

Education and Post-Primary Schools Teachers' Analysis by Qualification and Gender In Niger State

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Abstract

The issue of recruiting women teachers has become increasingly important to Ministry of Education and those supporting educational development, particularly given the positive impact women teachers can have on girls' enrolment. This paper deals with the post-primary schools teachers' analysis by qualification and gender with reference to Niger State. It provides vital strategies that must be carried out within a gender equality framework to ensure that teachers – both male and female – are granted the status and respect they deserve.

Keywords: Equity, gender, education, teachers and qualification.

Introduction

The background to the issue of gender is well known. The United Nations Decade for Women (1976-1985) played a crucial part in highlighting the important but often previously invisible role of women in the social and economic development of Third World and Communities and particular plight of low-income women. During this decade, there were considerable shifts in approaches both by academic researchers and policy makers. Researchers moved away from pre-occupation with the role of woman within the family and women's reproduction responsibilities towards an understanding of the complexities of women's employment and their production activities.

More recently a further shift in approach by researchers has recognized the limitation of focusing on women in isolation and has drawn attention to the need instead to look at gender. The focus was influenced by the concern about the manner in which the problems of women were perceived in terms of their sex-their biological difference from men rather than in terms of their gender - the social relationship between men and women. The focus on gender therefore makes it critical to look

not only on the category "women" – since that is only half of the story – but at women in relation to men, and the way in which these relations are socially constructed. An understanding of the social construction of gender allows for the recognition that because men and women play different roles in society, they often, consequently have different needs.

Education provides a channel for conveying health and survival messages and for teaching new skills and values, such as peace, tolerance, conflict resolution, democracy, human rights and environmental conservation. It is vital to reconstruction of the economic basis of family, local and national life and for sustainable development and peace building. Where a "window of opportunity" is seized for emergency education interventions that are oriented toward such ends, deep and long-term change in the education system is also promoted. Community participation is enhanced through ongoing consultation and engagement as well as through capacity building activities with youth leaders and school management committees. Teacher training and capacity – building support for education officials are also important

features of much work, especially in chronic crises and early reconstruction contexts.

Gender perspectives and gender equality principles are critical to ensuring that all boys and girls are able to benefit equally from education and that "windows of opportunity" to promote more gender-responsive and gender-equitable educational systems and structures are exploited. Boys and girls, men and women experience shifts in gender roles, relations and identities in creating new education needs. Male and female teachers also have different experiences and different priorities that need to be addressed. Most critically, there are often large gender disparities in both the supply and demand of education, usually to the disadvantage of girls. On the supply side, schools are often at a distance and not easily accessible for girls, especially disabled girls, they are often staffed exclusively by male teachers, with only minimal sanitation facilities.

In some instances, being in school, and the journey to and from school, places girls at considerable risk of sexual violence, abuse and exploitation. Consequently, impoverished families may prioritize boys' education and not have the money to pay for girl's school fees, uniforms and other supplies. Girls are also often relied on to do household chores, care for siblings and generate family income. Early marriage and pregnancy are additional barriers to girls taking up or continuing their schooling. Where girls are enrolled in high numbers, drop out rates towards the end of primary school are usually high.

Low Level of Educational Attainment among Women

With low level of education among women, they are ill equipped to meet the demands

and challenges of greater participation in decision making level. They are handicapped. Literacy is a product of ignorance and it subjects women to its tyranny and oppression. Participation in education requires the participants to be well informed, well equipped and knowledgeable on the decision they are going to take or make. An illiterate poor woman in the village has nothing to offer to the society in terms of development. Her duty is rearing children and cooking for the house. If educated, she does more than that. Graham (1994) understands the benefits of educating women when he said that women are so important to national development that they need to be developed side by side with men by providing those educational opportunities which prepare them for gainful employment as well as participating in governance.

In this aspect of national development and governance, it will not be out of place to mention women like Dr. (Mrs.) Ngozi Okonjo-Iwela who has helped in reforming the economic situation of Nigeria as former minister of finance. Professor (Mrs.) Dora Akunyili has saved so many lives by fighting war against fake drugs and food. Mrs. Oby Ezekwesili, a former minister of education, Hajia Inna Chiroma, Mrs. Esther N. Usman, Mrs. Chinwe Obaji, Mrs. Amina Ibrahim, Mrs. Helen Esuene, Mrs. Chinyere Asika, Mrs. Irene Chighue of BPE, Hajia Tayo Alao, Mrs. Race Ogwuche are all women of substance contributing to national development as well as participating in governance.

Women must strive hard to acquire all forms of education that will make them spiritually and mentally alert. Such education will empower them to demand their rights and give them the ability to have increased participation at decision

making levels. Women must realize and understand that it is only when their consciousness is developed that their intelligence will be of use to them. Women must be encouraged to be educated and trained in teaching profession. Women groups can look for grant scholarship to train girls and women in the field of teaching

Information Required to Meet the Minimum Standards and to Provide Gender – Sensitive Education

1. Nature, Cause and Manifestation of the Education

- * Impacts on the lives of displaced boys and girls (for example, recruitment, abduction, increased household chores).
- * Impacts for displaced men and women (including teachers).
- * Impacts for men, women, girls and boys of host community (including access to advanced training by teachers).

2. Demographics

- * Number of displaced girls and boys.
- * Number of boys and girls in the host communities and their access to education.
- * Breakdown by sex and age and if relevant by ethnic group of each.
- * Number of girl-mothers.

3. Levels of Education

- * Number of boys and girls requiring pre-school education.
- * Number of boys and girls requiring primary education.
- * Number of boys and girls requiring secondary education.
- * Number of out-of-school adolescent boys and girls.

4. Languages used by the Children

- * Mother tongue? Spoken? Written?
- * Other languages? Spoken? Written?
- * Do girls and women have the same proficiency in any "official" language as boys and men?

5. Community Maps

- * Are there locations to which girls and women in particular go – toilets / sanitation blocks? Clinic? Firewood collecting points? Water points?

6. Availability and Accessibility of School/Classroom Structures

- * Are the possible locations equally accessible to girls and boys? (for example, in a mosque)
- * What are the direct and indirect costs for girls and boys to attend school?

7. Facilities at Possible Schools/Classrooms

- * Are latrines accessible? Separate latrines for girls and boys?
- * Are the latrines in safe places for girls to go?
- * Is water available?
- * Can sanitary pads be made available for girls in the schools?

8. Distance to Classes

- * Is the distance to be traveled to proposed locations acceptable by parents for girls?
- * Is the route safe for girls and boys?

9. Household Chores and Other work

- * What sort of work are boys and girls involved with?
- * How many hours a day?
- * What time of the day?
- * Where does it take place?

10. Learning Materials

- * How inclusive of girls are the learning materials available?
- * Do they include pictures of boys and girls?
- * Stories and texts appropriate for both?

11. Teachers

- * Are there male and female teachers available? At all grade levels? What are their levels of qualification and experience?
- * At there Para-professionals? Other women in the community who could support girls in school and be involved in teaching and/or mentoring?

12. Teacher Trainers and Support

- * Are there female teachers trainers and support staff?
 - * Are there other women in the community to support the teachers (especially women)?
- Case Study of Niger State, Nigeria**

The following is a 2 X 7 contingency table of observed frequencies of number of male and female teachers by qualifications in Niger State, Nigeria.

Table: Number of Male and Female Teachers by Qualification in Niger State using a 2X7 contingency table.

		QUALIFICATION							
		MASTERS	GRADUATES	HND	NCE	A-LEVEL	GRADE II	OTHERS	TOTAL
SEX	MALE	81	1994	384	1819	510	22	126	4936
	FEMALE	6	351	38	480	76	0	21	972
TOTAL		87	2345	422	2299	586	22	147	5908

Source: Niger State Ministry of Education.

Hypothesis Testing

H_0 : Level of education (Qualification) is independent on Gender (sex).

H_1 : Level of education (Qualification) is not independent on Gender (sex).

Decision

Using Chi-Square distribution, the test statistic, $\chi^2_{calculated} = 69.34$ and at $\alpha = 0.05$, the critical value, $\chi^2_{6,0.05} = 12.59$. Since the calculated value (69.34) is greater than the critical value (12.59), we reject the null hypothesis.

Discussion of Result

From the above analysis, since the calculated value is greater than the critical value, we reject the null hypothesis; that is, level of education (qualification) is independent on gender (sex). We then conclude that level of education (qualification) is likely to be dependent on gender (sex). This shows that men are more educationally qualified than women and hence men teachers are more than women teachers in post – primary schools in Niger State. Women are not in positions of power and authority, with few female head teachers, principals, education officers and

managers at district, regional and national levels.

Conclusion

While there are positive roles that women teachers can play, it is important to remember that they are not necessarily aware of gender equality issues and concepts. They may reinforce gender stereotypes based on their own unconscious attitudes and perceptions of gender roles. Therefore, it is important that there is an awareness raised among men and women teachers with regard to gender equality. This should be incorporated in teacher training. In order to recruit more women teachers, many strategies must be identified by ministries of education and others supporting work in education, including establishing quotas for women teachers, providing scholarships and incentives for women to be trained as teachers and to work in rural areas, and developing creative recruitment campaigns targeting women.

Recommendation

Once hired, it is important that women teachers be ensured equal access to teacher training and professional development opportunities with innovative strategies employed to reach them in their

communities. Their development can be further supported through mentors, networks of women teachers and women education leaders. Gender-aware teacher training should be provided to empower male and female teachers with gender equality content that will allow them to more effectively encourage girls' active participation and achievement in school and promote gender equality. It is also essential that women teachers are fully involved in decision-making processes and not just relegated to subordinate role. In order to inform future development, more formal evaluations of the impacts of such strategies are needed. Furthermore, these strategies must be carried out within a gender equality framework that challenges attitudes in families and communities about women's and men's roles and activities, and ensures that teachers – both male and female – are granted the status and respect they deserve.

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