

Perspectives on gendered education development in Nigeria: Evidence from Yobe state, Nigeria, 2009-2015

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ABSTRACT

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This paper explores the efforts of Girl Child Education (GCE) development put in place by Governor Gaidam's regime in Yobe state, Nigeria from 2009 to 2015 as a tool for achieving gendered education development. It aims to provide the description and analysis of democratic regime performance in the development of Girl Child Education (GCE) through the perspectives and experiences of democratic stakeholders in democratic governance process in the state. The qualitative study is therefore based on the narratives of indepth interviews with democratic and education stakeholders and the review of education policy documents. The findings suggest that although there have been efforts to address the challenges of GCE through concerted efforts, the gender distribution of pupils and students at basic education levels reveals a low representation of girls than boys in Yobe state. The failure to achieve gender parity in education development is associated with poor access, lack of female role models, social, political, cultural and economic reasons and Boko Haram insurgency. This paper recommends that these issues can be addressed if more schools are established for girls, inspirations from female educators and roles models, better economic and political empowerment for young women and girls, and ensuring a peaceful and conducive learning atmosphere for the girls and women.

Keywords:

Education, gender, girl child, development, democracy; Yobe state; Nigeria

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1. Introduction

Over the years, the global community has continued to advance towards improving access to good quality education for all from pre-primary to tertiary [1]. To show its relevance in human societies, scholars agree that education is a fundamental human right [2-5]. Therefore the current public investment in education development has witnessed a boost [2, 6-8] in developing nations and democracies. In fact, in most of the countries at whatever level of development, the right of citizens to education is a fundamental objective principle for democratic governments as it remains essential in the achievement of their social, economic and political development. Generally,

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education development is considered an important element in combatting poverty, exploitation and promoting democracy, social and political stability [1, 9-11]. It is therefore not surprising that at global, national and sub-national levels there have been significant, but in some cases the gradual, transformation of education development spearheaded by both governments and development bodies.

Interestingly, a closely related issue that continued to dominate the discussion of education development is the issue of gender equality. It has been previously reported that from the outset, education of girls and women has been recognised “not only for as matter of respecting a basic human right for half of the population” ([4] p.8) but as a matter of achieving the broader goals of Education for All (EFA), Millennium Development Goals (MDG) and the recently minted Sustainable Development Goals (SGDs). Generally, these three international development goals have been advancing for the elimination of gender parity with a specific focus on ensuring access to basic education for girls and women by the year 2015 and beyond. Noteworthy, however, is the revelation of a recent EFA Global Monitoring Report which showed that although there has been significant progress in education development since 2000, out of the 84 Million of school children and adolescent, 54 Million of these populations are girls [5]. This report further showed that a third of countries did not reach gender parity in primary schools and a half in secondary education.

Since, education has been advanced as an important component of a democratic state [11], it generally means that equal access to education must be provided for both sex (boys and girls) if any serious and sustainable transformation is to be achieved in reducing poverty, and achieving sustainable human development [1, 10, 11]. In addition, education is considered an important driver of economic growth [3] therefore it is important in achieving democratic consolidation in most developing nations. Socci *et al.* [8] also advanced that education remains an important policy variable that promotes the socio-economic wellbeing of citizens in both developed and developing nations and democracies as it has multiplier effects on medium and short-term socio-economic development. Although there has been significant progress across the globe towards advancing gender parity in improving access and quality in education [5], there still exist some significant challenges faced by women and girls in Nigeria due to cultural, religious, economic and political orientations [12-14]. This remains a challenge that must be addressed.

In Yobe state, although various efforts were put in place by previous democratic and military regimes to improve its overall educational system and particularly GCE, statistics from national and international bodies show that the state has one of the lowest educational achievements in the country [15, 16]. In the case of girls and women’s education, the Nigerian Demographic and Health Survey showed a disturbing trend. For instance, 80.8% of women aged 15-49 years never attended school at all in Yobe state. Also, only 5.6% completed primary school, 3.6% completed secondary education and only 0.9% had more than secondary education. It further showed even more worrisome reality when such figures are compared with only 0.9% of the same population of women in Imo state which had no education. Similarly, Delta and Anambra states had only 4.0% and 1.5% respectively that had no education [16]. Overall, this poor education level of girls and women in Yobe state, therefore, becomes a serious policy and political concern not only to this democratic regime but also to every concerned citizen, policy makers and other important education stakeholders.

On the assumption of office in 2009, Governor Gaidam maintained that his regime will initiate and implement education development agenda including GCE in addressing existing education deficiencies in the state [17]. To indicate the importance of the gendered development of education, Sen and Mukherjee [4] provide that gender equality issues should be treated with multiple approaches and dimensions such as with sex, reproductive, political, economic and legal

lenses. This means tracing and choosing identified set goals, targets and standard indicators towards guiding such gendered policies and monitoring educational development outcomes [4]. Infact, MDG3A was intended to “eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and in all levels of education no later than 2015” [18]. Similarly, Anyanwu [2] had advanced that the promotion of gender equality in school is first that girls and women’s acquisition of education is important in fighting poverty. Secondly, the opportunities that education provides to girls and women to compete with other sexes in competitive sphere of life are invaluable as have been promoted by democratic regimes [2].

Although there have been previous discourses on GCE, there has been little evidence at sub-national levels such as the state government, especially in Nigeria. Given the current importance that democratic regimes play in the current decentralised education development at the state level in Nigeria, a careful understanding is thus needed to understand the perspectives and opinions of democratic stakeholders on GCE in the current democratic governance structure. Exploring such neglected issues in the current literature as Pranevičienė and Margevičiūtė [19] described it may “inspire dialogue within society, which may result in positive outcomes for both the people and the state” (p.110).” Moreover, Abbas *et al.* [17] had suggested that “studies could be undertaken to assess the impact of regime performance in key education outcomes in relation to specific education development goals set by Gaidam’s regime. Hence, based on the particular case of an educationally disadvantaged state, this paper through the perspectives of democratic stakeholders at sub-national level explored Governor Gaidam’s regime from 2009-2015 in the actualisation of its goals, measures and challenges in filling the gap between boys and girls enrolment in education development in Yobe state.

2. Study Area and Methods

The study was conducted in Yobe described as one of the educationally disadvantaged states in Nigeria with Gaidam’s regime from 2009-2015 as the case in point. Located in North Eastern region of Nigeria, Yobe state was carved out from old Borno state on 27th August 1991. Yobe state is situated within latitude 11o N and longitude 13.50 E with 47,153 km² total land area. Based on the projected 3.2% growth rate per annum, Yobe’s current population is about 3.5 million with under 5 children constituting about 20% [15]. With 70% rural population, Yobe state has literacy rate of 12 % for both male and female spread across its 17 Local Government Areas [16]. With Islam as the predominant religion of the citizens, Kanuri, Fulani, Hausa, Bade, Ngizim, Kare-Kare, Bolewa and Ngamo are the major ethnic groups in the state. Generally, farming, commerce and trade are the main occupations of the citizens. Yobe state like most Northern states in the country operates a pluralistic education system with both Islamic and western systems serving the populace.

Although a general research methodology was provided for the assessment of Gaidam regime’s social welfare performance in achieving democratic consolidation in Yobe state, Nigeria, 2009-2015 by Abbas and Ku Samsu [20], in this paper, the focus is on the expanded qualitative research methodology for girl child and education development alone in the state. To understand the regime’s efforts towards developing GCE considered as an important element of education development in the state, this study, therefore, utilised qualitative research approaches to offer indepth views of democratic and education stakeholders in their most real life context considered appropriate for this study.

For the selection of key informants, members of relevant institutions and education stakeholders in the state were included in the study through purposive sampling. Specifically, 28 informants were included from six key categories of education stakeholders. The first categories

included current and former politicians: commissioners, legislators and gubernatorial candidates. Second category comprised of senior administrators: permanent secretaries, executive secretaries and directors in the Yobe State Ministry of Education (SMoE) and State Ministry of Women Affairs (SMoWA). The third categories were education providers such as school heads (principals and head masters) and teachers. Fourth, the local civil society involved representatives of education labour unions and stakeholders including the National Union of Teachers (NUT); Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) and Parent Teachers Association (PTA). Fifth, the representative of development partners included United Nations Children’s Education Fund (UNICEF). Sixth, some community leaders (traditional, religious and gender based groups) were involved. Overall, the number of informants by categories who participated in the study were summarised in Table 1 below.

Table 1
 Categories of informants

Category	Number of informants	Description of informants
Politicians	6	Ruling party & opposition members
Senior administrators	6	SMoE and SMoWA
Education providers	6	Professionals
Local civil society	6	Professionals & non-professional
Development partners	1	Internationals
Community leaders	3	Traditional, religious & gender based
Total	28	Key Stakeholders

For data collection, various indepth interviews and review of education documents were utilised. The interviews were carried out in Yobe state Nigeria from May to September 2016. The aim of the interviews which lasted about 25-80 minutes at the informant’s offices or convenience places were to understand the regime efforts in GCE development within democratic governance context. With the prior permission and consent of the informants, the interview sessions were audio-taped with a digital recorder and notes were also taken as back up and to record non-verbal expressions. The audio tape recording was to ensure verbatim of statements and accuracy of the data generated. This was later followed by emails and phone conversations for member checks.

The documents reviewed mostly include national education guidelines to give a broad view of the girl child education system and its development in Nigeria. Similarly reviewed were Yobe Socio-Economic Reform Agenda (YOSERA) Versions II and III (2008-2015), Policy Document for the implementation of Programmes and Projects (2011-2015), selected speeches of Governor Gaidam related to education development and GCE in from 2009-2015, 2014 Education Sector Medium Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF) and 2016 situational report on the impact of Boko Haram insurgency 2016. Overall, these reviewed documents have provided this paper with relevant insights and guidance.

For data analysis, the thematic analysis approach to qualitative research was utilised where the transcription, coding and categorisation of the major themes were achieved on the informant’s interview transcripts and notes. To achieve the measurement credence in this paper, the Gender Parity Index (GPI) as advocated by UNESCO, UNICEF, MDGs and SGDs while discussing gender and education were used. Therefore, the aim was to understand gender equality broadly as the right to gain access and participate in education as well as to benefit from gender sensitive and responsive educational enrolment and obtain meaningful educational outcomes that translate in to greater participation of boys and girls in economic, social and political development of their societies [1]. In this context, gender parity aims at achieving equal participation for boys and girls in education

development. This process helped the researcher to identify consistent patterns and relationships between key variables or themes that emerged from the various interview data. As can be seen later in the subsequent section of results and discussions, to achieve a systematic credence, the current paper majorly utilised the policy analysis framework to analyse and discuss its key findings.

3. Results and Discussions

The interview evidence reported in the current paper provides the description and analysis of the regime's performance in the development of GCE from 2009-2015 through the perspectives of democratic stakeholders in the democratic governance process in Yobe state. Although there are convergence and divergence of opinion among the various categories of informants, six significant themes emerged from the interview data. Generally, these emergent themes reflect the regime's "GCE development plan, key intervention for school enrolment for girls, school enrolment trend and gender parity, lack of role models, social, economic and cultural factors and Boko Haram insurgency and the kidnap of Chibok girls syndrome." The GCE development plan is presented then followed by subsequent themes in the sub-sections from 3.1 to 3.6.

3.1 Girl Child Education Development Plan

In terms of education development plan in Yobe state, GCE was considered as one of the priority development objectives of this regime. In the interview, one ruling party politician like most other informants provided the motivation for the inclusion of GCE in the regime's education development agenda:

I must say that our young girls and women have always been left behind in terms of educational development. So, when we came in.... We felt it was important as a government to mainstream gender into the education system and the entire development of Yobe state. (Politician)

The relevance of the above expressed opinion lies on the fact that in 2009 when this regime came on board, female population seriously lagged behind their male counterparts at all levels of the education development in the state. This explains why Yobe Socio-economic Reform Agenda and Yobe Policy documents have consistently advanced that the education of girls in Yobe state is crucial for the effective upbringing of children, reductions in infant and child mortalities and reduction in child malnutrition. Based on this GCE development plan, the regime's intention can be seen as relevant as adequate attention towards GCE will make the achievement of MDG3 (achieving gender parity in schools between boys and girls) possible in the state. More generally, since the return of democracy in Nigeria in 1999, one of the critical aspects of both national and sub-national governments have been the promotion of the Nigeria's overall quest for the development of GCE in line with the current global trend of access, quality and equality. Since Nigeria remains a member state of the international agreements in education development, the adoption and implementation of GCE development agenda become even more eminent. To show the support provided by some international development partners in advancing GCE development plan in the state, this informant shared his view:

In the primary sector, we are more interested in GCE. When we talk about all the children who are out of school, we are basically promoting and supporting GCE

development in the state. Obviously, we advance that the regime has to move away from the current arrangement of boy's dominance. For me, if you want to change this society, the first step is to plan and improve the education especially for young girls and women here (Yobe state). We are supporting the government on this. (Development partner)

As earlier indicated by the development partner, this education activist and a teacher's workers union leader agreed with the earlier view:

I am not surprised at all..... Although the regime is trying to provide equal access to everyone for self-development through education, I must say that the push and campaign for GCE in our own case have been driven by the government through the support of international bodies and organisations to attain to such rights. (Local civil society member)

Interestingly, these expressed opinions on the rights of the girl child to education generally reflect the motivating framework as endorsed by UN member states [6] through international agreement and conventions. For instance, this includes a universal declaration on human rights; international convention on rights of children; international covenant on civil and political rights; international covenant on economic, social and cultural rights; and convention rights of people living with disabilities, etc. Essentially, the global agenda (EFA, MDGs and SDGs) through national policies (NPE and UBE) in Nigeria provides the architecture for the education development platform that emphasised GCE at sub national levels including in Yobe state. However, while these agendas broadly capture GCE at the international level, the emphasis on girls in Yobe state according to Abbas *et al.* [17] was to spur school enrollment, increase the capacity of schools, employ female teachers, reduce gender gap, reduce school dropout, improve completion and transition rates. Based on this, the regime's intention was meant to eliminate gender disparity at primary and secondary education preferably by 2015 in Yobe state.

Some previous studies have shown that improved education of girls who are future mothers is important towards reducing the prevalence of maternal and child mortality rates [21]. Similarly, since MDG3 situates girls and women's empowerment into education, it means even in Yobe state, it should mean tracing and choosing goals, targets, and indicators in guiding gendered policies and monitoring educational development outcomes [4]. In fact, it is as result of the key relevance of the GCE that the regime's development objectives are first considered as important determinants towards the actualisation of the targets in filling the educational gap between boys and girls in the state. Furthermore, in order to carefully evaluate the regime's performance, it has been argued that intentions are found in goals and judgments at the extent of performance [6]. To advance this position in this paper, the next section provides the regime's performance in the gendered education development through the various strategies adopted in improving GCE over the years.

3.2 Key Intervention for School Enrolment for Girls

To put the regime's education development plans as earlier discussed in to action, informants shared that this regime has continued to carry out school enrolment campaigns for girls through the SMoE and SMoWA with emphasis on the need for all stakeholders to join hands and support GCE. To support this particular view on the roles of SMoWA, this former UBE school principal in Yobe state and a current university lecturer shared his experience:

The Ministry of Women Affairs has been doing their best in setting programmes such as enlightenment, symposium, and mobilisation of parents and other important stakeholders towards encouraging GCE. Under this regime, some workshops and programmes are mostly organised by the ministry to find ways on how to improve GCE in Yobe state. (Local civil society member)

Building on this, informants agreed that the mass mobilisation campaign towards increasing net enrolment rate of girls and women in Yobe state is considered critical if the overall development of education is to be achieved. Informants further argued that since the creation of Yobe state in 1991, female population seriously lags behind its counterparts in education net enrolment over the years and therefore the need to address the long term challenge. In view of this shortfall, the starting point as argued by the informants is to engage all key stakeholders in awareness and campaigns. On this position, one development partner like most of the informants emphasised this point.

For me, there should be continuous sensitisation and awareness campaign on the need and importance of both western and Islamic education in all parts of Yobe state. Yobe state remains backward largely because of the poor education system. To kick-start its development drive, the campaign for school enrollment is the key which requires the involvement of all stakeholders. (Local civil society member)

Beyond the indication, for sensitisation campaigns, this opinion also emphasised the involvement of education stakeholders in education development policies and activities. In fact, this intention is in consonance with the democratic principle of popular participation in education development as having been encouraged by Nigeria's National Council on Education (NCE) and even international development calls such as by the EFA, UNESCO, UNICEF, MDGs and SDGs. Infact, the essence of this partnership and collaboration in developing society like Yobe state as advanced by informants is for the promotion of education ownership and its sustainable development considered invaluable towards achieving education development and democratic sustenance. In Yobe state, of particular importance in GCE policy development and its implementation is the role and functions of public officials, traditional and religious leaders, civil society organisations, international development partners, education administrators, teachers, parents, etc. This school teacher revealed the significance and importance of involving education stakeholders over the years in the state.

You see, in this state, we are already far behind many states of the federation. To make any headways means we have to work with all stakeholders be it local or international. To achieve overall success, the government needs everyone on board. (Education provider)

Similarly, a representative of UNICEF working in Yobe state while agreeing with above opinion shared his experience comprehensively.

UNICEF has been enjoying a very good relationship with the state government in Yobe especially because of UNICEF's big contribution in providing a variety of services to the communities in different LGAs. I am happy that the state government is

acknowledging UNICEF's support for its communities in general. UNICEF is always sharing information on its program with all concerned at the state level and engages them in discussions and on critical issues with an aim to develop good coordination and collaboration to achieve our targets on the ground and to cover the gaps if any in an amicable way. Meetings and discussions with the government officials is an important factor for us as this helps us in understanding each other's position and helps in reaching consensus on a number of important issues towards developing education goals and objectives. (Development partner)

Beyond mobilisation and partnership towards the development of GCE, informants opined that this regime has given considerable priority to renovation and upgrade of especially girl's schools across the state. An education activist and a teacher's workers union leader provide an example on this.

In the first place, almost all Government Girls Secondary Schools were the first schools to have been fenced and rehabilitated in Yobe state under this regime. These upgrades include repairs of classes, hostels, library, laboratories, etc. These girls' schools were, therefore, the first schools to be rehabilitated and or upgraded under this regime which indicates its priority to the development of GCE. (Local civil society member)

For most informants, since the regime had first embarked on full renovation and upgrade of girl's school, it has shown its political commitment towards the development of girl child education. The schools upgraded include Government Girls Schools in Ngelzarma, Dapchi, Damaturu, Gadaka, Dagona, among others. While citing the importance of these upgrades, a school teacher and a parent to one of the schools upgraded revealed how this boosts the confidence of parents in sending their wards to such schools.

I must say that the immediate upgrade there (girl's schools) has given most parents, teachers, and the communities the motivation and confidence to send their children and wards to such schools. With this effort, the government had done well in improving the living condition and learning environment of the GCE across Yobe state. (School teacher and parent)

Most informants advanced that the motivation for the rehabilitation of most of the girls' schools in the state became a priority because when this regime came on board in 2009, the situation of most of the girl's schools was in a most deplorable condition that required an emergency response. Importantly, the relevance of infrastructure and facilities such as classrooms, hostels, furniture, toilets, computers and ICT equipment in improving the capacity of the education system to deliver better result cannot be over emphasised [3, 4, 6, 7, 22]. This, however, does not suggest its availability alone is enough, as proper management of the facilities and instructional materials also improves teaching and learning environment in schools [7]. It is, therefore, only reasonable that beyond availability; the maintenance and continued development of the vital infrastructure must be sustained in order to achieve gender sensitive education development under this democratic regime.

Although reasonable progress was achieved in upgrading girls' schools, the regime is criticised by some informants on the approaches and strategies adopted in improving the infrastructure and

facilities. They particularly advanced that while this democratic regime has done well towards improving existing girl's schools over the years in the state, there was no effort for the expansion and establishment of more girls' schools. One of the education activists provides a clear example on this.

An example is even at the state capital here in Damaturu (state capital); we don't have a single day school for GCE. To me, this is a setback because some parents may not allow their children and wards to go to boarding schools. Eventhough, the level of GCE is generally improving but there is a need for an improvement in this regard. (Local civil society member)

This opinion depicts a scenario in Yobe state especially in urban areas where young girls are willing to attend schools but due to lack of day schools, such opportunities are not available. This indicates the lack of equal access to education suitable for girls who are willing to return home after class sessions instead of boarding schools. This call should be seen in line with the need for providing a conducive learning atmosphere for girls and women as has been achieved in most part of the globe due to interventions of international bodies such as UNESCO, UNICEF, MDG, UNDP, etc [14]. Similarly, UNESCO [1] had constantly advocated that gender equality must provide the situation boys and girls enjoy similar opportunities, rights, protection, and resources for their overall educational development. In fact, it is in recognition that available infrastructure encourages educational opportunities for girls and women [2] that such political commitment is considered an indicator of sustainable and people-centered development across nation and democracies [2, 4]. It has also been argued that girls are more affected than boys by a distance of school especially at lower school [1]. This clearly explained reasons why gender disparities in recent times in education are still evident in most developing societies like Yobe state in Nigeria. As distance remains an obstacle, Anyanwu [2] justified that, this could show the negative effects that exclusion of girls in education could have on poverty and sustainable development in the society.

Beyond mobilisation, partnership and priority infrastructural provision towards the development of GCE in the state, other specific efforts were also undertaken towards accelerating net enrolment of girls in schools. Informants identified some key initiatives including the free education policy; free medical treatment for boarding students; improvement in school feeding in boarding schools; sponsorship of best performing students for advanced studies at home and abroad; payment of national entry examinations among others. Based on this, the regime's political commitment was to 1) ensure the provision of qualitative, functional, free and compulsory primary through junior secondary education for all children of both sexes 2) provide required infrastructure, human resource and teaching and learning materials for qualitative education and 3) encourage through public engagement and campaign by government and all stakeholders towards pursuing and supporting secondary and higher education by all citizens of Yobe state [17]. This means that the aim was to improve school enrolment for both sexes by ways of providing access and the promotion of equity, quality, and gender balance in education development in the state.

3.3 School Enrolment Rates: Has Gender Parity Been Achieved?

Having discussed this regime's efforts in providing qualitative, free and compulsory primary, junior and senior secondary education especially for girls, the next issue is to understand whether or not gender parity was achieved in terms of school enrolment. The findings show that although various efforts were put in place by this regime, the trend of school enrolment over the years does

not indicate any sign of significant improvement across the basic education levels in Yobe state. As expressed by informants, the challenge of enrolment in schools for girls remains an old phenomenon especially in the northern states of Nigeria. According to this top bureaucrat, the case of Yobe simply reflects a similar phenomenon especially in certain LGAs of the state since its creation in 1991.

For the most part of girl child education in Yobe state, we have been battling with the same situation since former Borno state. The issue of enrolment for girls still remains our biggest challenge. But, despite all these confounding challenges, the regime is trying to address this gap, especially in the primary education sector. (Senior administrator)

As shared by most informants the trends of school enrolment over the years for girls has not been appreciative especially in the rural areas. One woman leader who participated in some campaigns to spur enrolment for girls in some communities shared her experience.

Honestly, it is one of the most difficult endeavours here (Yobe state). We have been doing our best to orient parents and communities that more girls should be enrolled in school, but the trend over the years is not improving significantly (Woman community leader).

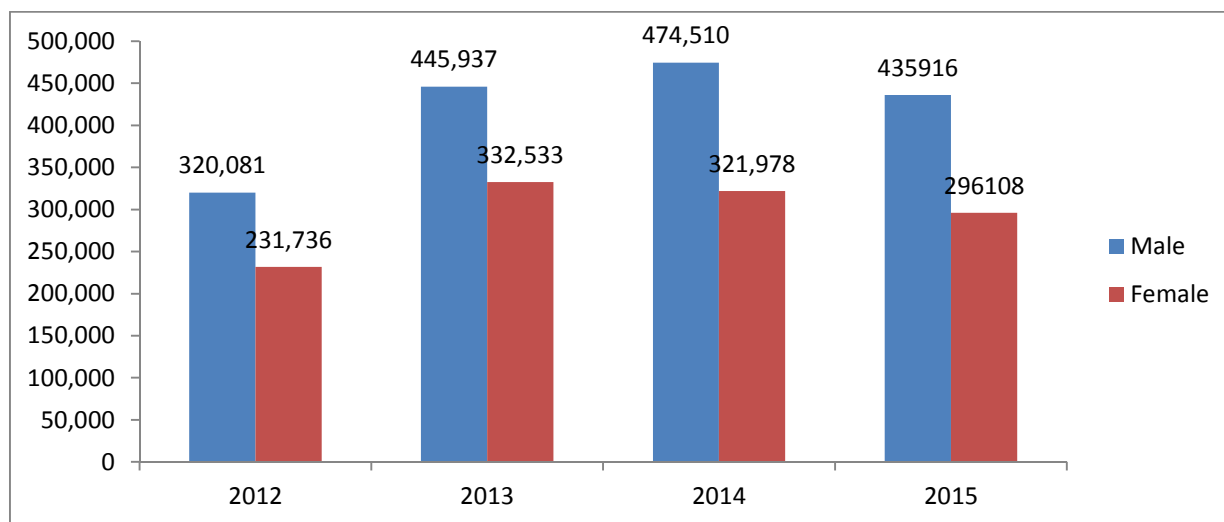


Fig. 1. Enrolment Trend of Boys versus Girls at Primary Schools

Source: An analysis from Yobe State EMTSS, 2014 page 11-12 & recent data from YBMOE

To probe the earlier assertion expressed by some informants a critical analysis of available data from Yobe state government was undertaken. Unsurprisingly, the data shows the trends of school enrolment with boys dominating over girls as provided in the subsequent figures below. At the primary school level, Figure 1 above shows the trend of the general dominance of boys over girls in school enrolment over the years. For instance, during the 2014 academic session, enrolments of boys and girls in primary schools were 474, 510 (59.6%) and 321, 978 (40.4%) respectively. Similarly, in 2014 academic year in Junior Secondary Schools (JSS), the enrolment for boys and girls were 41, 320 (58.3%) and 29,612 (41.7%) respectively. A similar situation is applicable in the Senior Secondary School (SSS) level as the enrolment for boys and girls in Yobe state were put at 26, 675 (63.9%) and 15,093 (36.1%) respectively (Figure 2).

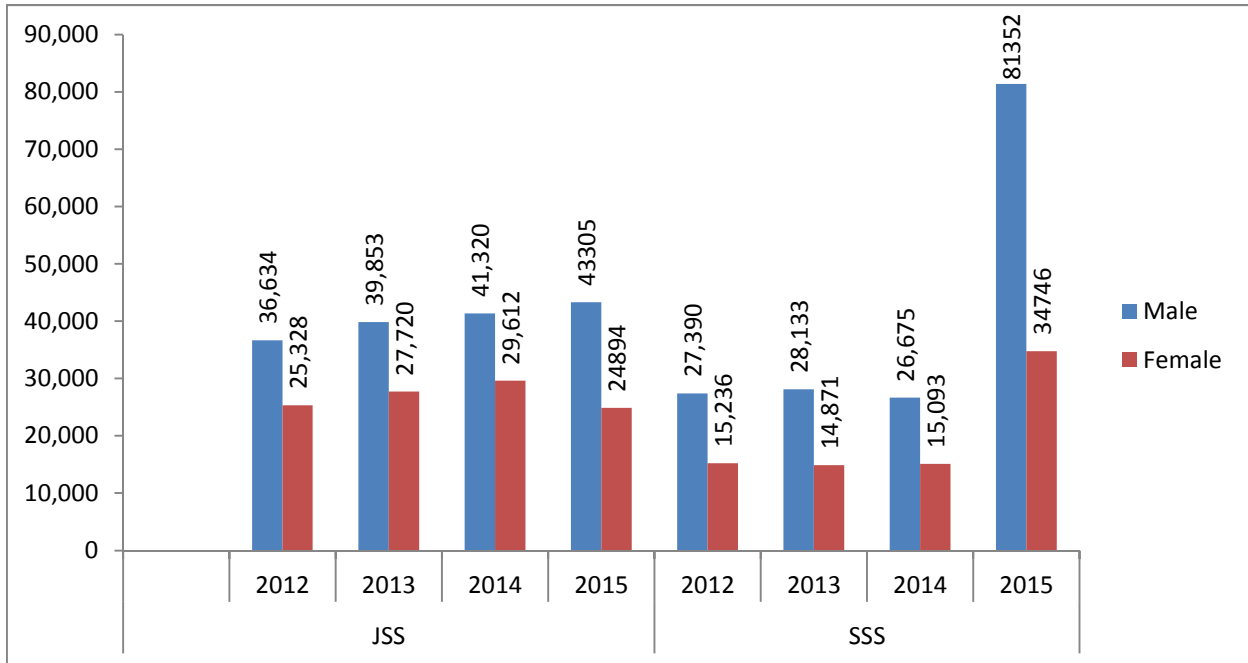


Fig. 2. Enrolment Trend of Boys versus Girls at JSS and SSS Levels
 Source: An analysis from Yobe State EMTSS, 2014 page 11-12 & recent data from YBMOE

Based on the two Figures 1 and 2, there are more boys than girls in terms of school enrolment particularly from 2012 to 2015 at basic education levels in Yobe state. It should be noted that although there is evidence of the general dominance of school boys over the girls in the trend, the differences in terms of a proportion are not the same across the strata of basic education. This means that while there is the dominance of boys to girls in overall school enrolment Figure 1 reveal that more girls participate in the primary when compared with junior and senior secondary school levels over the years (Figure 2). Hence, by using the GPI, this finding indicates that the boys still have upper chances to attend school than girls in Yobe state as indicated in Figure 3.

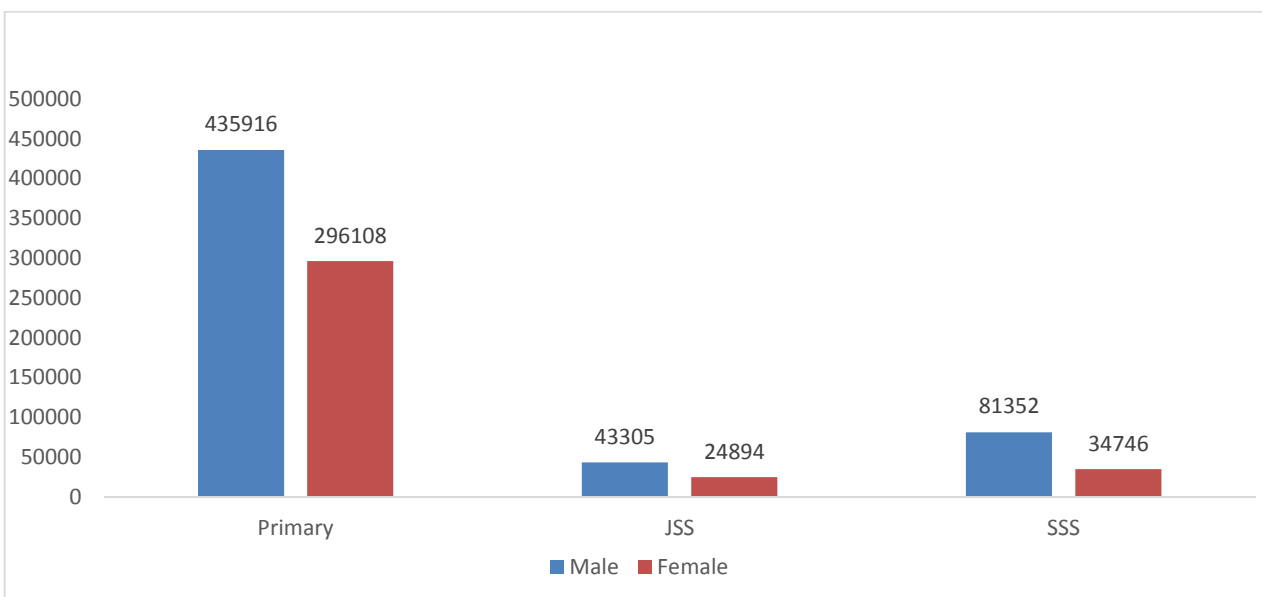


Fig. 3. Gender Parity Index at the Basic Education Levels as at 2015
 Source: An analysis of 2015 school enrolment data from SMOE

Based on the current gap between male and female pupil and students across primary, junior and secondary schools in the state (Figure 3), it means that the regime's development plan of achieving MDG No3 (reducing gender parity between boys and girls) was not achieved as at 2015. This finding is not totally surprising as recent EFA Global Monitoring Report shows that among out of school children girls are more likely than their boy's counterpart (48% and 37%) never to attend school especially ones from poor families [5]. This report further shows that although it was projected that by 2015, gender parity will be achieved at the global level, on the average at basic education levels, 3 in 10 countries at the primary level and 5 in 10 at the secondary level have not achieved this target [5]. With Nigeria still having the largest share of out of school children in the globe from all measures, it will therefore not be surprising if boys tend to enjoy more advantages than girls in terms of access, completion and educational attainment in Yobe state. This is in spite of the fact that most developing nations have expanded their education coverage to remote, rural and poor communities including with girls [5, 11].

3.4 Lack of Role Models

In a 2014 education MTSS report, it was projected that between 2011 and 2015 alone, Nigeria needed 212,000 primary school teachers with required qualifications. However, the shortage of teachers in developing nations like Nigeria and Yobe state, in particular, is not the only major challenge as importantly well qualified, trained and gendered teachers are the ones needed who would improve the quality of education provided in schools [22] in order to meet the increasing number of children attending schools [1,5]. In Yobe state in order to address this manpower shortage, this regime has embarked on the massive recruitment of teachers over the years as revealed by this teacher's workers union leader:

In 2013 alone, Governor Gaidam had given approval for the massive employment of more than 2000 NCE holders. In the process of screening the applicant teachers, we were able to realise about 1600 as qualified teachers. They (teacher applicants) were immediately recruited and posted out indiscriminately across the 17 LGAs in Yobe state most especially across the primary and junior secondary schools levels (Local civil society member).

Although this employment and similar others including newly recruited teachers with Bachelor degrees, Higher National Diploma (HND), and Ordinary National Diploma (OND) under this regime were relevant in achieving the human resource requirement for education development, opinions of informants indicate that they are not gendered sensitive. This woman leader provides an example:

Yes, this regime has done a lot in terms of teacher's recruitments. Unfortunately, the composition of the newly recruited and the old ones is not in favour of the young girls in school who should have female teacher role models. It is still male dominated therefore making it less attractive for young girls (Woman community leader).

This view is similarly shared by another informant who is a school teacher in one of the rural areas in Yobe state as captured in this quote

I believe that female teacher may serve as role models for some of our girls and women especially in most rural communities of Yobe state where there are still few educated women in those places and communities. Having female teachers will encourage them (female student) to enroll and stay in schools. (Education provider)

Based on the expressed positions above, one key factor that contributes to the success of girls in schools is the availability of female teachers that serve as role models to young girls. More importantly, it has been previously advanced that female teachers make classroom environment safe and “more inviting” which encourages them to stay and advance their education [1]. This scenario, therefore, seems important as there are considerable debates among educators and scholars on the importance of having both sexes in teaching services in schools [5] which spurs enrolments for girls. Therefore, balanced sex composition affects the gender parity in student enrolment and performance especially for girls [1, 2, 5, 11]. In addition, Anyanwu [2] had specifically advanced that higher share of female teachers in most schools increases democracy. Although this cultural aspect may reflect in regional, national or global level, such contextual issue must specifically reflect on the specific functioning of schools at various levels [7]. To reflect this scenario in Yobe state, the current data show that the GPI of teaching workforce is not impressive at all the basic education levels as indicated in Figure 4 below.

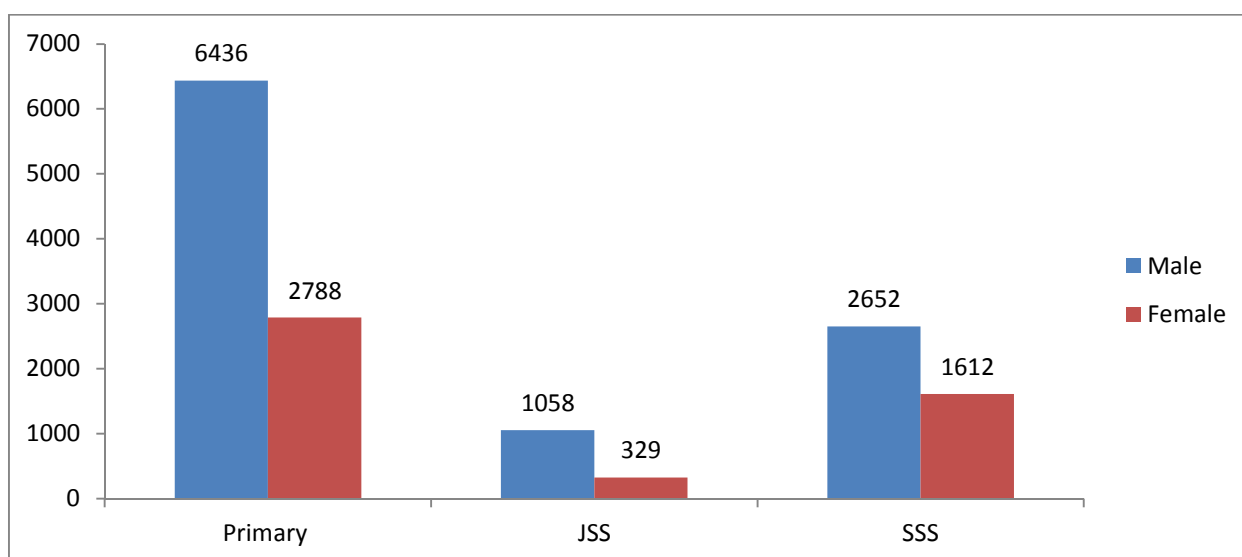


Fig. 4. GPI of Teachers in Yobe State at Basic Education Levels

Source: An analysis of gender distribution of teachers from YBMOE, 2016

From Figure 4, the overall gender distribution of the teaching workforce at all the levels of basic education reveals a low representation of female teachers in Yobe state. For instance, out of the approximate 15,000 teachers, only about 5000 are female representing only about 33%. In the particular case of junior and senior secondary schools, 1941 teachers are female which represents only 34% of the entire teaching workforce in secondary schools in the state. In the primary level, there is a decline, especially when compared with the secondary schools where female teachers represent only 30% of the entire teaching workforce. Generally, the overall GPI of teachers of basic education reveals the dominance of male (67%) over female teachers (33%), in the state. This explains the negative impact that lack of female teacher role models continues to have on young girls either in or out of school. Consequently, this low participation of women in the teaching profession may continue to lead to fewer young girls enrolled, retained or even complete their

education. This further indicates that the teacher's recruitment policies of this regime do not employ special practices that will empower girls and their needs through proper guidance, counselling, teaching methods and the presence of role models.

3.5 Social, Economic and Cultural Factors

Beyond the lack of role models, the failure to achieve gender parity in education is extended to the people's culture and religion in Yobe state in particular and Nigeria as a whole expressed in social, cultural, political and economic patriarchal forms. In this regard, poverty, illiteracy, poor religious knowledge of parents and their cultural orientations on girls, and non-willingness of parents influenced by different motivations have mostly contributed to poor attendance of school by girls in Yobe state.

In terms of poverty, although, there is agreement among some informants that basic education at least in principle is declared free by this democratic regime, some opposition party informants, however, reported that access to education is still skewed against children of poor families including girls. They argued that the chances of young girls having access to basic education are unlikely to be comparatively the same with female children from well to do families in the state. This position is aptly captured by this elder statesman and opposition figure in the state in the quote below:

First, there is no access for children (male and female) of the poor as education is now, unfortunately, the privilege of very few in the society. Secondly, most of the children of the poor are still on the street daily trying to make their means of their livelihood thereby denying them access to basic education. (Politician)

In Yobe state, there is a value element that encourages street hawking especially by the supposed school aged girls which have now become a deeply rooted value [13]. For some informants, economic reasons such as poverty and illiteracy of parents are the main reasons for poor attendance of girls in schools in Yobe state. Similarly, while insisting on economic benefits and the illiteracy of parents for the non-attendance of girls in schools in Yobe state, Ningi et al [13] had recently advanced that most of the school aged girls involved in street hawking in the state are from the poor families who cannot even afford their daily basic needs. According to this thinking, resorting to hawking instead of attending school by the young girls will offer them and their parents the means of livelihood. Shimeles and Verdier-Chouchane [9] insist that since most children of poor families mostly provide labour for their survival and that of their families, such labour time does not allow them to attend schools. UNESCO [5] thus advances that poor child from poor families hardly progress between education levels even if they are enrolled in the schools.

While educating a girl means empowering her to acquire, nurture and even develop skills and knowledge in order to make better decisions that shapes her life including health, wealth creation and distribution [14], unfortunately in Yobe state such effects of street hawking on GCE is that it discourages school aged girl from going to school due to economic benefits that come with street hawking [13]. Even, if they are enrolled, the street hawking in the process stalls them from going to school thereby leading to drop-outs. This socio-economic practice does not, therefore, allow them to attend either western or even Islamic education. Based on this, the failure of girls to attend schools, will therefore not allow them to have the required knowledge needed to make a rational and informed decision that could help them in reducing infant and child mortalities, malnutrition and have the self-ability for proper self-development. Lack of this self-development remains a

serious challenge to democratic regimes as UNESCO [1] contend that such constraints in the society may include pressure for early marriages, violence and sexual harassments and the exposure or vulnerability to diseases such as HIV/AIDS.

To advance the cultural and religious standpoints as expressed by informants, this journalist with interest in education development in Yobe state shared his experience.

Our culture and religion partially have dominated our decision when it comes to sending our female children and wards to western schools for education. Despite the involvement of all traditional and religious leaders in Yobe state to mobilise, sensitize and reorient their people on the need for enrolling our female children to both western and Islamic schools, we still did not hit our target of 50/50 for boys and girls. (Local civil society member)

This view shared by this informant had earlier been shared and supported by another scholar. In the views of this scholar:

The problems militating against the girl child education in Nigeria is an age long factor that hinges on cultural, social and religious undertones where the girl-child is perceived as inferior to the male and hence denied access to education and her roles relegated to that of a home maker, child minder and house keeper ([14], p.24).

This opinion suggests that male children are more likely to be enrolled in basic schools than girls in Yobe state indicating the preference of parent's willingness to send their children to school. In fact, with a predominantly poor rural and agrarian population in the state, most rural dwellers lack the orientation to enrol their children and wards to acquire a basic education, especially if compared with those in urban centers of the state or the country in general. Similarly, previous studies have shown that notwithstanding the importance and relevance of GCE in developing democracies like Nigeria, the current poor access and quality of education to girls and women in Nigeria have been largely due to religious and cultural values and orientations [2, 13, 14]. In fact, Anyanwu [2] explicitly states "cultural factors can exacerbate gender inequality as societal norms may inculcate reticence, value obedience, and deference to males, and limit women's involvement in the public sphere, including school attendance" (p.177).

3.6 Boko Haram Insurgency and the Kidnap of Chibok Girls Syndrome

All informants were unanimous that insecurity especially caused by the Boko Haram insurgency had seriously added to the existing challenges of GCE and overall education development in the state. While giving particular examples on the attack on schools, the government official provided his experience.

Unfortunately, five years of Boko Haram terrorist activities have affected GCE negatively. Some girls' schools like in Buni Gari and a mixed school in Buni Yadi were attacked and completely burnt down by the insurgents. The schools had to be closed down and students shifted to other safer grounds. (Politician)

To indicate the overall destruction and damage of physical infrastructure and facilities by Boko Haram insurgent recent Yobe State Government situational report on the impact of Boko Haram

insurgency showed that 55.5% of public and private infrastructure destroyed by the insurgents were mostly in the education sector. Specifically, out of the 1,098 public facilities destroyed spreads across 12 LGAs of the state 609 were educational buildings and facilities. However, a particular example is that, although 12 out of 17 LGAs in the state were attacked by Boko Haram on various occasions, the worst affected LGA's were Gujba and Gulani where all the schools were completely burnt and shut down. Its implication to GCE development was provided by a school teacher.

.....in some places like Gujba, Gulani and even Damaturu the state capital the schools including that of girls were not operating for a very long time. And, education is a planned programme with the scheme of work, annual and terminal plans, any phase that you missed, has passed. This is a setback for GCE that is at the lowest eve of development in the state. (Education provider)

In terms of human lives, eventhough, the number of people killed by Boko Haram terrorists has not been fully ascertained, the recent Yobe State Government situational report on the impact of Boko Haram insurgency revealed that 128 students were killed from schools in Mamudo, Buni-Yadi, Gujba, Damaturu and Potiskum alone. Consequently, due to the attacks on schools leading to the killings of many teachers and students, most parents in Yobe state were forced to remove, transfer or sometimes even the students themselves dropped due to fear of their safety and lives. With regard to this situation, this parent who lost his two daughters in Buni Yadi school attack shared his perspective.

Without mincing words, education is indeed important for our young girls and women. But at what cost can they acquire it? With the attack in Buni Yadi and the kidnapping of Chibok School girls, many parents are now reluctant to send their daughters to boarding schools. We lost our children and we are really afraid of the safety and lives of the surviving ones. (Parent)

Generally, this action of the students, parents and guardians were justified as Ewan Walt [22] reported that in Nigeria, the "despair and tragedy" of the missing 276 school girls from Chibok community in 2014 had created great concern for the safety of school children especially girls in the entire North Eastern region of Nigeria. Further, more than 900 schools were attacked, 600 school teachers killed and therefore forcing hundreds of thousands of children out of school "in a country where more than 10 million were already deprived of schooling [22]. It is based on this scenario that conflict is negatively correlated with education attainment in conflict areas as school age children are less likely to be enrolled or retained in school during the time of conflict [5, 23]. Indeed, in Yobe state, the Boko Haram insurgency had negatively affected the pace of girl's enrolment in schools. Although the reality is that such conflict leads to the destruction of schools, deaths and displacement of education providers and seekers, any effort of rebuilding such schools guarantee the continued education of young boys and girls that are very crucial for the future of conflict regions [23]. This promotes the credibility and legitimacy of democratic regimes [11, 23] as it demonstrates responsiveness to basic needs of people in affected societies.

4. Conclusion

The purpose of this paper was to describe and analyse Governor Gaidam regime's performance in the development of GCE through the perceptions and experiences of critical stakeholders in the

democratic governance process in Yobe state. As the finding suggests the regime's initial intention was to eliminate gender disparity at primary and secondary education preferably by 2015 in Yobe state. Through the implementation process, it revealed that although there were efforts made in creating awareness on the need for enrolment of girls to schools, collaboration with stakeholders and the upgrading of various girls' schools, the participation of girls and women in education development is low. Based on the current gap between male and female pupil and students across primary, junior and secondary schools in the state, it means that the regime's development plan of achieving MDG No3 (reducing gender parity between boys and girls) was not achieved as at 2015. However, this trend and level of inequality in education development are majorly associated with social, economic, political and cultural aspects of the society, and the effects of insecurity. Consequently, street hawking engaged by some school aged girls for economic reasons, illiteracy of their parents, lack of day school to enroll the girls, lack of role models for the girls and the menace of Boko Haram insurgency were mostly identified as the main barriers that thwarted the regime from its set target in GCE. To achieve education development through GCE, democratic regimes must, therefore, invest more in a female friendly school environment in order to improve the quantity, quality and the functionality of the education system and the wellbeing of young women and girls.

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