. Previous literature has highlighted the gendered dimensions of students' experiences and the need to enhance the educational outcomes of disadvantaged girls. Thus, it is crucial to assess the outcomes of educational interventions geared towards addressing these needs, as the findings obtained would show whether the interventions had any significant impact on girl child education. This would lead to identifying areas of strength and weakness. The available literature has yielded a dearth of information on the impact of girls' education initiatives in Jigawa State, specifically ESSPIN and TDP. The present research aimed to assess the gender differences in the impact of ESSPIN and TDP interventions on the quality of students' enrolment, learning experience and outcomes.

Method

Research Design. According to Slavin (2007), mixed method design is a combination of quantitative and qualitative techniques. This study adopted a concurrent triangulation design that involves the collection of both quantitative and qualitative data concurrently and then comparing the two databases to determine if there is convergence, difference, or some combination. This model generally uses separate quantitative and qualitative methods as a means to offset the weaknesses inherent within one method with the strengths of the other; conversely, the strength of one adds to the strength of the other (Creswell, 2009). Thus, a combination of surveys (quantitative techniques), interviews, observation and focus group (qualitative techniques) discussions were used to collect data for this study.

Population and Sample. The target population for the research consists of all ESSPIN schools, teachers and students in Ringim, Dutse, and Miga in Jigawa State. Multistage sampling was used for the study. Cluster sampling was used to select the schools in order to have a fair representation of schools located in both rural and urban areas. Thirty schools (ten from each local government) were selected for the purpose of the study. In each of the schools, the four teachers that were trained by ESSPIN/TDP were selected making a total of 120 teachers. Ten students were randomly selected from each school to give a total 300 students. Purposive sampling was used to select 120 community members including parents. This was to enable the researchers to link outcomes in the schools and community satisfaction with what students are taught in schools. In each local government area four community groups were participants in the focus group discussions.

Instrumentation and data collection. The study employed the use of questionnaires, interviews, focus group discussions and observation for data gathering. Questionnaires were designed to tap information from teachers regarding their experiences and perceptions about the impact of their training. Observational techniques were used to obtain information on teachers' teaching techniques, teacher and students' participation and other pertinent characteristics of classroom

engagement. Focus group discussions and interview guides were also developed to guide open-ended discussions with community members and parents on community educational needs, experiences and perceptions regarding the ESSPIN and TDP interventions. The instruments were given to experts in the field of testing and measurement for content validity. The questionnaire was pilot tested using split half method in which reliability coefficient was established at 0.87. The research assistants were trained for a period of three days. The researchers obtained formal approval to conduct the research from SUBEB and the state ministry of education. Thereafter, the SUBEB and the education ministry notified the local governments and schools involved in this study. Furthermore, approval and support of some traditional leaders in the local governments and community members were sought and secured for the study.

Findings

Research question 1: What is the impact of the ESSPIN and TDP interventions on students' performance? To answer this question, two kinds of data were collected; quantitative data (questionnaires for teachers) and qualitative data (interviews with students and focus group discussions with community members), subjected to descriptive statistical and content analysis respectively.

Table 2.1: Teachers responses on impact of training on students' performance (%)

Items	Yes	No
Is there increase in performance in common entrance examination as a result of interventions?	100%	0%
Methods of teaching I was exposed to improve students' performance	96%	4%

Table 2.1 shows that the teachers felt that the training they were exposed to helped to improve students' performance. All the teachers agreed that there was improvement in the common entrance examinations. Ninety-six per cent believed that the method of teaching they were applying due to the training received significantly improved students' performance. In support of

the teachers' responses, narratives from interviews with students indicated that the way they were currently taught had significantly improved their performance. A student in Ringim highlighted that:

Before we were not given opportunity to do class work, but now we get to do

class work in groups and sometimes we are even given homework, even though we don't have textbooks.

Similar responses were echoed by most of the students. During the focus group discussions, a majority of the community members who were also parents agreed that there was a remarkable change, in recent times, as their children or wards were actually improving. A father in Dabi claimed that:

My child... now I see him reading and writing and this was hardly the case before now. So I am happy... the only thing is that the school has no sitting facility, no water and the teachers are not enough.

Another parent in Dutse pointed out that:

...sometimes we come around to inspect and find students doing home-work or assignment at home.

The result from the data collected showed that the intervention contributed to the improvement of students' performance. This is in line with ESSPIN's (2010) finding that as a result of the intervention of the School Improvement Programme, the school community began to show interest in the education of their children and with the regular support of State School Improvement Team and School Support Officers, the teachers introduced child-centred teaching methods in their lessons, allowing children to learn in a child friendly and effective way which boosts performance. Most of the community members interviewed were satisfied with what their children were being taught but were not happy with number of teachers and available classes. The classes were overpopulated and the teachers were inadequate in most of the schools visited.

The impact of the interventions would have been significantly better if the school environment was more conducive by addressing factors such as overpopulation, lack of chairs and desks. Some of

the teachers were trying to use the learner centred approach but due to overpopulation and lack of chairs it was difficult. Also when put in groups, the students lacked basic reading and writing materials for classwork. This finding is in line with the ICAI report (2012) that DFID programmes have yet to achieve sustainable results largely due to the failure of the state governments to fund adequately and equitably the required improvements. From the observation, virtually all schools visited in Jigawa state had overpopulated classes that were dilapidated with few or no chairs and desks. In Dutse, in response to the question of what improvement parents would like to see in the school, a parent stated that:

Well, the improvement we need from the government is to decongest the classes by building more as some of the classes are accommodating over 100 students and also to provide additional chairs for the students and adequate toilet facilities.

Research question 2: What is the impact of the ESSPIN and TDP interventions on girls' school enrolment? To answer this research question, documents (students register), actual classroom observation and responses from focus group discussions were reviewed. Teachers' responses from questionnaires were also used. In most of the schools visited in the three local governments, there was improvement in enrolment by gender based on the attendance register; the same was also evident during class observation especially in Dutse and Ringim. Given the non-availability of school level data and dearth of useable and complete data in most schools, data for only six schools were available for analysis. Table 2.2 shows enrolment by gender in six schools.

Table 2.2: Enrolment (%) by gender in some of the visited

School	Boys %	Girls%
Zai Primary School (Dutse)	48%	52%
Limawa Primary School (Dutse)	40%	60%
Galamawa Primary School (Dutse)	54%	46%
Sankara Central Primary School (Ringim)	54%	46%
Sabongari Primary School (Miga)	62%	38%
J. S. S. Tsakuwa (Miga)	72%	28%
Total (Average)	55%	45%

From Table 2.2, it could be deduced that girls' enrolment was relatively high with the exception of the schools in Miga. It is noteworthy that in the two schools in Dutse gender parity was in favour of girls recording higher enrolment figures. According to the NDHS report (2013), 38.1% of girls as opposed to 48.6% of boys age 6-12 years attend primary school while 9.8% of girls as against 28.3% of boys age 13-18 years attend secondary school in Jigawa State. The attendance gender parity index for primary school is 0.78. However, the average boys to girls' enrolment of 55% as against 45% in Table 2.2 reflect a better female participation. Similarly, the teachers

argued that there is improvement as in the previous years before the intervention, in some of the schools, only a few girls were enrolled.

Figure 2.1 shows tabular and graphical illustrations of the summary of enrolment by gender before and after the intervention. The figure reflects an improvement by gender in the three local governments, most especially in Dutse; the wide disparity between enrolment of boys and girls observed in 2007/2008 before the intervention had reduced towards improved gender parity in 2014/15 in favour of girls.

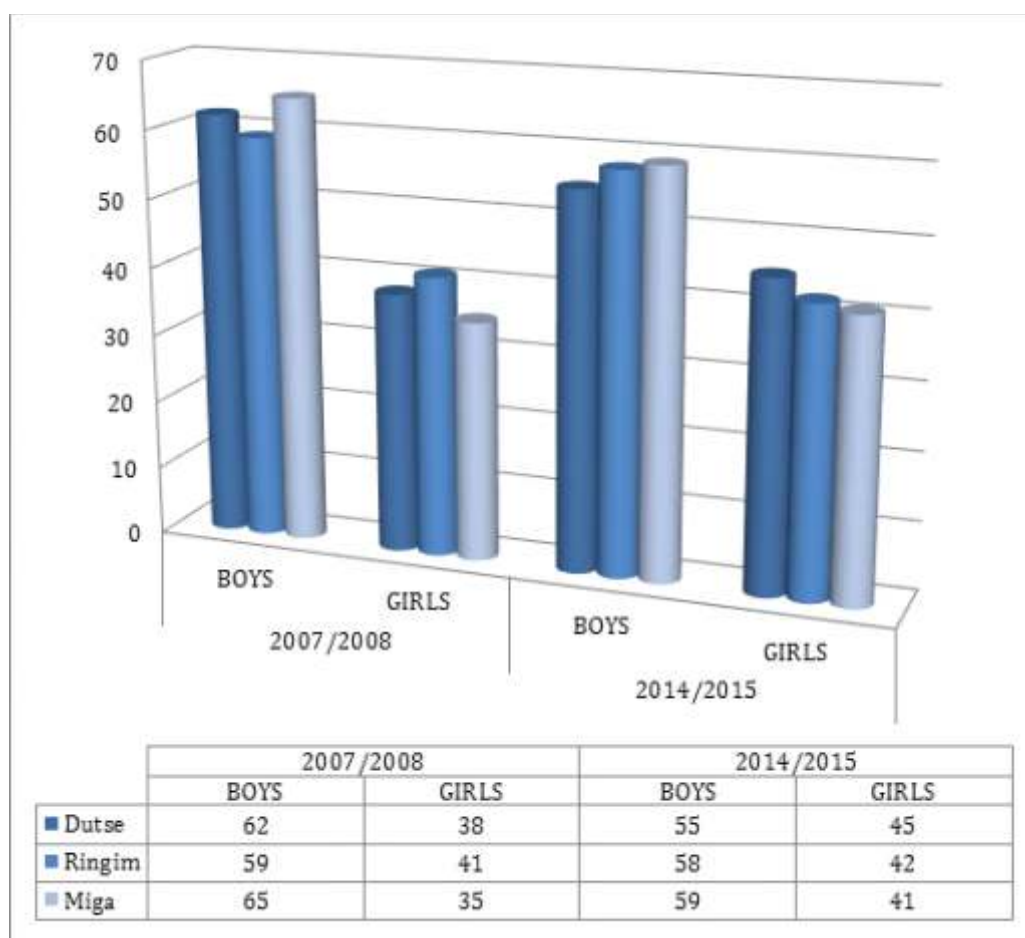


Figure 2.1: Enrolment (%) by gender before and after intervention in three local governments (2007/08 and 2014/15)

During a focus group discussions, when asked the reason for the increase in girls' enrolment, the community members mentioned that this happened as a result of increased awareness of the need for girl child education due to advocacy by ESSPIN and the distribution of school uniforms. A striking case of a particular girl was cited as an example by a community leader:

We have a girl coming from a distant village, about 8 km away from school. The father bought her a bicycle and she is always among the first to come to school. Some of these girls that are coming from far villages don't even have bicycles, but they still come because they have realised the need for education.

Similarly, a teacher from Miga described the role of ESSPIN as commendable in the area of creating awareness in girl child education and constant supervision in which he reported that:

I have just spent a year and a half in this school but the contribution of ESSPIN in the school is highly commendable especially with the uniforms they give to girls in the primary school and also the constant supervision by ESSPIN officials which has helped a lot in mobilizing parents towards enrolling girls in school. There was a girl that has not been coming to school for weeks but when ESSPIN officials came to our school for inspection, they advised us to check with the parents and discuss with them the reason for their daughter not going to

school. In the end the father reported that he always sends her to school but the girl confessed that she always dodged and go to bush until the school is over, and since that intervention made by the committee, the girl now attends school regularly."

The responses from focus group discussions also brought to light the effectiveness of ESSPIN programme in sensitizing the communities towards the need for girl-child education. This also helped in raising the enrolment of girls in schools. However, from the responses of the community members, they were not happy that school grants had been stopped, as they emphasised the need for the grants provided by ESSPIN through SBMC, which had been of much help to schools in the community. Thus, SBMC chairman in one of the local government areas argued that:

The school grant is critical in the effective running of the schools. We use the money to buy instructional materials, make repairs of chairs and tables, buy stationaries, chairs and tables etc."

A teacher in Miga also commented that:

We are witnessing changes in terms of education generally in this area especially in the girl-child education. Because in the past if you try to take a girl into school, the parent will come with sticks fighting authorities because they do not want to...but now parents (including non-educated ones) are spending their money to sponsor their children to school and each year we record a high increase from this town and the progress was recorded due to ESSPIN programme.

Findings from the data collected show that the interventions have helped greatly in improving

the enrolment of girls in schools. This finding is in line with ESSPIN report (2010) that as a result of various interventions including building of toilets, teacher training, free uniforms and provision of instructional aids, there were remarkable improvements in enrolment by gender.

Data collected also shows that the communities were happy with the interventions despite inadequate funding as most of the schools still lacked basic facilities like toilets, chairs and even classes due to overpopulation. As highlighted by the ESSPIN report (2010), the major challenges facing education sector in Jigawa State include: dilapidated school buildings; lack of basic facilities such as water and sanitation; poor coordination of school inspection; head teachers' lack of understanding of their crucial leadership role; lack of community support; poor coordination between state and local government areas; limited resources for teachers and students; large number of unqualified teachers; unmanageable numbers of pupils in a class. These problems were apparent during the course of the research. Some community members stated that although teacher training is important, other factors are also important. With the current dilapidated state of the classes, poor toilet facilities, no grants etc., little or no improvement will be seen in the students. From the discussion, it was learnt that the Jigawa State Gender Policy was useful to promote girl child enrolment, which include free education, school provisions for girls going to boarding schools such as mattresses, buckets, as well as full sponsorship of higher education for girls.

Research question 3: How did the training on new teaching methods impact on girls' participation and outcomes? Responses from teachers' questionnaires, students' interviews and observation provided data for addressing this research question.

Table 2.3: Percentages of Responses to Questionnaire for Teachers

Items	YES	NO
Did you participate in the TDP training workshop?	100%	0%
The skill I was exposed to during the workshop has helped to improve the performance of the students	97%	3%
The method of teaching helped in increasing students enrolment and participation	100%	0%
Has the training workshop impacted on your teaching style?	99%	1%
Has the training helped in your classroom engagement style?	97%	3%
Has the training benefited boys and girls in your class?	100%	0%
Has the training made any difference in the way girls learn in the class?	94%	6%
Is there any noticeable difference in the girls' performance in your class since you attended the training?	94%	6%
Is there any noticeable difference in the girls' classroom participation in your class since you attended the training?	92%	8%

Table 2.3 shows that all (100%) the teachers that participated in the study had attended the TDP training and there was an almost unanimous agreement on the positive impact of the training on their own performance as well as the students' outcomes. All the teachers agreed that the method of teaching has helped in increasing students' enrolment and their training has benefited boys and girls in their classes. Almost all (99%) of the teachers indicated that the intervention impacted on their teaching styles, 97% believed that the workshop exposed them to skills that improved the performance of students and helped in their classroom engagement styles. Again, 94% of the teachers believed that the training made a difference in the way girls learned in class and ultimately their performance and 92% were of the opinion that there was a noticeable difference in girls' classroom participation. The observational method incorporated into this study confirmed these findings in that teachers were observed asking engaging questions with the girls actively participating.

Responses from head teachers were positive on the impact of the interventions: For example:

To be frank with you, we got a lot of contributions from TDP in this local government whereby we were given trainer in the pocket (a hand phone) as you can see it, amplifier and other teaching materials to be used in class and they also give teachers two day

training from time to time.

ESSPIN has done a lot in the area of uniform and temporary shelter for the students. For the TDP, the teachers have now learnt the most simplified ways of teaching, which also aid in easy learning by the students. ESSPIN should bring the training closer instead of taking too long in between, at least twice in a term.

Table 2.4 presents the summary of researchers' observation of teaching activities in the schools visited. The results showed that 87% of the classes visited had good enrolment figures and participation (79%) by gender. However, only 22% of the teachers were found able to apply the learner centred approach. This could be attributed to several factors that were observed in the course of the data collection, including:

1. Teacher factor: most of the teachers lacked adequate subject matter knowledge and lacked communication skills in English.
2. Overcrowding in most classes, making grouping difficult to manage and control (only 27% of the classes observed had students seated in group).
3. Absence or inadequate seats for students (most of the schools visited had no seats in classes, the few that had were mostly broken, unusable and inadequate).

Table 2.4: Summary of data obtained

Items	Observation	
Teaching Method	Learner centred (22%)	Teacher centred (78%)
Student participation by gender	Full Participation (79%)	Low Participation (21%)
Gender sensitivity in class	Yes (96%)	No (4%)
Enrolment by gender	Good (87%)	Poor (13%)
Sitting arrangement	In group (27%)	In rows (73%)

Furthermore, the researchers were informed that although the training received was focused on four subjects (i.e. English, mathematics, basic science and technology), some of the teachers that were trained had different backgrounds from the subjects. For example, some were Arabic and Hausa teachers, which may have led to problem of implementation. Also some of the teachers had weak basic English communication skills and were observed to be teaching the students in Hausa even in the junior secondary schools. This makes implementation of effective teaching difficult. In general, these issues notwithstanding, the teachers that were trained were observed to have a zeal for engaging students in class activities.

In terms of students' outcome, 90% of the students responded that they had plans of furthering their education. Most of the students (92%) found the school environment encouraging and teachers helpful in motivating them to go further. Overall, findings in this research showed high level of girl child participation and outcome. The results were supported by those of Para-Mallam (2012) which reported that girls in some states had consistently above mean scores across all or most of the knowledge, attitudinal and confidence variables (Katsina, Kaduna, Niger and to a lesser extent Nasarawa) as a result of stronger and more consistent project intervention in those states. In this study, with the necessary interventions girls' participation and outcome was enhanced.

Research question 4: In what ways did the ESSPIN and TDP interventions help in meeting the educational needs of the society? Data from focus group discussions with community members was used to address this research question. From the

narratives, it is apparent that the community participants were satisfied with what their children were taught. The members expressed their belief that education is a tool for the betterment of the lives of their children. A father stated that:

With our children in school we know where they are and not wondering about with nothing to do, which could lead to so many things. Also children that go to school are better behaved and neat.

The narratives also showed that majority of parents allowed girls to complete the nine year basic education and proceed to senior secondary school due to the efforts made by ESSPIN and the state government.

The development of supervision by ESSPIN officials through the established SBMCs has also helped to develop a sense of community ownership of schools. Community members were active in engaging with what is happening in schools as observed in a community (Sintilmawa) where some of the students travelled significant distances (7 to 10 km) to attend classes. A number of SBMC members agreed with the parents of those students coming from remote communities to allow them to reside in houses near the school during week days and go home during weekends.

Findings from the study shows that ESSPIN through the SBMC helped to built good interaction between parents and teachers as claimed by a community member who is a parent and also a headmaster in one of the schools;

Members in this community are contributing to our school a lot, as one

time a parent visited and found a lot of seats that have spoilt laying around, he met with members and contributed money to repair those seats.

A parent in Miga central community stressed that:

The ESSPIN programme assists a lot especially in girl-child education. This is seen as a new thing to us, ... the assistance helps a lot in encouraging members of the community to enrol their children in school. All these changes happened in the last two years because of ESSPIN programme. The improvement we recorded in terms of girl-child education is beyond explanation because there was nothing like enrolling girls in schools from this community in those days. I can authoritatively tell you that we have more than 100 girls in school now compared to the past where the parents could not even agree to send their children to school. In a nutshell we have about 70-75% of our girls in primary school now while about 90% are at Islamiyya school. Our major problem is teachers in the areas of mathematics, English and science.

However, members observed so many problems bedeviling the schools in their communities which included: inadequate number and quality of teachers, lack of fencing, inadequate classes, lack of seats, unusable toilets in some schools and lack of water supply. In addition, the researchers observed that there was gross inadequacy of teachers especially in the rural schools visited. Also, the classrooms were overcrowded, dilapidated classes with inadequate sitting facilities.

Conclusion

This study was designed to examine the contribution of ESSPIN and TDP projects to girls' enrolment and quality of education in selected local government areas in Jigawa state. The findings suggest that the interventions contributed to the improvement in performance

of the students and have helped in the increase of girl child enrolment. Improvements in girls' participation in school and class engagement were also observed. Despite the poor infrastructural facilities in the school, the community showed positive perceptions about girls' education, expressed favourable interests in the schooling of their children and positive sense of community ownership of schools. In essence the programmes were seen as significant contributions to meeting the educational needs of the communities.

Some recurrent issues from the research were observed during the conduct of the research. First, ESSPIN has contributed in most schools by building toilets, provision of instructional materials and school grants for two sessions with the last in 2011. Second, SBMCs were very active in all the local governments visited. The TDP was actively engaged in organising teacher training for the identified teachers in all the visited schools with the last held in September 2015. Other non-governmental organisations and community members also contributed through voluntary teaching, provision of textbooks, orphan aid, etc. There is no gainsaying that these, to a considerable extent, helped to improve the quality of education, girls' participation in school, increase enrolment of girls and helped the community in achieving their educational needs. However, a lot still need to be done, especially in terms of improving teachers capability and dedication, expanding the scope of the interventions and addressing the issues highlighted.

Therefore, based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. The projects should be expanded to include other schools and teachers. Further, similar initiatives should be developed to encourage girls' education at higher levels in the state.
2. Employment of more teachers is central to the effectiveness of education intervention efforts.
3. There should be continuation of school grants to all schools.
4. Teachers for the training should be

screened to ensure that they have the prerequisite background in the subject areas they are being trained for.

5. Governments and NGOs should look into improved physical facilities in schools

such as provision of adequate chairs and desks, repairs of classes, building of new classes where needed, provision of toilet facilities in all schools.

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Girls' achievement in science and mathematics: research finding from Kano State science schools

Uchenna Idoko, Fatimah Ibrahim, Rabiatu B. Umar

Abstract

This study was undertaken in six selected Science Technical School Board (STSB) schools in Kano state principally to examine: (i) attitudes of parents and community towards girls' participation in science and mathematics; (ii) gender differences in mathematics and science (physics, chemistry and Biology) achievement, and; (iii) factors that influence achievement of boys and girls in science and mathematics. Qualitative and quantitative techniques involving questionnaires, document analysis, key informant interviews, focus group discussions and observational techniques were used to collect data from various stakeholders including students and teachers from the selected schools, parents, community leaders and government officials. The findings revealed that negative attitudes towards girls performance was evident in pressures towards early marriage, courtship process, girls' lack of choice in decision making and perceptions that girls were academically less capable than boys in science and mathematics. Analysis of achievements in SS2 qualifying and WASSCE exams showed that boys out-performed girls in science and mathematics over five consecutive years. The disparity was wider in mathematics. In general, performance in examinations decreased over the five-year period, especially for biology. Results revealed that the reasons for the poor and decreasing levels of achievement included lack of female teachers, overcrowded classes and attendant consequences such as inadequate participation in practical laboratory activities and poor boarding facilities. Also, the burden of household chores, negative attitudes and low levels of support for girls' science education hindered performance. Recommendations made to close the observed gender gap included discouraging gender stereotypes, establishing mentoring programmes, increasing the number of qualified female science teachers, training and retraining of science teachers towards gender-sensitive pedagogy and efficient gender disaggregated records, monitoring and evaluation.

Introduction

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), implemented for 15 years since 2000, were lauded for inspiring countries to take actions towards measurable improvement in girls' enrolment, retention and completion at primary and secondary levels. Yet, they have also been criticised for not sufficiently addressing and uprooting causes of gender disparity and wide range of factors that prevent girls from achieving their potentials (OSSAPMDGs, 2009). The succeeding Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which appear more propitious with respect to ending gender inequities in education, seeks through its Goal 4, to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities. Similarly, Goal 5 goal seeks to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls (UN-OHRLS, 2014).

As a member of the United Nations, Nigeria places emphasis on the provision of equal opportunities for girls and women as means of achieving sustainable development and economic growth. In developing countries, the importance of female education for national development, economic growth, and poverty reduction cannot be over-emphasised. Given their significant roles in production and reproduction, and important connection between gender issues and development it is important to invest in the education of girls and ensure parity in access and quality. Therefore, girls' access to education has received global, regional and national attention and there are several initiatives geared towards improving enrolment, gender parity and achievements.

Science and technology is an important aspect of education where effort to promote gender equality is very urgent. The Nigerian government has in recent years focused attention on strengthening national capacity in science, a key recommendation and objective of its Vision 2020 plan for economic transformation. Yet, the importance of gender equity in science education has not been significantly reflected in the country's activities, as it has not initiated any national policies toward this goal. Female

participation in science was mentioned in Nigeria's most recent Science, Innovation, and Technology Policy, but no specific objectives have been developed (FMST, 2012).

Statement of Problem

There is a noticeable underrepresentation of women in the current stock of scientists and engineers. This raises question about factors responsible for lower numbers of females at higher levels in scientific and technological institutions, as have been observed in universities (Ekine, 2013). This can potentially affect the attitudes and performance of learners in science and mathematics especially at the secondary school level. Both at school and household levels, the males are given much encouragement to go into science and science-based careers while this is played down among the female gender due to the peculiarities of beliefs and cultural practices in Kano state (Duse & Yar'zever, 2013). As a result, this study sought to find out if this explains variations in achievements of the respondents.

Primary school net attendance ratios in Kano state, according to the 2013 NDHS reports, is 60.5% for boys and 58.6% for girls. There are over two million primary school children in Kano State and the observed low levels of school attendance is associated primarily with poverty. Consequently, educational outcomes are strongly dependent on the socio-economic status of students' families; children from poor households in Kano State tend to have lower levels of literacy and numeracy compared to their non-poor counterparts. Also, poor households, where decisions on schooling tend to exclude some children in the household, exhibit higher gender gaps (Kano State Ministry of Education, 2009).

In the analysis and review carried out by the Kano State Education board on its baseline and midterm projections, it was revealed that female enrolment into schools, particularly at primary and junior secondary levels, exceeds that of the male, but the area of concern is the completion rate, as Table 3.1 shows.

Table 3.1: School enrolment and completion projection chart

Primary	Baseline	Projections			
	2005/06	2007/08	2012/13	2017/18	2019/20
Gross completion rate (%)	77%	80%	80%	97%	105%
Female gross completion rate	64%	71%	75%	96%	107%
Gross enrolment rate (%)	91%	89%	98%	117%	123%
Total number of pupils (thousands)	1,443,944	1,469,874	1,769,240	2,243,789	2,424,830
Number of pupils in private (thousand)	19,113	22,150	63,018	206,725	280,742
% of students in private	1%	2%	4%	9%	12%
Gender parity index	0.80	0.83	0.90	1.00	1.03
Junior Secondary					
Registration rate – male	55%	60%	71%	82%	82%
Registration rate – female	60%	66%	79%	93%	93%
Gross completion rate (%)	44%	48%	51%	67%	76%
Female gross completion rate	38%	37%	51%	67%	76%

(Source: Kano State Revised Education Strategic Plan, 2009-2018).

A survey of perceptions carried out by the state ministry of education indicates the impact of strong negative gender attitudes that serve as hindrances to girls' education. For example, mothers tend to send their female children to Islamiyya schools because of the perception that girls require moral education than what is taught than in conventional schools. Educated girls are perceived as having lower chances of being married and lacking respect. Early marriage and hawking, largely induced by poverty, are also factors that contribute to affect girls' education potentials (ESSPIN, 2006). Kano State is one of the northern states that are educationally backward and little research has been done on gender disparity in the state secondary education (Kano State Ministry of Education, 2009). This study, therefore, aimed to identify gender biases, gaps and inequities in science and mathematics achievement. It is expected that the findings will provide evidence to inform relevant policy and interventions to enhance girls' education outcomes.

Literature Review

Perspectives on Education and Gender

In investigating topics related to education and gender, it is expedient to consider pertinent theories including feminist theories, human rights theory and human capital theory. The human capital and human rights theories underscore the significance of education from

economic and capacity development perspectives while feminist theories seek to highlight underpinning power relations and factors that exacerbate gender inequality at all levels of human society. The importance of education cannot be over emphasised as studies have shown that education forms human capabilities which are critical for production; this eventually will be evident in the growth of all other stages of the human capital (Kang, 2009; Olaniyan & Okemakinde, 2008). This school of thought believes the more educated people are the more productive they become when compared to less educated people. This simply suggests that progressive human capital is as critical as development in physical, financial, natural and social capital. This concept focuses on the need to assess the quality of the present intellectual stock in the society basically by providing good content and quality education, which is then transferred to the future generations in order to increase the efficiency of future society. Human capital school believes that countries 'economic growth and functioning depend basically on their human (and physical) capital supply' (e.g., Olaniyan & Okemakinde, 2008). Other development experts have also shown that enlightened economic development is a product of investment made in human capital over a period of time through education (Adamu, 2000; Ojo, 1996; Okojie, 1995).

This idea does not highlight the various

dissimilarities that exist between male and female prospects and results in education. Since it does not take into cognisance these fundamental issues associated with gender and education gaps, it can therefore be referred as a gender neutral model. The idea has also been criticized on the grounds that although a shortage of educated people can adversely upset societal growth, education to all members of a society can negatively result into unemployment and underemployment because the government and the private sector may lack the capacity to accommodate the population of skilled workforce. This situation could adversely affect the society. For example there may be increased income inequalities in the society, with working people having higher income levels comparative to the unemployed, and in this way, result into a form of hostile development (Olaniyan & Okemakinde, 2008). Further, as Ezegwu (2012: 6) notes, many scholars have examined the relevance of human capital perspectives in Nigeria, some of which "tend to confirm constructive links between education and socio-economic development, while many indicate their scepticisms.

Feminist theories such as the socialization theory, gender difference theory, structural theory and the constructive theory lean toward equal gender rights in every aspect, including education for sustainable development. For example, the socialization theory links females' underachievement in schools to reinforcement or perpetration of gender roles and stereotypes by teachers. Teachers would focus more on boys calling on them more and challenging them. The beliefs of teachers and pupils determine the quality of teaching and learning (Samuelsson & Samuelsson, 2016). For example, when boys were taught biology using jigsaw puzzles they were familiar with boys tended to do better than girls even when both groups had comparable baseline performance before the intervention (Amedu, 2015). This idea is also shared by the liberal feminist theory (Chege & Sifuna, 2006). The theory recommends gender-neutral approaches (no distinctive gender roles in schools) but on the other hand, expounds affirmative action in

policies and programmes to overcome girls' poor achievement (Thompson 2003; Chege & Sifuna, 2006). Gender difference theory emphasises gender differences particularly because of exceptional values of women. According to this theory, the challenge for girls is coming to terms with the gap between school values and feminine values (Heaton & Lawson, 1996). This theory differs from socialization theory, which highlights gender-neutral teaching pedagogies; gender difference theory highlights gender aware teaching pedagogies. But both theories agree on the need for reforms in school patriarchal values in education system and the use of female role models to promote this reform and improve education achievement of girls rather than using drastic feminist approaches.

Structural theories advance that gender roles rise from the need to establish a division of labour that will help sustain the smooth running of the family and alongside add to the stability of society. In their view, girls and boys are educated to have different attitudes to life. Boys are taught instrumentality—that is, to be goal preoccupied, to focus on responsibilities and to be worried for the association of the family to societal structures. Girls, on the other hand, are educated to be communicative—that is, to express their feelings and to look for and react to the feelings of others and be preoccupied with the daily household chores. This theory just like patriarchal system has given rise to underrepresentation of women in various power structures and in addition, poor education achievement for girls. Another feminist theory is deconstructive theory. The deconstructive feminist theorists treat gender concerns as things that can be changed socially unlike the structural theory that sights patriarchal system as not adjustable. An example of such theorist is Sachs (1992) who emphasised that the response to gender inequality is to challenge unequal power relations which discriminate against women. The consequence of such contention is the promotion of girls' achievement.

Although the opinions of human capital and human rights theories emphasise the significance

of fairness in education at an individual and society level, they are still gender-neutral. Not totally taking on the gender element in a theory can result into severe gender inequalities towards achievement and other aspects in the education system. A number of scholars including Klasen and Lamanna (2008) contend that gender discrimination in education endangers the average total of human capital and in turn jeopardises economic advancement and development. Based on this line of philosophy, this study concisely supports that gender dimension is inevitable if education is to produce sustainable growth especially in Nigeria where women and girls have been traditionally and communally denied their rights to education.

Education, in its far-reaching logic, is an important tool for accomplishing constructive growth at diverse levels. In Kano, education is vital for combating with the three menaces of development: lack of knowledge, sicknesses and scarcity. Literature recognizes that education is a significant tool for development for the fact that it functions as an investment for production of other goods and services (Olaniyan and Okemakinde, 2008; Kang, 2009; Talaka, 2009). Therefore, education is one of the central tools for inclusive development and community advancement and it is a powerful dynamism for constructive transformation in society. For example, the significance of secondary education cannot be overstated due to the part it plays in community development. Kang (2009) among other scholars theorise that education has an essential importance, while others with same views as Talaka (2009) see education as a tool for community development. Also, whether education has significant worth or it is a tool for community development that involves establishments, organisations, procedures and rules; education and development are units that go hand in hand in liberating societies from poverty and gender inequality (Perkiö, 2009).

Overview of related literature

In Nigeria, the fact that the education of the girl-child is still lagging behind that of the boys has been well documented (e.g., Olarewaju, 2002).

More specifically, females were grossly under-represented in terms of enrolment, participation and achievement in science, technology and mathematics education at all levels of education (Nnaka & Anaekwe, 2006). In general, boys also tend to outperform girls in mathematics and science subjects (e.g., Raheem, 2017). Also, Agwagah and Aguele (2007) asserted that gender imbalance in education is a major issue desired to be given needed emphasis in the on-going education reforms embarked upon by the Federal Government of Nigeria. Furthermore, what is the impact of interventions in science and technology on girls' educational outcomes? This reflects a major focus of this study.

Gin (2011) observed that even in the modern-day framework, the categorisation of men and women creates a world that masculine values dominate and there are well-entrenched philosophies that women are second-rate to men. Hence, because there are power relations assigned to this norm, naturally men are assigned more power, and more prospects above women in the society. Science, technology and mathematics are perceived as masculine subjects; and there is notable inequity against women in science. Nwona and Akogun (2013) proposed that for gender equity to be achieved in science, technology and mathematics the best teaching methods must be identified and used so as to achieve the best result. According to Adesoji (2008) and Olasehinde (2008) some interventions geared towards improving the attitude of girls' toward greater achievement in sciences and mathematics yielded results while others did not. Examples of those that yielded results were: tutors' usage of inquiry method that combined determinations to raise students' attention and engagement; problem-solving mastery and also a chemistry method that included graphical representation of matter. These methodologies steered positive attitude and better achievement by girls. Several factors have linked to the observed gender gaps in performance. For example literature has emphasised the impact of negative stereotypical attitudes and cultural gender bias, which are consciously or unconsciously communicated, by teachers, male

classmates and parents (e.g., Arigbagbu & Mji, 2004; Ifegbesan, 2010). The consequences are reflected in science curricula, teaching and assessment (Ekine & Abay, 2013) and ultimately the reinforcement of such attitudes. Therefore, this study intends to uncover the experiences of girls in science schools in Kano state, relative to their male counterparts, in order to understand the dynamics at play and to inform the improvement of girls' science education outcome.

Objectives

The objectives of this research were:

1. To examine the attitudes of parents and community towards girls' and boys' participation in science and mathematics.
2. To examine possible gender differences in the science and mathematics achievement in Senior Secondary (SS2) qualifying examination and West African Senior Secondary Certificate Examination (WASSCE).
3. To understand factors that influence achievement of boys and girls in science and mathematics.

Research questions

1. What are community and parents' attitudes towards girls' and boys' participation in science and mathematics?
2. Are there gender differences in students' science and mathematics achievement?
3. What factors influence achievement by gender in science and mathematics?

Method

Research Design

Descriptive survey research design was used to carry out this study. The goal of the research was to record, analyse and interpret existing situations or variables; this research was not experimental and variables were not influenced or controlled. Thus, descriptive survey research design was considered appropriate for this study.

Target population and sample

Kano state has three senatorial districts, namely Kano South, Kano Central and Kano North. A purposive sampling technique was used to select two schools (one male and one female) from each of the three senatorial districts in the state. A summary of the school profile is presented in Table 3.2. Kano State Science and Technical Schools Board (STSB) manages nine science secondary schools in the state and six out of these nine schools were selected (3 female and 3 male schools). From each school 40 senior secondary (SS 3) students and 4 teachers were randomly selected to participate in the study. Altogether, a total number of 240 students and 24 teachers participated in the study. The research also involved 12 focus group discussions with students, teachers, policy makers and community stakeholders and 23 Key Informant interviews involving STBS directors, school principals, Parents Teachers Association members and community leaders including women leaders. Archival methods involving examination document analysis as well as participant observational techniques were incorporated into the study. Table 3.3 presents a summary of research participants and the research methods.

Table 3.2: Summary profile of six schools selected from the Kano State STSB schools.

Senatorial Districts	Girls	Boys
Kano South	Garko Girls Science College Established - 1992 Population - 1083	MaitamaSule Boys Science College Gaya Established - 1992 Population - 1073
Kano North	Girls Science Technical College Karaye Established - 2010 Population - 1231	Boys Science College, Dawakin- Tofa Established - 1977 Population - 1142
Kano Central	Girls Science and Technical College, Kano Established - 1998 Population - 1513	Boys Day Science College, Kano Established - 1993 Population - 1083

Instrumentation

The research made use of mixed method involving the use of quantitative and qualitative designs. The five instruments used to collect data for this study were:

1. Questionnaires to tap perceptions about towards science education
2. Achievement Document Analysis
3. Stakeholders Focus Group Discussions
4. Key Informant Interviews
5. School Environment Observation Checklist

Table 3.3 presents a summary of the research methods, the instrument used, objective of the measures, the participant

categories and sample sizes. Given the nature of this research, WASSCE results of the students that completed their secondary education from the selected schools in the past five years (from 2011 to 2015) in mathematics, physics, chemistry and biology were assessed. The WAEC result trend analysis helped to ascertain if there were any significant gender differences in achievement in the four subjects.

Overall each instrument covered different aspects of the variables being investigated. Data was sex disaggregated and the validity of the instruments was ascertained by conducting face validity checks through the use of experts prior to data collection.

Table 3.3: Research instruments, objectives of measures, respondents' categories and size

Instrument	Objective	Sample/ Size
Questionnaires	Students: - Investigated girls' and boys' views and participation in science and mathematics	Students – 240 40 from each of 6 schools
	Teachers: • Examined teachers' views about girls' and boys' achievement in science and mathematics	Teachers - 24 4 from each of 6 schools
Focus Group Discussions (FGDS)	• Investigated students, teachers, parents and community attitudes towards girls' and boys' participation in science and mathematics. • Probed any Socio-cultural forces that promote or hinder girls' or boys achievement in science and mathematics.	Focus Group Discussions • Students (3 FGDS) • Teachers (3 FGDS) • Policy Makers (3 FGDS) • Community Stakeholders (3 FGDS)
Documents Analysis	• Collected and analysed records of WASSCE results from 2011 - 2015 for the selected schools. • Collected and analysed records of SS2 qualifying examination in the previous year (2015) of the current SS3 students in selected schools.	• 6 schools WASSCE for 2011- 2015 • 6 schools qualifying results for 2015

Key Informants Interviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigated school policies and practices with regard to girls' versus boys' achievement in science and mathematics. Examined state policies and practices with regard to girls' versus boys' achievement in science and mathematics. 	23 Key Informants: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 6 school principals 3 PTA Chairmen 2 STSB Directors 3 Chief Imams 3 Village Heads 3 Old Students 3 Women Leaders
Observation Checklist	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Checked school environment i.e. facilities and equipment (laboratories, water, sanitation, classrooms etc.) and assessed them for availability, adequacy and accessibility. 	6 Checklists 1 checklist per school

Method of Data Analysis

The quantitative data collected were analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences. The qualitative data (that is the transcriptions and translations of written texts, field notes, supporting documents, recordings of interviews and focal group discussions, consultations notes, photos and videos) were reduced and conclusions were drawn using the grounded approach. The preliminary results of the findings of this research were presented at a stakeholders' validation workshop. Additional insights from stakeholders were incorporated where necessary to clarify research findings.

Results and Discussion

What are community and parents' attitudes towards girls' and boys' participation in science and mathematics?

In some of the study communities, the age at which girls were married is beginning to increase but many community members still favoured early marriage. From the findings, in most cases, the girls dropped out of school to start families or often times struggle to finish school after getting married especially when they have just few terms to the completion of senior secondary school education. The focus group discussions with girls revealed that once their relatives initiate dialogues of marriage they begin to regard themselves as adults and hence feel the urgency to prepare to become good wives. It then becomes very difficult to concentrate on their schoolwork as they feel that it would be of little

use to them in their future roles as mothers and wives. Consequently, poor performance on the girls' part becomes almost inevitable.

A community participant in the focus group discussions explained that once a girl gets married the husband decides her the next steps in terms of her education, field of study or career. The decision seizes to be hers and previous aspirations are at a high risk of being abandoned probably because of her lack of negotiation skills. About 30% of the community members said that the role of husbands in career decisions makes girls feel that too much aspirations and hard work in science and mathematics are futile and have risky outcomes. The most popular belief among the community members is that girls should carry on both responsibilities of being successful students and brides-in-waiting given their future primary roles as wives and mothers. The response of a girl in a focus group discussion in Kano North corroborates the pressure and distraction that early marriage constitutes:

Last holiday I went through very strong pressure to marry and was mandated to visit all my married aunties for advice. I have been long confused and don't even know what my result will look like.

Boys on the contrary are treated differently. The community feels that the boys deserve absolute support to study science and aspire to be whatsoever they want to be. From our findings there was a great level of empathy towards boys due to their expected future roles as 'family

provider'. The boys also confirmed the support received but expressed their concern that high expectations to take up the so called 'high-end scientist professions' such as medicine and surgery, engineering and pharmacy place pressures on them. In addition, they fear that the community might not support or accommodate their derailment.

Discussions and interviews with students, teachers and parents revealed that for many

respondents, there was a commonly held view and a strong belief that girls are academically less capable than boys in science and mathematics. About two-thirds of parents expressed their beliefs that science and mathematics are easy subjects for boys but difficult for girls. Only one-fifth of the parents think that girls find science and mathematics easy. This perception has an undesirable effect on girls' participation in science and mathematics.

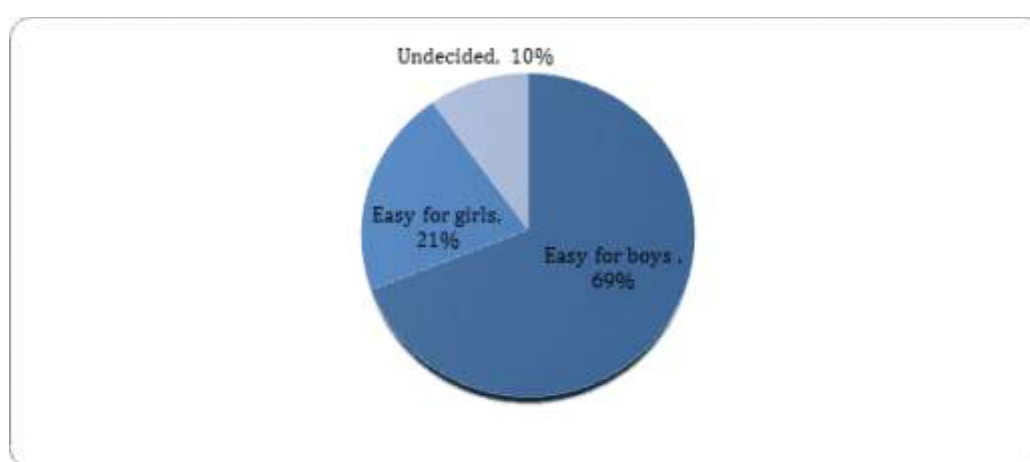


Figure 3.1: Parents' views on whether science and mathematics are easy for boys and girls

It is also noteworthy that teachers and girls themselves share this negative view that science and mathematics is difficult for girls. These stereotypes and negative attitudes might explain, to a considerable extent, why girls receive less encouragement and are hardly motivated at home or school to strive to succeed in their school work. Also, given that less is expected of them, they also in turn expect less of themselves and are less confident of their academic abilities. Boys, on the other hand, tend to receive more encouragement, which leads to a stronger drive to succeed because of higher expectations of performance.

Another issue that was also highlighted during group discussions is that of the burden of household chores for girls. The girls in the day schools stated that they were required to take care of house chores before going to school and after school hours. This burden of chores takes up

their home study hours, which most times prevents the girls from attempting their homework and engaging in extra studies. Even the boys attested to this:

My younger sister washes my school uniforms three times every week; that's her job. After school, I pray, play and do my homework. (A male student focus group participant from Kano Central District)

Almost all the day school girls expressed their wish that their household chores could be reduced and redistributed among other siblings so that they could get additional time to devote to their academic work.

Are there gender differences in students' Science and Mathematics Achievement?

Qualifying Exam. Kano State carries out Senior

School Certificate Examination (SSCE) qualifying examinations in the second year of senior secondary school (SS2). This serves to prepare candidates for the WASSCE and National Examination Council examinations the following year and to determine eligibility for state sponsorship. The state government pays the school fees and examination fees of students who

obtain three credits and above. This selection standard is lower than the national minimum standard of five credits (ESSPIN, 2006). Table 3.4 presents comparisons of the summary of 2015 SS2 qualifying examination results by gender in each of the six schools for mathematics, physics, chemistry and biology from the selected boys and schools.

Table 3.4: Candidates (%) with minimum credit in science and mathematics SS2 qualifying exams from boys and girls' schools

Schools	Boys Maitama	Boys Tofa	Boys Day	Boys' schools Average	Girls Day	Girls Garko	Girls Karaye	Girls' schools Average
Maths	74	85	88	82	56	48	63	56
Physics	81	88	90	86	89	75	79	81
Chemistry	87	89	87	88	92	79	80	84
Biology	99	98	96	98	97	98	98	98

Girls and boys had similar (98%) overall scores in biology reflecting equality in biology achievement. Although boys performed better than girls in chemistry (88% as against 84%) and physics (86% as against 81%), the differences

were not as pronounced as inequality in achievement in mathematics (82% as against 56%). In general, girls achievement was lower than boys for except for biology (see Figure 3.2).

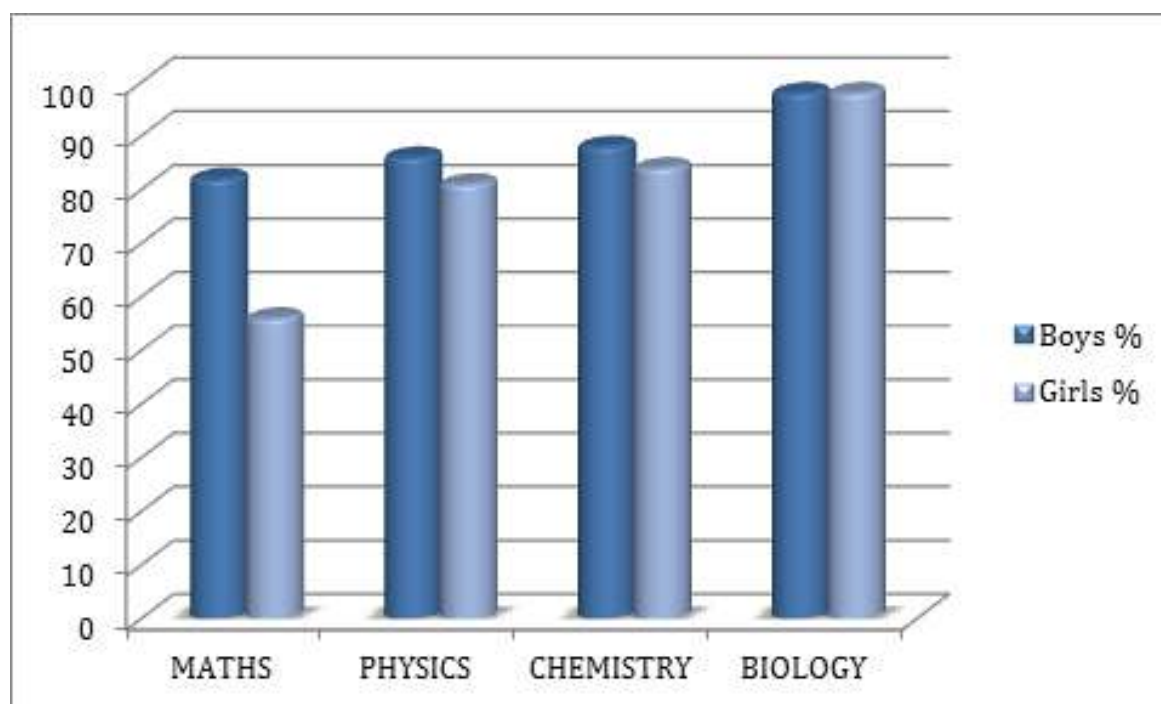


Figure 3.2: Girls' and boys' achievement in SS2 qualifying examinations in science and mathematics (%)

Trends in WASSCE Achievement

The WASSCE results for students in each of the six schools from 2011 to 2015 were compiled for mathematics, physics, chemistry and biology. Figures 3.3, 3.4, 3.5 and 3.6 presents, in tabular and graphical formats, the percentages of boys and girls who obtained at least a credit in each of subjects. Generally, boys' achievement was higher than girls in all the four subjects from 2011 to 2015. In other words, more boys than girls obtained credit scores in science and mathematics across the years (see Table 3.5).

Table 3.6 shows that the gender gap in achievement was very wide for Mathematics, and biology. The average gender difference over the 5-year period was 22.3% and 21% for mathematics and

biology respectively. There was a slight gender gap in physics and chemistry achievement (17%), which was lower than mathematics and chemistry. In general terms, boys had achieved much better than girls in the science and mathematics in the years studied. Furthermore, the gender differences between girls and boys were wider at SS3 level than SS2.

A breakdown of scores by school (Table 3.5) shows that while achievement in Mathematics was higher in boys' schools relative to girls' schools, some boys' colleges performed poorly in mathematics. Also, girls' achievement lagged behind over the five- year period except at Karaye Girls' Science College which was founded in 2010 and participated in the WASSCE for the first time in 2015.

Table 3.5: Candidates (%) with at least a credit in WASSCE science and mathematics in the boys and girls schools 2011-2015

		Maitama Sule	Dawakin Tofa	Boys Day	Girls Garko	Girls Day	Girls Karaye
Maths	2011	36	27	40	5.3	25	-
	2012	31	56	27	0.9	7	-
	2013	77	50	25	1.8	42	-
	2014	30	50	15	2.9	11	-
	2015	69	42	2	0	23	81
Physics	2011	97	90	58	95	99	-
	2012	75	100	92	31	99	-
	2013	92	66	29	5.9	84	-
	2014	85	66	50	9.6	65	-
	2015	79	86	45	12	17	91
Chemistry	2011	59	82	61	70	31	-
	2012	46	79	22	46	5	-
	2013	100	85	45	11	83	-
	2014	76	85	20	2.1	73	-
	2015	89	98	15	25	87	100
Biology	2011	85	90	85	33	87	-
	2012	62	95	61	99	16	-
	2013	100	96	84	15	98	-
	2014	48	96	42	27	40	-
	2015	69	39	17	18	8	100

Despite higher achievement of boys relative to girls, the graphs showed a decreasing trend over the years from 2011 to 2015 for boys. The achievement of girls decreased over the years for biology and physics and

fluctuated for mathematics and chemistry. This implies that decreasing achievement over the years in WASSCE achievement in Kano State is a shared phenomenon (ESSPIN, 2006).



Figure 3.3: % of boys and girls with at least a credit in Mathematics 2011-15

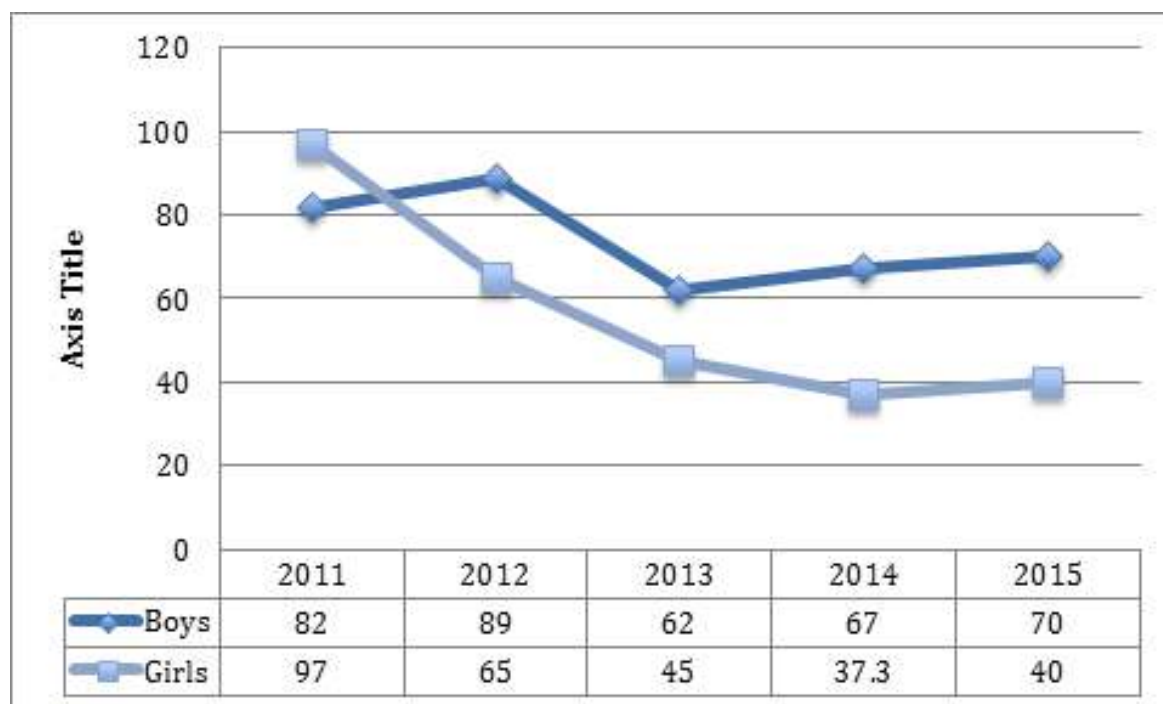


Figure 3.4: % of boys and girls with at least credit in Physics 2011-2015



Figure 3.5: % of boys and girls with at least a credit in Chemistry 2011-15



Figure 3.6: % of boys and girls with at least a credit in Biology 2011-15

Table 3.6: WASSCE trend aggregate (2011-215) and minimum credit in four subjects

Subjects	Boys	Girls	Gender Gap
Mathematics	38.2	15.9	22.3
Physics	74	57	17
Chemistry	64	47	17
Biology	71.2	50.2	21

What factors influence achievement by gender in science and mathematics?

Responses from key informants and focus group discussions as well as school observations were summarized to highlight factors that possibly led to the formation of the observed gender gaps and poor achievement. Apart from pressures for early marriage, negative stereotypes and perceptions of girls' low competence in science as discussed earlier, seven factors emerged from the analysis of the narratives: overpopulation in girls' schools, inadequate female teachers, burden of household chores, inadequate laboratory practices, lack of academic support from parents, poor toilet facilities, inadequate teacher training, inadequate innovative programmes.

Overpopulation in girls' schools. There are more science schools for boys than for girls in Kano state. The schools under the STSB include science schools, technical schools, science and technical as well as technical vocational schools. Only six of these schools are girls' schools when compared to 41 schools for boys. The school observation exercise revealed that the population of students within selected boys' school was high but manageable unlike the girls' schools. In the boarding houses the boys all had beds as opposed to the girls' schools that were over-populated and many of the girls had no beds. Although, the classrooms were overcrowded in both girls and boys schools, the average students' population ratio per class in the boys' schools was 50 while in girls' schools was 70. Girls were seen sitting on the floor to receive lessons in the two of the selected schools. These poor amenities have implications for performance as a female student from Kano district stated that:

During the cold seasons, most of us dodge

classes because we easily catch cold sitting on bare cold floors to learn.

During the validation workshop, stakeholders identified the manner in which admissions into science schools, especially into the female schools, were carried out, as a major reason for overcrowding. The state has admission guidelines into science and technical colleges but it seems that since 2012 these guidelines have been overlooked in admission processes, leading to gross over population especially in female schools.

Inadequate female teachers. Table 3.7 shows a breakdown of the number of male and female teachers for the subjects across the schools visited. There is inadequate number of female science teachers in the six schools studied. Table 3.7 shows that female physics and mathematics teachers (average male: female ratios of 13.5:1 and 7:1 respectively) were the fewest. Two of the three girls' school did not have female mathematics and physics teachers. One school did not have a female chemistry teacher and another lacked a female biology teacher. Thus, while male students had male role models in their teachers, lack of female role models in science subjects especially mathematics and physics is a lived reality for the girls. The community members and female students also expressed the need and desire to have adequate number of females teaching the four subjects in their schools. Expectedly, the boys were indifferent. An SBMC member in Kano North stressed that:

If we have at least one female teaching each science subject in our girls' schools, I know our girls will be very encouraged to study to be like her.

Table 3.7: Number of teachers by gender and school

Schools	Mathematics		Chemistry		Physics		Biology	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Garko Girls Science College	5	0	3	2	3	0	5	0
Girls Science Technical College Karaye	4	0	4	0	4	0	4	1
Girls Science and Technical College, Kano	5	2	4	3	4	1	3	5
Maitama Sule Boys Science College Gaya	5	0	5	0	6	0	4	0
Boys Day Science College, Kano	4	2	3	2	5	1	3	4
Boys Science College, Dawakin- Tofa	5	0	4	0	5	0	5	1
<i>Total Number of Teachers</i>	<i>28</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>23</i>	<i>7</i>	<i>27</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>24</i>	<i>11</i>
<i>Ratio of Male to Female teachers</i>	<i>7:1</i>		<i>3.3:1</i>		<i>13.5</i>		<i>2.18:1</i>	

Stakeholders at the validation workshop observed that teachers redeployed to science and technical schools used to take eligibility examinations, but this also stopped since 2012. Consequently, there were some unqualified teachers teaching in these schools. Further, inadequate science and mathematics teachers' trainings and gender-blind teaching pedagogies make learning of mathematics and science very difficult for girls.

Burden of household chores. As earlier highlighted, girls in the day school, unlike their male counterpart bear the burden of household chores before and after school hours. This makes it difficult for them to have time for their homework. The boys in the study agreed that they rarely got not involved in domestic chores at home.

Inadequate laboratory practices. In all the schools studied, the schools laboratories were functional but the students complained that some of them do not have 'individual knowhow' of setting up and carrying out experiments. According to the school teachers and principals the schools, especially those for girls, were over-populated and this makes it difficult to engage students in individual or small group experiments. The students strongly requested that the frequency of the experiments be increased and the classes be broken into smaller groups. The lack of laboratory

reagents was also identified as a factor associated with poor academic achievement and even sometimes groups were merged so that little quantity of reagents can be managed.

Lack of academic support from parents. Parents, especially those who do not have any knowledge of science, are not able to provide academic support for their children. Majority of the students received no academic support from parents; they were totally dependent on their teachers.

Poor toilet facilities. In most of the schools there were poor sanitary facilities available for the high population of students. In some schools there were only about three functional toilets facility serving over 1000 students. This poses difficulties to girls who usually during menstruation require high level of privacy and clean sanitary facilities.

Inadequate Innovative Programmes. Science and mathematics events have not been organised for the schools in the recent past. Some of the students interviewed said that they had not attended any science fairs or state organised science competitions and they are in senior secondary three.

Discussion

This study investigated gender gaps in achievements in mathematics and science in

selected girls and boys STSB science schools in Kano state. In order to understand the context of girls' achievement, the study first examined community and parents' attitudes towards girls' participation in science and mathematics. The findings showed that differential expectations of future family roles for boys (as family providers) and girls (as brides) influenced community attitudes. Although the age at marriage is gradually increasing, community members still favoured early marriage and girls dropped out of school, consistent with ideologies that endorse a primarily domestic role for women (e.g., Pittin, 1990). Also the preference for early marriage over continued education, particularly in rural communities, reflect that marriage is viewed as a family building strategy, an economic arrangement or a way to protect girls from unwelcome sexual advances (Atim, 2017). While there was more support for boys' science education, girls were constantly reminded of the need to prepare for their key roles as wives and mothers.

In addition, the view that science and mathematics were too difficult for girls was

observed among teachers, parents and the girls. Consistent with literature, the findings revealed that pressures towards early marriage, courtship process, girls' lack of choice in decision making and perceptions that girls were academically less capable than boys in science and mathematics emerged as factors associated with community negative attitudes towards girls education in science. These factors contribute to girls' lack of confidence and low self-esteem and are reflected in low achievements in science, thereby, reinforcing the negative attitudes towards girls' capability in science held by the girls themselves, their parents and teachers (Ekine & Bay, 2016). The findings emphasise the need to discourage stereotypes and negative perceptions that weaken women's participation in science. Furthermore, it is very important to motivate and promote girls' achievement in mathematics and science as prior achievements enhance their subject -related self-concept, which in turn improves subsequent performances (Ching-Yi & Hsin-Yi, 2018; Igbo, Onu & Obiyo, 2015). The summary of different participants' perspectives on boys and girls achievement in mathematics and science is presented in Table 3.8.

Table 3.8: Summary of key findings reflecting participants' perspectives on gender and performance in science and mathematics

Factors	Girls' Views	Boys' Views	Parents' Views	Teachers' View
Perceptions of competence	Mathematics, physics are difficult.	Mathematics, physics and chemistry are difficult but achievable for mostly boys.	Mathematics is very difficult especially for girls.	Girls believe mathematics and science are difficult.
Beliefs	Stress of studying sciences will soon be overtaken by marriage and might never be useful.	Girls are not supported by parents to study sciences because they will get married before or immediately after writing WASSCE	Girls' primary roles and aspirations should be focused on being good wives and mothers.	Girls can only thrive if the older generation of girls from the same community share their success stories in science and mathematics
Cultural and Social Factor	Girls view reproductive roles as primary and their education as secondary	Boys view girls as destined to be care givers of the home and so should come to terms with it.	Parents viewed both the reproductive and care giving roles of girls as absolutely important.	They viewed day students as going through double challenges of actively playing the care giving roles and having consistent

				demands to accept reproductive roles alongside schooling.
School Environment	Poor toilet facilities, overcrowded classrooms and hostels impede learning.	Inadequate laboratory reagents and lack of modern instructional materials hinders learning.	Lack of mastery of the subjects taught by teachers especially for mathematics leads to failures.	Inadequate training and work exposures e.g. study visits informs the challenges of meeting up with the modern demands of teaching.

The results also consistently showed that boys out-performed girls in science and mathematics over five consecutive years. The disparity was wider in mathematics. Furthermore, performance in examinations decreased over the five-year period, especially for biology; fluctuations in performance was observed for mathematics and chemistry for the girls. Results from qualitative data revealed reasons for the poor and decreasing levels of achievement. These included lack of female teachers and overcrowded classes as well as attendant consequences such as inadequate participation in practical laboratory activities and boarding facilities. Also the burden of household chores, negative attitudes and low levels of support for girls' science education hindered performance. Socialization of children had over the years resulted in intense heavy work load for girls that contribute to limit the time girls have to do academic work at home relative to boys. Mathematics and science require additional time for doing extra studies; when girls are laden with extra household chores it reduces their chances of excelling.

The inadequate number of female teachers in the girls' schools might be the major factor affecting

girls' achievement in science and mathematics. The Girls Science Day College that has 11 female teachers maintained a successful trend of achievement from 2011 to 2015. This should be considered as a very important influence for in improving and sustaining girls' achievement in science and mathematics.

Conclusion and recommendations

The focus of this research was the difference between girls and boys in mathematics and science achievements in selected Kano science schools. The results generally showed lower performance in girls' schools relative to boys' schools. Nonetheless, there was an exception where girls in one of the schools showed better performance relative to one of the boys' schools in almost all the subjects. This suggests that given the right conditions, girls like boys, have the potential for excellence in science and mathematics in the northern states that previously had poor indicators of performance in science education. In the course of this research, the efforts to improve access to science education through additional schools, provision of transportation and scholarships were observed. The findings of this research suggest

that beyond improving girls' access to science education, there is a need to have a gender sensitive approach to retain and sustain participation through a truly gender equitable and quality education. Consequently, the following recommendations were drawn from the results of this research:

1. Gender stereotypes needs to be discouraged because of the consequent impact on girls' access, retention and availability to engage in meaningful science education. There is a need to design multi-level innovative programmes to sensitize communities on girls' education in science. Increased attention needs to be given to social reorientation and engagement of all stakeholders to engender support towards gender equity in science achievement.
2. Existing structures such as SBMCs should be involved in community attitude change processes and should be used to headhunt for women achievers in science from their communities to serve in the state and community sensitizing teams. This can help to forge views among parents that bride price is not the only source of wealth from girls, rather, achievement in science can enhance girls' opportunities.
3. A collaborative mentoring programme should be developed for girls studying science at school, community and state levels. This will serve as a platform to adequately guide the girls to the best possible achievement in school and life careers.
4. Develop strategies to increase the number of qualified female teachers in mathematics and science especially in female schools to mentor and inspire female science students.
5. Inadequate science and mathematics teachers' training and gender-blind teaching pedagogies make learning of mathematics and science very difficult for girls. The government needs to ensure the training and re-training for teachers who teach mathematics and science subjects, focusing on how to teach problematic topics. Gender should be mainstreamed into pre-service and in-service teachers training curricula and schools should implement gender-sensitive teaching pedagogies.
6. Robust interaction and engagement with successful female role models who can inspire students should be encouraged. Female engineers, pilots and doctors can be good facilitators in sensitising stakeholders on the importance of science and mathematics education for girls both at institutional and community level.
7. Provision of good quality education. More robust programmes and engagement to enhance learning targeted at girls like science fairs and inter-school science experiment competitions need to be developed to boost the morale of female science students.
8. Infrastructural facilities for girls' science schools should ne improved and efforts should be made to decongest the already overcrowded schools to achieve effective class sizes for more effective learning environment.
9. Government should also improve on disaggregated records of achievement, monitor and evaluate schools to ensure maximum use of resources and measure progress towards gender parity in science education.

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The effectiveness of SBMC School grants in promoting girl's Enrolment and retention in Niger State.

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Abstract:

The main purpose of this study was to examine the effectiveness of SBMCs and the impact of the grants received under GEP project on promoting girls' enrolment and retention in schools. The study employed concurrent mixed method design involving the use of qualitative and quantitative research techniques. The study was carried out in three local governments from which nine GEP-funded and four non-funded schools were selected for the study. Using in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, surveys and archival records, data was obtained from government officials, SBMC members and other community members such as men, women, adolescent females in and out of school and schoolpupils. The findings revealed that: (1) Most of the SBMC members in funded schools had received training and held meetings twice per term on the average; factors said to be instrumental in enhancing their functionality and effectiveness. (2) There was an increase in girls' enrolment and Gender Parity Index from 2005 to 2015 in the three local governments. However, the proportion of female teachers, which was very low compared to male teachers, did not witness a significant change over period. (3) SBMCs' activities associated with increased girls' enrolment included community sensitization, monitoring of pupils' attendance registers and provision of support materials. (4) The SBMC system improved women's realization of their significant vital role in promoting girls' education. Women engaged in good practices and house-to-house visits encouraging girls' enrolment and attendance. (5) There were differences between funded and non-funded SBMCs in their effectiveness and functionality; composition; gender inclusiveness; awareness of their roles and responsibilities; level of training received; accountability; activities undertaken; intensity of their enrolment drive, and; ability to internally generate funds. Recommendations included training programmes of all SBMC members, creating platforms to share experiences with other communities, documenting best practices, providing incentives for performance, continued sensitization to support girls' transition and increased proportion of female teachers.

BACKGROUND

Globally, education is regarded as tool for economic, social and political development. International instruments such as Convention on the Rights of the Child, Education for all (EFA), Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the more recent Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to which Nigeria is signatory, clearly set goals and targets to help countries improve the overall lives of their citizens. The launching of the Universal Basic Education (UBE) programme in 1999 is one of the country's responses to the global instruments on education. One of the UBE goals is to provide access to basic education to all children irrespective of status, gender, ability or disability and location. However, educational disparities still exist across regions, states and even within states.

The UBE programme recognises the importance of community participation in basic education delivery. As part of the overall efforts to ensure community participation, the National Council on Education in 2005 directed that School- Based Management Committees (SBMC) be established in all schools in the country. The SBMC is intended to act as a bridge between schools and the community members through administration at the micro school level as opposed to governmental or other organised levels. It entails the decentralization of aspects of decision-making to the school level and may involve the management of human, financial and other resources, depending on governmental preferences (FME, 2005). The SBMC is broader in composition because it includes members of community stakeholders unlike the Parent Teachers Association (PTA) that is limited to only parents of children in the school and teachers.

Niger State is one of the educationally disadvantaged states in Nigeria, especially in relation to female education. The 2013 Niger State Annual School Census report shows that 676,351 pupils were enrolled in primary schools of which 43% were females. Also, up to 47% of children aged 6 to 16 years have never enrolled in school. UNICEF data reveals that about 50.8% of school aged children are out of school in the state,

which constitutes the highest figure of out-of-school children in the whole north-central zone (UNICEF, 2012). The 2013 NDHS report indicates that up to 61.6% of females in the state do not have formal education while 17.5% have some level of primary education and only 6% completed primary education (NPC/RTI, 2014). Based on information from the National Bureau of Statistics, female adult literacy rate in English stood at 32.4% against 52.4% for males. The West African Secondary School Certification Examination (WASSCE) results in 2008 indicates that 37.4% candidates that participated in the examination were females and only 1.6% achieved credit pass mark in five subjects, including English and mathematics (Dunes, et al, 2014). Niger state's Development Action Plan (2007-2011) highlighted the critical function of education in transforming the social, economic and political realities of its people. The state also recognized the role of stakeholders' especially at the local level, which led to the development of a policy on SBMC and the implementation guideline as a way of institutionalising the SBMC in the educational system.

Given the poor participation of girls in education from available statistics and findings of the Participatory Rural Appraisal supported by UNICEF in 2005, Niger State was selected as one of the Girls' Education Project (GEP 1 – 3) target states. The overall goal of GEP was focused on MDG goal 3, which seeks to eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education. The GEP was implemented using different strategies that included the establishment of SBMCs and provision of grants to the SBMCs to carry out activities geared towards improving the learning environment for pupils and promoting girls enrolment and retention. The SBMC provided a convenient platform for the implementation of GEP and the attainment of its goals depended, to a large extent, among others, on the performance of the committees. The SBMCs' ability to utilize funds aimed at promoting girls participation in education is crucial to the success of GEP in the state. Therefore, this study examined the extent to which the funds given to SBMCs under the project

promoted female enrolment and retention in schools.

Rationale

SBMCs are established as a strategy for including stakeholders, especially at the grassroots level, to participate in the education of their children through the school management. The SBMCs are expected to carry out functions that are associated with their roles and responsibilities as stated in the policy and implementation guidelines. The functions include sensitization, mobilization of funds for school infrastructure improvement and encouraging schooling for all children in the community. They receive training which enable them to develop and implement school development plan. Findings from a qualitative study by Save the Children (2012) revealed that in all the states where Education Sector Support Programme (ESSPIN) activated SBMCs, improvements such as raising funds for school improvement as well as improvement in school infrastructure and participation of women and children. While the study provides information on possible positive actions, it failed to explain how these actions have affected girls' enrolment and retention in schools. It also provides very little information on how grants to SBMCs were utilised and possible impact on girls' education in the state. This study seeks to contribute to closing this knowledge gap.

There is a dearth of research comparing the SBMCs that are under the pilot programme and those that are not. Operations of the SBMCs require active participation of the members and the community for monetary and non-monetary support. This depends on the ability of the SBMCs to mobilize and the willingness of the community to respond. Understanding of SBMC grant effectiveness would require in-depth understanding of how they operate in funded and non-funded settings. This study therefore examined the activities being carried out by the committees under the different conditions. It is pertinent to note, as Save the Children (2012) reveals, availability of resources is important for SBMCs to carry out certain activities but in-depth investigation is required to confirm how the availability of financial assistance could ensure

their effective operation. Under the GEP in Niger state, grants were given to SBMCs to utilize based on their school development plan. Hence it is necessary to assess how the grants have facilitated female enrolment and retention in schools through the activities of SBMC members.

1.2: Statement of problem

Nigeria has an estimated 10.5 million out of school youths, of which over 8 million are located in the northern parts of the country (Hoechner, 2011; Umejei, 2011). Primary school enrolment stands at 70% in the southwest, 74.9% in the south-south, 81.4% in the south-east, 47.2% in the north-west, 68% in the north-central and 44.1% in the north-east (NPC/ICF, 2014). Available literature also indicated that

attendance is lower in the north than in the south, in rural areas rather than urban, for poorer households than richer, for girls more than boys in northern states, for Muslims more than non-Muslims, and for nomadic and migrant children and children with disabilities" (Humphreys & Crawford, 2014: iii).

Niger is one of the educationally disadvantaged states in northern Nigeria, especially as regards girls' education. The state recorded a Gender Parity Index of 0.80 and the net attendance ratio for girls at 51.4 is much lower than for boys at 64.1 (NPC/ICF, 2014). The state has a high drop-out rate of girls up to 13.7% and one of the highest rates of primary school absenteeism in Nigeria (NPC & RTI, 2011). These problems necessitated the adoption of the SBMC system as directed by the federal government to all states as a way of involving community members in the education of their children. Their roles include monitoring of school operations, being part of decision-making process and mobilizing parents to ensure all children of school going age are enrolled and retained in school.

Under the GEP intervention, the SBMCs were trained on school development planning and were given special grants to carry out activities aimed at promoting girls' enrolment, retention and completion. As is common with most intervention programmes by development

partners, not all communities were able to benefit from support funds. Bako, Mariga and Munya local government areas in Niger state were among the GEP Local Government Areas that received support through the intervention. However not all communities and schools within these areas were beneficiaries of the project. In each of the GEP supported local government education authorities, only 35 schools were beneficiaries of the intervention. This study therefore examined the extent to which the grants given to SBMCs have increased girls' enrolment and retention in schools in the state, especially in those areas that received the funds. It examined enrolment and retention situations in recipient communities in relation to non-recipient communities to understand possible differences and factors relating to SBMC grants that possibly worked to influence girls' education in the communities.

Objectives and research questions

This study sought to examine fund related factors that affected performance of SBMCs in both the GEP funded and non - funded schools. It also sought to understand if SBMC funding impacted on girls' enrolment and retention in schools within GEP project communities. The specific objectives of this study were to:

1. Identify factors that affect SBMC activities and examine their general effectiveness in the funded and non-funded communities.
2. Examine the association between special grants to SBMCs and girls' enrolment and retention in school.
3. Identify possible best practices by women in SBMCs that strengthen girl's participation in education in the communities.
4. Identify possible areas of differences in activities of SBMC in the funded and non-funded communities.

Consequently, the following research questions were addressed:

1. What are the factors that promote SBMCs' functionality and effectiveness?

2. How did SBMCs work to promote girls' enrolment and retention in the funded and non-funded communities?
3. What roles did women play in the communities to promote girls' enrolment and attendance?
4. What are the differences between performance of SBMCs in the funded and non-funded communities?

Literature Review

The Federal Government of Nigeria launched the UBE programme as part of its commitment to global reforms that are enshrined in international instruments like the MDGs, SDGs and EFA. These instruments are aimed at improving the quality of life of citizens including their level of education across nations. The 2004 UBE Act deals with the provision of basic education to all children of school going age in the country. Among the strategies adopted in implementing the programme was to encourage community participation by encouraging the establishment of SBMCs in primary and junior secondary schools. The National Council on Education approved the establishment of SBMCs at its 52nd meeting in 2005. Thereafter the Federal Ministry of Education (FME) through the Universal Basic Education Commission issued guidelines to all SUBEBs and Local Government Education Authorities on modalities of establishing SBMCs (FME, 2005; UBEC, 2011)

The directive was issued in 2007 making SBMCs mandatory. However, The results of ESSPIN research on SBMCs in five states showed that many members were not clear about their roles and responsibilities; membership was not sufficiently inclusive; the relationships with existing groups were not clear, and; the functionality of SBMCs were hampered by lack of finances and skills (Adediran & Bawa, 2009).

Niger state established SBMCs in line with the directives at the National Council on Education and also developed the state policy on SBMC to provide a legal framework for the implementation SBMCs. The SBMCs are

expected to be engaged in short-term roles such as collaboration, mobilization, monitoring of teachers and physical facilities, development and implementation of school development plans in addition to ensuring safe and secure learning environment. Their long-term roles include procurement of teaching and learning materials, assisting in discipline issues, sourcing funds for school improvement, supporting academic excursions, ensuring proper planning, budgeting and implementation of school plans. According to the guidelines, SBMCs are intended to be inclusive with membership comprising 19 education stakeholders out of whom 7 are expected to be women. This is deliberate in order to give women the legal right to participate in decisions related to their children.

The Niger State SBMC policy became operational in 2013 with a short-term period from 2013 to 2016. The implication is that three years was considered enough for SBMC members across the state to understand and perform effectively. This is however subject to evaluation. At the time this study was conducted, the end of the short-term period roles was a year to round off, thus, it is necessary to assess the practicability of the SBMC roles and impact on schools as well as community members. This would accord policy makers and implementers the bases for a possible review of the long-term roles and activities. As a strategy to move the state forward, a development action plan for all sectors was put in place in 2007. Education was given priority, and under the implementation strategy, SBMC committees were recognized along with State Ministry of Education, State Universal Basic Education Board, local government education authority, Parents Teachers Associations, Community Based Associations and Development Partners as responsible bodies for implementing education. There was however no clear plan to strengthen SBMCs either in terms of capacity building or funding to carry out its expected responsibility.

School-based management has increasingly become an important education reform in developed and developing countries and have assumed different forms in different places

(Ayeni & Ibukun, 2013). In addition, it has also been linked to improved educational management (including the raising and judicious use of funds) and students' learning outcomes. In Nigeria, the effectiveness of SBMCs has presented a mixed picture. A number of studies have highlighted problems hindering the potential benefits of SBMCs. These include lack of teachers' cooperation, lack of expertise and devotion among SBMC members and poor planning of activities (Oduwaiye, Bakwai & Yisa, 2015). Another paper that examined the involvement and effectiveness of SBMCs in governance, curriculum implementation and students' learning outcomes in Nigerian secondary schools emphasised SBMCs' challenges as low capacity of key members, poor attendance at meetings, lack of incentives and financial support from the government, lack of cooperation from the schools and the PTAs (Ayeni & Ibukun, 2013). The consequences of such challenges include ineffective school management and low level of students' academic achievement.

However, in a monitoring exercise conducted to assess the establishment of SBMCs and provision of school grants, results revealed that SBMCs had been stabilized in all schools but their functionality depended largely on the form of training received. Also, enrolment figures increased generally in the schools but not in terms of gender parity. The study could however not verify claims of girls' enrolment due to poor record keeping in the schools sampled. The findings indicated that SBMCs that received training and funds had executed school improvement projects and some committee members deployed their knowledge of fund mobilization to raise more funds from private sources (CSACEFA, 2009). Humphrey and Crawford (2012), in their review of literature on basic education, noted that while SBMC progress has been uneven given its developmental state in the country, school–community relations are improving where SBMCs are active; there is a feeling of mutual responsibility for the success of the school, and; traditional and religious leaders are involved. The success of SBMCs have also

been associated with provision of support in that donor supported schools were found to be more functional (e.g., FME, 2015). For example, a qualitative which assessed how SBMCs mobilize and manage resources around the improvement of schools, especially their role in promoting the enrolment of children from excluded groups, found that SBMC members within their first year had succeeded in mobilizing resources from local community and government and were able to utilize funds for improvement of schools (Save the Children/ESSPIN, 2012). Furthermore, improvements were recorded in the enrolment of children including excluded groups, community members' participation as well as in the visibility of women and children in mobilization for school activities. (Save the Children, 2012).

Another study assessed the effectiveness of the SBMC system in four states (Bauchi, Kastina, Sokoto and Niger) in a bid to gauge the progress made under GEP initiative. The objectives included evaluating the viability of the SBMC structures and mechanism, resource usage as well as effectiveness in promoting quality education especially for girls (Adediran & Bawa, 2010). Using a combination of methods such as interviews, field visits, focus group discussions, analysis of documented developmental milestones, findings revealed in addition the effective utilisation of grants in improving schools infrastructure and girls specific needs, there were increased enrolment of pupils particularly among girls, reduced teachers absenteeism and gender gap. In general, many of the studies emphasised that funding is strategic to the effectiveness of SBMCs (e.g., Bawa, 2012). In that wise, some state policies indicated varied funding sources to include UBEC intervention fund, conditional grants schemes under the MDGs, donations and contributions from the communities, old pupils associations, civil societies organisations, development partners, private companies, philanthropists, and levies from like minds or membership contributions as well as fundraising through launching drawn from the SBMC's principle of operation.

The Revised Guidelines for the development of

SBMCs (UBEC, 2011) notes that SBMCs are established to enhance schools management in a manner that ensures quality education and promote good relationship among various categories of stakeholders. Concerns over issues such as training, funding, mechanism for decentralisation and inclusiveness as well as monitoring and mentoring systems for documenting evidence-based learning led to reforms and the development of the 2015 National School-Based Management Policy (FME, 2015). The policy aimed to create SBMCs with stronger sense of community ownership and participation in the overall development of the school, while improving learning outcomes of the children. In addition, it is expected to provide an environment for the SBMCs to thrive as states are also expected to draw from it as they develop and domesticate their respective policies henceforth.

The present study, which was undertaken when many states in the country, including Niger had domesticated the SBMC policy, contributes to existing literature in this context. Furthermore, the study builds on existing research by adopting a mixed methods approach and a comparison of funded and non-funded SBMCs to shed more light on activities carried out using the grant in promoting girls' enrolment and retention in schools. For example, In addition, admissions and attendance registers of the schools visited to may have further strengthened the findings.

Method

Study design and data collection

The main purpose of this study was to examine the general effectiveness of SBMCs and the impact of the grants received under the GEP initiative in promoting girls' enrolment and retention in schools. In assessing the possible variations in SBMCs' operations and effectiveness, the following aspects were considered: composition of SBMCs; trainings received; frequency of meetings; general operations and mechanism for decision making; nature of activities carried out; availability of additional resources, and; utilisation of resources. Thus, a concurrent mixed method design was adopted to explore possible explanatory factors

that influence the performance of SBMCs through the collection of both qualitative and quantitative data at community and school level. The use of a combination of both quantitative and qualitative techniques provides a better understanding of the research problems and issues earlier highlighted.

Quantitative data was collected from analysis of available records (archival data), information from questionnaire administered to officials from relevant local government education units (social mobilization), schools services, UNICEF units, and SBMC members. Also qualitative data was collected from interviews conducted with key SBMC members (chairmen, secretaries, women leaders), directors at SUBEB and focus group discussions with community members (men, women, adolescent females in and out of school, pupils).

The researchers made use of questionnaire to obtain information from respondents that are literate. This is because questionnaires require the respondents to read and select options that are in agreement with the respondents' opinion which may pose a challenge to non-literate respondents. Face to face interviews were conducted with key government officials and some community members. The face-to-face interviews were held with directors at SUBEB due to the fact that they are few individuals at the management level and in the context of this study, their opinions on issues under their jurisdiction often times were expected to be informative and are respected. In addition, focus group discussions were undertaken because it provided opportunity for groups to discuss and understand issues together, thus collective views were expressed during the interactions.

Population and Sample

The target population for this study comprised SBMC members of Gbako, Munya and Mariga local government areas representing the three senatorial zones of Niger state, which had 203, 110 and 121 primary schools respectively. Respondents were drawn from among teachers, pupils of schools and parents especially women in

the study areas. Similarly, all stakeholders at SUBEB and local government levels formed part of the study population. They included directors of school services and social mobilization, heads of department schools services and social mobilization, SBMC members, SBMC desk officers and UNICEF unit officers.

Purposive sampling technique was used to select the local government areas in which UNICEF was implementing GEP in the state. Six local governments were under the project, two per senatorial zone. Three local government areas were therefore chosen from each of the senatorial zones. Since the study was intended to examine activities of focus and non-focus SBMCs, it was considered necessary to select local government areas that were benefitting from the intervention. Within the focus areas, only 35 schools each were under the GEP. Thus, activities of the SBMCs that received grants and those that did not (a control group) could be compared. Simple random sampling technique was used in selecting the communities and schools for the study. For the non-funded SBMCs of schools and communities, purposive sampling was also employed to get schools within same areas as those funded in order to see if differences existed in terms of performance. A total of nine funded and four non-funded schools were used for the study.

Study Site and Conduct of Study

All data collection activities were conducted within the selected local government areas, in schools and at designated areas within the community as agreed between researchers and community members. Quantitative and qualitative data were collected from stakeholders that were involved in the implementation of SBMCs; the actors (SBMC members) and the target beneficiaries of the committees activities.

Government officials were visited at their places of work and were interviewed. The researchers trained competent research assistants that assisted in administration, retrieval of questionnaires and facilitated the focus group

discussions. The focus group discussions were conducted with different groups (women, pupils and male community members) at different times. This approach allowed each group especially women and pupils to freely express their views which perhaps would have been difficult if other group members were present. Responses from interviews and focus group discussions were recorded and then transcribed for further analysis.

Official approval by the state government through the SUBEB (the office managing basic education delivery) was secured for the study. The approval was communicated to the respective local government areas. Due to time constraints, additional institutional review board approval was not sought, however, the study strictly observed by the code of ethics guiding conduct of research involving human subject including voluntary participation and confidentiality of responses.

Findings

Factors that promote SBMCs' functionality and effectiveness

SBMCs were established in some communities in order to perform functions aimed at improving school governance and provide access to education for school age children. Thus, data analysis was focused on whether or not SBMCs were trained, held meetings and based mobilization and expenditures of resources on the Whole School Development Plan (WSDP). Also, the perception of stakeholders on activities that promote functionality and effectiveness of SBMCs were sought.

Table 4.1 presents responses of SBMC members in funded schools on whether they received training. The findings show that almost all the members (92.2%) agreed that they had undergone training. Only one person (0.9%) responded in the negative and 7% did not respond at all; perhaps they were new members that joined the committee after the capacity development had taken place.

Table 4.1: Response of SBMC members on whether they had received training and no of times meetings held

<i>SBMC members received training</i>		
Response	Frequency	%
Yes	106	92.2
No	1	0.9
No response	8	7
Total	115	100
<i>Number of times SBMC meetings held per term</i>		
Response	Frequency	%
2 per term	57	49.6
1 per term	27	23.5
No response	31	27
Total	115	100

What is the impact of the training for those that benefitted? Responses from participants tended to indicate that SBMCs benefitted from trainings, which have been instrumental in enhancing their functionality and effectiveness in carrying out their responsibilities. Examples of responses from participants were:

Yes I did attend training. The training has helped us in carrying out so many SBMC activities in this community among which are frequent visitations to schools and house-to-house sensitization of parents to enrol their girls in school. (A female SBMC member)

Training of SBMC members on their roles and responsibilities, whole school development plan, has made the committees to function effectively. (A government official)

The factors that helped me in particular to be effective include, the training we received on our roles and responsibilities and how to hold meetings because no organisation will function well without

holding meetings. (A SBMC chairman in Munya LGA)

On the frequency of meetings held by SBMC members, 49.6% indicated that they met two times per school term, 23.5% said they held meetings once per term while 27% did not respond at all (see Table 1). SBMCs were also trained on how to hold meetings as a committee. In general, meetings were held by committee members to discuss issues affecting their community and school:

Holding regular meetings allowed us to discuss and plan activities to be carried out...especially when we receive grants, we usually decide on what to do during meetings. The support we receive from the community greatly helped our effectiveness. (ASBMC chairman)

Whenever we conduct meetings, at the end we call for general community meeting and explain to members our decisions/plans for them to understand and assist us in executing projects. Feedbacks help us a lot in our work. (A woman leader)

Table 4.2: SBMC members' responses on factors that enhance functionality and effectiveness and whether spending is based on WSDP

Factors that enhance functionality and effectiveness		
Response	Frequency	%
Training, Meetings	45	39.5
Carrying out project effectively	27	23.7
Cooperation among SBMCs	27	23.7
Finance/ Funding	15	13.2
Total	114	100
GEP spending were based on WSDP?		
Response	Frequency	%
Yes	86	74.8
No	29	25.2
Total	115	100

What factors enhance the functionality and effectiveness of SBMCs? Table 4.2 shows that the training received and holding of meetings were the most frequently (39.1%) cited factors identified by SBMC members. This suggests that stakeholders think highly of capacity development as a means of making the committee members functional and effective which further supports the views earlier expressed in the narratives. About 23.5% stated that carrying out projects effectively made the committee to be functional and effective. The participants were of the opinion that SBMCs' ability to execute projects effectively was responsible for their effectiveness. Similarly, 23.5% attributed their outcomes to cooperation among the committee members while 13% indicated availability of funds as a factor. It is noteworthy that funds had the least frequently cited factor in SBMCs functionality and effectiveness among funded SBMCs. Responses of some participants emphasise that community members and SBMC members also give contributions when necessary:

We plan and execute activities by contributing funds and agree on the activities to be carried out. If it is a project we do collect sand and water by ourselves and make sure the project is completed. For example, like the time we constructed

toilet for the school, we spent like N80,000, it was only cement we bought but all other work we did by ourselves. (A member of SBMC)

We generate resources through donations, contributions and involving old boys of school. Even the GEP fund given to us could not do all the things we did but we had to contribute. (A chairman of SBMC)

Did SBMCs mobilise resources and were their expenditure based on Whole School Development Plan (WSDP)? Funding is very important to support provision of school materials and project activities. The GEP funds were disbursed to the funded schools to support the financial gap identified and as a way to provide opportunity to SBMCs to execute planned activities. The committees were expected to play a key role in increasing enrolment, retention, completion and transition of girls to secondary schools. The importance of funds to the success of SBMC activities are reflected in the responses from funded and non-funded SBMCs to the question of whether SBMCs can work to improve girls' education in the community without funds. Figure 4.1 presents SBMC members' views on the importance of funds to their functions in funded and non-funded schools.

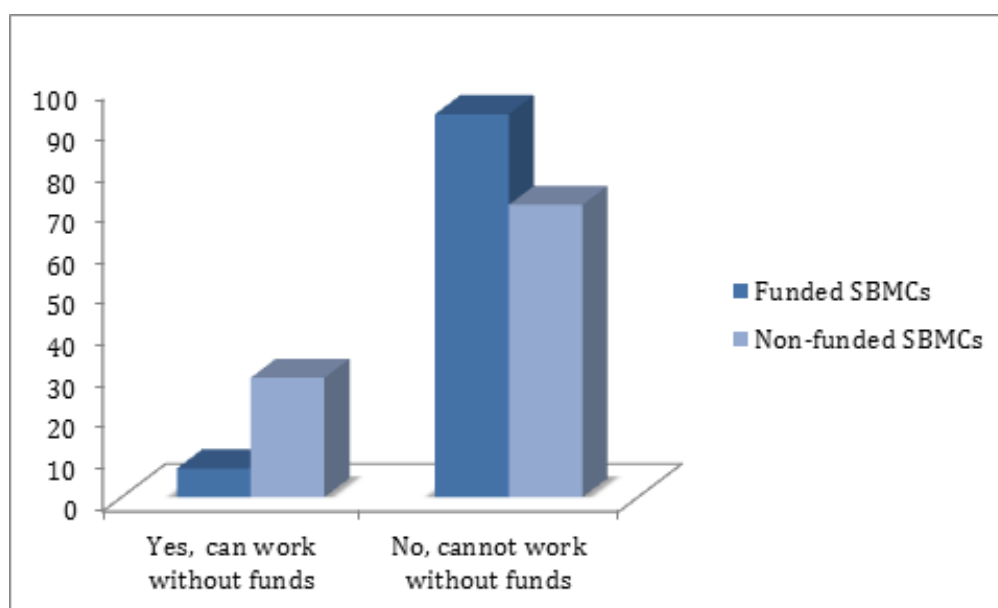


Figure 4.1: SBMC members' responses on whether the SBMC can work to improve girls' education in without funds

The above graph shows that only 7% of the respondents from the funded schools thought funds are not necessary for SBMCs to perform their functions, but 93% disagreed with the view meaning that they thought funds are needed. Perhaps having funds available under GEP made the SBMC members to assume that their performance depends largely on the availability of funds. However, 29% of responses from the non-funded thought that SBMCs can carry out work to improve girls access to education without funding. Probably being non-funded, the SBMCs generated resources through other means. On the whole, majority believed that SBMCs' work to improve girls' education outcomes required funding.

Interviews with stakeholders revealed that SBMC members depended on internally sourced contributions especially from PTA levy. This is an indication that community members are not totally dependent on external sources for funding school activities, although their contributions cannot match grants such as the GEP. Examples of respondents' narratives in support of this include:

We meet within the community and make some contributions among us, but not much because of poverty, we also buy chalk with PTA levy and sales from school farm. (A chairman of SBMC)

No fund was given to our school by government except our parents donation when the need arises. (An Adolescent respondent)

The findings in Table 4.2 also shows that 74.8% of the total participants attested to expending the GEP fund based on priority projects captured in the WSDP while 25.2% answered in the negative. SBMC members were trained on how to develop WSDPs to provide them with a guide on how to address school needs. The finding is an indication that SBMC members were utilizing the knowledge gained during training for use in school improvement. The following narratives confirm that planning is an important aspect of their work:

I monitor implementation of projects through the SBMCs' priority needs captured in the school development plans to ensure they are doing everything as planned. Usually schools have many challenges and the School Development Plans allow them to tackle problems one at a time. (A desk officer at the LGEA)

The training has helped me to have an idea on how to plan school needs in the school development plan. (A head teacher)

We plan and execute our activities by first of all calling meetings to tell the community the problems we have in the school so that we can suggest which one to do first and we also monitor the implementation by a sub-committee to ensure it is properly done. (A SBMC chairman)

It was also reported by a chairman of SBMC that the bank account they opened helped them to manage the GEP money and all records of expenditure were kept with the head teacher who is the secretary of the committee. He was also of the view that formation of sub-committees eased their work:

The SBMCs formed sub- committees to carry out different work. e.g., when we provided uniforms, there was sub-committee that bought yards and sew, another bought exercise books and pencils and at the end we all met and all assigned sub-committees read their report to all members. This make our work to be done well. (A chairman of SBMC)

The committee members were aware of the important role the training received played in building their capacity to understand their responsibilities and the GEP fund empowered them enough to be confident in making decisions that affect the education of their wards. This clearly shows that community members possessed the ability to effect positive change in education once they are given the opportunity.

Although the SBMC members in the funded schools had undergone training on how to manage the GEP funds, the reported benefit of the training stresses the need for refresher trainings to take care of new members. As stated by the an education secretary:

SBMCs were trained, ... such trainings should be repeated because some schools or members had received the training a long period of time ago and some members are new, as such, more training is needed.

It was also evident during the visit to schools that WSDPs were available and it is noteworthy that all the funded schools had information boards. Any visitor to these schools did not have to ask for information on SBMC related issues as it was readily available on the information boards. Also, it was evident that activities were prioritized using the WSDPs and there were records of expenditure as well as minutes of meetings that were kept with the head teacher. The researchers sighted these documents during field visits.

SBMCs' approaches to promote girls' enrolment and retention in the funded communities

Data on enrolment figures of male and female

pupils, number of male and female teachers, number of schools and gender parity index were obtained from the department of planning research and statistics of the three local government education authorities under study. The data which captures three sessions 2005/06, 2009/10 and 2014/15 for Gbako, Munya and Mariga are presented in tabular and graphical formats in Figures 4.2, 4.3 and 4.4.

Figure 4.2 shows that there was an increase in girls' enrolment relative to boys with marked increases observed in the local government areas. Girls' enrolment which in 2005/06 were 30.9% and 32.2% rose to 41.6% and 35.9% for Gbako and Gbariga respectively. For Munya, the figure rose from 42.8% to 47.2%. The increase enrolment rates tallies with the increase observed in the Gender Parity Index as reflected in Figure 4.2. The GPI was 0.4 and 0.5 in 2005/2006 for Gbako and Mariga prior to the implementation of GEP 1. The data however indicated that in the 2014/15 session, the GPI was 0.7 for both local government areas. In the case of Munya, as at 2009/10 the GPI stood at 0.7, but by 2014/15 gender parity was 0.9 indicating that the ratio had increased in favour of girls' enrolment and a move towards parity in enrolment. It is very likely that the intervention of GEP contributed to the observed improvement in GPI.



Figure 4.2: Enrolment figures for males and females in the three local government areas from 2005-2015 (Source: Compiled from Annual School Census Report, 2005 – 2015 EMIS Niger state SUBEB)

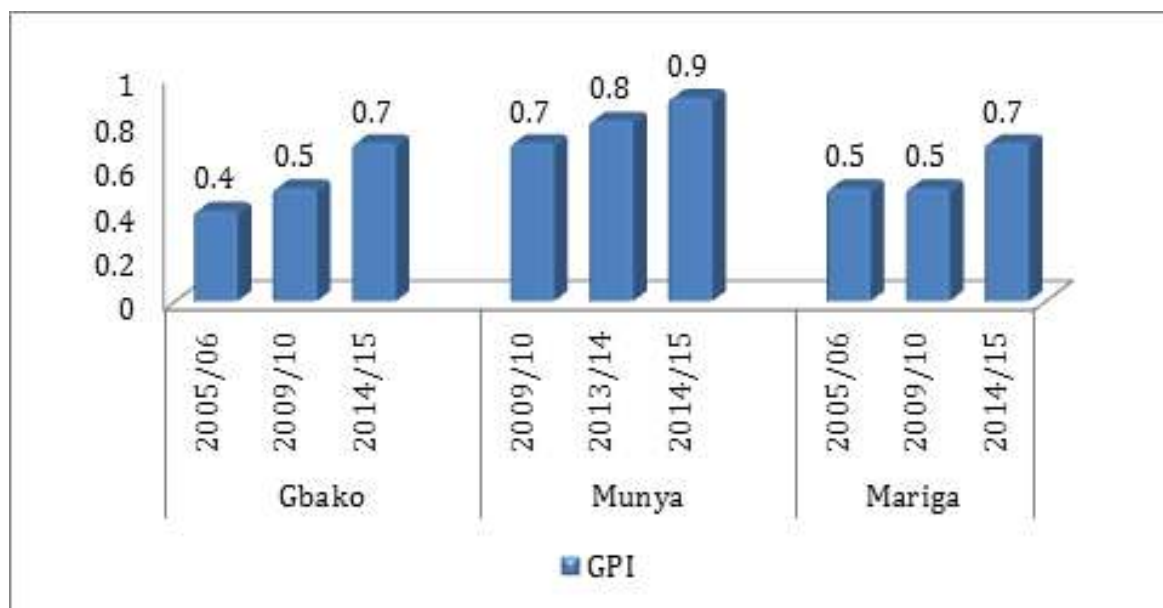


Figure 4.3: Gender Parity index (GPI) from 2005-2015 in the three local governments (Source: Compiled from Annual School Census Report, 2005 – 2015 EMIS Niger State SUBEB)

The data from the Annual School Census Report 2005 – 2015 also shows that the proportion of female teachers in all the schools was very low compared to male teachers, especially in Gbako and Mariga local government areas. Figure 4.4 shows that in 2005/06, female teachers

constituted 13.7% and 11.5% in Gbako and Mariga respectively. Over 10 years, the three local governments witnessed only a negligible increase with 15.1% and 13.1% for Gbako and Mariga respectively; the proportion of female teachers increased from 35.4% to 36.5% in Munya.

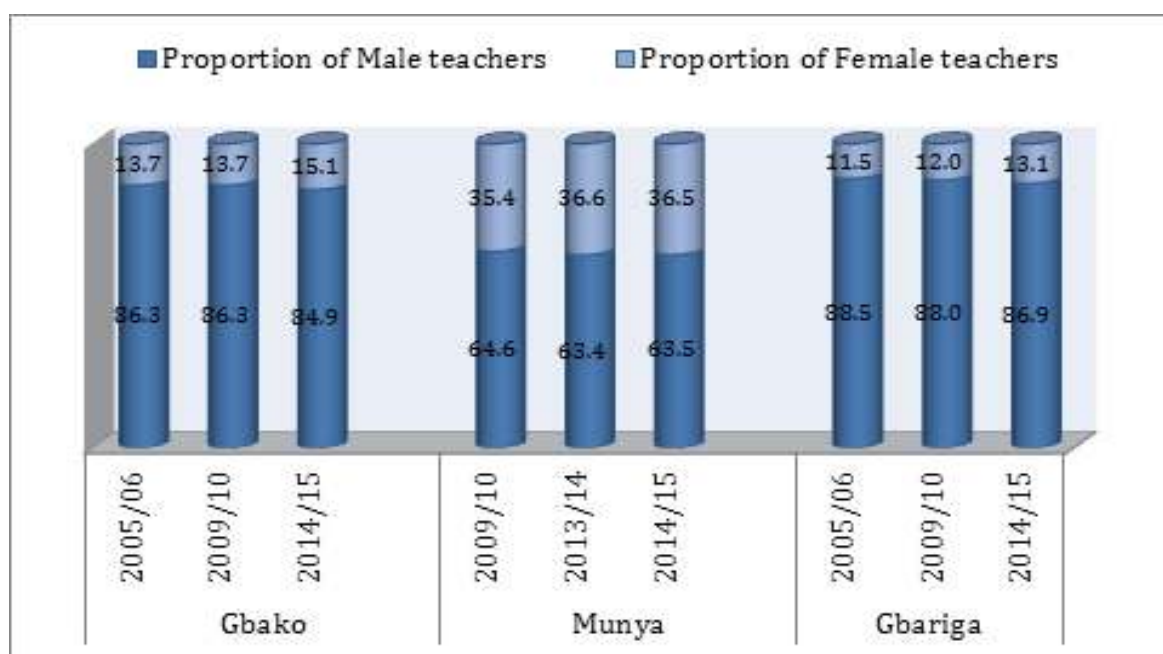


Figure 4.4: Proportion of male and female teachers in three local government 2005-2015 (Source: Compiled from Annual School Census Report, 2005 – 2015 EMIS Niger State SUBEB)

SBMC members embarked on varied activities to promote girls' participation. Table 4.3 shows the activities carried out by SBMCs in GEP funded

schools that encourage girls' enrolment and retention.

Table 4.3: Participants' responses on SBMCs' activities in funded schools that encouraged girls' enrolment

Response	Frequency	%
Campaigns, sensitization to encourage more girls	63	54.8
Monitoring attendance register	27	23.5
Meeting girls' parents	14	12.2
Talking to parents and guardians	11	9.6
Total	115	100

The results presented in Table 4.3 revealed that 54.8% of the respondents indicated that sensitization to community members helped in the enrolment of girls in schools while 23.5% attributed the increase to monitoring of pupils' attendance registers during visits to school. Only 12.2% believed that meeting with parents was an activity that engendered the increase; the remaining 9.6% felt that talking with parents and guardians, which is similar to the meeting with parents impacted on girls' school participation.

Stakeholders that responded through interviews and discussions during the study also confirmed SBMCs' the use of diverse approaches in persuading parents and attracting girls to enrol and attend school. A desk officer in the education unit of a local government area stated that most of the activities carried out by the SBMC members who received grants to promote girls education included purchase of school uniforms, construction of female toilets, provision of instructional materials, discouraging hawking during school hours and early marriage. They also monitored pupils and teachers' attendance during visits to school. Similarly, other participants observed that:

The GEP funds given to SBMCs were utilized in the construction of female toilets, purchase of female school uniforms and bags, sandals, socks and in addition they also carried out enrolment drive campaign, house-to-house visits, all in collaboration with mothers' associations. (Desk Officer, Munya)

We also monitor daily school attendance, ensuring that hawking no longer takes place during school hours and ensuring that girls are not withdrawn for marriage. (A Chairman of SBMC)

SBMC activities in Toroko community greatly benefited not only children in the community but also female adults. During the study visit, married women were seen in an adult literacy class established by the committee, all the women were optimistic that they will learn how to read and write. One of the women said:

I want to be educated enough to read and write and I will make sure my children all attend school to become important people; it is not late to be educated. We are happy with the effort of SBMC in this community.

The above is an indication of the effect of the sensitization on the importance of girls' education and the active participation of the women in ensuring that not only their wards should be educated but also adults. This could be of immense benefit to children as female parents will have better opportunity to support their children when faced with school assignments and homework.

To encourage girls' school participation, SBMC members were also engaged in the provision of support materials. It was observed that apart from convincing parents on the importance of girls' education through campaigns and sensitization, other factors such as poverty were also strong issues that required support in different forms to

enable parents send their daughters to school. The GEP funds were utilized to provide needed materials and in some instances cash to parents. Figure 4.5 shows the responses of participants about the support materials the SBMCs provided

to encourage girls' school enrolment. Two-thirds (67%) of the respondents thought that provision of school uniforms and instructional materials encouraged girls enrolment.

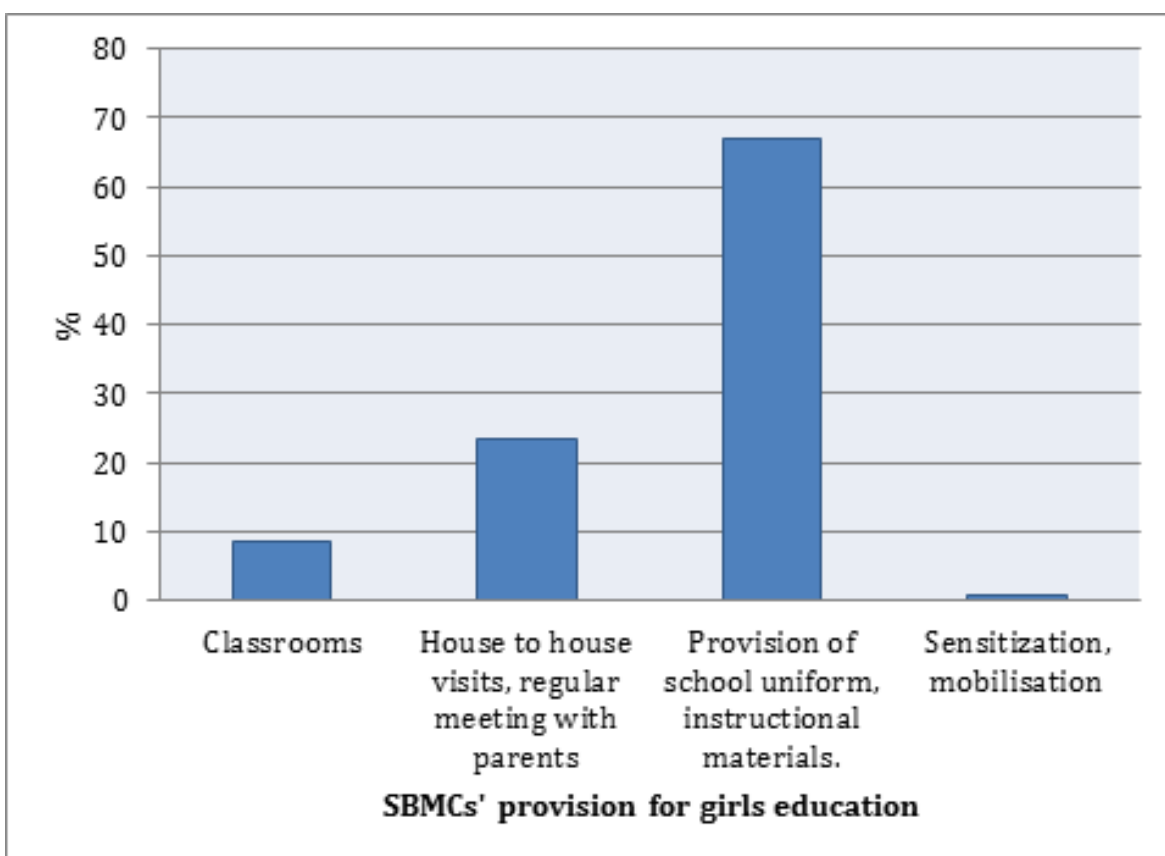


Figure 4.5: Participants' responses on provision of SBMCs' towards girls' enrolment

About one quarter (23.5%) agreed that house to house visits and regular meetings with parents were responsible for the positive outcome while 8.7% of the participants attributed the increase in enrolment to provision of classrooms. The findings generally suggest that provision of school uniforms and instructional materials contribute to attracting more girls to attend school in the funded communities. Other stakeholders that participated in discussions also shared this view. For example, some female pupils in the schools visited stated that:

Some activities of the SBMC in my school include providing teachers' desks, books

and repair of some dilapidated classes. Yes, SBMC provided us with bags, books and uniforms and we also have toilets and borehole, which have made our school better for us.

Yes, we are aware of the funds given to the SBMC committee. Girls are given money; N5,000 even N10,000 was given to us. Uniforms, books, bags with writing materials were given to us and were purchased with the money given by UNICEF. SBMC encourages us to come to school through advice on the importance of education to the girl child. They

supervised our classes to monitor what is happening in the class; absent girls are checked to find the reason for their absenteeism.

The money referred to in the last narrative is the support given to families under the Cash Transfer Project. The head teachers in the funded schools, who also are secretaries of SBMCs, agreed that the GEP funds were utilized in addressing girls' education, which have yielded positive results in terms of enrolment and retention of girls. One head teacher in Mariga local government said:

The distribution of uniforms, writing materials and the construction of toilet for girls have helped in the increase of girls' enrolment. In 2013/14 we had 140 girls, in 2014/15 we had 143 girls and in 2015/16 we now have 158 out of the total population 370 pupils.

Another head teacher in Munya local government also attributed increase in enrolment of girls to provision of uniforms and school supplies. According to him enrolment figure of girls in the school in 2013/14 was 196, 2014/15 was 273 and in 2015/16 was 303 with total enrolment of 594. An adolescent out-of-school girl stated that:

We don't even know what GEP is and the grant, but with the explanation, yes, more girls are attending school now and I know of girls that were given uniforms, books and bags; it assisted parents because of the poverty in this community.

Roles of community women in promoting girls' enrolment and attendance

Membership of the SBMC was based on representation of stakeholders in the community which was a deliberate effort aimed at ensuring inclusiveness in management and decision-making regarding schools in communities. The policy guidelines on SBMC at national and state levels clearly provided opportunity for women and children to be members of the committee and this which was adhered to especially in all the funded schools visited. Apart from being represented in the committee, what actually did

women do to make girls have access to school, attend and transit to secondary schools? Interaction with men, women and adolescents during focus group discussions gives an insight into women's roles. The narratives revealed that women in the funded schools were actively involved in the education of their children. The SBMC system seemed to have contributed to orienting women to realise that they can play a vital role in creating better access to female children to enrol and attend school. Consequently, there were reports of good practices and efforts by women at the individual level. For example, some women in focus groups from funded SBMC communities stated that:

On the issue of retention, we usually contribute money and buy biscuits, sweets and writing materials to distribute to pupils, the result of which made children to hardly absent themselves. (A female participant in the focus group in a funded SBMC community)

Our main challenge is lack of a secondary school in the community and some men don't allow a female child to go to school somewhere else as this attracts additional financial burden...Some men are not interested in the education of the girl child; women use to farm soya beans to sell and get money to support the girls to complete their school.

Girls in our village do not attend secondary school, which is in the next village because sometimes they are harassed and raped on the way. Parents, because they are afraid, leave the daughters to grow old enough to be married after primary. I then talked to some parents and they allowed me to take eight daughters to my father's house, which is in that village and they are now attending secondary school.

The above good practices gave opportunity for eight girls to be able to attend secondary education. This however is just a drop in the ocean if the number of all the girls that completed

primary schools and require such assistance is considered. Indeed, information obtained from adolescent out-of-school girls suggested that despite the opportunity they had to attend and complete primary school, transition to secondary school is a challenge. The girls' explained that despite the intervention by UNICEF, fathers still preferred to support their sons to proceed to secondary school than girls. It is noteworthy that most of the out-of-school girls that participated in the discussion had completed primary school but were at home as at the time of fieldwork. One of girls stated that:

Yes, girls are allowed to go to school but if they finish primary six they are not allowed to go to secondary school. They focus on boys than girls. Fathers see female education as not important. We want our parents to be sensitized more on importance of girls furthering their schooling.

This is an important aspect in which the government and development partners can engage to accelerate achievement of the GEP objective. The aim of educating children in a community is to provide opportunity for them to ultimately become useful citizens and to act as a catalyst to ending the cycle of poverty; completing primary school is just a step in the pursuit of becoming self-reliant and useful.

Another effective approach employed by the SBMCs to ensure that girls attend school was paying visits to households to meet with parents and convince them of the need to support their wards. Participants were asked whether women were the committee members that carried out this function. The findings showed that an overwhelming number of respondents (99%) were in agreement that women paid visits to households to meet and persuade parents to allow their female children to enrol and attend school. Only 1% gave a negative response. The result was confirmed by the views of men during discussion on the roles played by parents. Narratives from men and women show that the women in the communities under study were

doing a lot to assist girls to be in school:

Women visit house to house for enrolment, women renovate school toilet, women have land where they farm and use the money for girls school, women are more active than men in all activities, women attend all meetings, women want all the children to be educated'. (A male focus group participant)

We do call on people to discuss issues of girls' education, but we assign women to handle women issues while men handle men related issues. (A male focus group participant)

To act as a role model, another female SBMC member and I are presently back in school to complete our primary education, this will enable us help our own children and to also show that age is no barrier to education. (A female focus group participant)

Differences between performance of SBMC in the funded and non-funded communities

What are the stakeholders' views on the differences between funded and non-SBMCs? An interviewee, a director in SUBEB stated that:

SBMCs in funded schools are better in implementing their Whole School Development Plan. The funded communities and schools have demonstrated a higher capacity for planning, resource mobilization and the propensity to own their schools by direct involvement in management.

Similarly officers at local government level that are charged with monitoring of SBMC activities stated that SBMCs of funded schools are specialized in the monitoring of school activities and have techniques in developing plans but non-funded committees do not have the techniques in school governance. One of the local government officials said:

Yes, there are many activities taking place in focus communities that are not there in

the non-focus [non-funded] communities such as the Cash Transfer Programme, SBMC and mothers' associations, which are more functional in focus [funded] communities. Also, school-based teacher development and student tutoring, mentoring and counselling programmes are present and functional in the focus communities. Early childhood care centres too are more functional in these communities.

Unlike the non-funded SBMCs, the members in the funded SBMCs were conversant with their roles and responsibilities and readily showed progress recorded in terms of projects that they had executed. For instance, in Sonfadako community SBMC members established a junior secondary school by utilizing resource mobilization techniques learnt. A block of three classrooms and office with a borehole were seen during the fieldwork. The committee members unequivocally stated they were able to achieve this by seeking for support from a local donor and a native of the community. In addition they sourced for volunteer teachers whom they give occasional incentives to teach.

The composition of SBMC committees in the GEP funded schools was generally based on the provision of the policy guidelines; women and children representatives were also involved based on the prescribed proportions (See Table 4.4). Women constituted 47% of the SBMCs in funded schools as opposed to 28% in non-funded schools. Funded committees also met more frequently; twice per semester on the average as

opposed to once a year observed for the non-funded committees. All the funded SBMCs had bank accounts as opposed to one quarter of the non-funded SBMCs and attracted more donations and contributions than the non-funded SBMCs. Table 4.4 also shows that funded SBMCs engaged in interventions to increase enrolment and school improvement projects such as visitation to schools, community sensitization and mobilization, enrolment drive, house to house visits, resource mobilization, construction and renovation projects and provision of volunteer teachers. The activities carried out by the committee members of the non-funded schools were the annual enrolment drive campaigns held throughout the state. The indicated that they were unable to achieve much due to lack of funds since most people in their communities were poor.

Only a few SBMCs in non-funded schools had been exposed to aspects of training with some funded groups and their training was limited to issues of their roles, how to conduct meetings and sensitization on how to conduct enrolment drive. However, members of funded SBMCs were exposed to more robust training activities which focused on issues such as their expected roles, responsibilities, resource mobilization, how to conduct meetings, WSDP, accountancy and transparency, and funds management. Consequently, the differences observed between funded and non-funded SBMCs, which is reflected in their ability to mobilize additional resources and carryout more activities including execution of projects may be linked to the quality of training and funds received.

Table 4.4: Differences between funded and non-funded SBMCs

Criteria	Funded Schools	Non-Funded Schools
No of sampled schools	9	4
No of members SBMC	19	Varied; 13, 14, 15, and 18. Mean= 15
Composition of SBMC	Men =9 Women =8 Pupil =2 (head boy, head girl) Proportion of women= 47%	Mostly men Women varied no; 3,4,5,5 Mean=4.25 Pupil = None Proportion of women (Average)= 28.3%
Meetings	Regular; Average twice per term Minutes of meeting available	Once per year Mostly referred to as PTA meeting
Availability of funds and bank account	GEP fund Community contributions Donations from elite locals Bank account available Contributions by SBMC members Other or personal donations	None None None Only one of four schools had a bank account Occasional levies known as PTA levies None
Support to pupils (girls)	School uniforms (bags, sandals, socks) Cash Transfer Programme Toilets, Boreholes	None None None
Training received	Roles and Responsibility Resource mobilization How to conduct meetings Whole School Development Plan Accountability and Transparency Funds Management	A few members were trained with members of funded schools. Received training only on roles and how to conduct meetings but not on funds management Received sensitization training on how to conduct enrolment drives,
Activities carried out to increase enrolment	Visitation to schools, Community sensitization, mobilization Enrolment drive House to house visits by women Resource mobilization	Enrolment drive Sanitation activities during rainy season
School improvement activities	Construction and renovation of classrooms and toilets Sourced volunteers to fill gaps	Provision of chalk

Source: Fieldwork (January and February 2016)

Discussion

Previous literature have highlighted the lack of training and skills as a major problem encountered by SBMCs and therefore emphasised the need for training to enhance the functionality effectiveness of SMBCs (e.g., Ayeni & Ibukun, 2013; Oduwaiye, Bakwai & Yisa, 2015). The findings of this study revealed that most of the SBMC members in funded schools had received training and held meetings twice per term on the average. These factors were identified as instrumental in enhancing their functionality and effectiveness. The training received by SBMC members on roles and responsibilities, WSDP, resource mobilization, fund management in addition to monitoring and mentoring visits by government agencies

enhanced their performance, particularly in the funded schools. Thus SBMC members were able to effectively utilize the GEP funds due to the training received on fund management and WSDP. The provision of grants under GEP also provided opportunity to SBMCs to work for the educational transformation of their communities and at the grassroots level. The stakeholders in the three local governments were in agreement that funding plays a key role in making SBMCs functional. Participants noted that without resources, it would be difficult for the committee members to execute minor repairs to schools and provide school materials such as uniforms and writing materials to girls.

The training may also be associated with the accountability observed in funded schools. All the funded schools had bank accounts and there was evidence of records of expenditure, minutes of meetings, WSDPs and all the funded schools had information boards on these items. The formation of sub-committees within SBMCs to carry out specific functions assigned to it contributed to the committees' effectiveness. This approach promoted delegation and division of labour among the committee members, which also improved the cooperation alluded to by the SBMCs, and consequently enhanced their performance.

In this study, an increase in girls' enrolment and gender parity from 2005 to 2015 was observed across the three local governments. The participants affirmed that the increase could, to a considerable extent, be attributed to the activities of the SBMCs. Further, the activities of the SBMCs which were associated with increased girls' enrolment included community sensitization, monitoring of pupils attendance registers and provision of support materials. Majority of the participants affirmed that utilization of GEP funds to provide support materials encouraged parents to enrol their female children in school. Also, rehabilitation of classrooms, construction of separate toilets for girls and provision of water source (boreholes, wells) by SBMCs made the funded schools to be more conducive for learning. This finding corroborates result from a monitoring and evaluation report by CSACEFA (2009) which suggested that the projects such as construction or renovation of separate toilets for girls, provision of water, and distribution of free school uniforms and bags to girls from poor homes were executed to attract more girls to school.

Although the participants also stated that SBMCs in funded schools sourced for volunteer teachers to assist in teaching and provided incentives occasionally, one issue that requires

further attention is the low proportion of female teachers. The findings revealed that the proportion of female teachers, which was very low compared to male teachers, did not witness a significant change from 2005 to 2015. The study revealed that having women representatives have positively impacted on the participation of girls in education in the funded schools. The gender inclusiveness of the funded SBMCs and the impact on the community is noteworthy. Consistent with literature (e.g., Adediran, 2010), the study revealed that having women representatives have positively impacted on the participation of girls' education in the funded schools. The SBMC system contributed to orienting women to realize their significant vital role in promoting girls' education. Women engaged in good practices and house-to-house visits, encouraging girls' enrolment and attendance.

There were differences between funded and non-funded SBMCs in their effectiveness and functionality; activities conducted; composition and gender inclusiveness; awareness of their roles and responsibilities, and; training received. Consequently, the SBMCs of funded schools had better capacities for resource mobilization, exhibited more accountability, had executed more school improvement projects and monitored their schools more often than the non-funded ones. Also, they demonstrated a higher capacity for planning, resource mobilization and the propensity to own their schools by direct involvement in management.

During the course of the interviews and discussions with the different participants, there were some notable recurrent issues relating to transitioning of girls to secondary school. First, despite the increase in girls' primary school enrolment and completion rates, girls still faced difficulty in transiting to secondary schools mainly due to lack of support by parents and preference for male

children. Second, governmental efforts, however minimal, have not translated to significant changes in the lived experiences of girls in some the communities in the study. Third, non-availability of junior and senior secondary schools close to the communities further compounded the problem of girls' transition. Thus there is a need to for SBMCs to go beyond girls' access to primary school to encourage and facilitate transition to secondary schools.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this research, there is a reasonable evidence to conclude that grants in conjunction with trainings, monitoring and mentoring visits by government agencies provided to the funded schools contributed to enhancing SBMCs functions and effectiveness towards improving girls' access and retention in primary school which was not evident in the non-funded schools. It was also observed that women seemed to be more active than men in carrying out activities that promote girls' enrolment and retention. The utilization of the GEP funds in executing girls' specific projects like providing separate toilets to girls, uniforms and writing materials by SBMC members contributed to the increase in girls' enrolment and retention in schools; transition to secondary schools by girls however remains a big challenge. There were also remarkable differences in activities conducted by SBMCs in the funded and non-funded schools. The availability of GEP grant provided opportunities for SBMCs in the funded schools to execute school improvement projects that promoted girls' enrolment. Consequently, based on the findings of this research, the following recommendations were made:

1. There is a wide gap between the performance of SBMCs in funded and non-funded communities. This creates the need for the state government to own the SBMC system by deliberately putting in

mechanisms to train all SBMC members in the non-funded communities and provide grants in order for SBMCs to work and transform basic education services to reach all children. The progress recorded in education by the funded communities need to be replicated in all communities as education is a right and therefore all children, irrespective of status should be educated.

2. Given their demonstrated potential, SBMCs should be strengthened to enhance their functionality and effectiveness in communities through regular training including refresher training for new members, creating platforms to share experiences with other communities, documenting best practices and providing incentives for performance.
3. There is the need for continued sensitization to support girls' education not only in terms of primary school attendance but to proceed to secondary school. This should include a drive to ensure girls' transition to secondary school. SBMCs need to go beyond girls' access to primary school to encourage and facilitate transition to secondary schools.
4. The performance of women in SBMCs has demonstrated that they can be significant agents of change to facilitate increase in girls' access to education. Therefore, more interventions should strengthen women's participation in the support girls' school enrolment, retention and transition.
5. The proportion of female teachers in most of the schools under study

was remarkably low. The government and SBMCs should give priority to increasing the number of female teachers who are needed as role models in the school community.

6. The state government need to expand

junior secondary schools to provide easy access to girls to transit from the primary level. This will help address the issue of distance from home for females in most communities.

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5



Schooling in conflict situations: Of girls' education in Plateau State

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Abstract

The study explored the realities of girls' schooling in conflict situations and the impact on attendance and retention in Plateau State. Using a mixed method approach, three research questions were addressed: (1) What are the identified impact of conflict on girls' retention in school? (2) What are the factors influencing the development of education for the girl child? (3) How are the various interventions contributing to educational development in the state? Data was collected from six local governments areas in the state: Jos North, Wase, Riyom, Kanke, Bokkos and Langtang South. The data were collected from documents, questionnaires, individual and key Informant interviews, focus group discussions and observations. The participants in the study included 480 primary and secondary school pupils (comprising of 75% females), 48 teachers, 60 parents as well as community leaders, school administrators and community members. The findings revealed that conflicts were linked to low enrolment and drop out of girls from schools, arising from: forced migration to take up various forms of labour; economic and family sustenance, and; fear of safety. Factors such as early marriage, unwanted or early pregnancy, religious and traditional beliefs were identified as the major socio-cultural factors affecting the educational attainment of the girl child. Furthermore, due to societal pressures, girls also compulsorily dropped out of school in the event of pregnancy, to avoid being tagged as 'too educated' for potential suitors, and, to assist in family upbringing in the event of incapacitation or demise of a parent. Only a quarter of the students enjoyed free education while majority received support from parents for fees and school learning materials, thus creating an educational context where ability to pay becomes a strong factor in girls' educational attainment. While distance to school was a challenge to many girls in the rural areas, teacher's approachability was identified as a major reason for girls' positive attitude to school. About one third of the students indicated had that there were organisations

supporting their school form of educational intervention. Two organisations had interventions partly targeted at girls' education while only one was targeted solely at girls. Raising awareness and developing skills on conflict prevention management and resolution, gender-based violence as well as advocacy for the establishment and strengthening of SBMCs are intertwined; a scale-up of such efforts at the community, local government and state levels will enhance positive adaptability and girls' education in conflict prone communities. Several recommendations were made including the need for effective documentation of school records for planning, diagnostic, intervention, research and policy purposes. Also, teachers require training and development that incorporates gender-sensitivity to promote girls' education.

Introduction

The fourth of the sustainable development goals (SDGs) by the United Nations aims at ensuring inclusive and quality education for all and also promotes life long learning. One of the targets under this goal is to eliminate gender disparity in education and ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities, indigenous people and children in vulnerable situations (UNESCO, 2015). Despite all the progress that has been made towards increasing access to education, particularly for women and girls, there are still about 57 million out of school children of which more than half live in sub-Saharan Africa. UNICEF (2012) estimates that no fewer than 9 million Nigerian children of primary school age are out of school, 74% of which will never be enrolled into school. The Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC) projects an estimated 10 million out of school children in Nigeria as at 2014. At the secondary school level in the UBEC report (UBEC, 2012), it is estimated that 2.2 million children will never be enrolled and 22.1% of those that do enrol are expected to drop out along the way for one reason or another. This dropout rate at secondary school more than triples that at primary school level (an estimated 5%). Therefore the study explores the various levels of girl-child education and participation across six LGAs of Plateau state.

It is noteworthy that there have been concerted efforts by government agencies to increase access to girl child education through special interventions by UBEC and Ministry of Education

in Plateau state. For instance, the junior girls model schools in Denji and Zaron in Kanam and Barkin Ladi local government areas respectively built by UBEC were created especially for the girls in these areas to bridge the gap in girl-child education. However, the effectiveness of these interventions needs to be examined. Nationally, according to the British Council Gender in Nigeria Report (2012:29-30), from 2004-2008, there has been average disparity of two million boys enrolled in primary schools more than girls, while there was an average of one million boys enrolled in secondary schools more than girls. Therefore, a study of this nature becomes relevant as it focuses on the existent situation and offers prognosis for possibilities on how the girl-child in Plateau state can participate freely and indiscriminately in the world of education. Research endeavour such as this contribute to efforts to bring the state in general up to speed for global competition in terms of total number of educated girls per community.

Statement of the problem

A key area of concern for the international community, civil society organisations and the educational sector in Nigeria is the active inclusion and participation of the girl-child irrespective of pre-existent societal norms and traditions. The UNICEF substantiated this concern by positing that gender parity target and equal access to education is indeed the foundation for all other development goals. It further stated that until equal numbers of girls and boys are in school, it will be impossible to build the knowledge necessary to eradicate

poverty and hunger, combat disease and ensure environmental sustainability (UNICEF, 2007; 2009). However, the proportion of out of school children is high in Plateau State. With a total of 1,450,966 total children currently in school and 750,000 children out of school, one out of three children are out of school in the state. Girls are adversely disadvantaged because their education is seen as a burden and their withdrawal from school an economic asset dropping of school an asset as many lack of education as to engage in income generating activities such as domestic labour and hawking an asset. For example, a 10 year old girl whose dream of being a nurse was abandoned when she was taken away to be a maid in order to provide income for her family. This reflected the plight of 'most girls of her age from her community in Plateau State' who 'work as maids in exchange for money, items or schooling' (Okeke, 2015). According to a report the National Institute for Policy and Strategic Studies, unlike other northern states in their study (Nasarawa, Kaduna, Bauchi, Gombe, Katsina and Niger) with girls' education related statistics increasing marginally from 2005 to 2010, the enrolment of girls into junior secondary in Plateau state declined from 49% to 43.9% (Para-Mallam, 2012). The reasons for this have been attributed to lack of motivation for the empowerment of girls, socio-economic factors, youth sexuality and ethno religious crises.

Given the trajectory of girl-child education in Plateau state, this study focused on the following interrelated objectives:

1. To examine the impact of conflict on girls' retention in schools.
2. To assess possible factors influencing the development of education for the girl-child.
3. To assess how effective the various interventions contribute to educational development by various stakeholders.

In order to address these questions, the study the following questions were posed:

1. What is the identified impact of conflict on girls' retention in schools?
2. What are the factors influencing the development of education for the girl

child?

3. How are the various interventions contributing to educational development in the state?

Research context

Plateau State covering an area of 26,890² is located in the middle belt zone of Nigeria. The state is bordered in the north-west by Kaduna State, in the north-east by Bauchi State, in the south-west and west by Nasarawa State, while in the south-east it is bordered by Taraba State (PLACA, 2004). Plateau has a relatively temperate climate with a topography characterized with picturesque landscape and undulating high lands, thus providing a hydrographical head for many rivers, some of which are very fast flowing and have developed waterfalls. The 2006 population census shows that the state has at that time approximately 3.3 million people. A large proportion of the population is engaged in farming and mining activities.

To many Nigerians, the Plateau state motto of 'Home of Peace and Tourism' was more than an empty slogan (Onoja, 2010) given the relative peace enjoyed by inhabitants of the state and evident in the presence of a large number of foreigners who often came for yearly vacations and tourist visits. However, the recent conflicts that had been experienced in past two decades have had devastating and unprecedented effects on the socio-economic and inter-relational fabrics of the state. The conflicts that pervaded the state have been divided into inter-community conflicts and indigene versus settler conflicts. Although these conflicts would be said to possess similar motives in line with conflicts elsewhere, in Plateau state, religion became a tool for mobilization among the belligerents (Fwatshak, 2007). These conflicts, spanning over 20 years (with 2001, 2008 and 2011 designated as the most devastating), have since taken so many lives, displaced individuals and families in their thousands, caused forced migration and destroyed economic and social viability for individuals and the state at large.



Figure 5.1: Map of Plateau state indicating all the Local Government Areas

The diagram in Figure 5.1 is the map of Plateau state. The local government areas (Jos North, Riyom, Bokkos, Kanam, Langtang, and Wase) used as study areas are identified with alphabetical markings a, b, c, d, e and f respectively.

Jos North Local Government

Jos North Local Government Council, as it is currently constituted, was carved out of old Jos Local Government Council during the 1991 local government creation, with Jos town as the council headquarters. It is made up of one district, Gwong, which includes the Jos town area and has a population of 437,217 persons based on the 2006 census. The metropolitan nature of the council area provides it an added advantage as there are infrastructural facilities like good roads, pipe borne water, electricity supply etc. The local

government council is no doubt the melting pot of the state due to various economic, social and natural factors.

Kanam Local Government

Currently headquartered in the town of Dengi, the local government has an area of 2,600 km² and a population of about 165,898 according to the 2006 census figures. The major languages spoken in Kanam are Boghom, Jhar, Kantana and Basharawa.

Wase Local Government

Situated some 216 km south-east of Jos, the traditional state was founded in 1820, and it became a part of the British Royal Niger Company protectorate (later Northern Nigeria) in 1898. The population of the local government was put at 125,000 as of 2003 and the area about 17,500 km².

The languages spoken include Jukun, Taroh, Hausa and Fulani.

Bokkos Local Government

With its headquarters in Bokkos town, the local government is currently the host of the Plateau State University. It has an area of 1682km² and a resident population of 178,454 as at the 2006 census. The languages spoken include Ron, Mushere and Kulere.

Riyom Local Government

With an area of 807km² and a population of about 131,551 according to the 2006 census, the local government has its headquarters in Riyom town. This predominantly Berom area shares boundary with Kaduna and Nasarawa states. The major languages spoken include Berom, Aten and Atakar.

Langtang South Local Government

Headquartered in Mabudi town, the local government has an area of 838km² and a population of 106,305 at the 2006 census. The major language of the people of Langtang South is Taroh.

Literature review

Perspectives on girl child education in Plateau state

Education is a joint responsibility of various tiers of government in Nigeria. At the basic education level, education financing is the responsibility of states and local governments. The Federal Government of Nigeria, through the UBEC, provides an intervention fund to states for funding of basic education with two per cent of its Consolidated Revenue Fund. The fund is disbursed and should be utilized according to UBEC stated formula (UBEC, 2004; 2013). At the state level, the UBEC implements its programmes through the State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB) and Local Government Education Authority (LGEA). The objectives of the Plateau State Universal Basic Education is not explicit on the provision for free universal basic education, neither is there a clause for coordination to ensure gender equity in enrolment, retention and attainment in schools (Plateau State Government, 2016b). The Constitution of the

Federal Republic of Nigeria maintains that education should be provided free when practicable, which appears to weaken any reason for holding the government accountable for failure to provide free education. Similar trend is also observable in the Universal Basic Education Act (2004), which does not make it mandatory for states to provide free education to school age Nigerian children (UBEC, 2004). Para-Mallam (2012) observed that in Plateau State, successive governments have put measures in place to address low educational attainment but have not been able to sustain or consolidate past gains, resulting in low attainment rates, particularly for girls.

Scholars are in agreement that gender inequality exists both in access and completion across Nigerian states, including Plateau States (see Unterhalter & Heslop, 2011; Dunne, et al, 2013; Ezegwu, Adedokun & Ezegwu, 2015; Humphreys & Crawford, 2014; Unterhalter et al, 2015). The 2015 Nigeria Education Data Survey (NPC/RTI, 2016) relating to age-specific schooling among children between 4-16 years shows that 24.6% of children in Plateau State never attended school while 3.3% dropped out higher than north-central zone averages of 16.8% and 2.5 % respectively. The survey also reported gender differences in the net attendance ratios between boys and girls in the primary (males, 67.4%; females 64.6%) and secondary school levels (males, 40.1%; females, 31%). The figures were lower than the regional level averages for males (74.2%) and females (72.6%) for primary school and secondary schools (males, 41.4%; females, 37.9%). The 2010 NEDS state report (NPC, 2014) further shows that among adults age 15-61 years and above, the population of literate men against literate women spread across rural and urban areas was 91% literate urban men over 85% literate urban women; 67% literate rural men, over 57% literate rural women. In general, only about 47% of girls in rural areas have access to basic education for literacy. Furthermore, Plateau State has a 65% drop out rate of the girl child in her Class 6 (final class) against a 47% drop out of the boys in the same class. The UBEC data sheet (2015) in its students' enrolment by state for JSS classes

2011/2012, shows that Plateau State had a total of 283 schools, with a total enrolment of 63,233, of which 34,324 (54.3%) were males and 28,909 (45.7%) were females. The disparity in female literacy rate from that of males could be a direct function of individual government policies and how they translate to practical result oriented implementation. In-depth investigation is required to understand peculiar state situations and explain possible deficiencies of government to actualize gender-based policies, which are often publicly endorsed and in reality neglected. As Para-Mallam (2012) posits, girls have high aspiration for their education and can identify the obstacles they face and a wide range of solutions, but not in all states or schools. This is an indication that the posturing of school authority and government determines to a large extent, the dynamics of basic education, enrolment and retention of the girl-child in schools.

What are the reasons why these numbers tilt negatively towards the girl child? Para-Mallam (2012) noted that Plateau State had one of the highest numbers of obstacles that could hinder educational aspiration for girls. According to the 2010 NEDS report, the high rate of drop out of the girl child in Plateau was attributed to monetary cost (38%) and the need to work for economic benefits to augment the families' income or for survival (30%). Another reason is the strike action by local government staff and teachers in 2012 that lasted for more than three months and led to significant drop out and transfer of children to private schools (Para-Mallam, 2012). Could this have led to the decline in girl child school attendance in Plateau State within the period? There is no statistical proof to affirm this position; poor records of school level data and limited understanding of its purpose makes it difficult to monitor, assess and act on gender gaps and the problems of girls and boys attendance, progression and retention.

In terms of educational infrastructure and facilities with gender considerations, Zwalchir, Jurmang and Yaro (2001) opined that there is a general technology gap and gender bias.

Technology, they posed, should be equally accessible to male and female students. Gender gap should not exist in the use of basic technology, as this will bridge social inequality among males and females in terms of life opportunities and choices. However, such limitations in equality of access to educational facilities lie within factors, which need to be better understood. Para-Mallam (2012) is of the opinion that since basic education is not free, levies charged contribute to girls not attending and progressing in school and fully engaging in needed activities. The educational facilities may not benefit the girl-child because she might not be able to pay for certain basic practical. This study attempts to unravel the extent to which access to basic technology and educational facilities are gender biased in the face of generally assumed factors.

In a bid to enhance educational outcomes, the state government proposed an improvement on the delivery of qualitative and free education as a matter of right and not privilege, a number of from the critical formative (nursery and primary) through the transitional stages of secondary and vocational programmes (Plateau State Government, 2016a). The education objectives of its Education, Youth and Human Capital Development agenda were to be achieved through: (i) annual training and retraining of teachers as well as elaborate incentives scheme to attract the best and brightest teachers (ii) improved management of schools through excellent administration (iii) allocating sufficient resources for infrastructure such as safe classrooms, water, electricity, sanitation, libraries, laboratories and use of Information Technology to enhance learning. It also emphasised ensuring support for those at risk of dropping out of school, and free payment of all senior secondary certificate examination registration fees for indigent students. Although these proposed objectives may encompass the major concerns and position of Zwalchir et al (2001) and Para-Mallam (2012) as previously stated, nevertheless, Para-Mallam (2012) explains that after painstaking study on educational facility improvement, teachers' improved levels of

training do not translate into higher attainment for girls in all schools. However, better trained teachers, (through pre-service and in-service training) are associated with girls speaking out more about obstacles to completing their education and possible solutions. This calls for a more specific and practical improvement on the state of educational facilities to cover the girls' peculiar educational needs in the state. To this end, an in-depth investigation and documentation of the realities of girls schooling is pertinent.

Conflict, gender and education

According to Tschirgi (2011), in conflict and post-conflict contexts, the educational sector is often burdened with additional challenges beyond the usual limitations. Similarly, Justino (2010) argues that greater attention needs to be paid to understanding and overcoming the barriers that populations affected by violent conflict face in accessing their right to education. The right to education is almost always denied the beneficiaries at the peak of violent conflicts and children are either removed from school or are prevented from attending school. In Justino's view, conflicts and associated physical destruction can interrupt the education of children through the damage to schools, absence of teachers, fears of insecurity and change in family structure and household income. These variables are all aspects of investigation which are subsumed under the study.

For more positive consequences, Tschirgi (2011) avers that there are many examples whereby the education sector has played a critical role in promoting peace (in post conflict scenarios) by, for example, addressing inequalities, overcoming prejudices and fostering new values and institutions. In order to foster this positive-reverse role of education on conflicts, Tschirgi further posed that beyond education's direct contributions to peace-building, there is a compelling need to incorporate conflict sensitivity into the design and implementation of education programmes and projects in conflict and post conflict contexts. However, Justino (2010) argues that the area of violent conflicts and how it affects

education has not fully matured as literature is ambiguous; she noted that, 'clearly gender is a theme, but it is not obvious how. UNICEF (2016) states that 'women, men, boys and girls experience conflict differently, with a range of gender-related impacts and must be effectively taken into account. Women and girls are uniquely and disproportionately affected by violent conflicts. While conflict situations may lead to women and girls undertaking non-traditional activities that provide opportunities for economic participation, the disproportionate burden of care they face may become exacerbated in post conflict contexts and affect their economic empowerment negatively. In addition, the nature of contemporary conflicts produces the primary consequence of displacement, it has great implications for education (Dryden-Peterson, 2011); girls become disproportionately burdened and threat to their sexuality inevitably affects every aspect of their lives (SCSVC Report, 2016). As Justino (2010) posed a thematic inference that 'the exposure of households to violence results in significant gender differentials in individual educational outcome.' The challenges of access to education for girls in conflict situation is further compounded issues such as child marriage, lack of security and threats of violence related to attending school, gender based violence within schools, and lack of essential 'girl-friendly' infrastructure (UNICEF, 2016). This study intends to explore the extent to which this assertion is true in Plateau state.

Plateau state conflict and education

Ejikeme (2002) argued that during emergencies, many Nigerian parents selectively attend to the male child than the girl child. Thus, violence and conflicts have gendered implications and may affect education (especially for the girl-child) in the following ways: (i) death and displacement of teachers, parents and students (ii) destruction and damage to schools and educational infrastructure (iii) schools being targets during crisis (iv) forced closure of schools (v) threats to children's security while attending school - girls may be kept from school by parents for fear of violence against females (vi) exacerbating existing marginalization in society (UNESCO, 2010). The exact statistics

and facts on these identified parameters for Plateau State are either absent or sketchy. For example, Ozoilo, et al (2012) in giving the demographic number of patients managed by the Jos University Teaching Hospital in the 2001 Jos crisis, stated that a total of 463 crisis victims were presented over a five-day period. Out of these, records of 389 (84.0%) were available. There were 348 (89.5%) males and 41 (10.5%) females. Indeed, the ethno religious crisis led to the depopulation of rural areas, especially around the state capital (Para-Mallam, 2012) and children (especially girls) were withdrawn from schools in areas worst hit by the crises namely: Riyom, Barkin-Ladi, Bokkos and Wase (Premier Times, 2013). In general, although there exists some studies that looked at conflict and gender issues in Nigeria, they appear to have given little attention to peculiar Plateau States conflict factors and how they work to strengthen or exacerbate the inequality in the state (Ezegwu et al, 2015).

Method

Research Design

In addition to the focus on the nature of girl-child education in conflict situations, this research includes the influence of non-conflict factors of culture, community engagement and interventions in such contexts. Hence, a mixed

method design was adopted to provide real-life contextual understanding, multi-level perspectives and cultural influences. Furthermore, the application of rigorous quantitative and qualitative analysis to assess issues of interest using Concurrent Triangulation Design offers in-depth understanding to phenomena in this study.

Research Sites

Through the use of multi-stage sampling, involving the constant review and justification of samples, the study involved six local government areas (Bokkos, Jos North, Kanam, Langtang South, Riyom, Wase) traversing the entire senatorial districts in the state for an equitable spread of area of data collection. In the selected local governments, data gathering in the field took place for a period of seven weeks. Two communities were selected for data collection in each local government and in total, data was collected from 12 communities. Table 5.1 presents the list of communities involved in the research according to the local governments. Furthermore, in each local government area, data were collected from two schools (one primary and one secondary), bringing the total number of sampled schools to 12.

Table 5. 1: Communities in the local government areas selected for the study

Local Government	Community
Bokkos	Daffo and Bokkos Town
Jos North	Laranto and Dilimi
Kanam	Dengi and Jarmai
Langtang South	Mabudi and Sabon Gida
Riyom	Ganawuri and Rim
Wase	Katarko and Wase Town

Participants

First, in each of the 12 schools in the study communities, 40 students were randomly selected, particularly female students, and were served with structured questionnaires. Research assistants were readily available to offer explanatory assistance to respondents who had problems completing the questionnaires.

Altogether questionnaires were administered to 480 student participants comprising (75%) females and (25%) males. The age distribution of respondents showed that 94 (19.6%) were aged below 11 years, 385 (80.2%) were aged 11-20 years while 1 (0.2%) above 20 years old.

Second, teachers were randomly selected within

the schools for interviews and some school administrators were interviewed as key informants; a total of 48 teachers and 12 administrators were selected. Also, 60 parents of children from the communities were selected for an interview to solicit their views and perceptions. Third, key community stakeholders in religion, education and traditional authority, basically constituting the School Management Board Committee (SBMC) were engaged in a focus group discussions per school community for generation of more holistic data for the study. In all the study participants comprised 480 students, 48 teachers and 12 teachers (school administrators as key informants), 60 parents and participants for 12 focus group discussions.

Data Collection Methods

The research used both quantitative and qualitative data as well as information collected from both primary and secondary sources. These were: document analysis (secondary data), interviews, questionnaires, focus group discussions and observations. The study used quantitative data on statistics of enrolment and retention of the girl child provided by some of the sampled schools and local government authorities in the state. Similarly, where available, a range of documents was collected from different research sites related to the study (UNICEF, UBEC, SUBEB) in Plateau State including the NEDS 2010 State Report and 2015 national report.

Interviews with teachers, parents and key informants in the community were all audiotaped, with very few exceptions (where consent to record the conversation was denied). Each interview was then transcribed and emerging findings and illustrative quotes written up using an agreed template. In addition to one-to-one interviews, students' views were also gathered through a structured questionnaire administered in English. The questionnaire was developed from series of consultations and team collaboration amongst research assistants, other researchers and experts. The questionnaire covered the key themes and problems identified by the study.

In each community a focus group discussion was

conducted with structured and unstructured questions based on the research questions and partly drawn from the interview template of the teachers. The participants comprised of members of SBMCs, religious and community leaders. A total of 12 focus groups discussions were held in the 12 communities. The discussions were all recorded with the consent of the participants and subsequently transcribed, cleaned and analysed in order to bring out pertinent data related to specific questions of the study. In addition to informal observations made during interviews and questionnaire administration, formal observations were made at the sample schools, checking facilities, interventions and their environments. Also, the teaching and learning environment was explored through lecture observations.

In general, the limited understanding of English was, to some extent, a limitation experienced in the study. Thus, more time was required for the completion of the survey than was anticipated. Although in all cases Hausa, local language and English speakers were available, the low literacy skills amongst some respondents meant that the survey questions had to be read and explained. For ethical clearance, the team sought formal approval to conduct the research from both state basic education board and the education ministry in Plateau State. The local governments and schools involved were appropriately notified of the motive and direction of the study. Further, approval and support of some traditional leaders in the local governments and community members were also sought for the study. The research team received training in research ethics, including the importance of respondent confidentiality and anonymity. All participants involved in this research were given detailed information sheet explaining the aims of the research, the methods to be employed and how the resulting data will be stored and used. All key gate-keepers were informed and their consent sought prior to fieldwork. Informed consent was sought from all participants individually. Respondents' identities and confidentiality is protected by the use of pseudonyms, in order to focus on what people do and say rather than who they are.

Findings

Conflict situations and girl-child retention in schools

Most of the schools visited had poor database of students enrolled and those retained. The researchers were referred to different administrative officers for information regarding girls who were out of school as a result of the conflicts, but the efforts were unproductive. The research team further visited SUBEB to get up-to-date statistics of enrolment and retention figures in the six local governments without results. However, given that this study intended to examine probable links between the conflicts in Plateau state and the education of the girl child, this section of the findings was based on participants' perceptions and secondary sources in face of dearth of pertinent data.

Previous literature on Jos North indicated that the periods of the violent crises in Jos in 2001,

aftermath of the conflict and the local government post-election violent periods witnessed decreases in already disadvantaged enrolment figures for girls, particularly at the secondary level where figures dropped from 10,801 (50%) in 2001 to 9,292 (44.9%) in 2003 (Collins, 2014). In other words, in the absence of school records one can extrapolate the association between conflicts periods and this pattern of decrease in girls' enrolment to other local government areas. Indeed this assumption was supported by data obtained from respondents. Figure 5.2 compares the views of the interviewees (teachers, parents and key informants) on whether they felt there was a direct link between conflicts in the community and girls' education. Most (83.3%) of the teachers and many (66.6%) of the parents interviewed believed that there is a direct link between girl child education and the conflict in Plateau state.

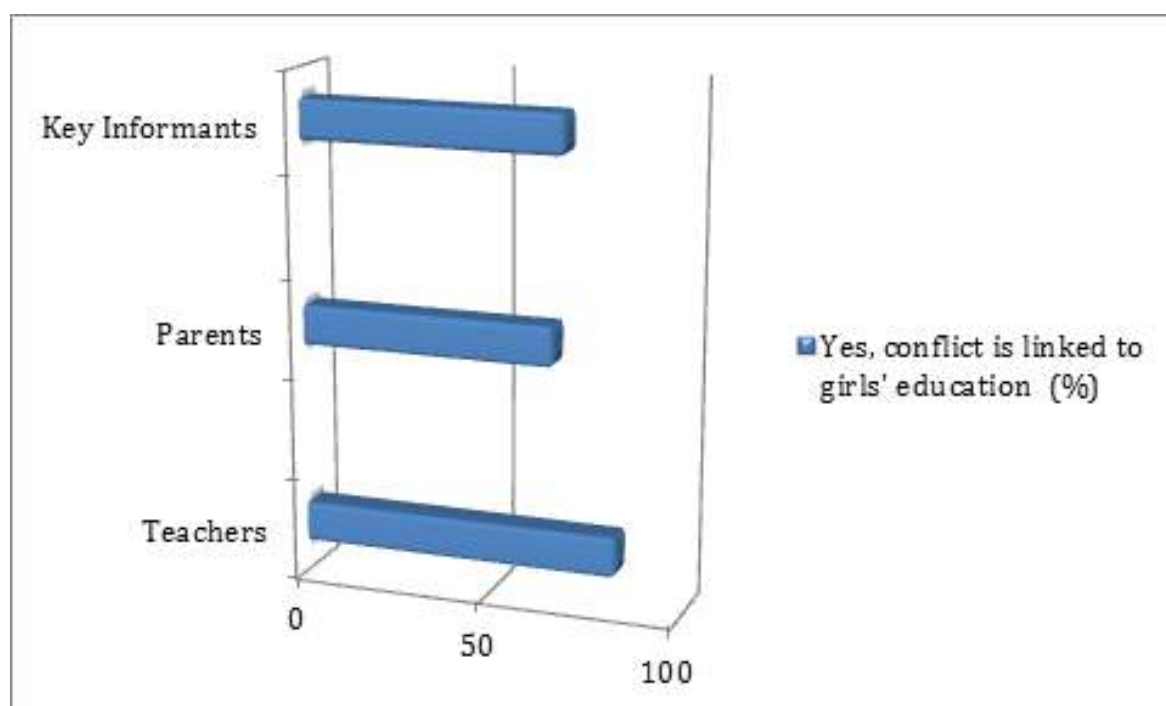


Figure 5.2: Responses of teachers, parents and key informants on link between conflict in the community and girls' education

Their views were predicated on assumptions of the likely vulnerability of girls, thus making them extremely susceptible to discrimination and abuse. On one hand, violence and conflict were seen as 'a male affair' and girls' education can help mediate by being veritable tools in curbing the conflicts in the state. An example of comments:

An educated girl can act as a spy in the community and intercept plans by any group to attack her community and report it to security agencies for proper action. (A parent interviewee)

The views of the teachers show a direct indication that educational attainment for girls is viewed as a significant factor in arresting the cycle of conflicts in the state. They believed that if more girls were educated, they would have influenced family members who participated in the violence by enlightening them on the dangers conflicts posed to society and how precariously vulnerable it made the females. One of the teachers stated:

if the communities had more educated girls and girls in school, they would have considered the safety and vulnerability of these girls and prevented violent confrontations. And we also wouldn't have had girls coming out to fight and cheer the males who were going out to fight like I saw in my community.

In general, 69.3% of the key informants and 59.8% of focus group were in agreement with the teachers and parents. Nonetheless, some contrary responses emerged during the focus group discussions in which divergent views were expressed:

I see no link between the conflicts in the state and girl child education because whether a girl is educated or not, she remains a girl and the men remain as men, so she has no influence on the eruption of a conflict whether within her family or the community at large." (Male focus group participant)

The female respondents especially from Langtang South LGA believed that education of

the girl child plays significant roles in conflict contexts. One of the women stated that;

Educated girls have impacts on conflict because they are compassionate beings. Look at Senator Benny Lar and the things she has done to prevent conflict in our society. She can do these things because she is educated."

This pattern of views also portrays the patriarchal attitudes still held by certain segments of society within the state. The girl child irrespective of educational attainment is still seen as subservient and subject to patriarchal decisions and actions even in the face of conflicts, which oftentimes leave the girls displaced and burdened to carry on domestic responsibilities of caring for the family after the devastations of a conflict. This view is by and large reinforced by the position Justino (2010) posing that, in conflict scenarios, families tend to move their resources to investment on the boys rather than the girls, as girls being seen as investments with potentials of low returns. In Langtang South however, this view was greatly refuted by findings during the study. Parents indicated that their female children (already educated and working) were the ones making more efforts than the males in ensuring that the conflicts in the community are brought to a permanent halt.

The issue of displacement and subsequent unplanned and uncertain migration is a major problem for the completion of education for girls in Plateau state within the scenario of conflict. Justino (2010) argues that education can help reduce children's exposure to threats including sexual exploitation, physical attack and recruitment into armed groups. During one of the focus group participants stated that there was a large number of

...orphaned and vulnerable children, internally displaced and without access to education and most of them are girls. Government should make efforts to identify these children and provide for them the basic education and humanitarian support they deserve."

Consistent with this assertion, narratives from the interviews showed that across Langtang South, Wase and parts of Bokkos there has been organised migration out of the state by girls still of school age. Some of these girls were identified as orphans and displaced children. Respondents indicated that these girls either by parental or guardian influence or self-action move to Lagos and Port-Harcourt precisely for purposes of domestic labour in order to evade being victims of conflict on the one hand, and to help sustain the family economically on the other hand. A parent from Langtang South and a teacher respectively stated that:

After the series of fighting and killings here, many of our young girls have abandoned school and have run to Elele [Rivers State] in order to look for greener pastures."

We used to have a population of over 3000 students before the outbreak of the conflicts... now we have less than 500 students in total...so we have classrooms and facilities lying waste, as a result of the massive relocation and displacement of families.'

Findings from Riyom shows that in the build up of the incessant conflicts and killings in the local government, from 2006 till the time of data collection in 2016, a total of 15 schools were directly affected by the conflicts. These schools were shut down and some of the facilities were vandalized. As a result of poor documentation and record keeping within schools in the state, there were no figures to show the estimated number of school children that were put out of school within the period. Thus, the data needed to properly assess the number of girls whose educational attainment had been disrupted as a result of the schools shutting down due to the conflicts was unavailable in the local government. Of the 15 schools, five were permanently shut down and serving as hostels for security operatives of the Joint Task Force Operation Safe Haven. The study however could not get the figures or whereabouts of the school children

from the five schools permanently shut down. Also, as a result of the nature of spontaneous attacks in the local government, the study found out that parents in the community part walk their children (especially the girls) within the age brackets of 4-10 years to school every day for about 25 metres to 2 kilometres. This trend was not found in the other locations of the study, where parents affirm that their children were safe enough to walk to school irrespective of the volatility of the area.

In communities of Bokkos and Riyom, parents interviewed stated that the conflicts in Jos had forced a number of families to migrate to the villages, leaving them with farming as the only source of income. Most of the girls in the communities do not attend school on market days as they assist their families to sell some of their farm produce in order to bring home monies for family sustenance. Observation by researchers showed that while the girls were at the markets selling, a larger number of boys were in school learning.

Responses from interviews and focus group discussions revealed that in most of the communities, particularly in Rim community (Riyom local government area), as a result of the incessant conflicts in the local government, security agents were stationed there in their numbers to secure lives and property. However, majority of the parents and teachers interviewed stated that the security agents tended to 'prey on' the young girls of the area; the girls were enticed and abused sexually which in many of the cases led to unwanted pregnancies. There are several consequences: the girls are forced to drop out of school; some of the security agents deny their responsibility of the pregnancy; girls are forced into early marriage; some others are forced into domestic labour in order to cater for the child. During crisis situations, many young girls are likely to drop out of school as a result of early marriage. This phenomenon increases poverty levels and likelihood to die during childbirth (Narang, 2016).

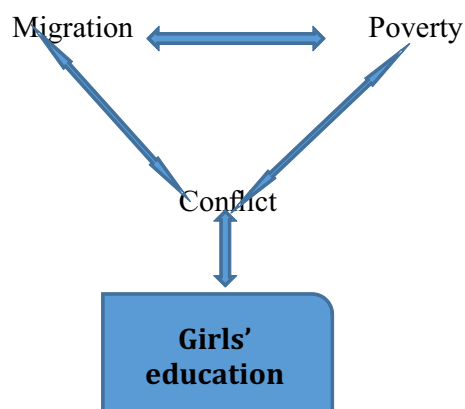


Figure 5.3: Interlinking factors influencing girls' education in communities experiencing incessant conflict

The purposive inter-textual analysis of factors influencing girls' education can hardly be exhausted. Figure 5.3 shows an inter-linkage between conflict, migration and poverty, and how these factors influence girl child education attainment in Plateau state. These factors are particularly triangulated as an aspect of this study, given their re-occurrence as identified responses from respondents across the study area. During one of the focus group discussions in Jos North, a respondent noted that the conflicts in Jos had increased the poverty levels, making it almost impossible for some parents to send all their children to school; when the choice had to be made, the girls were likely to be abandoned in favour of the males for school completion.

Furthermore, in the face of the multi-dimensional conflicts forcing families to move away from urbanization to the hinterlands, the shortage of rainfall and attendant lack of staple food for subsistence forced families to resort to peasant farming and girls are most preferably chosen to work on the farms (as asserted by a parent in Kanam). Similarly, with the lack of rains and drying up of grazing lands, herdsmen, in their bid to ensure the survival of their cattle also travel through farms. The confrontations between herdsmen and farmers have led to covert and overt violent killings and clashes between the herders and the autochthonous people. Thus, the wheel of conflicts revolve, causing further displacement of families, fear for the safety of

girls, resultant poverty and further migration, forcing the girl child to a point of disadvantage in terms of educational attainment.

Factors influencing the development of education for girls

It is worthy of note that the selected schools were all mixed schools within rural areas of the state, except for the schools in Jos North. According to UNGEI report (2005), girls in co-education schools in rural areas face double challenges in attaining success as opposed to their male counterparts. This claim steers the study into investigating rural-based conditions inhibiting educational attainment for girls. From some of the selected study communities, girls' education faces minimal challenges while in some others, girls' education is grossly hindered. Some of the factors investigated include school facilities, school fees and supplies and socio-economic condition.

The state of school facilities plays a significant role in the quality of educational attainment for both the boys and the girls. Given the peculiarity of the feminine gender and its associated vulnerabilities, schools should be able to provide certain basic facilities to protect the dignity of the girl-child and assure her security. The investigation of school facilities in the study were done primarily using the observation tools and through unstructured purposive questioning. The results indicated that some of the selected schools had adequate classroom facilities like desks for all students in the class, boards for the teacher. Only three of the 12 schools had computer facilities and in one school, all the computers were spoilt and abandoned.

However, in terms of water, sanitation and hygiene facilities, 83.3% of all the schools had access to water, some of which were government sponsored, and the others provided by private intervention. Another critical school facility investigated was the toilet facilities. In recognition of the distinctiveness of the girl child, the federal government proposed in the National Policy on Gender and Basic Education, as a key strategy in promoting education for the girl child,

the provision of separate toilet facilities for the girls in all schools (Federal Ministry of Education [FME], 2007). Nonetheless, the toilets in the schools under study were neither sufficient nor separated by gender. In one of the schools visited in Jos North, an interviewed teacher expressed disappointment with the inadequacy of toilet facilities especially for the girls. He noted that as a parent, he understood the extent of privacy the girl-child needs as regards using the toilet and expressed the urgent need for an intervention project for building specific toilets for girls in schools.

Basic education is supposed to be free, compulsory and the right of every child in Nigeria (UBEC 2012). The scope of the free education programme is expected to cover all forms of fees and provision of basic learning materials for children of school age. The findings from all the 12 communities indicated that some students paid fees of varying amount. The British Council Gender in Nigeria Report (2012) in positing the

Nigerian case of free education states that 'In theory education is free, but in practice parents pay fees, which disproportionately burden the poor'. Similarly, the TEGINT Endline Research Report (2012) that covered Nassarwa, Plateau, Gombe, Kaduna, Katsina and three other states noted that there were evidence of wide range of charges being made by many schools with a wide variation in the amount charged and reasons for charges. These charges were established to have a detrimental effect on girls' attendance and progression in school. For probable reasons of convenient justification, in the primary schools, the monies paid were referred to as levies or development fees, while for the junior secondary schools it was called school fees. Some key stakeholders within and outside the educational sector of the state attested to the harsh reality that government was yet to implement the free education for junior secondary schools in the state. The graph in Figure 5.4 shows the ranges of fees respondents paid as school fees.

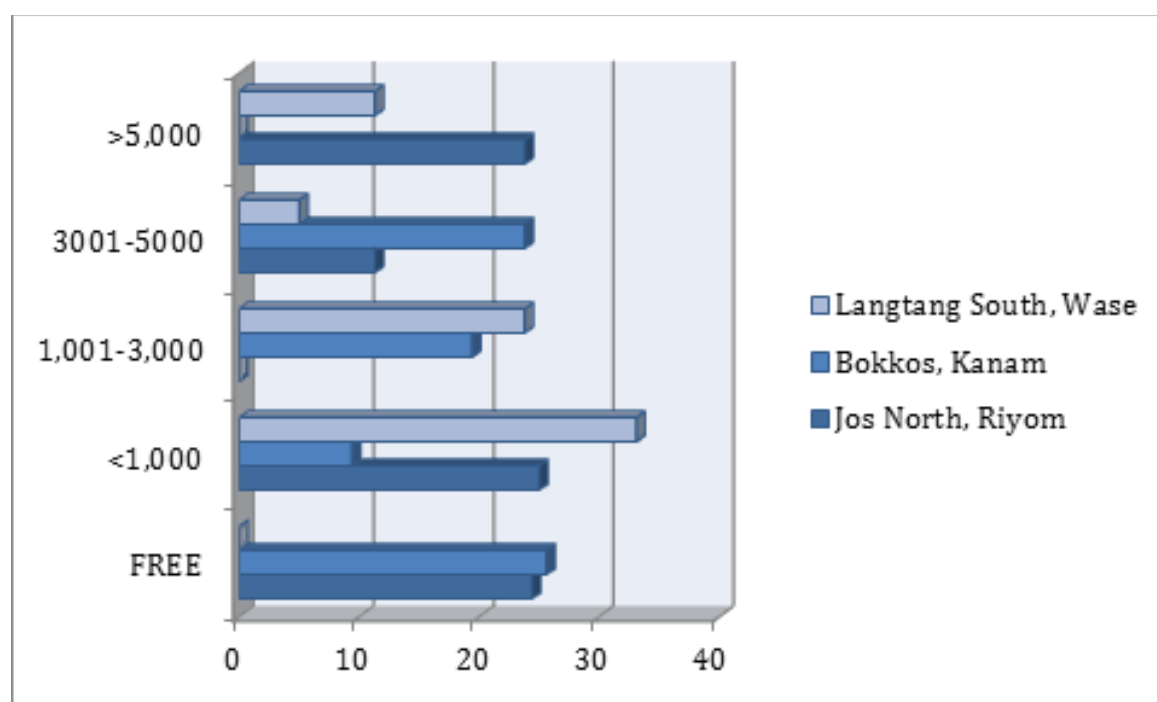


Figure 5.4: How much respondents paid to attend school

Figure 5.4 indicates that in Jos North and Riyom as well as Bokkos and Kanam, only a quarter (24.4% and 25.6% respectively) of the respondents attended school free of charge without their parents having to pay any fees. The remaining respondents paid fees ranging from below one thousand Naira to fees higher than five thousand Naira. The findings generally indicate that some students in Jos North, Riyom, Bokkos and Kanam experience some level of free education in contrast to students in Langtang South and Wase where there were no responses indicating that students had free education. However, Jos North and Riyom, given their strategic locations and characteristics (i.e. Jos North being mainly urbanized), had the highest frequency of students paying N5000 and above as fees.

Majority of the respondents clamoured for absolutely free education to ease parents and guardians from the burden of paying fees and ensuring educational completion for the girl child on the long run. However, there were a few

objections, mostly from teachers:

...people don't take anything given for free seriously...for free education to work, we first need proper community sensitization and awareness" (A teacher in Bokkos)

...whether education is made free or not, most of the girls would still abandon school to get married" (A teacher from Wase)

These contrasting views indicate that there are still deep-rooted stereotypes (even among their teachers) that can inhibit educational attainment of the girl child even in the face of free education.

As regards other basic school needs like uniforms and books, the responses showed that their parents were mostly responsible for the provision of these items. Table 5.2 shows the responses of sampled students to the question 'what support do you receive from your parents?'

Table 5.2: Student respondents' reporting of parental support towards their education

What support do you receive from your parents?		
Response	Frequency	Percentage
School fees	395	82.3%
Uniforms	388	80.8%
Books	325	67.7%
None	5	1%

Table 5.2 shows that 82.3% of the respondents claimed that their parents pay their school fees, 80.8% received their parents' support through school uniforms, 67.7% received support through books while 1% received none. Findings revealed that not all students received free education and not all received parental support for school fees. This may be a confirmation of the statement from some of the teachers and key informants that some of the students have to work after and most times during school periods in order to afford money for their 'fees' and other school supplies which government ought to make free at this level of their educational endeavour.

Socio-Economic Factors

The economy of Plateau state has always been tied to mining, farming and trading of all sorts, given its rich endowment in mineral resources and a relatively cool climate. However, the recurrent conflicts in the state saw the destruction of so many businesses and the exit of potential investors. This no doubt deflated the economy of the state forcing many to relocate from the state entirely, while the indigenes moved from the economic nerve centre of Jos and environs to their villages, thereby increasing poverty rates. The non-implementation of the 18,000 Naira minimum wage by the past

administration caused families to rely on subsistence farming, hawking and other menial forms of labour as ways of augmenting their meagre resources. Most (91.8%) of pupil respondents said their parents would rather send the boys to school and have the girls stay home because of this. The completion of school for the girl child appears threatened by this factor in the sense that when the respondents were asked about the likely factors that could hinder them from their educational attainment, 66.3% respondents attributed lack of finances as the greatest factor. About 95% of the teachers interviewed also attributed the major reason for drop out of the girl child to economic and financial incapability of the parents or guardians. A key Informant in Ganawuri stated that:

Lack of finance and economic means of parents is one of the greatest limitations to girl child education here.

This assertion goes further to highlight how the girl child combines labour and education. In Jos North, three quarters of the teachers interviewed at Laranto established a link between economic constraints of parents, girls' domestic labour and educational attainment. One of the interviewed teachers stated that:

A large number of our female students are house-helpers to the families in this community. Most of these girls come from very poor families residing in the villages, so they come to work in order to get money and education. Because they have to wake up early and do lots of domestic chores, they come to school very late. And because of the loads of chores they have to do when they get home, they hardly do their assignments or even study. With their poor grades, their guardians either withdraw them from school, or they personally lose motivation and opt to drop out voluntarily

Consequently, the views of the pupils concerning their parents' attitude and preference of their activities during the day were sought. Results indicated that the parents of 85.1% of the

respondents wanted them to go to school, while 9.6% preferred them hawking rather than going to school, 7.3% wanted their girls at home and 5.6% to go to the farm. Interview conducted for parents still indicate that parents prefer their children going to school only to the extent that it does not interfere with their economic resources to cater for the rest of the family. A parent from Kanam indicates that:

I am not stopping my daughters from going to school, but when the farming season comes, they must have to come and work on the farm because that is where we would get the money for feeding them first before training them in school.

The teachers in Plateau state in 2012 went on an indefinite strike which lasted for about 9 months and crippled the educational sector of the state. This strike was as a result of non-payment of salaries and outstanding allowances. Forty-two out of the 48 teachers interviewed, representing 87.5% indicated that their salaries were hardly paid promptly as expected. At the time of gathering field data, all the teachers interviewed in Jos North indicated that they had not been paid for the past 3 months. A clear menace posed by this is illustrated:

When we don't get paid as expected, we tend to lose interest in our jobs and hardly pay attention to the needs of the students...we don't like the feeling, but that is just human nature, so we beg government to take teachers' salaries seriously.

During the long period of strike, girls were left without options but to resort to hawking, working as domestic servants and working on the farms. This exposed them also to various menaces that sometimes lead to unwanted pregnancies, early marriage and academic discouragement. During one of the focus group discussions, a participant stated that:

In my community, during the prolonged strike, girls were enticed and deceived by

men as a result of their idleness. This led to numerous cases of pregnancy and eventual forced-early marriage.

The aftermath effect of the strike amongst other factors led to the government of Plateau state declaring a 'state of emergency' on the educational sector in 2013.

Perceptions and attitude about going to school

The girl's perception about going to school is associated with attitudes that could positively or negatively influence her educational attainment. Perception towards school was solicited through the following set of questions: 1) what do you like about going to school? 2) What don't you like about going to school? 3) How safe is the route to your school? On what the girls like about going to school, 95.2% of the respondents liked going to school because they wanted to learn while 13.1% liked going to school because they liked playing and meeting other children. In order to get a balanced perspective, they were asked what they do not like about going to school. The findings showed that most of the respondents were not comfortable with school distance (36.6%), the teachers 9% and 8.8% the location. A majority of the respondents (74.8%) indicated that their school was located in the community while (24%) attended schools located in the neighbouring community. Schooling within the community has its own identified benefits as parents and guardians can easily have access to their wards in cases of emergency. However, schooling in the neighbouring community has its own peculiar challenges of distance and security. Some of the interviewed parents averred that they could not allow their children (especially the girls) to attend school far away from home for fear of their safety, given the volatile nature of the state post 2001. It was observed that the 24% of respondents schooling in neighbouring communities trekked to school. And when interviewed, about 98% of parents indicated that they do not accompany their children to school. One of the parents' stated:

The children can get themselves to school together with their mates...we do not have to carry them there.

To ascertain the knowledge of safety to and from school, respondents were asked 'how safe is the route to your school'? Responses showed that 34.8% and 42.5% believed that the routes to their schools were very safe and safe respectively. About 15.2% asserted that their route was somewhat safe while 8.3% maintained that their routes were not safe. Similarly, the teachers were also asked about the safety of the routes to school for the students and 90% of the teachers maintained that the routes to school were relatively safe for the students. One of the teachers in Jos North however explained that the status of the safety of the route to the school is as a result of the gradual polarization of habitation across religious lines in the community:

Before now, the Muslims were scared of passing through the Christian areas and vice-versa, but now, the community has been divided according to ethno-religious groups and the school is right in the middle, so the safety of students and teachers across religious lines has been improved.

Teachers and the Girls

In terms of gender and education, the role of the teacher is similar to that of a professional guardian. This is reflected in the National Policy on Gender in Basic Education strategy of 'Gender capacity for basic education sector' designed to meet its Objective 1 of 'Access to Basic Education' in its goal of 'Increasing Girls access to education' (FME, 2007). Consequently, the teachers are expected to be trained and retrained on gender curriculum development and gender policies as well as given gender materials for sensitization. Conversely, the attitude of the girl child towards the teacher is very important to ensure that there is a balance of feeling that could aid the educational attainment of the girl child.

When asked about what they liked about their teachers, 82.5% of the respondents liked the teaching style, while 27.7% believed that their teachers' approachability is the reason why they liked them. Only about 8.5% and 7.1% liked their teachers because they were males and females respectively. From all the schools visited, the

statistics show that 70% of the schools had a higher ratio of female teachers to male teachers. This factor however indicates that the girl child had more advantage at sharing and benefitting from the female teachers than the males. But most importantly is the quality of teaching offered by the teachers, male or female. A student illustrates that:

I like my teacher because he takes his time to explain everything to us...even when I don't understand, I go to his office and he makes me understand better.

On the issue of approachability, the students' indication of approachability as a reason for teacher likeness is extremely important as the girl child often face physiological and emotional

challenges in greater dimensions than the males. Therefore, a teacher's ability to listen and counsel endears the girl child to the teacher and can serve as motivation for them to stay in school. A teacher gave an in-depth analogy of how the girls in her school came to regain confidence in the teachers and stayed back in school:

The girls [junior secondary] in my school were having problems talking to anyone about their monthly periods which they could not understand or manage properly. But I called one of the girls whom I noticed was having challenges in managing it, after counselling her with another colleague of mine, she brought a lot of her classmates for counselling too...I felt fulfilled after that because the girls were all happy."

Table 5.3: Responses showing pupils' perceptions of teachers' attitudes towards girls

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Very Good	196	40.8%
Good	238	49.6%
Not Good	36	7.5%

Table 5.3 shows that 40.8% and 49.6% of the respondents agree that teachers' attitude towards girls was very good and good respectively. Only 36 (7.5%) of them said the attitude was not good. The teachers were also asked same question regarding the perception and attitude of their colleagues towards girl-child education; 86% of the teachers affirm that their colleagues viewed girl child education as being extremely important and also believed that both the male and female teachers treated the girls equally and looked out for their best interests irrespective of gender. In contrast to this majority views and perception which may have been related to the need to provide socially desirable responses, there were divergent views about the attitude of teachers towards the girls. For example, an interviewed teacher stated that:

Most of my colleagues pretend about being in favour of the education of the girl child. The truth is that most of us do not

really care about the education of the girl child, because girls will always abandon education to take care of the family.

Socio-Cultural Factors

In the course of the study, societal and cultural influences were identified in the responses as a recurring factor in educational attainment for the girl child in Plateau state. The cultural discrimination between male and female children persists. To a large extent, women and girls were unaware of their rights and generally suffered from low self-esteem. Society is increasingly accepting of girls' education but not to the same degree as boys (evidenced by education statistics) and girls' educational progression beyond primary school is often viewed as waste of time and resources with no immediate benefit to the family (Para-Mallam, 2012). The students were asked about the factors they thought could hinder them from completing school and their responses are reflected in Figure 5.5.

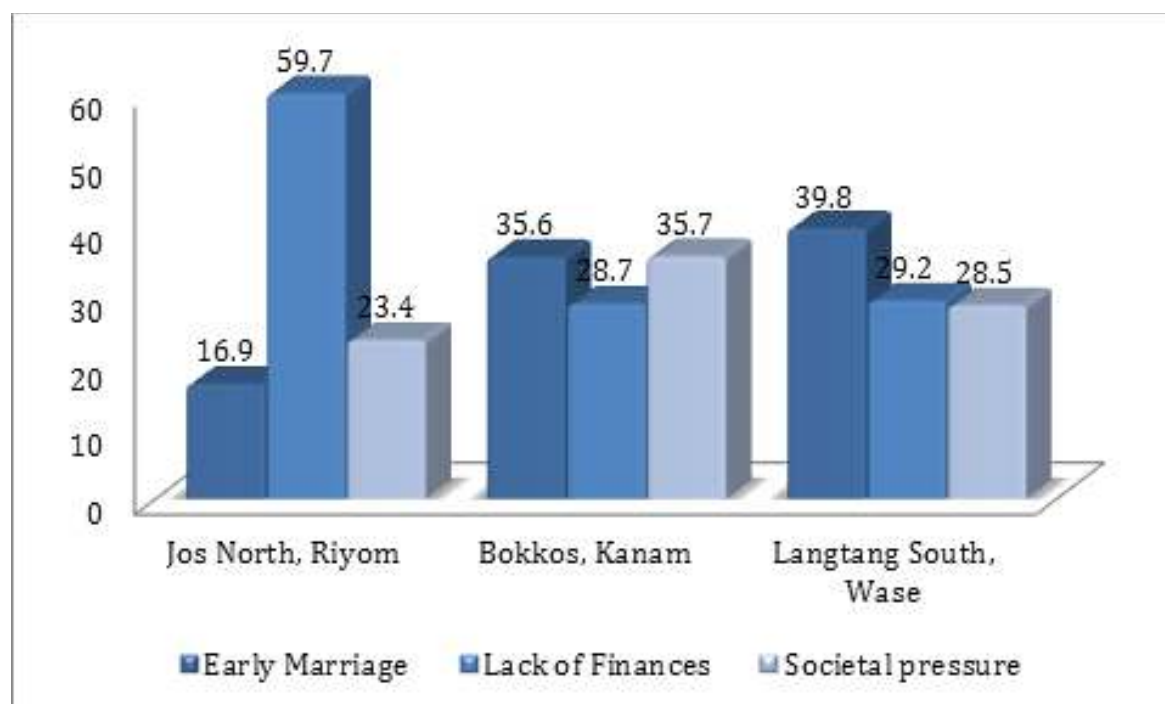


Figure 5.5: Factors that could hinder students from completing school

As earlier stated, the nature of urbanization in Jos North and Riyom (in part) caused its statistics on certain issues to remain significantly discrepant from other local government areas. More than half (59.7%) of respondents from Jos North and Riyom indicated that lack of finances was the major hindrance in completing school compared with 28.7% of respondents from Bokkos and Kanam, and 29.2% from in Langtang South and Wase thought identified lack of finances as a hindrance. However, on the issue of early marriage, Jos North and Riyom had the lowest percentage of 16.9% as against 28.7% from Bokkos and Kanam, and 29.2% from Langtang South and Wase. The reason for these differences may be as a result of the fact that families in urban settlements were less likely to give their female children away in marriage at an early age than their rural counterparts. Beside, these girls would rather drop out of school and engage in varying forms of labour than get married early. The factor of culture itself carries 23.4% in Jos North and Riyom, 35.7% in Bokkos and Kanam and 28.5% in Langtang South and Wase. Societal pressure as factor refers to other issues relating to society and

the girl child such as: (i) compulsory dropping out of school in the event of pregnancy (ii) dropping out at a particular age to avoid being tagged as 'too educated' for potential suitors (iii) dropping out of school to assist in family upbringing in the event of incapacitation or demise of a parent. During a focus group discussion, religious culture emerged as a significant obstacle to girls' education. In this study, it refers to beliefs guiding a religious group, adhered to by its followers and transferred through generations. How this hinders educational attainment for the girl child was clearly illustrated by some of the focus group participants. For example:

As a Muslim, I cannot allow my female child attend a school where the girls are allowed to dress in skirts and other revealing attire and associate with the boys freely...it would make her look indecent and corrupt her mind..., and I would prefer she stays at home and learn whatever she wants to learn.

Personally, I fear that my daughters would

imbibe foreign attitudes and knowledge that would be contrary to our beliefs, so I often prefer religious appropriate schools for them.

These socio-cultural attitudes were discovered to play significant roles in poor girls' educational attainment in the study areas with Muslim populations. A Muslim cleric, also a teacher, stated that:

The attitude towards girl-child education from my people is very poor and it saddens me. Right now, I am on a personal campaign in my community urging all parents to send their daughters to school. In fact, I personally register and cater for the fees of some of the girls now."

Another factor evident from the narratives was the culture of ignorance. A relatively small number of respondents, constituting less than 20% of the sample population believed that sheer ignorance posed a great risk to educational attainment for girls in the state. This factor they believed is deep seated in the parochial attitudes of some parents who in spite of widespread awareness see no point in sending the girls to school.

The response of 85.6% of teachers and 95% of parents interviewed showed that one of the greatest obstacles to girl child education was early marriage. Langtang South had quite a number of very young girls of school age who were already married and bearing children. The educational attainment for girls in this locality is viewed with mixed feelings of culture. The following statement by a respondent buttresses the point:

What is the point of going to school when at the end of the day you are at home to look after children? I am not saying that they shouldn't go to school oh! But all they should learn is how to read and write. A time will come when you will have to choose between book and marriage. If you read too much who will marry you? Book

does not run, so marry first then you can go back to school.

Some early marriages are planned and purposive, while others are as a result of unwanted pregnancies. The cases of unwanted pregnancy leading to girls' poor educational attainment was seen in most parts of the study area. The scenario of unwanted pregnancies amongst schoolgirls was viewed from two major perspectives in the cause of the study. The first is the perspective of parents and teachers viewing the girl child as inherently corrupt with desires for sexual adventure. The second is being the perspective of being victims of deceit from security agents and lustful enticement from community males. About 40% of the interviewed teachers and 55% of parents believed that unwanted pregnancies which leads to girls dropping out of school is solely hinged on the overarching sexual desire of the girls. A parent during a focus group discussion stated that:

At this stage of their lives, they (girls) are filled with sexual desires which leads them into promiscuity and eventually results in pregnancy. They are expected to take responsibility for their actions.

On the other hand, a parent in Rim community alleged that a reasonable number of unwanted pregnancies, which led to girls dropping out of school, were associated with the presence of the security agents. These agents were alleged to often take advantage of the young girls with promises of marriage or taking them to a 'better' life. Often times the security agents end up abandoning these girls either because they get redeployed or the girls themselves get pregnant but either way the girls would have long dropped out of school. However, an educated community member viewed the issue of unwanted pregnancies and girl child educational attainment from a different spectrum. He believes that oftentimes, these girls are too young and naive to take decisions or responsibility for their actions as the acts that led to the pregnancy are biologically motivated and without proper prior counselling in schools; these girls hardly understand or possess

the knowledge to control those impulses. He however posited that:

I have been of the opinion that girls who get pregnant while still in school should be allowed to continue their schooling till the time of delivery. And after delivery, she can come back to school and complete her studies. Government should however, enact laws that would stop these girls from being discriminated against or victimized by school authorities or fellow students.

Status of interventions intended for improved education and the girl child.

Provision of school learning materials. The implementation of free basic education (earlier discussed) entails removal of all forms of fees or levies and provision of learning materials for children in primary and secondary schools all over the country. These materials include books and basic instructional materials for the pupils to facilitate their learning process. The data for access to books for school children and the method of acquisition shows that parents of 91% of the respondents were responsible for the provision of books to their wards. The community contributes 2.7% government 5.6% and 5.3% of the respondents did not know who provided their books. The results indicated that as parents are the major providers of school learning materials with little or no governmental support, the lack of economic means by these parents could inevitably lead to the halt of educational attainment for particularly the girl child.

Basic infrastructural facilities. Through the Educational Tax Fund programme established in 1993, government has embarked on widespread provision of developmental facilities for schools at all levels in the country. The availability of general school infrastructure in the schools including access to water and toilets for the students, particularly the girls, was discussed earlier. However, this section specifically probed the availability and access to desks and chairs as basic facilities for school children. About two-thirds (68.1%) of respondents asserted that everyone in their class had a desk and chair, while

31.3% indicated the contrary. The general implication is that while some students learn in class with access to desks and chairs for writing to enhance educational attainment, some other students in other schools lack the basic amenities, which can hamper effective learning. In one of the schools in Langtang South, pupils were seen clustered in threes and fours on desks originally designed for two persons. This also posed the challenge of students' inability to write properly and comfortably in class. Interviews with teachers indicated that this overcrowding resulted from inadequate desks and chairs; thus, merging the classes for convenience became inevitable.

Basic computer literacy. Computer studies have been incorporated into basic curriculum for school children all over the country. However, the level of access to basic computer literacy for school children in the study area is poor; 68.3% of pupils had no computers in their schools for computer lessons while 29.6% indicated the presence of computers in their school. Amongst the 29.6% with claims of the presence of computers, a large number of the computers were faulty, unusable and the computer laboratories neglected. In one of the schools in Jos North, all the computers were absolutely non-functional; meanwhile, the students received computer lessons at least twice every week. An interview with the computer teacher on the issue revealed that:

When I joined the school in 2011, only about 2 computers were working. Now they are all faulty. The school authority has been promising to fix them and get new ones, but till this moment, I have not seen any repairs or new computers...I teach my students the theory and hope they get to do the practical someday.

Indeed, findings indicated that only 15% of the student respondents had basic computer skills while 78.5% believe they did not have basic computer literacy skills. On the part of the teachers, despite the policy of government on teacher training in modern techniques, most of the teachers themselves were not computer

literate. Out of the 48 teachers interviewed, 78.5% were not computer literate while 21.5% indicated that they were. In the face of inadequate computer facilities and resultant poor quality of teaching, the seeming intervention of government and the general public in ensuring that students of school age had access to computers in an increasing digital world may be unproductive. Thus, there is a lowering of the quality of educational attainment for the children especially the girl child who is already disadvantaged by environment in comparison to her counterparts in other parts of the world.

Teacher training. Despite the governmental plan to expose teachers to training and retraining teachers for up-to-date best practices of the profession, 83.3% of the interviewed teachers affirmed that they had not attended any professional training for at least ten years. Also, 5.1% noted that they had never attended any training since the commencement of their teaching careers while only 11.6% stated that they had attended trainings within the last three years. However, none of those who attended trainings were exposed to sensitization with particular emphasis on the girl child. The reasons given for the low levels of exposure to training among teachers were nepotism and lack of governments' commitment to the professional welfare of teachers. One of the teachers asserted that:

Whenever a training is organised, the same set of persons who attended the last training are still selected because they have some level of connections, while the rest of us stand back and look without doing anything.

Community involvement and participation in girl-child education. Communities are very essential in playing roles that could promote educational development. The Nigerian National Council for Education in 2005 approved the establishment of School Based Management Committees (SBMCs) in recognition of the profound role communities play in children's educational development. Amongst other functions, the SBMCs are to assist

schools within communities in encouraging enrolment, attendance and retention, as well as support schools along lines of logistic and structural needs. The role the community plays in the supporting education of their children was explored in this study. Only 9.6% of the respondents said that their communities supported them through free books; 4.4% through free transport; and, 3.8% through the provision of free lunch. However, 79.6% respondents claimed that their communities did not support them. Also, findings showed that 19.6% of the respondents said that their communities built classrooms; 65.4% did not know what their communities actually do in terms of educational support.

It was observed that the strongest presence of SBMC in the study area was in Marbudi (Langtang South) and Jarmai (Kanam). The SBMC in Jarmai there was an intervention programme targeted at ensuring that girls in the community were enrolled and retained in school. Other communities in the study indicated a very weak presence or absence of SBMCs. A respondent, a staff of SUBEB, attributed the lack of SBMC strength in the state to its phases of development. He pointed out that SBMCs in the state were at its formative stage. At the time of the study, they were at the fourth level training for communities to ensure that communities got fully involved. He further noted that the state plans on constituting a state executive SBMC to consolidate on the efforts and activities of the community SBMCs to sustain educational attainment for boys and girls.

On the other hand, the Parent Teachers Association (PTA) was identified as the popular channel through which members of the community contributed to educational development of the children in the community. However, the limitation of the PTA was the restriction of its membership to parents of children attending the particular school, making it almost difficult for other members of community to participate and make contributions. The responses indicating the building of classrooms and other facilities as community support was thus in relation to the

PTA rather than a general community intervention. As a result of the near absence of SBMCs in most of the communities investigated, the data revealed that the communities differed in the engagement of PTAs in educational development of the school children. In Riyom, interviews with teachers and key informants indicated that in a bid to enhance the performance of the children, the PTA of one of the schools engaged in employing and paying teachers. This was their response to the paucity of teachers in the schools within the community. Also in Jos, the PTA of one of the schools set up a monitoring committee to check truant students who may have loitering the streets while classes were in session. All members of the committee were empowered to apprehend the children and take them to the school authorities. However, none of the communities, including the PTAs were engaged in any activity or support programme particularly targeted at the girl child.

Organisations and educational intervention. In tandem with the global drive to ensure inclusive and quality education for all, various international, local, government and non-governmental organisations are embarking on projects targeted at schools for improved standards of learning and performance, many of which are impactful. However, due to some constraints, such as limited funds, these projects are often limited in scope. To the question of whether there were organisations supporting you're their schools, 36.9% of respondents affirmed that there were organisations supporting their school in one form of educational intervention or the other while 59.6% noted that there were no organisations supporting their school. The study asked two major questions to extract specificity regarding organisational support in schools and educational attainment for girls. The questions sought the names of the organisations supporting the school and if any of the organisations had any programme specifically designed for the girl child. The responses indicated that the organisations supporting the schools in the various communities were predominantly national and state based non-governmental organisations.

Some of the organisations and the nature of their intervention or support included (i) Apurimac which provides skills acquisition training for students in order to boost their economic independence even after schooling (ii) Yakubu Gowon Foundation which gives scholarships to some of the students and provides other forms of infrastructural support (iii) UNICEF which engages in teacher development and training programmes in order to assure quality educational content for the school children.

Conversely, regarding the girl child, three organisations were specified as having programmes targeted at the girl child. Two of the programmes involved general student participation while only one of the programmes was targeted solely for the girl child. The organisations that partly targeted girl child in their programmes were the Centre for Peace Advancement in Nigeria (CEPAN) and Community Action for Popular Participation (CAPP). CEPAN, through its Peace Club programme teaches the essence of peace and conflict prevention, management and resolution. It also provides the students with diverse skills acquisition, and particularly enlightens the girl child on the concept of gender-based violence and its prevention and control given the post conflict condition of Plateau state. CAPP engaged in an advocacy campaign for the full implementation of the SBMC targeted specifically at the enrolment of the girl child to school by communities themselves in Plateau state. They also embarked on the school feeding pilot programme to motivate children to get enrolled in school. The pilot programme has since been concluded and its sustainability left for the government of the state. Evidences however showed that past and present administrations have not shown any form of commitment to sustaining the pilot programme. The organisation with an intervention specifically and solely targeted for the girl child is the Christian Woman for Excellence and Empowerment in Nigeria (CWEENS). Through its Cweens Club programme, the organisation engages in the training of the girl-child on hygiene, peace and its ramifications, fighting violence and abuse against women as well as providing them with economic skills.

Some of these organisations and their programmes of support and intervention touched on the basic aspects of the study (conflict prevention management and resolution) and educational attainment for the girl child. Raising awareness and developing skills on conflict prevention management and resolution, gender-based violence as well as advocacy for SBMCs to be fully established in the state are intertwined in the sense that as girls in Plateau state are faced with the challenge of schooling in a conflict prone communities and given the socio-economic issues they face, their educational attainment is no doubt threatened.

Some additional observations

The National Policy on Gender in Basic Education (FME, 2007) ascribes the attainment of gender equality as a human right and a requisite for the achievement of the Education For All. The education of the girls however has been subtly subsumed under the provisions of the constitution as an essential for social justice and equality. It has been argued that specific attention to gender equality, particularly girls' education, has been largely promoted by donor international agencies and little known home-grown initiative for promoting gender in education exists in Nigeria (Ezegwu, 2015). To push forward this ideal, the 2004 Universal Basic Education Law which mainly advocates for free and compulsory basic education was designed for all Nigerian women (girls) to acquire basic education and experience the full benefits of contemporary living and contribute meaningfully to the development of the country. Thus, Federal government in its bid to increase girls' enrolment in schools designed a set of comprehensive strategies which include:

- Advocacy and sensitization
- Provision of free and compulsory Basic Education
- Child friendly School principle and facilities
- Gender sensitive Education Budgets
- Training and supply of female teachers in rural schools
- Incentive for girls, and,
- Gender Responsive curriculum

These strategies are expected to boost the indices of girl child educational attainment in all states of the federation, but evidence from this study shows very low levels of implementation in Plateau state. Some respondents noted:

Since my employment as a teacher in 2011, I have not attended any professional training...neither have we had any gender specific training or programme. (An interviewed teacher)

We provide all the school materials and fees for our children...government does not support us. So when we no longer have the means to cater for all, the girls would have to drop for the boys to continue schooling. (A respondent during a focus group discussion)

Summary of findings

The study was focused on exploring how girls' education fared in a Plateau state. This an imperative in the face of the spate of violence in the past two decades that have displaced families thus putting girls at more disadvantage. The findings of this study confirmed previous literature that suggested links between conflicts and crises on girls' education (e.g., Justino, 2010; Tschirgi, 2011). No doubt, the conflict and post-conflict context in study areas have presented situations that further stretched the usual limitations to girls' education experienced in other parts of northern Nigeria.

This research revealed several key findings. With respect to the goal of examining the impact of conflicts on girls' education, first, there was lack of school level data and gross inadequate record keeping at the school, local government and state levels. Nevertheless, evidence from survey and qualitative data showed that conflicts were linked with girls' poor enrolment and drop out from school, arising from forced migration to take up various forms of labour for economic and family sustenance, fear of safety, pregnancy and early marriage. The narratives generated benevolent (albeit sexist) perspectives of girls in terms of their

potential to curb the conflict were they more educated. This attitude may be an entry point for intervention for renewed efforts to increase enrolment of girls. Second, in the face of the prevailing economic constraints and resultant strain on the families, the impact was more disadvantageous to girls who tended to be less favoured for education and thus dropped out of school to support the family through various forms of labour like hawking and farming.

The factors influencing the development of education for the girl-child were also identified. Consequently, the third key finding was that despite the assurances by government for the provision of free education at basic level, only a quarter of the students indicated that they experienced free education. Majority of the respondents claimed that they received support from parents for school fees and supplies; this creates educational contexts where ability to pay becomes a strong factor in girls' educational attainment. There were poor computer laboratories as well as toilet facilities for girls in schools contrary to what was promised by state. Fourth, majority of the girls admitted that they liked going to school because they wanted to learn. However, while safety was a concern to some, a considerable proportion of the girls were uncomfortable with the distance to the schools.

The fifth key finding relates to the role of teachers. About two thirds of the schools had more female than male teachers; one third of the schools had fewer females than males as teachers. About four fifth of the teachers had not been exposed to training since the commencement of their teaching appointments. The teacher's approachability was the major reason why the respondents (mostly girls) liked their teachers. This factor is important for planning interventions to improve attitudes towards school. Indeed, this intervention is critical given that the results revealed strong negative stereotypes about girls' education amongst teachers. Sixth, factors such as early marriage, unwanted or early pregnancy, religious and traditional beliefs were identified as the major socio-cultural factors affecting the

educational attainment of the girl child. Further, due to societal pressures, girls also compulsorily dropped out of school: in the event of pregnancy; to avoid being tagged as 'too educated' for potential suitors, and; to assist in parenting in the event of incapacitation or demise of a parent.

This research also focused on identifying the interventions by local and international organisations that have contributed to educational development of the girl child in the communities. The another key finding was that despite the promise (by government) to provide basic learning materials for children, parents were the major providers of basic school learning materials with little or no governmental support; the lack of economic means by these parents predictably lead to the halt of educational attainment the girl child in particular. Poor infrastructural facilities such as inadequate desks and resultant overcrowding of classes as well as and non-functional computers were observed. Majority of the students did not possess basic computer literacy, while the teachers were also not computer literate. In the face of inadequate computer facilities and resultant poor quality of teaching, the seeming intervention of government to ensure that students of school age had access to computers in an increasing digital world may be unproductive. Thus, there is a lowering the quality of educational attainment for the children especially the girl child who is already disadvantaged by environment in comparison to her counterparts in other parts of the world.

In terms of the eighth key finding, most communities within the study area showed significant lack of involvement and ownership of the education of the girl child due to the non-functionality of the SBMC in the communities. The PTAs in communities tended to be more effective in supporting schools, given the inchoate SBMC system in the state. Finally, about a third of the respondents affirmed that there were non-governmental organisations supporting their schools in one form of educational intervention while; no organisations were providing support to the schools that two-

thirds of the respondents attended. Only one of the three identified organisations had programmes targeted to the girl child. In general, findings showed that raising awareness and developing skills on conflict prevention management and resolution, gender-based violence as well as advocacy for the establishment of SBMCs are intertwined. Therefore a scale-up of such efforts will enhance positive adaptability and ultimately girls' education in conflict prone communities.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were drawn based on the key findings of this research.

1. Government should partner with key non-governmental organisations and civil society groups to embark on widespread advocacy and sensitization within various communities on the importance of girls' education. This sensitization would ensure that traditional perceptions about the roles of girls in the community are changed amongst parents and community members alike.
2. Poor records at school, local government and state levels constitute a major challenge for research, planning and policy intervention. Efficient data collection should be part of governmental efforts to enhance girl child education.
3. Key stakeholders including traditional, religious and community leaders should make deliberate efforts to encourage girls' education in their various communities. Thus, purposive advocacy frameworks that would aid government and other interested agencies in their bid to augment community efforts towards achieving educational attainment for girls are needed.
4. Government should exercise political and social powers and work in synergy with UBEC to ensure the implementation of compulsory and free basic education in the state. This would alleviate economic strains on families and boost educational attainment for the girls.
5. School administrations need to introduce more curricular and extra-curricular activities and facilities that will motivate students' attendance and retention especially for the girl child (e.g. Sports, peace and gender clubs).
6. The state government should increase supervision—through SUBEB— and fund SBMCs in all schools. Federal, state and local governments should further monitor and ensure that schools comply fully with the policy directive to establish and operate SBMCs.
7. Poverty alleviation schemes should be holistic and people-centred to address the material conditions of the people and to checkmate the excesses resultant from economic difficulties that breed violence and other forms of social vices.
8. Government should facilitate the effective professional training, employment and rural deployment of teachers to boost the educational standard in the state. The trainings should be designed to incorporate specific techniques and curriculum to address the peculiarity of the girl child within educational environments.

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A study of the impact of SBMC grants on girls' enrolment in Zamfara State

Zuwaira Abdu Gusau, Hasan Buba and Saadatu Abdu Gusau

Abstract

This study examined the impact of school grants on girls' enrolment in schools that are beneficiaries of the Girls Education Project 3. The research focused on three main aspects: impact of grants on enrolment, community perceptions on grant execution and impact as well as grant management support for girls' education. Using a mixed method design involving quantitative and qualitative techniques, 18 schools in urban, semi-urban and rural communities in six local government areas were covered. Through the use of school records of enrolment and attendance, questionnaires, interviews and focus group discussions, data was collected from a sample of girls, head teachers, community heads, government officials, members of the SBMCs and mothers associations. The findings showed that: (1) Over the five-year period (2011-2015), girls' enrolment, attendance and retention witnessed a significant increase in number and only a slight increase in gender parity; (2) The primary expenditure to which SBMC grants were applied - provision of instructional materials and school uniforms - were consistent with what respondents considered most beneficial for enhancing girls' schooling and perceived by the community to have significantly improved the girls' child education in the schools. However, not all the secondary level expenditure tallied with items considered important in enhancing girls' education; (3) SBMCs were perceived as performing several roles; chiefly, that of raising funds and making financial contributions in cash and kind; (4) Despite the fact that all the respondents agreed that effective monitoring of grants received was necessary to influence increase in enrolment and retention, only a few felt that government officials engaged in monitoring; (5) Local government education officials carried out more advocacy and sensitization activities and engaged in consultation and meeting with SBMC members; activities which have the potential to ensure community

participation, ownership and cascade effect on community heads and key community. The recommendations included sustained effort towards increased enrolment and closing gender gap, SBMC training, fostering a culture of accurate and reliable school records, entrenching mechanisms for more effective grant utilisation, financial accounting, and incentive and feedback systems.

Introduction

Zamfara State is one of the eight northern Nigerian states with the lowest girl-child education and highest female illiteracy record in Nigeria (Ovuorie, 2013; Zamfara State Ministry of Education, 2015). The average percentage of primary attendance in the state is 18% (Humphreys & Crawford, 2014) and Zamfara State has about 68,000 out-of-school girls (Umar, 2015). In 2014, the total population of pupils in primary school was 611,562 with only 35% being girls. Gross Enrolment Rate was 45.3% for girls against 81.4% for boys, Net Enrolment Rate was 39.5% for girls as against 71.5% boys and Gender Parity Index was 0.56 (2014 Annual School Census, Ministry of Education, Zamfara State). This clearly shows the wide gaps in primary school enrolment between boys and girls. In addition, the large gender disparity in educational attainment was captured in the 2013 NDHS report in which 77.3% of females of household population as against 55.8% males had no education. Also, only 3.7% females as against 5.8% males had completed primary education. The net attendance ratio reflect that 42.9% of boys and 27.7 % of girls aged 6-12 years attend primary; 36.8% boys and 14.6 % girls aged 13-18 years attend secondary school in Zamfara state.

Available evidence shows that tradition, early marriage, negative parental attitudes and low status of women are key challenges to girls' education (UNICEF, 2007; Kainuwa & Yusuf, 2013). According to Kainuwa and Yusuf (2013: 2), Nigeria's Report to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women explains that various laws, including state Sharia Criminal Laws have not effectively addressed discrimination against women even though there are some provisions that guarantee, women's rights and protect them against discrimination.

Section 239 of the Zamfara State Sharia Penal Code Law 2000, for example, prohibits and punishes women trafficking. Previous studies (e.g., Kainuwa & Yusuf, 2013; Sperling 2005) have focused on some the obstacles or barriers preventing the girls from accessing basic education. These barriers were classified as insensitive gender policy, infrastructure/school environment, family household resources, cultural and community beliefs among others (e.g., FGN/UNICEF 2001; UNESCO 2002, ActionAid, 2012)

In recent years, there have been a series of programmes and interventions on girl child education such as the establishment of girls' focal primary schools across the state by Zamfara State government, 140 selected schools initiative by UBE, UNICEF supported programme through Girls Education Programme phase 3 (GEP3) including school grants and some others to mention but few, with the aims of combating and bridging the gaps between girls and boys education. Girls' education not only brings the immediate benefits of empowering girls, but is also seen as the best investment in any country's development. Ensuring that girls are educated is a guaranteed way to increase a country's economic productivity, lower infant and maternal mortality, improve national status and health care and reduce poverty (UNICEF, 2007). Nonetheless, despite the potential impact of the intervention programmes, there is paucity of empirical research on the effectiveness of the projects and factors that promote or inhibit the intended benefits. More specifically, not much has been done to consider the effect of school grants on girls' enrolment and retention in basic education most especially in Zamfara State where this type of grants is seriously needed.

The need to explore the effect of school grants on girls' enrolment and retention for the enhancement of girl-child education will go a long way in assisting stakeholders and providers of basic education to adopt the best and appropriate policy measures to be taken if at all education for all and gender equity in education is to be achieved. For example, studies that examined the impact of cash grants to families and school feeding found increases in students' enrolment and school participation in Mexico and Kenya respectively (Schultz, 2003; Vermeersch & Kremer, 2005). Osei-Fosu (2011) examined the impact of the capitation grant and school feeding programme on school enrolment, attendance and retention in Ghana. The study involved 20 randomly selected basic schools that were beneficiaries of the capitation grant but only ten of them were under the school feeding programme while the other ten were not. The results showed that the school feeding programme positively impacted on school enrolment, attendance and retention. However, the capitation grant caused a positive but not significant impact on enrolment and the impact of the programme in general was affected by Parent-Teacher-Association levies and the weather. Also, using a combination of qualitative and quantitative designs, a study which examined the impact of feeding programme of public elementary school pupils in Osun state of Nigeria found that the feeding programme resulted in increased enrolment, retention, regularity, punctuality and school attendance. The major challenges observed were insufficient funding, poor infrastructural facilities and poor monitoring and evaluation (Taylor & Ogogu, 2016). In the study conducted by Deffous (2011), using five developing countries as case studies, the importance of examining the use of grants and monitoring the control of its use as well as assessing the impact on quality and equity of the education system were emphasised.

Although the Universal Basic Education (UBE) was introduced in Nigeria in 1999 to ensure every Nigerian school age child acquires basic education, the outcome has been very slow (Gershberg, et al, 2015). As part of efforts of DFID

and UNICEF to contribute towards filling of this gap, Girls Education Project (GEP) was introduced in Northern Nigeria, including Zamfara State. It is line with this that, the research set out to study the impact of UNICEF GEP (phase 3) schools grant intervention in order to gauge its relevance in the affected schools as it affects enrolment and retention of the girl-child. The researchers' personal experiences as extension officers working with rural communities have shown that despite the existence of the Universal Basic Education Act (UBE Act 2000) in Nigeria, the girl child in rural communities of northern Nigeria, Zamfara state in particular, do not significantly participate in basic education. However, in communities where the international development partners are engaged in intervention programmes, the situation is entirely different. Monitoring and evaluation assessments have shown that the participation of the girl child in these communities is far greater than in other rural communities of northern Nigeria with an increase of over 60% in girls' enrolment, while attendance has risen over 25% in the supported schools (UNICEF/DFID Report 2008). Furthermore, following several years of the launching of United Nations Girls' Education Initiative (UNGEI), there has been relatively few research and sustained attempts to consider the effect of school grants on girls' enrolment and retention, more especially in Zamfara state. This research attempts to address this gap. Therefore, this study explored the effect of school grants on girls' enrolment and retention in order to gain better insights to enhance and accelerate the girls' participation in basic education, bearing in mind the socio-cultural factors that characterise rural communities of Zamfara state. This research is premised on the notion of a deep understanding of the dynamics involved in encouraging girls' participation in education and ultimately creating a society where girls in northern Nigeria are 'empowered through quality education to realize their full potentials and contribute to transforming societies in which gender equality can become a reality' (Lawal, 2010). To this end, this research specifically evaluated the impact of GEP3 intervention in order to provide insights regarding activities that

can be scaled up toward bridging the existing gaps in the girl child education.

Objectives

The overall objective of the study was to provide an assessment on:

- A. The impact of grants on enrolment and attendance in selected communities Zamfara state;
- B. Community perception on the school grant intervention in the study areas in Zamfara State; and
- C. Girls' specific initiatives embarked by the community that increased girls' enrolment in schools

Research questions

1. What is the impact of school grants on girls' enrolment and attendance? 2. What are the perceptions on use of grants and impact on girls by the communities?
3. What forms of grant management support enhanced the capacity of the communities towards increased girls' enrolment?

Research Methodology

Design

This study adopted a mixed design involving the use of a wide range of qualitative and quantitative data collection techniques at community and school levels. The research tools employed were focus group discussions, in-depth interviews, one-on-one interviews, documents analysis and use of questionnaires to explore UNICEF grants intervention factors that increase enrolment and retention in the selected schools. The research also involved a survey in which data was gathered through questionnaires and interviews designed based on the objectives of the survey and pre-tested.

Research Site

Multistage cluster sampling was adopted in the selection of communities. The state was divided into three clusters (Zamfara North, Central and West) based on the three senatorial zones whereby two local government areas were randomly selected from each cluster. In all, six local government areas were selected namely Kauran Namoda, Zurmi, Bungudu, Tsafe, Maradun and Talata Mafara. A list of the GEP 3 supported primary schools was used for the selection of 18 primary schools (six each of urban, semi-urban and rural communities) in six local government areas of the state. Table 6.1 presents a breakdown of research sites and selected communities.

Table 6.1: Selected research sites and selected communities

Selected local government area	Population	Ward of selected school	Population	Selected primary schools	Description of location
Bungudu	343,647	Bungudu	36,658	Sarkin Fulani MPS	Urban
		Nahuche	35,039	Nahuche II	Semi-Urban
		Kwatarkoshi	30,010	Unguwar Dunya	Rural
K/Namoda	374,891	S/Mafara S/Baura	53,854	Girls Focal PS Kaura	Urban
		Kyambarawa	36,814	Kasuwar Daji MPS	Semi-Urban
		Yankaba	29,157	Barkeji PS	Rural
Maradun	280,938	Maradun North	25,298	Mualedi MPS	Urban
		Dosara/Birnin Kaya	25,789	Dan Baza MPS	Semi-Urban
		Kaya	22,489	Kaya PS	Rural

T/Mafara	286,701	Kayaye	58,472	Bello Dogo MPS	Urban
		Jangebe	21,851	Jangebe MPS	Semi-Urban
		Makera/Take Tsaba	32,290	Makera PS	Rural
Tsafe	354,427	Tsafe	43,150	Ali Akilu MPS	Urban
		Yan Doton Daji	45,811	Nasarawa Sarki MPS	Semi-Urban
		Bilbis	31,993	Bilbis PS	Rural
Zurmi	391,506	Zurmi	46,657	Issau MPS	Urban
		Moriki	43,987	Yanruwa MPS Moriki	Semi-Urban
		Dauran	28,079	Dauran MPS	Rural

Study sample

A stratified random sampling was used in the selection of girls and purposive sampling for parents in the community. From each of the 18 schools, 21 girls were selected, comprising 378 pupils in total. Also, the head teachers (one from each school), community leaders (one from each community school), representatives of SBMCs (eight from each school) and mothers associations (one from each community) were selected using purposive sampling. Also one officer representing the State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB) from each of the local government areas took part in the interviews.

Questionnaires were used to obtain information from respondents (girls) that are literate. This is because questionnaire requires the respondent to read and select options that are in agreement with their opinions which may pose a challenge to

non-literate respondents. Face-to-face interview was conducted with key government officials, some community leaders and parents. In addition, focus group discussions were with women and SBMC members. See Table 6.2 for details of participants and research methods. Documents like data on enrolment and attendance registers were obtained for quantitative data on enrolment and attendance of female in schools. Research assistants were recruited and trained to assist with data collection and entry. The research team secured written approvals from the state government through the SUBEB and the respective local government areas to gain access for the conduct of the study. The study strictly adhered to the code of ethics guiding conduct of research involving human subject.

Table 6.2: Study participants and research methods

Population	Objective	Number of respondent	Number of incidents	Instrument
Head Teacher	Report on how the grant has been applied to support increase in enrolment and retention	18 Head teacher	18	Questionnaire
Community Leader	To assess SBMC functionality	18 Community Leaders	18	Interview
SBMC Members	To monitor the WSDP for school improvement on enrolment and retention	144 (8 in each community X 18)	18	Focus group discussions
Parent	Their level of awareness on the school grant To assess relationship between grants and girls' enrolment	18	18	Interviews
Mothers Association	To assess their participation in grant utilization To assess MAs perception on the importance of girl child education	18 groups	18	FGD
Girls	To ensure girls benefitted from school grant	378 (7x3x18)	378	Questionnaire
SUBEB Local government area	To ensure monitoring of grants in schools	6	6	Interview

Findings

The impact of grants on enrolment and attendance

All the 18 schools in the study received one-time grants in the year 2013, albeit at varying periods. Are there increases in girls' enrolment following the grant utilization? The data available from

schools reflected enrolment and attendance numbers. Figure 6.1 derived from school records shows that there was 50.5% increase in girls' enrolment figures from 2298 to 3459 pupils from 2010/11 to 2014/15 session. Similarly, girls' attendance figures also increased over the five-year period by 50.5%.

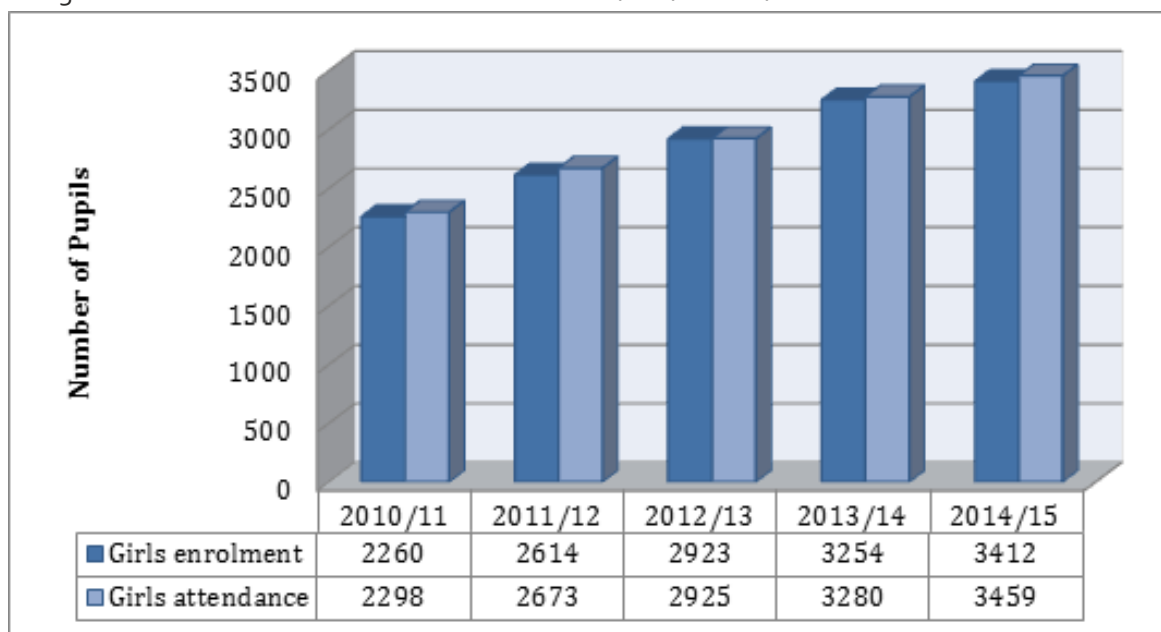


Figure 6.1: Girls' enrolment and attendance figures

Figure 6.2 presents the annual enrolment increase which was 15.67% from 2010/11 to 2011/12 and remained relatively stable (11.8% and 11.3%) over the next two sessions. Although an increase in enrolment was witnessed from 2013/14 to 2014/2015, the figure of 4.9% was not as high as previous years. Figure 6.1 also shows that over the period of five years, a high proportion of girls attended school, following a similar pattern with the enrolment figures.

The drop in enrolment to 4.9% may be due to the waning effect of absence of grants for the year and a need for sustained support for a considerable period. It might also be due to reliability of the data. It is noteworthy that

although records of enrolments and attendance were obtained from school records, capturing the complete picture was somewhat difficult. For example, in some schools, attendance figures were higher than admission figures, probably because in some schools, pupils were admitted without following the normal admission process. Such oversights were perhaps connected with the girls' specific initiatives done in the community schools. The alternative explanation for the higher attendance rates is the well-documented dearth of reliable and accurate school records. Thus, there is a need for a more effective information system to capture more accurate and reliable data.

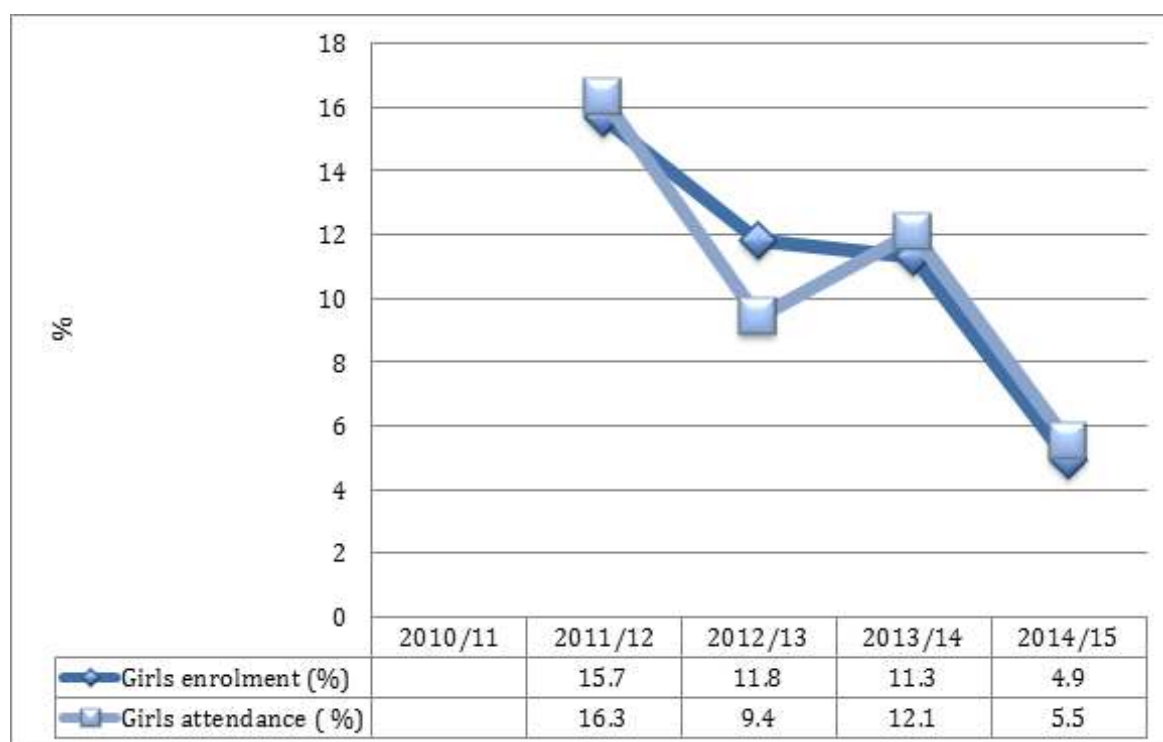


Figure 6.2: Percentage of girls' enrolment and attendance over five-year period

According to the primary school level statistics obtained from school census (Zamfara State Ministry of Education, 2015), enrolment by gender in 2012-2014 was 271,273 for boys as against 143,809 for girls, representing 65.4% for boys and 34.6% for girls. Figure 6.3 compares school attendance records of girls relative to boys

in this research. In 2010/2011, attendance for girls was 36.3% compared to boys at 63.7%. The figures for girls dropped slightly in 2011/12 and 2012/13 at 34.9% and 35.5% respectively, and thereafter witnessed an increase to 38.1% as against 61.9% for boys. The change over the five-year period was low at 1.64% indicating a slow

change towards gender parity. Overall, as reflected in Figures 6.1 to 6.3, over the five-year period, girls' attendance witnessed a significant increase in number and only a slight increase in gender parity. Also, the findings underscore the

need to actively engage in interventions towards the minimization of gender gaps among primary schools' pupils and ensure increase in girls' enrolment and retention.

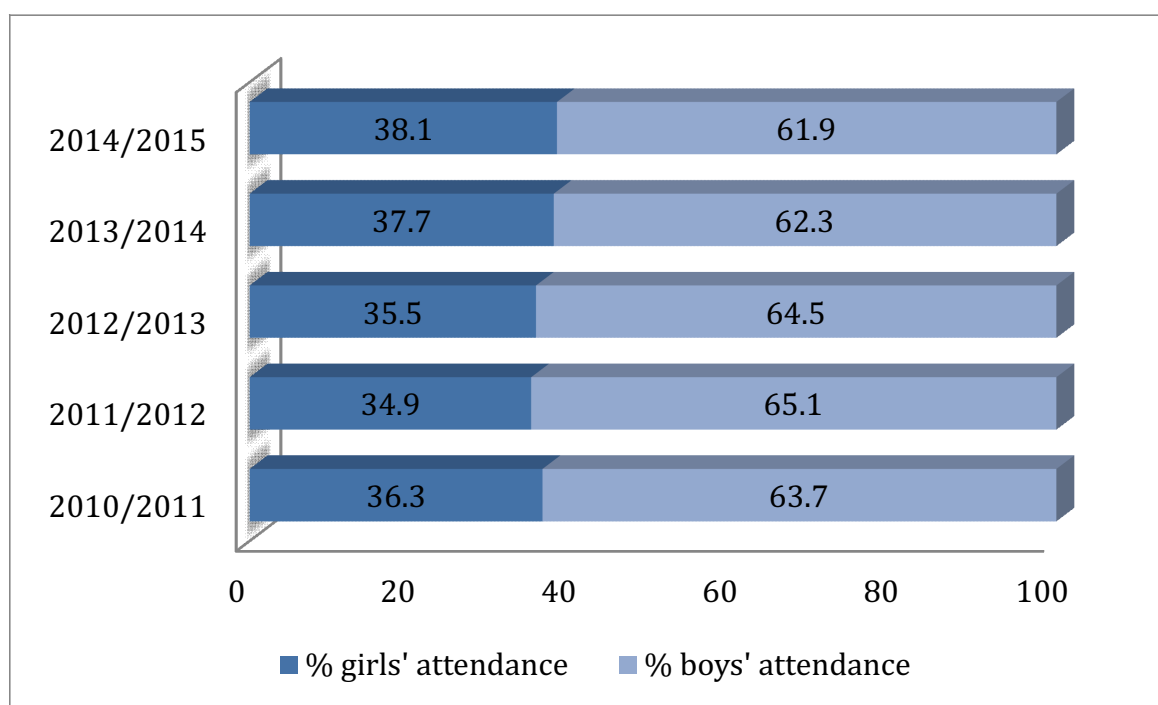


Figure 6.3: Percentage of girls' attendance relative to boys

Consistent with the observed increased enrolment and attendance figures, participants from the focus group discussions and interviews also reported that there was a tremendous improvement in girls' enrolment in all the communities. A female chairperson in Makera community confirmed that:

Before the grant was given we had few girls in school, only 2 girls attended primary school but with the intervention from the GEP school grant there are presently 85 girls in the school.

Perceptions on use of grants and impact on girls
What projects were executed from the grants

received? Responses from community participants were summarised to provide frequencies of identified projects and narratives of their realities. Figure 6.4 shows that the primary projects executed through the grants were the provision of instructional materials (94%) and school uniforms (72%). Other projects undertaken to a moderate extent (second level) were skill acquisition programmes (61%), renovation of classrooms (56%) provision of sporting facilities (50%), gender separated toilets (50%) and provision school bags and sandals (44%). Projects such as provision of first aid kits (11%) and construction of covered wells (11%) and supply of ICT (6%) were infrequently executed.

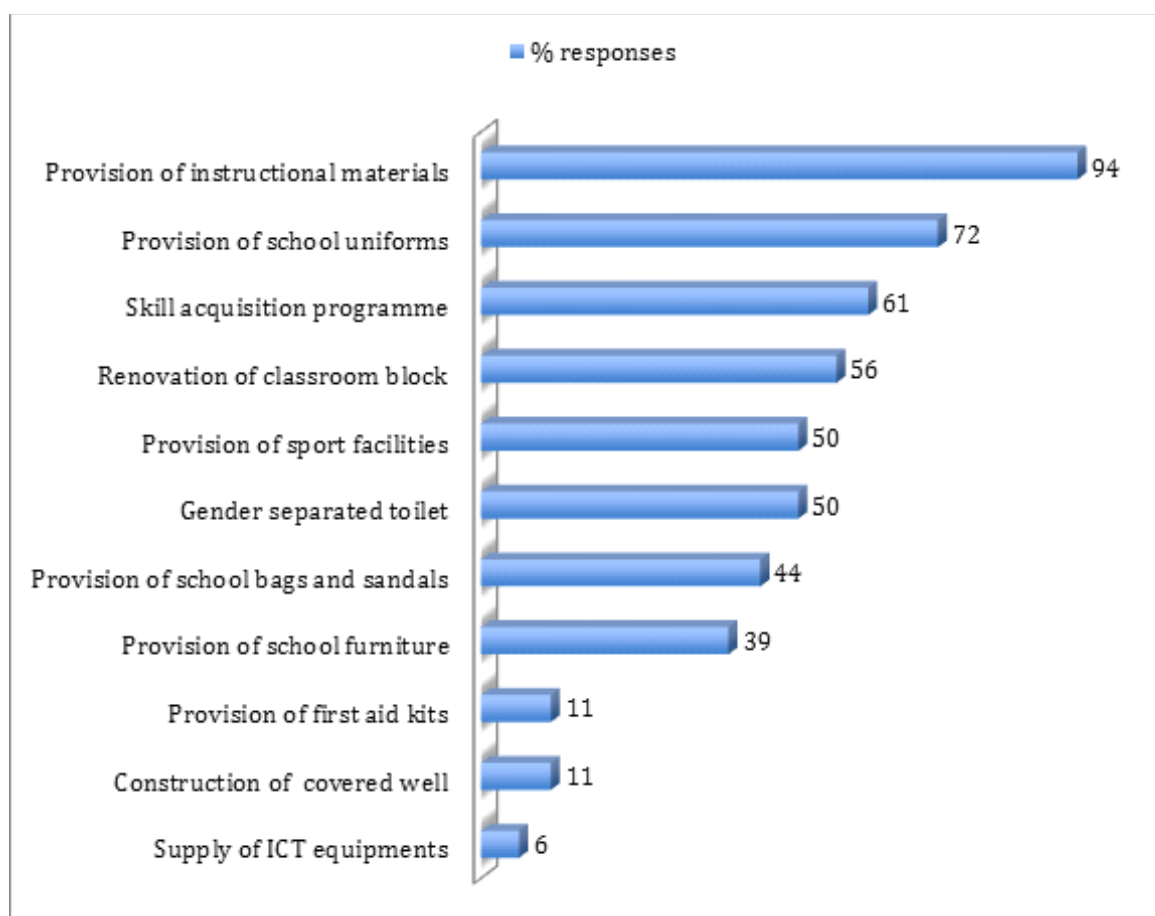


Figure 6.4: Projects executed through SBMC grants as reflected in responses from the communities

Narratives from interviews and focus groups corroborated the prevalence of the provision of instructional materials. For example, a head teacher of one of the community schools reported that:

The provision of school registers, chalks, textbooks and other instructional materials in the school helped a lot in that it motivated teachers to be regular in the classes unlike before.

What of the projects are of benefit in improving girls' education? Did the respondents consider the projects executed as similar in priority with respect to their potential effectiveness in improving girls' education in their communities? Figure 6.5 presents respondents' views on what they considered most impactful projects for girls' education. The most frequently cited intervention (primary level) that can enhance girls' schooling were provision of school uniforms

(72%) as well as textbooks and exercise books (61%). This is consistent with the primary level projects executed and thus corroborates the significance of the grants' primary expenditure on instructional materials and school uniforms. Gender separated toilets (56%) and construction of classroom blocks and wall fencing (56%) were considered important by a little over half of the responses. Provision of safe drinking water (44%), supply of ICT equipment (44%) and provision of skill acquisition equipment (44%) were considered by about two fifth of the responses as important. Of all the second level expenditure items (as identified in Figure 6.5) only female toilets and skill acquisition tended to be consistent with secondary level priority the items were given in terms of expenditure. The provision of first aid kits (22%), breakfast (17%) and renovation of classroom block (17%) were considered by only a few of respondents. Overall, Most of the respondents thought that the provision of school uniform to girls led to an influx

in the enrolment. For example, a community head in Talata Mafara stated that:

The provision of school uniform to girls led to an influx in enrolment to the extent that today, we have more girls in some classes than boys.

In general, the primary level expenditure was

consistent with what other respondents believed will enhance girls enrolment and retention. However, not all the secondary level expenditure tallied with items considered important in enhancing girls' education. Therefore, there is a need to ensure that interventions have the potential to impact remarkably on girls' enrolment, retention and gender parity.

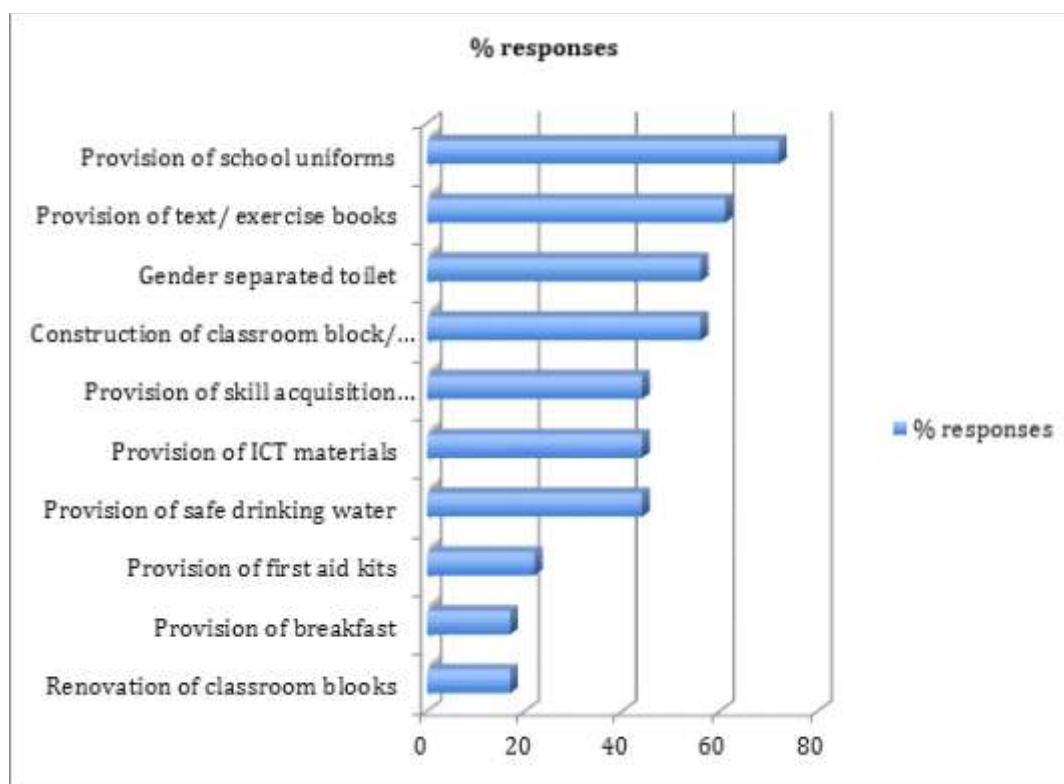


Figure 6.5: Participants' responses of perceived interventions that can improve girls' education

What roles do SBMC members play during project implementation? Figure 6.6 shows that respondents were in agreement that SBMCs primarily played a role in financial and in-kind contributions (100%). One third of the respondents thought that they monitored teachers and 28% emphasised their planning

meetings. They also engaged in enrolments drive campaigns, advocacy and sensitization (17%) and supervision and execution of the projects each (17%). Thus, SMBCs in the communities were seen as performing several roles and chiefly, that of raising funds.

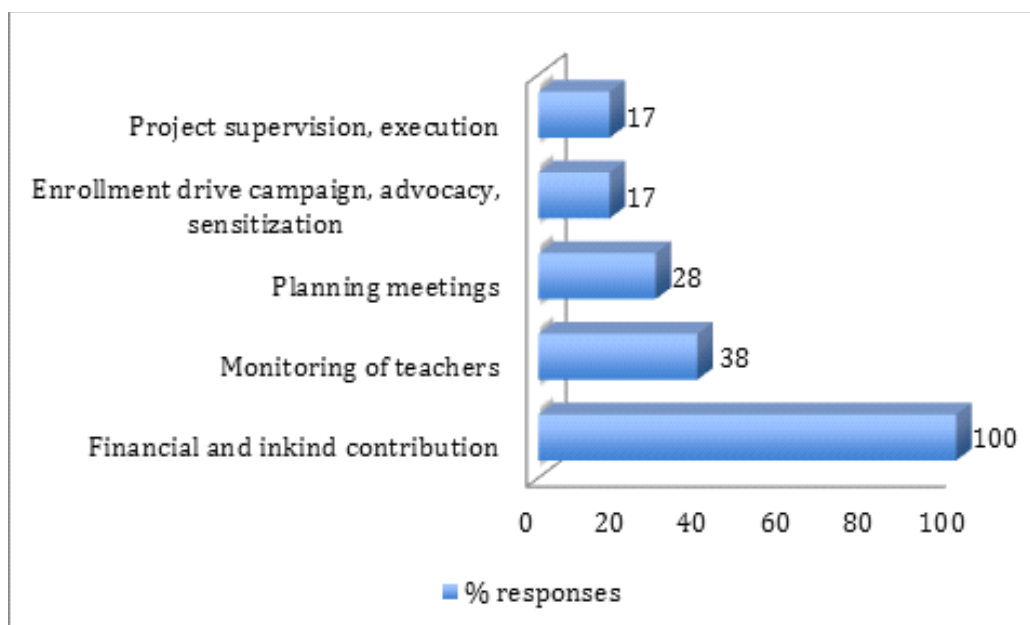


Figure 6.6: The roles SBMC members play in grant implementation

What types of grant related records were available in the schools? Figure 6.7 shows that majority of the benefited schools had payment receipts (94%) and budget templates (83%) and about three-quarters had SBMC minutes' books (72%). Three-fifths of the schools had projects' pictures 61%. Only 44% had SBMC bank books, 28% had record of distribution or list of beneficiaries and 6% ledger file or financial records books. Thus, while the SBMCs had good records of payments, the

financial reporting was minimal. Although, good records of payments were available in most of the schools and this may imply some degree of transparency in executing the schools' grants across the benefited communities, the dearth of financial records books, ledger file and records of distribution may also imply a need for training and skill development in financial record keeping and the need for provision of incentives for compliance.

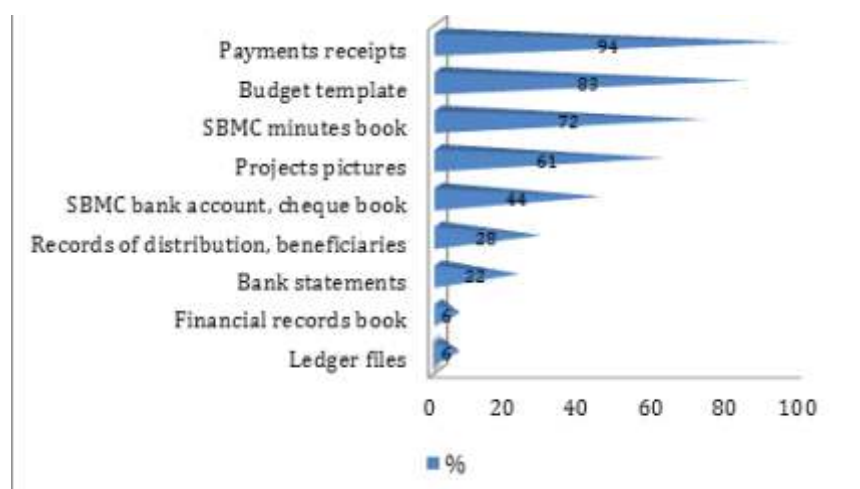


Figure 6.7: Percentages of schools with records related to school grants

Grant management support

How did local government education authority officials assist in accessing grants? Most of the respondents from the school communities (83%) indicated that the officials assisted in opening bank accounts for the schools while 17% disagreed. Majority of the SBMC members acknowledged the assistance from Social Mobilization Officers (SMOs) who provided support in opening bank accounts. Examples of the comments were:

We don't know how to open bank account; it was the SMO that assisted us in opening the account thereby facilitating the process of assessing the grant. (SBMC member in a rural community)

...they don't know how to open bank account and the grant cannot be accessed without banking procedures, it was the

SMO that helped in the opening of the account. (A rural community leader and member of the SBMC community)

Furthermore, with regards to grant disbursement to schools, 67% of the respondents indicated that the disbursement was made in full, while 33% said that the disbursement was made in instalment. Responses to the question on how to ensure that the grants received by the SBMCs enhance girls' enrolment and retention reflected 100% endorsement of the need for effective monitoring (see Figure 6.8). Half of the respondents (50%) indicated that the involvement of all stakeholders in the process might influence increase in enrolment and retention, while a third of the respondents identified strategies such as assisting schools in meeting the conditions of disbursement, meetings with SBMCs and sensitization to improve enrolment and retention of girls in school.

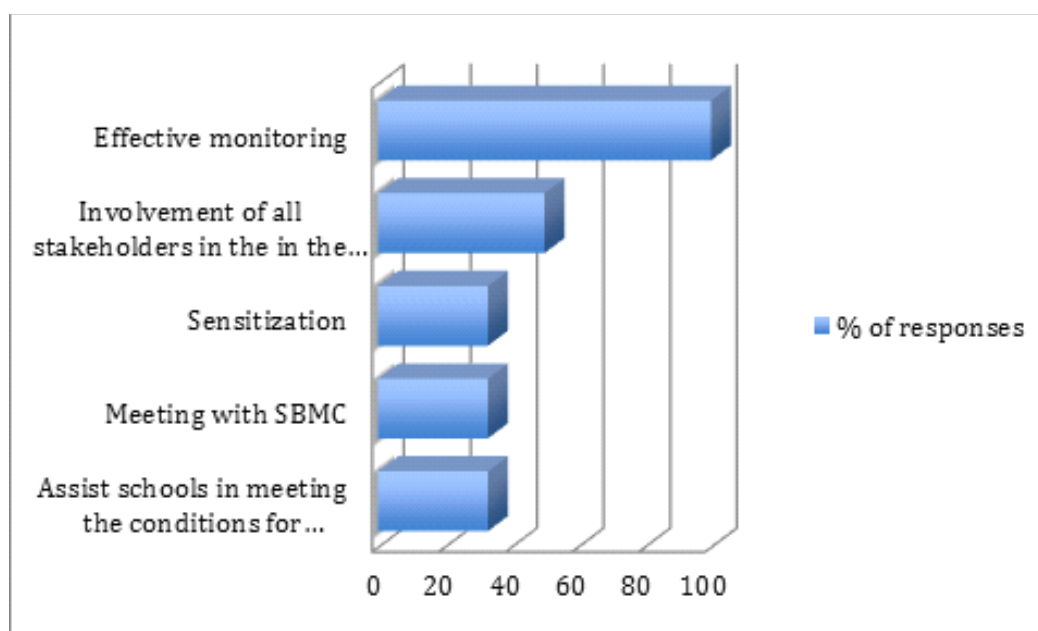


Figure 6.8: Strategies to ensure grants increase girls' enrolment and retention

In all the qualitative data analysed, all the respondents in the focus groups, mothers' associations and the community heads stressed the importance of the roles of the SMOs in ensuring growth in enrolment and retention through effective monitoring and stakeholders' involvement. Indeed, majority of the respondents from the interviews (83%) indicated that local government education authority officials frequently monitored schools to ensure transparency while 17% thought they monitored only sometimes. Narratives from the discussions suggest that government officials should provide necessary advisory support. This type of support was acknowledged in Barkeji, Dauran, Moriki and Unguwar Dunya communities where SBMCs were advised on best practices and activities to promote community participation and sustainability of the programme.

Local government education officials also provided other types of assistance to ensure community participation. Figure 6.9 shows that other types of assistance rendered were mostly advocacy and sensitization (83%), consultations with community members and meetings with SBMCs and mothers' associations (50%). They sometimes engaged in monitoring, meeting with stakeholders and providing financial or technical support; assistance with resources mobilization was rarely mentioned (17%). The data showed that during enrolment drives, two-thirds of the

respondents stated that local government education officials participated in organising the campaign while a third indicated that they partook in the sensitization of parents and communities.

The government officers and all other stakeholders organised themselves to sensitize and educate the community on the importance of girls' education. Some community heads alluded to recent initiatives that made it an obligation for the mothers to participate in house-to-house mobilization during enrolment drives. The district head of a rural community stated that he goes round the community to 'sensitize my people to enrol their girls in school'. In Maradun, the emir has a sub-committee on enrolment in order to ensure that all girls of school age re-enrolled. Overall, to ensure community participation and ownership during the proposal and implementation of the grants in the respective communities, local government education officials, to a large extent, carried out more advocacy and sensitization activities. Also, to some considerable extent they engaged in consultations and meetings with SBMC members. The consequences of such governmental support and mobilization for girls' enrolment at community levels seemed to have had a cascade effect on the activities of community heads and key community groups.

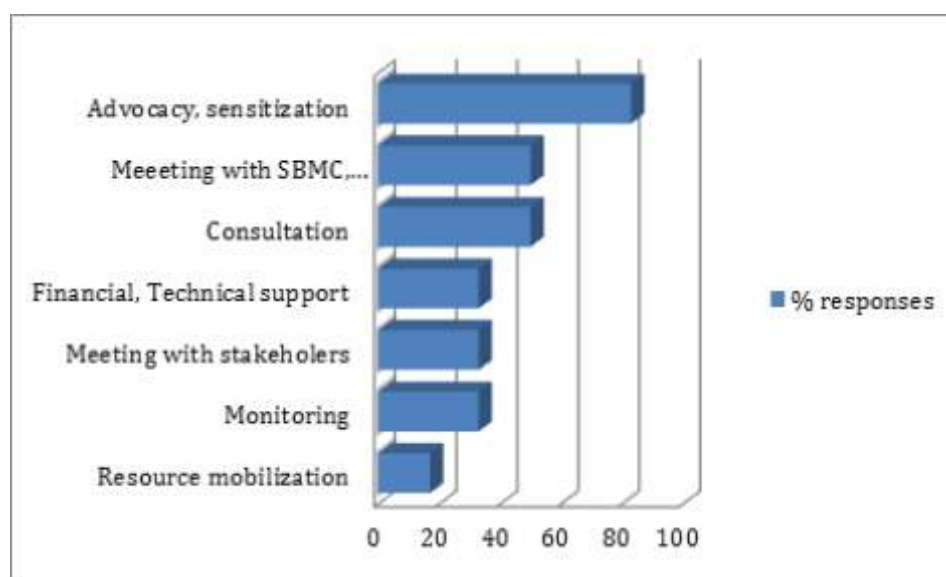


Figure 6.9: Other assistance provided by government officials to support community participation

Discussion

The study set out to examine the impact of grants on girls' enrolment and retention in GEP 3 benefitting schools in Zamfara State. The research focused on three main aspects: impact of grants on enrolment and retention, use of grants, and grant management support. The findings showed a reduction in enrolment gaps between boys and girls from 2010/2011 to 2014/2015 academic session and a significant reduction in attendance gaps between boys and girls from 2011 to 2015. In other words, marked increases in girls' enrolment and retention especially over a period of three years were observed, albeit, the increase was not even. The observed growth in enrolment was higher the session immediately after the grants 2013/14. Generally, over the five-year period, girls' enrolment, attendance and retention witnessed a significant increase in number and only a slight increase in gender parity. The findings are consistent with some previous studies on positive impact of grants (e.g., Osei-Fosu, 2011; Schultz, 2003). However, the need to consolidate on gains from interventions from the grants is amplified by the uneven growth observed. Also efforts should be sustained towards minimization of gender gaps among primary schools' pupils beyond grant intervention periods. It is also noteworthy that there are limitations with aggregating data obtained from various school records in terms of accuracy and reliability (e.g., Humphreys & Crawford, 2015), consequently, while school level data may be useful indicators of enrolment and retention in community schools, the data needs to be treated with caution. It also underscores the need for fostering a culture of keeping reliable and accurate school records.

Grants may be used for maintenance or for the provision of learning and teaching materials (Deffous, 2011). Although in this

study, the grants were used for varied purposes, they were primarily expended on the provision of instructional materials and school uniforms. To a large extent, the grants' primary level expenditure was consistent with what respondents considered most beneficial for enhancing girls' schooling. Provision of instructional materials and school uniforms was perceived by the community to have significantly improved the girls' child education in the schools. In addition the provision of female toilets and acquisition of skills, which were not given as much priority in terms of grant expenditure, were also considered second level in terms of the benefit to improving girls enrolment. In general, the primary level expenditure was consistent with what other respondents believed will enhance girls' enrolment and retention. However, not all the secondary level expenditure tallied with items considered important in enhancing girls' education. Thus expenditure need to better aligned with impactful interventions identified by the community. It is also necessary to ensure that interventions have the potential to impact remarkably on girls' enrolment, retention and gender parity.

SBMCs play key roles during implementation of the grants and intervention projects. They were perceived as performing several roles; chiefly, that of raising funds and making financial contributions in cash and kind. The findings also showed that SBMCs in the communities were seen as fully involved in their school development activities. Records of payments, budget templates and minutes of meeting were available in most of the schools; this may imply some degree of transparency in executing the GEP3 schools grant projects across the beneficiaries communities). Like previous literature that identified SBMC members' lack of skills as a challenge (e.g., Oduwaiye, Bakwai & Yisa, 2015), the dearth of financial records books, ledger file and

records of distribution may imply a need for training and skill development in financial record keeping. Introducing a system of incentives may enhance accountability and incorporate a much needed feedback mechanism.

Majority of the respondents acknowledged the support of local government social mobilization officers in assisting with opening accounts. Given the need to improve financial accounting and the much needed assistance to enable SBMCs to meet grant conditions (as observed by participants) the officials should be trained to provide support for the SBMCs improved financial management. Indeed, despite the fact that all the respondents agreed that effective monitoring of grant received was necessary to influence increase in enrolment and retention, only one third felt that government officials engaged in monitoring. This underscores the need for improved monitoring of grants to ensure that the main objectives of enhanced girls' enrolment and retention is achieved. Many respondents also acknowledged that the involvement of all stakeholders in the process would be beneficial. Respondents also noted that, local government education officials frequently carried out more advocacy and sensitization activities and to some considerable extent engaged in consultation and meeting with SBMC members. No doubt, these activities have the potential to ensure community participation and ownership during the proposal and implementation of the grants in communities. The consequences of such governmental support and mobilization for girls' enrolment at community levels which seemed to have had a cascade effect on the activities of community heads and key community groups needs to be fostered for more positive outcomes.

Conclusion

This research set out to gauge the relevance of Girls Education Project schools' grant

intervention in terms of enrolment and retention of the girl-child in affected schools as well as community perceptions about grants' execution and impact. The study analysed enrolment and attendance registers as well as data obtained from questionnaires, interviews and focus group discussions. Based on the findings the following recommendations were made:

1. Overall, over the five-year period, girls' enrolment, attendance and retention witnessed a significant increase in number and only a slight increase in gender parity. Therefore, there is a need to consolidate on gains from interventions and efforts should be sustained towards minimization of gender gaps among primary schools' pupils beyond grant intervention periods.
2. Without useful, reliable and accurate data, it will be difficult to understand the impact of programmes and engage in effective planning of appropriate interventions. There is a need to foster a culture of good recording keeping beginning from the school level.
3. The findings of this study provided support for the advantage of SBMC based intervention in enhancing access, equity and economic development of the community
4. Grant expenditure needs to better aligned with impactful interventions identified by the community. There is a need to ensure that interventions have the potential to impact remarkably on girls' enrolment, retention and gender parity. Mechanisms should be put in place to ensure increase in school grants, effective utilization, monitoring, feedback and incentive system with the objective of promoting girls' enrolment and retention.

5. Given the need to improve financial accounting and the much needed assistance to enable SBMCs, members should be given appropriate training and skill development in financial record keeping. Introducing a system of incentives may enhance accountability and incorporate a much needed feedback process. The school SBMCs should be continuously trained, sensitized and monitored to ensure improved financial accountability, sustained school ownership and the drive to increased girls' enrolment and retention.
6. The perceptions of the wider community on the need to ensure access to education for the girl-child should be continuously enhanced through sustained efforts at multi-actor collaborative community-based enrolment campaigns and sensitization programmes.
7. Governmental and nongovernmental organisations have been engaged in addressing the educational needs of the people in the state; however, efforts should be more collaborative and supportive in ensuring efficient and effective use of resources for towards achievement of access and gender parity in educational opportunities.

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Cultural barriers to girls' education, transition and retention in Jigawa State

Titilope Fakoya and Hafsat Abdullahi Mustafa

Abstract

Previous research and available statistics have documented the fact that girls' educational attainment is lowest in northern Nigeria. Several factors account for girls' poor performance and hinder their access to education in the region. This study aimed to scope and document the barriers that limit girls' education, transition and retention in Jigawa State. Qualitative research design was adopted using key informant interviews, focus group discussions and one-on-one interviews. Data was obtained in four local government areas reflecting urban, peri-urban and rural communities. Participants included a wide range of stakeholders comprising government officials at the state and local government levels, development partners, community leaders, parents, married girls, school age and adolescent girls and boys. Findings revealed that girls experienced several cultural barriers such as traditional practices of 'talla' (hawking of petty items in preparation for marriage), and 'zanche' (courtship process), lack of autonomy, early marriage, fear of divorce, lack of role models and female teachers and societal pressures associated with ambivalence towards girls' education. The major influencers of girls' education, especially in rural communities, in order of decreasing power were grandmothers, fathers, male relatives and teachers. The economic barriers to girls' educational attainment were the hidden costs of education, deepening poverty and worsening economic climate. Dearth of schools and poor school infrastructure served as physical environmental challenges to girls' education. Case studies of communities were also presented to document girls' experiences in situations of poverty and lack of role models. Urban-rural differences were observed: stronger emphasis and impact of cultural and economic barriers, lower levels of awareness of education policies were more evident in rural areas. Recommendations included working with key influencers of girls' education and providing second chance opportunities for continued education and skill acquisition for out-of-school and divorced girls.

Introduction

Education is the most important aspect of human development and key to successful living. Yet, the global figure for out of school children is estimated at 61 million with 34 million living in Sub-Saharan Africa; girls from the region constitute 23% of the global figure. Further, Nigeria has the highest number of out-of school children 8.7 million children (UNESCO, 2016) and educational marginalisation is compounded by gender, ethnicity, socioeconomic conditions and geographical location. According to the 2013 National Demographic Health Survey reports (NPC, 2014), the Net Attendance Ratio in primary school education shows that 61.6% of boys aged between 6 to 12 years attend primary school as against 56.7% of girls. Females in rural (48.8%) have lower Net Attendance Ratios than those in urban areas (69.4%). The attendance ratios for females in north-west (43.8%), north-east (41.5%) and north-central (66.2%) zones were lower than for females in south-west (69.5%), south-east (80.3%) and south-south (73.4%) geopolitical zones.

Previous research has noted the long-term effects of gender attitudes on opportunities for women in the economic, political and social spheres (e.g., Csapo, 1981, McCleary-Sills, Hanmer, Parsons, & Klugman, 2015). These social and cultural biases are reflected and reinforced, particularly in northern Nigeria, by the exclusion of girls from the education system. In parts of the region, primary completion rates show a 34% disparity between boys and girls. By the completion of junior secondary school this disparity widens to 43% in Zamfara State for instance. Across the region, significantly more boys than girls are completing basic education, thus entrenching systemic disadvantages for adolescent girls and women in later life.

Previous literature has documented several barriers to girls' exclusion and disadvantaged position in Sub-Saharan African including northern Nigeria (e.g., British Council, 2012; Csapo, 1981; ESSPIN 2012; Hyde, 1993; Udegbe, 2015). Many of the factors identified as strong barriers in the early eighties still persist despite

several initiatives to address the hindrances. From available literature, barriers to girls' educational attainment have been linked to three major sources; state, school and socio-economic level constants. Factors such as lack of political will, poor funding, weak gender policies and implementation as well as teachers' training and welfare issues constitute state level barriers. School level factors include poor facilities and infrastructure, distance to school and lack of female teachers. Socio-economic factors are demand side constraints, which consist mainly of community and family related issues that serve as hindrances to girls' education. They include patriarchal norms and attitudes, early marriage and pregnancy, child labour and poverty. A survey conducted to examine the status of out-of-school children in Jigawa state shows that the most prominent reasons for dropping out of school were financial problems and lack of interest by parents while reasons for those who never attended were distance to school and parents' lack of interest (Jigawa State Government/ESSPIN, 2014). In addition, over 90% of those who dropped or never attended school were from rural areas and over two thirds were from poor (rural) families. Thus, the barriers to girls' education and their potency vary across regions and communities. Nevertheless, there may have been changes in predominance of barriers over time. For example, given the attention the issue of child marriage has attracted globally and locally, stronger consensus is emerging to eliminate the practice (Wodon, 2015). The processes through which these factors operate need to be clearly understood in order to design relevant and appropriate strategies to address them. The low levels of girls' school enrolment and gender parity in northern stress the urgency to address the girls' exclusion if the Sustainable Development Goals on education and gender equity are to be achieved by 2030. Through the Northern Nigeria Girls' Education Programme, the British Council seeks to increase the likelihood that more young girls in the north complete basic education and play an active role in their communities. Thus, in order to meaningfully engage communities it is necessary to produce reliable evidence to support advocacy and implementation of girls'

education intervention programmes. Therefore, this research sought to shed light on the cultural norms, understandings and behaviours that create barriers to the education of girls in northern Nigeria.

Objective of the study

This study was designed to assess and document the barriers to the retention, transition and completion of girls in basic education in northern Nigeria. For this study, Jigawa State was used as a proxy for the northern region. The broad research question that guided the conduct of the research is: what are the barriers to girls' retention, transition and completion in rural and urban areas in Northern Nigeria?

Method

Overview of research sites

Jigawa state, created in August 1991, is one of the seven states in north-west Nigeria. The state, mainly populated by the Hausa, Fulani and Mangawa, is made up of twenty seven local government areas by the 1999 constitution. Jigawa state has an estimated population of 4,361, 002 according to the 2006 Population census. The choice of the state and local government areas was informed primarily by proximity to Dutse, the state capital. In addition to communities around Dutse being more accessible, security concerns due to the recent increase in Boko Haram attacks necessitated that the research occur in locations that are closer to the state capital. In addition, Jigawa state is bordered by Niger Republic to the North, and it was decided that the research takes place in area of the state that were most likely free from the influence of neighbouring countries. Thus, the local government areas were also chosen so as to include a mix of urban, rural, and peri-urban locations in the study. Given these criteria, the following local government areas were chosen as the focal points for this study: Ringim, Birnin Kudu, Gaggarawa, and Kiyawa.

Ringim Local Government Area. Ringim is approximately 68 km from Dutse; it is both a local

government headquarters and an Emirate headquarters. The local government area has a total population of 192, 407 according to the 2006 national population census. Ringim town is located in the Chad Basin lowlands and is dominated by Hausa – Fulani tribes who are predominantly Muslims. The major industry of the region is farming, although the people also partake in trading activities. The two communities studied in Ringim were Badegi and Sintilmawa

Birnin Kudu Local Government Area. Birnin Kudu is bordered by several other The local government areas from within and outside the state. From the east and the north are Buji and Gwaram as well as Kiyawa and Dutse in Jigawa State. From the south, it is bordered Niniji (Bauchi State) and on the west there are two Kano State local government areas namely Takai and Sumaila. Birnin Kudu is the local government with the largest population in Jigawa State with a population of 333,757 (2006 population census). The men are subsistence farmers growing guinea corn, millet, rice, and maize whilst the women are mostly housewives. The two communities studied in Birnin Kudu were Kafin-gana and Kangire.

Gaggarawa Local Government Area. Gaggarawa has a population of 80,394 as at the 2006 population census. It is part of the Gumel Emirate. The two communities studied in Gaggarawa were Kore Balatu and Madaka.

Kiyawa Local Government Area. Kiyawa has an eastern border with Jama'are Local Government Area in Bauchi State. Kiyawa has been a district since 1921 before the creation of the local government in 1989. With a total population of 172,952 (according to the 2006 national population census) Kiyawa has over 90% residents in rural areas who engage in subsistence agriculture. The Kiyawa river valley makes farming possible both in the rainy and the dry season. The two communities studied were Katuka and Balago.



Figure 7.1: Map of Jigawa State Local Government Areas

Data collection

Given the broad objective of this study, data was obtained from a wide range of stakeholders. The participants comprised government officials at the state and local government levels, development partners, community leaders, parents, married girls, boys and girls of basic education age (6-14 years). Information was gathered from the participants through key informant interviews, focus group discussions

and one-on-one interviews. The entry point for this study was the compilation of the list of stakeholders for a stakeholder analysis to determine the level of influence and interest among the various potential participants.

Key informant interviews were conducted with twenty key officers in the education sector at the state and local government levels as well as development partners who were engaged in

community level projects. They comprised the Honourable Commissioners of the pertinent ministries, local government chairmen and education secretaries as well as team leaders of ESSPIN, SPARC, TDP, M4D and SAVI. An interview guide with questions requiring mostly open-ended responses was developed to assess the existing plans, policies, budgets, success, and challenges of government intervention mechanisms over time on girl child education in Jigawa State.

Focus group discussions were held with community based leaders and organisations as well as out-of school (married) girls. Focus group discussion guides were developed for leaders (religious and traditional), civil society organisations, faith-based organisations and school-based management committees which facilitated discussions on social, religious, economic and political issues affecting the education of the girl child in the selected communities. The discussions also explored opportunities for change and indigenous solutions to the issues and challenges identified by all the stakeholders. Focus group discussions for the out-of-school married girls assessed the challenges faced by girls who are unable to complete their education in the selected communities. The discussion guide for this category of participants explored innovative methods of keeping girls in school based on their lived experiences. As most of the discussions were held in Hausa, the guide was translated before the exercise to improve clarity and enrich the discussions. Four enumerators were trained in the use of the guide. The interview had at least six respondents from each category of stakeholder and at least one focus group held in each Local Government Area.

A qualitative survey was conducted through the use of in-depth-interviews in each of the four local government areas with 10 parents (of five adolescent boys and girls each) and 20 boys and girls of basic education age (6-14 years). The aim was to understand their experiences, perceptions on girls' education and understanding of the cultural factors that disallow girls from

completing basic education. The interview guides developed for this category of respondents contained both open and closed ended questions to tap family backgrounds, experiences and perceptions of gender disparity within the family and the community as well as the experiences of girls in the family, school and community.

In general, the data collected across the key informant interviews, focus group discussion and in-depth interviews including field notes were subjected to content analysis to identify the emerging and repeated themes that run through the participant narratives and responses. The data was also subjected to descriptive analysis to summarise frequencies on responses where necessary.

Findings

Jigawa State Education Profile: some activities of government and donor agencies

The Jigawa State government demonstrated its commitment to education by budgeting N13,500,000,000 (thirteen and a half billion naira) for the education sector in 2015. This unprecedented move means that education was allocated 32% of the entire budget, an increase of 7% over the previous year's budget. The government identified key policy priorities that were seen as critical to achieving their development objectives. These included sustained improvements in access to quality education, pursuit of targeted youths and women empowerment and other poverty reduction programmes.

At the time the data was collected, Jigawa State had a free education policy for all students. For girls, it is expected that no fees were paid from primary through secondary to tertiary institutions, with all expenses subsidised by the state government. To this end, the government provides school uniforms of the same colour to all girls in schools. For those entering the boarding house, the subsidy package consisted of a trunk box, a blanket, a bucket and a few toiletries. Individual local governments provided transport to and from boarding schools for girls. The provision of the subsidy package from the state

government is repeated in the fourth year to any girl entering the first year of senior secondary school for a science course. At the tertiary level, parents or guardians of girls in state schools were encouraged to bring receipts of any costs incurred on behalf of the girl for reimbursement. The state government reimbursed tuition costs, administrative fees and so on, all in a bid to provide free education for all girls at all levels.

State Agency for Nomadic Education

The State Agency for Nomadic Education has 297 primary schools spread across all the local government areas in the state. Kafin-Hausa, with the largest nomadic population has the highest number of schools (19) and compared with a local government, Hadejia, with the least (two). Enrolment as at 2014 was 44,268 and over 18,000 of them were girls. Of the 645 teachers on the roll, only 26 of them are women.

Donor Agencies

This study focused on activities of four donor agencies working to support the state educational programmes; ESSPIN, TDP, SAVI, SPARC and M4D.

ESSPIN's work in the State was geared towards improving planning, financing and delivery of basic education. By the end of the programme in December 2016, an estimated 1.5 million children would have benefitted from ESSPIN supported interventions. The Teacher Development Programme (TDP) worked to strengthen the quality and effectiveness of teachers while the State Accountability and Voice Initiative (SAVI) is a demand-side governance programme funded by DFID. It works in ten states in Nigeria with civil society groups, media houses and state House of Assembly elected representatives and supports and encourages them to be informed, credible and effective agents of citizen voice and accountability. Together with its partners, SAVI aims to promote more responsive, accountable and inclusive state governance, and make a difference to the lives of people in their states. In Jigawa State, SAVI has supported education reform and community monitoring initiatives.

The State Partnership for Accountability,

Responsiveness and Capability (SPARC), was created by a partnership between Nigerian and UK governments to support governance reforms already underway in Nigeria. This supply-side programme helps Nigerian leaders and government workers change governance for the better. SPARC focuses on technical aspects of policy and strategy, public financial management and public service reform, and supports central ministries. In Jigawa State, SPARC is working with the State Government to improve and strengthen systems and processes that support successful implementation of the state's reform agenda. SPARC is also working to help develop systems and processes that promote transparent and accountable governance.

Mobilising For Development (M4D) aims to support improved equitable access to quality basic services and accountability at the local level. M4D works with communities, marginalized groups, policy makers, and service providers in Kano, Kaduna, and Jigawa states to impact service delivery in relation to education, health, water and sanitation and livelihoods. This is achieved by scaling up technical and capacity support for local governments and local-level civil society and community-based organisations (CSOs and CBOs). M4D aims to cover both demand and supply-side governance reform in a way that does not artificially separate them but reflects the political links between them.

Family characteristics, gender disparity and girls' views on schooling: responses from in-depth interviews

Tables 7.1, 7.2 and 7.3 were extracted from data obtained from qualitative survey involving 40 parents (61.5% males and 38.5%) and 80 (50% boys and 50% girls) children of basic school age. The parents' ages ranged between 25 and above 50 years but the majority were between 25 to 35 years. Also the children's ages ranged between 6 and 15 with a majority in the 13-15 age bracket. The tables focus on pertinent aspects of family characteristics, gender disparity issues as well as girls' views on schooling respectively.

Table 7.1: Demographic and family characteristics of parents and children interviewed

Family characteristics. According to both groups of participants, the number of children in the households ranged from 1 to above 10, with over 40% having 10 or more children.

Demographic /Family Characteristics	Pupils' Responses N (%)	Parents' Responses N (%)
<i>Gender</i>	Female = 40 (50%) Male= 40 (50%)	Female=15 (38.5%) Male=24 (61.5%)
<i>Age (years)</i>	6-9 = 4 (5%) 10-12=32 (41%) 13-15=43 (54%)	25-35=19 (54%) 36-49=7 (20%) 50 and above=9 (26%)
<i>Education</i>	Primary school (Pry 5 and 6) =13 (37%) Junior Secondary (JSS1-3) =18 (54.5%) Not in school= 6 (8.5%)	Primary=7 (20%) Secondary=8 (23%) Tertiary=8 (23%) No formal Education=12 (34%)
<i>Number of children in the household</i>	1-3=6 (8.5%) 4-6=20 (25%) 7-9=19 (23.75%) 10 and above=35 (43.75%)	1-3=3 (9%) 4-6=12 (34%) 7-9=5 (14%) 10 and above= 15 (43%)
<i>Number of girls in the household</i>	1-3=31 (39%) 4-6=28 (35%) 7-9=10 (13%) 10 and above=10 (13%)	1-3=11 (33%) 4-6=12 (36%) 7-9=4(12%) 10 and above= 6 (18%)
<i>Number of boys in the household</i>	1-3=27 (33.75%) 4-6=31 (38.75%) 7-9=12 (15%) 10 and above=10 (12.5%)	1-3=14 (44%) 4-6=8(25%) 7-9=4(13%) 10 and above=6 (19%)
<i>Do they all go to school?</i>	Yes=43 (56%) No=34 (44%)	Yes=20 (61%) N0=13 (39%)
<i>If No why</i>	Parents can't afford=7 (18%) Not up to school age=7 (18%) Attend Quranic school=6 (16%) Married/about to=8 (21%) No response=10 (26%)	

However, responses from both groups did not reflect a marked and consistent difference in the number of male and female children in their households. Consistent with available state and national level statistics about 40% of the children in the household do not attend school. The reasons given in order of decreasing frequency were: marriage, parents' inability to afford child's education, underage status and preference for Quranic school.

Gender disparity issues. More parents (82%) than children (65%) knew of girls who had completed their education. However, more children (68%) felt that the girls were now married or did not know (20%) what the girls were doing, thus reflecting lower levels of perceptions about the benefit of girls' education beyond marriage. In contrast more than 90% of both groups knew of

boys who had completed secondary school and were allowed to finish more because of job prospects or to enable them continue with their education. This also shows marked differences in community and family expectations and opportunities for boys and girls with respect to educational attainment. About one-fifth (19%) of the parents plan to stop their children from schooling and 80% of those to be stopped are girls. Most of the parents (905) also stated that fathers were the ones who make the decisions of when to stop a girls' schooling. Some parents (27%) and children (28%) believe that it is not culturally acceptable for girls to complete schooling in their communities for several reasons: fear of getting pregnant before marriage, need to get married and fear of rape and molestation.

Table 7.2: Responses of parents and school age children on gender disparity issues

Some gender disparity issues	Children's Responses (%)	Parents' Responses (%)
Do you know of any girl in your family or community who finished her secondary school?	Yes =52 (65%) No=28 (35%)	Yes =31 (82%) No=7 (18%)
If yes, what does she do now	Married =41 (68%) Working =4 (7%) Back to School =3 (5%) Don't know =12 (20%)	Married =15 (47%) Working =8 (25%) Back to School =6 (19%) Don't know =3 (9%)
Do you know of any boy in your family or community who finished secondary school?	Yes =73 (91%) No = 7 (9%)	Yes =36 (97%) No=1 (3%)
If yes, do you know why they were allowed to finish?	Job Prospect =46 (66%) Influence from parents, friends =3 (4%) Don't know =21 (30%)	Married =0 Working =11 (37%) Back to School =12 (40%) Don't know =7 (23%)
Do you plan to stop any of your children's schooling before they finish primary or Junior Secondary School		Yes =7 (19%) No=30 (81%)
If yes, which one		Girls=8 (80%) Boys=2 (20%)
Who makes the decision of when to stop the girls' schooling in the family		Father=27 (90%) Mother=1 (3%) Girls=0 Others= 2 (7%)
Is it culturally acceptable for girls to finish school in your community	Yes= 52 (67%) No=22 (28%) Don't know=4 (5%)	Yes=27 (73%) No=10 (27%)
If no why?	Fear of rape, molestation =2 (7%) Marriage=7 (26%) Fear of behavior changes=1 (4%) Don't know=17 (63%)	Fear of getting pregnant before marriage =5 (63%) Ready for marriage=1 (12%) Don't know=2 (25%)
Has any girl ever challenged the cultural practices?	Yes=6 (10%) No=53 (90%)	Yes=6 (17%) No=30 (83%)
Are women kept in seclusion in your community		Yes=37 (97%) No=0 No response=1 (3%)
At what age are women likely to be in seclusion		5-10 years= 5 (12%) 11-14 years =15 (40%) 15-18 years= 15 (40%) above 18 years=3 (8%)
At what age are girls in your family/ community married off?	14-17 years=52 (66%) 18 years and above=13 (16%) No idea=14 (18%)	14-17 years=34 (89.5%) 18 years and above=4 (10.5%)

Girls' views on schooling. Most of the girls (88%) involved in this survey attended mixed schools while only 12% attended girls-only school. It is believed that girls-only schools enhance retention in schools (ESSPIN, 2013). The table also showed that majority (94%) indicated that their schools were not fenced and about two thirds (63%) felt that security was an important factor in school

attendance. What other factors affect whether girls go to school? According to the girls, the responses in order of prominence were loss of income, poverty, lack of toilet in schools, fear of rape or molestation and eagerness to get married. The lack of role models was evident in the girls' responses.

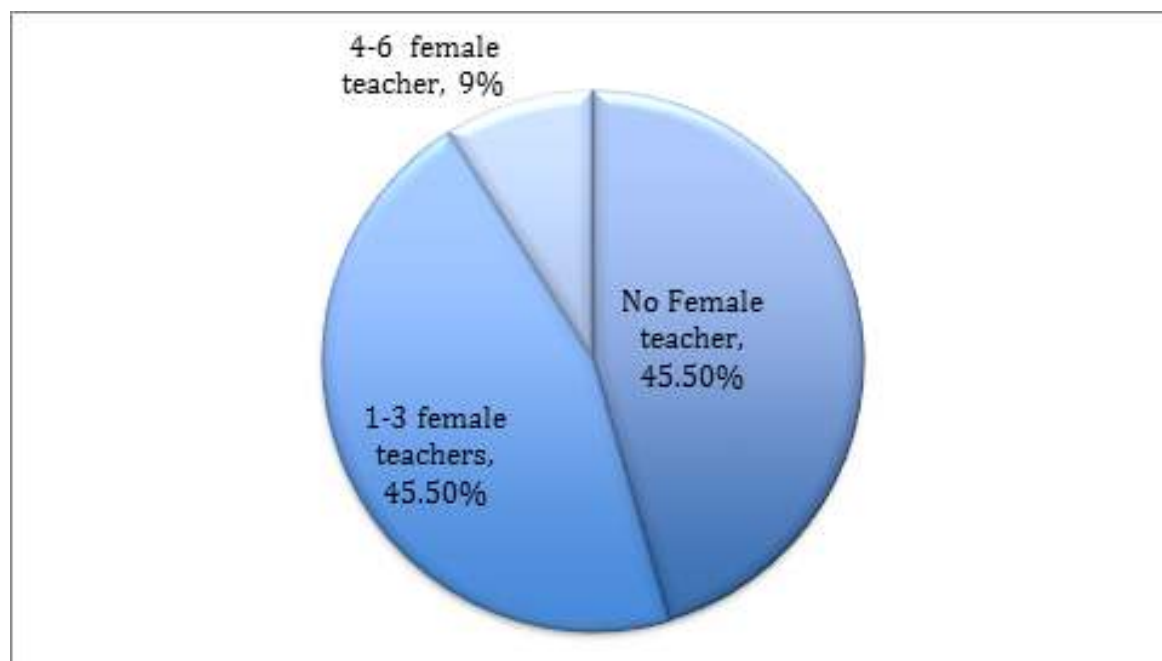


Figure 7.2: The number female teachers in the schools the girls attend

As shown in Figure 7.2, most of the girls interviewed (45.5%) did not have a female teacher or had between 1-3 (45.5%). It is believed that the availability of qualified female teachers leads to higher female enrolment, retention and educational attainment as the teachers serve as sources of encouragement and role models (e.g., ActionAid, 2011; Okojie, 2012). Similarly, in the

absence of positive role models, the girls rely on married girls in the community. Responses in Table 7.3 shows that 29% of the girls agreed that once all their friends got married they should also do so. The same proportion of girls also agreed that they remained friends with their married mates, thus creating a potential for strong influence.

Table 7.3: Responses of girls on some issues about schooling

Some issues from girls' perspectives on schooling	Responses from Female pupils
Is your school an all girls' school?	Yes=5 (12%) No=36 (88%)
Is your school fenced?	Yes=2 (6%) No=34 (94%)
Is security a factor in school attendance	Yes=25 (63%) No=15 (37%)
What other factors affect whether girls go to school or not	Lack of toilet=9 (23%) Fear of rape or molestation=8 (20%) Loss of income= 13 (33%) Poverty=10 (25%) Eagerness to get married=7 (18%)
How many of your teacher are females	None=16 (45.5%) 1-3=16 (45.5%) 4-6 =3 (9%)
Do you see your female teachers as role models?	Yes=15 (100%) No=0
Do you think once all your friends are married you should also get married	Yes =11 (29%) No=27 (71%)
Do you remain friends with your married friends?	Yes =11 (29%) No=27 (71%)

*Option of multiple responses

Barriers To Education Access

Data from key informant interviews, focus group discussions, field notes and open ended questions from in-depth interviews were analysed to examine the barriers to girls' education in the communities and lived experiences at the community levels. The

findings revealed that the main barriers to quality education for girls in Jigawa State can be grouped in to three categories: socio-cultural, economic barriers and physical environment. Table 7.4 further illustrates these barriers and summarizes the themes under each category.

Table 7.4: Categories of barriers and challenges to girls' education from qualitative data

Type of Barrier	Specific Challenges
<i>Socio-cultural</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Traditional Practice of <i>talla</i> • Tradition of courtship: <i>zanche</i> • Lack of Autonomy • Early Marriage • Aversion to marriage with educated women • Lack of Role Models • Societal Pressure • Low Perceived Value of Education
<i>Economic</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deepening Poverty • Hidden Costs of Education
<i>Physical Environment</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distance and Scarcity of Schools • Security Concerns • Insufficient Infrastructure • Lack of Amenities in Schools • Scarcity of Quality Teachers

Socio-Cultural Barriers

Traditional practice of '*talla*'. The practice of *talla*, which is prevalent in the Hausa culture, was cited numerous times by participants as a reason why girls did not stay in school or complete their basic education. *Talla* is a cultural practice where young girls are involved in hawking petty items such as kolanut, groundnuts, cakes and vegetables to augment household income. It is also a practice whereby would be brides generate money to buy marriage trousseaus for their future matrimonial homes. Over time, the definition of exactly what it means to furnish a new home has changed. Previously, the bride would be expected to bring basic furnishings and some clothing with her into her new home, a trousseau of sorts. However, in recent times the definition of 'furnishings' has been expanded to include modern appliances such as television sets and air conditioners depending on the socio-economic background of the young bride. The young women who participated in the discussions in the communities under study were eager to marry

and were afraid that if they could not save enough money to buy marriage trousseau through *talla* they might be the object of discussion in the community due to the very few or inferior items they would carry to their husbands' homes. Some of the requests made by men were very specific with regards to expectations. One participant mentioned that he expected his wife to bring with her an air conditioning unit at the minimum.

Such requests place a heavy burden on the young girls. With limited means of earning income, their only option is to hawk, sell and save for a future that is only a few years off. With such mounting pressure, girls confessed that they would rather hawk wares to save for their *talla* than spend time in school, which they feel does not necessarily add value to them on the marriage market. As such the practice of *talla* is directly related to decreasing rates of school completion and retention for girls in the communities under study.

The effects of *talla* on education for girls are not limited to girls themselves saving for their marriage trousseau. In the Hausa tradition, a woman who marries is usually kept in seclusion, otherwise known as *purdah*. However, she is not released from her duty to provide for the household for the first year of marriage. These young brides are then compelled to ask neighbours or children in the community to hawk their wares on their behalf. The unmarried girls, who are then responsible for selling not only their own wares but also those of the new brides, bring back to the brides the profits made from selling their goods for which they sometimes earn little fees. Thus, the narratives from the qualitative data reveal that practice of *talla* has far reaching implications for the education outcomes of girls as it places a burden on them to earn income both for themselves and for the married girls, many times at the cost of their education. Previous literature have linked the provision of household utensils as wedding trousseau to the need for girls from poor families to earn money for the utensils (e.g., Usman, 2010; Okojie, 2012)

Tradition of courtship: 'zanche'

In many of the communities under study, the tradition of courtship '*zanche*' was also found to be one of the traditional practices that led to early marriage and prevented young girls from completing their basic education. *Zanche* is the process by which a man declares his intentions for marriage and speaks to the father and male relatives of the girl in question to seek their permission for the union. In practice, any interaction a young girl has with a man can be considered as *zanche*. In the course of carrying out this study, it was found out that quite often, men looking for wives, talk to the fathers and male relatives of the girl they are interested in before approaching the girls themselves. Because *zanche* is seen as a prelude to marriage, by the time the man interacts with the girl in question, her male relatives are aware of the situation and informs the girl that since she has started *zanche*, she is now obliged to marry the man.

With the introduction of modern technology such as mobile phones, *zanche* is now starting to occur outside of the previously prescribed boundaries. As a result, the girl is not always fully aware of the entirety of the process and may not know that the man she is talking to on the phone is also talking with her father. Then her father informs her that he is aware she has started *zanche* with a man and must marry him. As a result, the girl is forced into a situation where she gets married earlier than she had perhaps planned and has to cut short her education. The restrictive practice of *zanche*, coupled with the introduction of technology, has created a situation where mere conversations with men are often escalated into marriages before the girl is ready which often truncates her education.

Lack of Autonomy. This findings show that girls in the communities under study have a limited amount of autonomy especially when it comes to decisions regarding issues such as marriage. Such decisions are traditionally viewed as the domain of elders and male relatives and are decided based on the physical characteristics of the girl. Her body decides for her when to go to school, leave school and or get married. Neither chronological age nor mental age plays a role. Once a girl begins to show signs of puberty, with or without menarche (onset of menstruation), she is considered to be of marriageable age and the significant persons in her family will commence the necessary preparations.

The narratives from the data reflect four categories of significant persons that often make decisions on behalf of the girl:

- Her grandmother. This may be her paternal mother or her father's older sister (or the oldest female member of the household). As the matriarch of the home, she often has the final say and rarely does her son (the girl's father) disobey her. Even if her father wanted her to continue in school, if his mother wanted the girl to get married, then she will very often get her way. He is bound by culture, tradition and religion to respect her wishes.

- Her father. In the absence of a strong maternal figure in the homestead, the father decides whether his daughter remains in school or continues on with her education. Her mother is not able to hold any contrary opinion whatsoever.
- Her uncles, brothers, and other male relatives. These men very often influence the father's decision. In a few cases, if the father wants the girl to remain in school, his brothers or sons can prevail on him to get her married. They are able to convince the girl's father that further education makes her less desirable to men for marriage.
- Her teachers. Where parents are ignorant of school processes and classes, it is the teachers who decide if a girl is big enough to transition from primary to secondary schools. If the class teacher considers her physically too small, she may be asked to repeat the year, return to primary 5 or go and wait at home to grow bigger (and invariably get married). If the teacher thinks she is big enough to get married, he does not permit her to continue her classes.

By identifying the key decision makers in a girl's life, it is possible to note the chain of command and who the major influencers are with respect to girls' education in the communities under study. Consequently, strategic approaches can be developed to educate the relevant parties about the necessity and benefits of education for girls, thereby increasing the chances that more girls will be allowed to complete their basic education. In the survey, about 75% of respondents noted that when decisions about stopping a girl's education have been made, they cannot be challenged by other family members, thus highlighting the need for external parties that can influence decision-making concerning education.

Early Marriage. "It is a shame for a girl to reach around 15, 16, and still be in her father's house." This sentiment reflects the feelings that were echoed in all of the communities visited. The

importance placed on marrying off a girl before she reaches a certain age is one that cannot be downplayed, as there still exists a stigma for girls in their late teens that have not yet married. Unfortunately for most girls, marriage also signifies the end of their education. Community norms dictate that brides spend their time taking care of their homes and families, and education is seen as a barrier that prevents the bride from taking on her new responsibilities.

Aversion to marriage with educated women. The notion of early marriage is also related to negative attitudes towards educational attainment of girls. There is a fear that girls who finish secondary school will be prideful, unruly, and difficult to control by their husbands. This fear is quite pervasive; it was the second most popular reason given by the respondents as to why a girl completing her education might be against cultural norms. In a focus group discussion in Kiyawa, one male participant responded, "When you tell a less educated woman to sit down, she will sit down. But when you tell an educated woman to sit down, she will ask you why!" His explanation aptly captures the sentiment shared by many others, who agreed during the discussions that educated wives and daughters challenged authority and that girls needed to be married off early to stop them from developing the habit of challenging their husbands.

A lot of the discussions about marriage revolved around what men want in their brides in relation to their education. Fathers allow their daughters to go to school up to the level they think a husband will allow. When girls are in school, their parents believe that they have little control over them and therefore cannot vouch for the behaviour of their daughters. Often times, this fear translates to devaluation of the knowledge gained in the school. Any confidence gained from going to school is mistaken for insolence and a girl demonstrating courage is seen as breaking the social norms of timidity and shyness (*'kunya'*) and considered insubordinate and brazen. Subsequently, she is termed as wayward and regarded as bad company for other 'good' girls. Educated girls are considered 'spoilt' and

considered troublemakers for their husbands and co wives. If the husband agrees that the wife can continue going to school after the wedding, then that is more acceptable. However, a father is unlikely to risk over-educating his daughter lest he renders her an unattractive prospect.

The data also shows that the educational attainment of men was not related the how educated they wanted their wives to be. Indeed, most of the men interviewed said that they would prefer if their wives were not educated beyond the junior secondary level. About one fifth said they would prefer wives who did not enter into the western-style education system at all but completed Quranic school instead. Boys attending school shared this sentiments, and while 98% of those interviewed wanted to go on to a tertiary institution, 100% of them said their ideal girl could not be educated beyond junior secondary school at the most. One participant stated that "God forbid I marry an educated woman". In Ringim, some participants stressed that their men do not marry educated girls. A focus group participant made the point that 'Even a vet doctor' was made to 'come back to marry a girl from the village. Educated girls will challenge you: they have no respect! They know too much' The sentiments expressed by these men showed that the strong attitudes that created their aversion to female educational achievement are not necessarily tied to the education levels of the men.

For many parents, a married daughter brings more status and pride than a well-educated daughter. Mothers would rather see their daughters married and feel that it is then the prerogative of the husband to decide whether he wants the girl to continue her education. This is partly due to the respect the communities accord to married women and not to single women, and also because parents fear that the longer they delay marriage, the less likely their daughter is to marry and the more likely she is to get pregnant outside marriage. Therefore, interventions targeted at allaying parents fears and encouraging them to value education are needed in these areas.

Fear of Divorce. In many northern Muslim communities, divorce is very easily invoked by men. They simply have to repeat the three Talak (divorce) to their wives, which is essentially repeating "I divorce you" three times. This does not have to take place in person, and the discussions revealed that men have been known to divorce their wives by text messages. In Ringim, participants made the point that men carry around pieces of paper on which the phrases to divorce their wives are already written. In such cases all they have to do to divorce their wives is simply give them the pieces of paper. Divorced women in the communities face a social stigma and are ostracized; they must return to their families and very often leave their children behind with their husbands and his new or other wife. The combination of the devastating effects of divorce and the ease with which men divorce their wives means that wives are reluctant to contradict their husbands or bring up any issues that may offend them. Therefore, wives are reluctant to raise issues such as continuing their education or allowing their daughters to continue their education, for fear of being divorced if they displease their husbands by doing so.

Overall, the narratives reflect that married women and girls were considered dispensable and very often replaced for the slightest reason. Local parlance says that a girl is just like a 'jumper from Jos' and girls in Madaka used the analogy of sweeping and throwing away the dirt on a garbage pile to describe just how dispensable they were. They all claimed that their husbands regularly let them know that there are many others waiting to replace them in the home if they do not fall conform.

Lack of Role Models. In many communities, girls lack female role models to look up to when it comes to education. Instead they often turn to their peers as referent others, thus creating situations in which when a girl drops out of school, her friends do the same. Consistent with the responses of girls in the in-depth interviews (Table 7.3), the qualitative data also reveals that girls are affected by other girls who leave to get married: 'if my friend that we go to school together, is no longer going to school, then why do I have to

continue going? Indeed, when a girl was asked why she stopped going to school, she pointed to another girl and said 'because she stopped going'. The girls tend to conduct a cost-benefit analysis and come to the conclusion that school is of no benefit to them in the long run, especially if they cannot share the experience with their friends. When the girls look into the future, they see themselves as wives and mothers, and do not see what value education has in their lives, and so they drop out of school. The end result is that while the original girl who dropped out of school may have done so due to an impending marriage, she creates a knock-on effect among her social group. Thus, girls who were not about to be married and did not necessarily face any external barriers to the continuation of their education drop out of school because they do not see how it is beneficial to them to remain in school. They would rather spend the time hawking and saving up for their marriages instead. This is a very different situation from when parents of girls pull them out of school. In this case, the girls are displaying a degree of autonomy and choosing not to attend school. This situation was observed especially in the Amagua and Danlere communities.

The lack of educated girls and women as role models in communities seems to be a strong driving force for the girls to look to their peers for direction and to emulate their actions with regards to their education. With no successful girl in the community that the girls can look up to as examples of the benefits of education, they and their parents find it difficult to imagine what to expect the result of an education would be, outside marriage. In Madaka community for example, only two girls had completed their senior secondary education. One was already married and the other was about to be married. She had been encouraged to complete her senior secondary by her fiancé. The dearth of female teachers in communities as discussed earlier compounds the issue.

Further, married women have considerable influence on the unmarried girls in their communities. The unmarried girls are in regular contact with the married girls; especially as they

are often selling wares on the behalf of the wives. Also, the married girls are often their only connections to their outside communities. In turn the girls, who also want to be married, look to the married girls for advice and will generally follow their example. There is the possibility that this connection could be leveraged in a manner that encourages the young girls to want to continue their education.

The importance of strong role models was reflected in the narratives reflected in the study. In lieu of educated female role models in their immediate communities, many girls cited polio vaccinators as women they wanted to emulate. These women were educated, respected by community members, and performed an important service. Some girls from Makerabu Community responded that they were going to school because they wanted to become polio vaccinators, who did important work and commanded respect in the communities they visited. In Ganjin Gebi in Gerawa Community of Ringim LGA, a polio vaccinator needed a girl to number the houses in the village with chalk and in return the girl was given N1,900 for four days of work. Immediately after that all the mothers in that community sent their daughters to school. This episode proved to the women that there were some immediate economic benefits to education, benefits that community members previously had no idea of.

Societal Pressure: ambivalence towards with girls education. This study revealed that men regard educated girls as a challenge to their authority. Some liken educated girl to being free and of loose morals. With no direct evidence of this (anecdotal evidence says many of the prostitutes are uneducated) men insist that girls must be uneducated – or just barely educated – and without any knowledge of the ways of the world. They do not want their girls educated. With the lack of male role models who educate their daughters, even men who might want to send their daughters to school hesitate to do so as they do not want to stand out in the community and draw negative attention to themselves.

Contrary to this, some girls believe that education increases their value. It earns them respect in the community and helps them interface with the world. Girls from Madaka said that a girl educated to the second or third year of junior secondary school would have at least three suitors to choose from, compared to an uneducated girl who had much lower value. When married, even as a school dropout, she was distinct from the other wives and commanded more respect from her husband and his family. The co-wives of the sole educated girl however are likely to be envious of her and make her adjustment to married life more difficult.

Economic barriers

Hidden Costs of Education. Thirty per cent of the parents interviewed cited the cost of education as one of the reasons their daughters do not go to school, saying that they only had the funds to send their male children to school and they would rather marry the girls off to reduce household expenses. Though official policies mandate free education across the state, the reality is that most people in the rural areas are not aware of the policies. Some parents in Kafin-gana were not only unaware of such policies but also highly sceptical of the existence of such laws. There is a dire need for updated information on policies related to education to be disseminated and shared with the population. The media, particularly local radio stations, have a strong role to play in the spreading of such information.

Parents also pointed out the hidden costs of educating their daughters such as, transportation, uniforms and meals, which play a considerable role in dissuading parents from sending their daughters to school. In addition, the opportunity cost of sending the girls to school creates situations in which girls in school are unable to spare as much time to assist with household chores and to hawk. This is quite a serious disincentive as many families rely on the income their daughters bring in from hawking.

Deepening Poverty. Many parents who would ordinarily enrol their children in school find it difficult to do so due to increasing poverty. Girls

between aged 6 – 14 years play a strong economic role within the family structure, especially in rural communities. In these communities, girls go out to hawk daily with a tray full of goods worth between N500 – N700. A girl makes a daily profit of less than N150, with which she is expected to procure necessities for feeding her family. This deepening poverty has altered family life and structure. Whereas Islam mandates that a man provides everything for his family – even cooked food – current realities now dictate that relationships are negotiated. Men provide dinner, whilst women provide lunch.

The deepening poverty has also resulted in economic migration to “Lagos”, when men leave their homes in search of greener pastures. The men often work as motor bike (okada) riders, butchers in abattoirs, or beggars. Not all of them make it physically to Lagos, but they leave their families behind, essentially leaving women to head the households, often with young children. Men return infrequently, with little or no money and depart again, leaving behind pregnant wives. These women are responsible for feeding and taking care of their families however they can. The women are unable to leave their homes and so rely on young girls in the community to hawk wares on their behalf. Young girls are pulled out of school as soon as they are old enough to hawk goods. The girls engage in petty trading, selling groundnuts, bean cake and other products that the women make at home.

Worsening Economic Climate. The worsening economic climate in Nigeria has affected the supply side of education. There are few teachers as teaching salaries are unattractive to graduates and cannot support families. This also means that there are fewer available jobs for girls who complete tertiary education, thus lessening the attractiveness of education. The college of education, which used to be an attractive choice for girls, has seen abysmal rates of employments for its graduates in recent years. Between 2009 and 2014 only 400 out of 5000 graduates have been employed. This dismal outlook on the job market reduces the perceived benefits of education to parents and they are less likely to

educate their daughters in an economy where they perceive there will be no economic benefits for doing so.

Physical environmental factors

Dearth of Schools. In many communities, secondary schools are quite a distance and parents are wary of having their daughters walk such long distances alone. Although there is a requirement that junior secondary schools should not be more than 5km away from communities, this distance still poses a challenge for children to walk. The roads to the schools are not tarred and the distance often takes over an hour to cover by foot either way. These untarred, bushy roads pose many dangers beyond just tiredness. For girls especially, young men are often at work in the bushy areas and walking those paths alone puts them at risk of rape and harassment. Girls in urban and peri-urban areas are closer to secondary schools as most secondary schools are located in those areas. But for girls in rural areas, getting to a secondary school is an arduous task that takes up a lot of time and involves walking paths fraught with danger.

Defilement is a grievous religious offence, far beyond the shame and stigma of being an unwed mother. The fear of rape, either by boys, community men, teachers or those in authority over the girls is sufficient reason for early marriage, or to prevent the girls from attending the schools. The strength of this threat varies between communities and local vigilante agents are at work in various communities in Birnin Kudu and Magarawa to discourage this. However, the situation is generally bad that the state began a process of passing a law that made the offence punishable by death. Civil society organisations are currently working with the new state assembly to push the law forward. Primary schools are a far more ubiquitous sight than secondary schools and they are easily accessible to communities. However, the dearth of secondary schools means that many girls do not continue their education beyond the primary level. During the one-on-one interviews, several parents said that they would allow their daughter to go to senior secondary

school if it was closer to the community. The findings are consistent with previous literature which revealed that distance is one of the prominent reasons given for not attending school in the state (Jigawa state/ESSPIN, 2014)

To help combat the issue of travelling long distances to schools, Ringim LGA introduced a school bus that picks up the students from specific locations and drops them off at their schools. However, there is only one school bus in the LGA and it cannot cater to the 2,000 students in the area. This situation underscores the extent to which external support is needed to support infrastructural development in the educational sector.

Poor school Infrastructure. Many of the secondary schools that are accessible to those in rural areas lack the infrastructure necessary to deal with an active population. Some schools lack functional toilets, while others lack sufficient classrooms for the students. In one school of five teachers, there was only one toilet facility in both the primary and junior secondary school; this toilet was for the teachers. The lack of usable toilets in particular is a deterrent for girls, who due to their physiology are unable to urinate in public as it leaves them exposed. In addition, girls in secondary schools require access to toilets to take care of themselves during their menstrual periods. For these reasons, it is necessary that all schools be equipped with functional separate toilets to encourage girls to go to school.

Toilets can be rendered unusable by way of plumbing problems, issues of cleanliness, and wildlife infestation. For example, Kafin-Gana has one primary school and one junior secondary school with two blocks of classrooms for both boys and girls. Both schools do not have functional toilets; the only toilet is filled with snakes and the school authority is unable to handle this.

Quality of Education. The quality of education provided in public schools, especially in rural areas, was also given as a reason for why children, especially girls, dropped out of school. Discussions with school based management

committee officials revealed that in Jigawa state, primary school pupil/teacher ratio is 34:1 and 96:1 when considering only qualified teachers. There are about 7,640 classrooms with only 86.4% deemed usable. Only 33% of these classrooms have seats and 45% are furnished with good blackboards. When the girls make very little progress academically, their parents see no reason to continue sending them to school, rather they keep the girls at home to do chores or engage in petty trading. A respondent in Luge Community noted that the school in that location has not graduated a single student in the 16 years of its existence. This means that students are scoring very poorly in examinations and reflects the low quality of education provided by the school.

A contributing factor to the poor quality of education that students receive is also the length of the school day. In some of the rural communities visited, the school day reportedly ends at gam in order to give the children time to prepare and hawk their goods. With a two-hour long school day, it is doubtful that the academic curriculum is being covered in its entirety.

In addition to the issues surrounding the quality of education, the perceived benefit of education in these communities is generally quite low. Some focus group participants reported that going to school has little practical impact given that girls come home upon graduation, get married and stay in the village. This seems to fuel the sentiment that 'you will come back and be just like us' and also illustrates the low levels of perceptions of the benefits of education in some of the communities. Furthermore, most parents and guardians have doubts about the usefulness and appropriateness of Western-style education, especially when it conflicts directly with issues of marriage.

Barriers to girls' education: examples of experiences from local government areas and communities

This part of the paper discusses examples of barriers to girls' education from communities in the local government areas. These case studies

are intended to present typical examples of girls' experiences with regards to barriers militating against educational attainment in communities in Jigawa state. The case studies are derived from an aggregation of data obtained from key informant interviews, focus group discussions and one-to-one interviews with all categories of respondents.

Ringim: girls' education advocacy, safety and second chance schools

In terms of traditional structure, Ringim is the Headquarters of Ringim Emirate, comprising of Ringim, Garki, Babura and Taura Local Government Areas. A first-class Emir, subordinated by four district heads in charge of Ringim, Dabi, Sankara and Chai-chai Districts, presides over the Ringim Emirate. The district heads are in turn assisted by village and ward heads. At present, Ringim Local Government Area consists of 40 village heads and numerous ward heads.

In Ringim, civil society organisations have been advocating for changes in the education sector, but have received little response from the government. For instance, in 2015, they advocated for Emergency Educational and Health Support without success. These organisations would benefit from specific trainings on how to involve government officials and advocate for change successfully. In addition, the civil society organisations have produced lengthy, detailed reports outlining measures that the government could implement that would be beneficial to the communities and increase the enrolment, retention and completion of girls in schools. Some of the suggestions include: the provision of school uniforms, shoes and sewing materials for all girls, the creation of vocational centres for girls, a database of children attending schools in the local government and affirmative action with regards to employment for rural communities. Implementing these suggestions will certainly bring about positive changes in the local government area. It was also suggested that skills training be introduced into the formal education curriculum in such a way as to give the girls

immediate benefits and encourage the parents to continue sending their daughters to school.

In Ringim, the traditional belief that women should not be outside of their homes is quite strong; religious leaders in some communities preach that Western education is contrary to Islamic teachings and that it is a daily sin to go to school, especially in Gaggarawa Community. There is a strong stigma attached to educated girls in Ringim, to the extent that even well-educated men are prevailed upon not to marry girls who have completed senior secondary school and in some cases they are dissuaded from marrying girls who have completed junior secondary school.

Beyond traditional beliefs, the dangers that girls face going to school were emphasised in Ringim and Gaggarawa. The respondents from these communities complained that the few girls that go to school are raped by male teachers and by men they encounter on their way to school. This is especially prevalent in the rainy season when the cornfields are bushy and dense, thus, constituting a serious dilemma. Many parents tend to keep their daughters at home rather than risk their being raped and defiled for an education that brings no immediate economic benefits. In a rural community (Sintilmawa), many girls tend to finish the junior secondary school before they get married. When asked, the girls expressed strong desires to further their education and lamented the lack of a nearby senior secondary school. The

boys in the community, on the other hand, trek to other villages for their senior secondary education while the girls are instead kept at home. This is an reflect gender disparate circumstances and impact where despite the desire to further their education, girls are denied access for want of an accessible senior secondary school. Therefore, the communities would benefit from the establishment of secondary schools closer to the communities and also from social and legal interventions to prevent rape and punish perpetrators.

During the focus group discussions, it was revealed that second chance schools play a strong role in the communities in Ringim and Birnin Kudu townships. In these second chance schools the girls learn all traditional academic subjects as well as vocational skills. The vocational skills they learn allow the girls to realize immediate economic benefits from their education and make it more likely that they will complete all their courses. The programme is funded by the state government whilst the building was donated by an philanthropist. This programme has met with some success and participants report a friendly and supportive atmosphere. There have been encouraging instances of advocacy from the Girl's Platform in Ringim in recent times. They recently advocated for a girl to return to school after she was divorced by her husband of less than a year and left pregnant.

Box 7.1: Badege Community and the belief that schooling is not for girls

Badege is a community in Ringim local government area, about 30-45 minutes by motor bike from Ringim along a dirt road. The community has one primary school, a head teacher and an additional teacher. The girls in Badege do not go to school at all and, they do not hawk. The women are petty traders, selling flour, and groundnut oil whilst the men go off to the farm. The belief within this community is that schooling is not for girls and although the girls would like to be educated, both they and their mothers have never seen any girl go to school and so they believe that schooling is for boys alone. The girls say their parents will not allow them to go to school. The headmaster is concerned about this, but according to him, if the parents do not bring the girls to school, it is not in his position to ask them to do so. Mothers desire a better life for their daughters saying to the researcher 'I want her to be smart like you' but they do not see the link between education and the better life they seek. One mother had sons from a previous marriage outside of Badege and had left them in Dutse to go to school. For the boys willing to go beyond the primary education that the community has to offer, they must trek at least 45 minutes every morning to reach the nearest junior secondary school.

Intervention through the M4D programme runs a Girls Platform in Badege has been beneficial to some extent. This is a weekly hour long meeting of girls aged 10 -19 years during which they are taught life skills by an older and more experienced mentor. These gatherings provide a safe space for the girls to learn about communication, negotiations, hygiene, health education and a host of other life skills. However, the programme has not been able to break the barrier of parents refusing to send their girls to school. Currently, a discussion is going on between M4D and SUBEB to sensitize parents in the community on the importance of Girl Child Education. This is an example of where a lack of visible educated role models has affected an entire community.

Birnin Kudu: urban - rural differences and support from local groups

Birnin Kudu is the most densely populated of the four local government areas under study and so has more pupils to cater for. The local government provides free transportation for girls who attend public boarding schools and also supplies those girls with a few items such as toiletries. In general, the extent of the support that girls receive from the local government is limited and even then, as with all other local governments visited, it is on a first come first served basis. Due to the relatively higher population, the local government is unable to fund extra items such as brooms and disinfectant for the girls as demanded by the boarding house. Given that poverty is a major barrier to education, the local government has moved the start of the school day from 8am to 9am to allow children who have to hawk in the mornings to get to school on time. See Box 7.2 for an example of a community where increased poverty creates more constraints to girls' schooling.

In the more urban areas of Birnin Kudu there are numerous junior and senior secondary schools, and the main town of Birnin Kudu has a school of nursing and midwifery and a skills acquisition centre. In the urban area, education is considered a priority for girls and many more girls finish senior secondary school. There are still cases of girls being pulled out of school for marriage when they are considered physically mature and ready for marriage, but there are fewer occurrences in the more urban areas. Divorce rates are also falling in these areas, and parents are more likely to take care of their divorced daughters, rather than shun them. The urban areas also have second chance schools which are attended by divorced and married girls. These schools demonstrate to reluctant parents the value of education, particularly as girls better their communication and negotiation skills.

In the rural areas, however, there still exists some apathy towards educating girls and they are often pulled out of school to get married. If a girl wants to continue her education she may appeal to

school-based management board and traditional leaders but may not receive the desired support. In addition, divorce rates are still high and the stepmothers of the children of divorced women do not send them to school but send them to hawk instead.

Local associations in Birnin Kudu are active and have assisted schools on numerous occasions. The association of carpenters have volunteered to repair furniture for free at Kangiri Primary School, the association of groundnut oil sellers gives students free uniforms, the association of rice millers gives students free brooms and some other women's associations give schools money for repairs. In addition, civil society organisations have a policy of free examinations for science students. The support and cooperation shown by these associations is commendable as they come together to increase access to education for girls. With this approach the local communities are invested in the success of the girls and show their support for them in concrete ways. Replicating

this support would be a useful way to involve communities in the education of girls and to get their buy-in.

Apart from organised associations, local groups engage in activities that support education for girls. The Birnin Kudu Youth Development Group advocated for female-only junior secondary schools which would encourage more girls to attend secondary schools. Local da'awah (Islamic Preachers) groups positioned members at strategic points to watch out for boys who attempt to molest or harass girls going to school and enforce a curfew for both boys and girls. The National Union of Teachers also advocated for free uniforms for 300 girls from members of Jigawa State House of Assembly. Furthermore, the discriminatory treatment of disabled girls came to light; it is noteworthy that in Birnin Kudu girls with disabilities were encouraged to go to the Islamiyya and Quranic schools, as the communities believe that they need moral education more than the western one.

Box 7.2: Kafin-Gana community where increased poverty places more constraints on girls'

education In Kafin-Gana community the girls interviewed showed enthusiasm for attending school. All respondents said they would happily go back to school if given a chance. None were aware of the free education policy and complained that the students are kicked out of school when they do not have uniforms. In response, the community has decided to pool together their funds to make uniforms for school children, though they are yet to do so due to a lack of funds. Though educated girls command a lot of respect in this community, their lack of employment opportunities post-graduation puts them at the same level as others who have not gone to school. This makes the community query the value of all the time and effort spent in school. Kafin-Gana in particular reported few cases of sexual molestation and did not mention it as a deterrent to education for girls.

In general, the attitude of the community towards education is positive, however, the economic reality means that girls are withdrawn from school to hawk, as they have become the bread winners of the families. Those who do go to school go very early in the morning, but leave by the first break at 9am to hawk foodstuff for lunch in families. To this end, women prefer their daughters because they are more useful. Boys do not hawk because it is perceived as a girls' work, besides which men prefer to buy from the girls. Encouraged by their mothers, girls wear very heavy make up to make them more attractive to prospective customers and sell more wares.

In Kafin-Gana extreme poverty has driven many men to search for greener pastures (in “Lagos”). They return home annually with no money and often impregnate their wives before leaving again. Divorce rates are extremely high in this community, and most men marry three to four wives at once. For those who have not gone to seek their fortune outside the town, their wives are responsible for running their homes, and in a few cases, there are shared responsibilities with the wife providing dinner and the husband lunch. Women who do not acquiesce are promptly divorced and replaced. Men fear that educated women become uncontrollable and will no longer provide for the family. For this reason, they do not want their wives to go to school so they remain under their authority.

Gaggarawa; *perceived lack of encouragement from government and negative attitudes from parents*

In Gaggarawa, most of the participants complained about the girls' boarding schools in the area. Parents complained that the food provided by the school was low quality and insufficient resulting in girls returning home diseased and malnourished. Parents refused to send their daughters back to schools where they were ill-fed and not properly cared for.

It appears that the local government is not as attentive to the needs of the education sector and as a result little progress is made with getting girls to attend school. Parents do not see the benefit of

education and there is little in the communities that could change their minds. Girls marry at an average age of 12 years as girls who are over the age of 15 years are viewed as too old for marriage and unmanageable. Those girls considered too old for marriage are mocked by their communities and families and are seen as spoilt. In Gaggarawa the Ulamas also pressure parents to marry off their daughters early. As a result of the negative attitudes towards education in Gaggarawa, enrolment in schools is attributed to internally displaced persons in the area and not the indigenes. Box 7.3 reflects that role models are required to change attitudes while skills acquisition enhance the perceived benefit of schooling.

Box 7.3: Madaka community, an example of married role models and desire for skill acquisition

Divorce rates are very high in Madaka, and women are considered dispensable. During a focus group discussion, a participant commented that 'If you are not ready to conform, they will pack you out of the house like rubbish'. For many girls married at age 13 or 14 years, divorce is a reality and a fear they face daily. In this small community, three girls stood out as educated role models who finished senior secondary school. The first girl is married and the second is about to get married. The third girl, the most inspiring, has not only completed her secondary education and got married, but is currently enrolled in an advanced teachers college. She is doing this with the active support of her husband who is also a student in the college. All young girls regard these girls with envy, and would love to be in their shoes. They love the respect that these girls command in the community and are often called to represent the community to the outside world. It is important to note that part of the reason these girls are looked up to is that they are married. If they were educated but not married, they would likely be the subjects of speculation and ridicule, as they would be viewed as unwanted by men.

In this community the main reason that girls did not go to school was not poverty, but rather the fear on the part of the men that educated women would not listen to them. A participant observed that 'it is not poverty that stops them from letting their daughters go to school;

education is free!' It is more socially and traditionally beneficial to the men to keep their daughters at home than risk them becoming 'spoilt' and 'unmanageable'. Girls expressed the desire for skills acquisition programmes such as tailoring, knitting, and soap-making. For them, such programmes are more valuable than a western-style education and will allow them to make meaningful economic contributions to their homes.

Discussion

The findings of this research revealed several issues relating to the girls' low levels of educational attainment in northwest Nigeria. First, education is a long-term investment that provides yields after years of consistent input. Nonetheless, most of the community participants did not appreciate the long maturity period of an education investment, revealing the major reason why other activities - especially economic activities such as hawking are prioritized over girls' education. Since the benefits of education are not available immediately and rather accrue over time, many are sceptical that such benefits do indeed exist and would rather have their daughters produce immediate benefits by hawking or marrying than go to school.

Immediate income is valued more than education, which only brings benefits in the long term. For many families, sending their daughters to school means forgoing income from hawking in the present. Few are willing to prioritize education, especially as they do not see any immediate benefits from it. Often, girls will remain in school for as long as it takes the women in the community to prepare the goods for hawking. Once they are ready, around 11am, the girls leave school and hawk. They miss large chunks of the school day and do not get opportunities to catch up.

Husbands and parents are more willing to let the girls attend life skills clubs and safe spaces events because they see these as having a direct impact on the skills of the girls as mothers and wives. Issues such as hygiene, communication, and negotiation skills that are taught in the life skills clubs are more relevant to the immediate realities of the girls and so parents and other decision makers could be persuaded to allow the girls to attend the life skills clubs. However, such clubs are

available only in select communities, thus most of the time when a girl drops out of school that is the end of her engagement with the system as a whole.

Many girls want to go to school but are not allowed to by their parents and husbands. These decision-makers pose a significant barrier to girls' education and must be convinced of the value of education. Otherwise regardless of the programmes created, the change will be limited. Community leaders know what the problem is but cannot influence whether the children should go to school or not – that is considered unseemly. The general mind-set will take a lot to change and the community leaders are reluctant to risk their supporters by pushing unpopular positions. Most decision-makers are interested in school insofar as it increases the value of the girls for marriage.

The gap between the rural and urban areas is poorly understood and organisations are missing opportunities to make purposeful interventions. In urban areas, education is valued more and girls do not usually leave school during break to hawk. However that is not the situation in rural areas. Organisations must take note of differences like these and factor them into their plans and proposed interventions. Many communities are unaware of new policies and laws that are passed nationally and in the state. Insufficient publicizing of changes has created pockets of communities where nothing changes and business continues as usual. In addition, the lack of junior and senior secondary schools to transition poses a considerable challenge. The few that exist are far apart, requiring girls to trek long unsafe distances (up to 12km) to school and back and putting them at risk for molestation and harassment. Parents and husbands would rather keep the girls at home than take such risks.

Conclusion

The findings of this research have several implications for intervention activities to improve girls' educational participation and attainment. The long distances which serve as barriers to girls particularly in rural areas require the establishment and maintenance of more boarding schools for girls. Poverty and the consequent burden on girls to engage in income generating activities suggest the need to incorporate entrepreneurial training and skill acquisition into education experiences for in-school girls as well as those who have dropped out. The findings also show that the provision of free uniforms, meals, and writing materials will alleviate some of the cost of education for the parents. Social protection measures will make the

men more confident, less threatened and reassured of women's educational attainment.

Community education especially for influencers such as matriarchs, fathers and male relatives is important to provide information, updates on new policies and advocacy for attitude change. Intervention programmes must go directly to the beneficiaries and be supported by a strong advocacy component such as a radio show during which educated married girls share their experiences. More schools that combine Islamic education with formal education will assuage parents' fears and reassure them that their daughters will be getting appropriate moral instruction in school and will not become 'unmanageable'.

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