

# Secondary School Enrolments, Parity Level and Teacher Employment in Lagos State, Nigeria

<sup>1</sup>Gbenu, J. P. (Ph.D.), <sup>2</sup>Lawal, R. O.

<sup>1</sup>Dept. of Educational Management, Faculty of Education, Lagos State University, Ojo, Lagos, Nigeria

<sup>2</sup>Dept. of Educational Foundations & Management, Michael Otedola College of Primary Education, Noforija-Epe, Lagos, Nigeria

## Abstract

*The purpose of the study was two-fold: to determine the extent of the Lagos state government's compliance with the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and Education for All (EFA) of ensuring increasing enrolments and male-female parity on the one hand and ascertaining whether the state government also matched teacher employment with the increasing enrolments, if complied, in all the Lagos state secondary schools. The population of the study, which also purposively doubled as the sample, was the enrolled students (Junior and Senior Secondary Schools) between 2008/2009-2014/2015 sessions. The design adopted was ex-post-facto with collected from a secondary source. Guided by six research questions and two null hypotheses, findings by the study, through descriptive and inferential statistics revealed that Lagos state government was able to comply with enrolment parity between boys and girls matching the enrolments with teacher employment. The study however, noted that the enrolments were fluctuating over the seven sessions considered recommending to the government to intensify efforts on enrolments and facilities to guarantee high literacy rate and quality education. The need to emphasise on male teacher employment was also recommended by the study given the ratio of almost 1:2 as found out, in favour of female teachers.*

## Introduction

As a leading driving force in national development, education has empowered individuals, broken chains of poverty in people's lives and increased their earnings. No wonder, politicians, by this unparalleled role in countries, have often enlisted education as a topmost item on their agenda to win votes. The wall of difference between developed nations and their developing counterparts has been traced to large doses of education that have been given to the citizens of the former compared to the low attention given to same in the latter countries. Thus, countries that record high enrolments, and consequently literacy rate, at all levels of her educational structure tend to experience rapid growth and development, exporting both human capital and industrial products to generate foreign exchange in the long run.

In her recognition of this fact, Nigeria has instituted and initiated series of programmes and policies to encourage school enrolments and improve quality delivery of education. For instance, the Federal Government of Nigeria launched a major education reform programme in 2006 according to Vision 2020 paper (2010) which stresses the importance of institutional reforms to improve efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery at all levels of education. Equally too, the Universal Primary Education (UPE) of 1976 and the Universal Basic Education (UBE) of 1999 were meant to improve school enrolments and quality of education.

Meanwhile, a notable gap has been observed in enrolment between boys and girls in schools globally, and particularly in Africa. This situation has led to multidimensional programmes being put in place to encourage the girl child education despite the arrays of benefits derivable in educating girls. In Nigeria, Okebukola (2008) states that "at least 3.9 million primary school-age children were out of school as at 2008, of which 71% were girls. It must be stated however, that several efforts have been made by the Nigerian government to ensure increased access to education by girls and parity with boys. These efforts are supported by the National Policy on Education (2013) which states specific goals of education, among others, as "to ensure and sustain unfettered access and equity to education for the total development of the individual and to ensure the quality of education delivery at all levels". All the states in the country are expected to join in this

success train.

Lagos State with an estimated population of 20 million people is expected to lead the course of high school enrolments and gender parity while not losing sight of facilities provision. The study therefore, intends to examine enrolments situation at the secondary level in Lagos state, being an economic nerve centre of the country which encourages the influx of people at the rate of about 3% annually. Meanwhile, there might be the need to assess situation reports about school enrolments, taking note of the parity level in enrolments with reference to Lagos State, the girl child education as well as the effects of some of the regional plans on the level of education. This serves as the purpose of the study.

## Ensuring Parity between Boys' and Girls' Enrolments: Some Benefits of Educating the Girl Child

Investment in education benefits the individual, society and the world as a whole. Broad-based education of good quality is among the most powerful instruments known to reduce poverty and inequality, with even greater benefits on the side of women. Olaniyonu and Gbenu (2016) give the following benefits arising from educating the girl child.

1. Reduction in women's fertility rates with the use of family planning methods, delay in marriage and childbearing. It is estimated that one year of female schooling reduces fertility by 10 percent. The effect is particularly pronounced for secondary schooling.
2. Lowering infant and child mortality rates for the fact that women with formal education are more likely to seek medical care, ensuring that their children are immunized.
3. Lowering maternal mortality rates since educated women have better knowledge about health care practices, less likely to become pregnant at a very young age, tend to have fewer, better-spaced pregnancies and seek pre- and post-natal care. It is estimated that an additional year of schooling for 1,000 women helps prevents two maternal deaths.
4. Protection against HIV/AIDS infection. Girls' education ranks among the most powerful tools for reducing girls' vulnerability, slowing and reducing the spread of HIV/AIDS and contributing to female economic independence, delayed

marriage and family planning.

5. Increasing women's labour force participation rates and earnings.
6. Creating intergenerational education benefits, recognizing mother's education as a significant variable affecting children's education attainment and opportunities.

Given this background, it could amount to injustice not to emphasize and improve on the girl child education at all levels of education in Nigeria taking note of the long-term effects in the national development.

### **The Girl Child Education in Nigeria and Government's Efforts at Encouraging High Enrolments**

Stakeholders in education are quite worried about the wide disparity in school enrolments between boys and girls in Nigerian schools. Okebukola (2008) notes that gender differences in primary Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) rose from 7% in 1990 to 12% in 2001. In the Northern states, the gender gap averaged over 30% with some states as high as 48% in his analysis.

There are few other states in the South where gender-related problems have prevented girls from participating in basic education programmes. The gender disparity in basic education, no doubt, in the words of Okebukola (2008) "contributed to the rating of Nigeria among countries that are unable to meet the Millennium Development Goals of attaining gender parity by 2015".

A number of factors have been found to militate against gender parity in female enrolment, retention and achievement in Nigeria. These, according to Olatunji (2013) include socio-cultural practices, misinterpretation of religious tenets, poverty and unfriendly school environment.

There have been efforts at tackling some of these impediments. For instance, the Federal Government produced a National Policy on Women which had provisions for women and girl-child education. In the quest to implement the policy, task forces on the Education for Girl-Child was set up at all levels of government. The Federal Government established 40 unity schools for girls. The Federal Ministry of Education also established and equipped 275 Women Centres. Each Centre had sewing machines, typewriters, industrial cookers, fridges, deep freezers and materials for teaching skill in functional/literacy and skill acquisition.

In addition, in line with its commitment of achieving high enrolments and gender equality in education by 2015, such that both males and females would be assured of full and equal access to good quality basic education, government collaborated with all stakeholders to promote programmes and activities towards eliminating gender gaps in education. Notable, according to Okebukola (2008) was the FGN/UNICEF/DFID Strategy for the Acceleration of Girls' Education in Nigeria (SAGEN)-Plus whose key elements include, but not limited to the following:

1. Sustaining advocacy and awareness raising at all levels;
2. Increasing community participation
3. Mainstreaming Child Friendly School (CFS) principles through school cluster training, inspectorate and teacher training, promoting the concept of school centres for non-formal education, Early Childhood Care and Development and Education (ECCDE) and community development;
4. Working closely with partners at state and local government levels.

The Strategy aimed at 15% reduction in disparities (especially gender) through an inter-sectoral response enhanced linkages between programmes, directly addressing the goals of Education

for All (EFA).

### **A Look at Some Educational Policies Steps in Nigeria Targeting High Enrolments and Parity**

Secondary education is the education children receive after primary education and before higher education in Nigeria. The broad goals of this level of education according to the National Policy on Education (2013) are to prepare the individual for useful living within the society and for higher education. It is a six-year offering divided into junior and senior secondary levels of three years each.

The junior secondary is the terminal part of the 9-year basic education programme. Alongside with the senior level, the Federal and State governments, private individuals and organizations, voluntary agencies and communities provide secondary education.

There are quite a number of national and state policies that are meant to encourage secondary enrolment and bridge gender disparity gap in Nigeria. Some of these as compiled by Olaniyonu and Gbenu (2016) are as follows.

In 2003, the Nigerian government prepared the National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS), a major multi-sectoral reform programme that sees educational reforms as central to socio-economic empowerment. In June 2005, a National Committee was inaugurated to monitor and allocate additional funds from the debt relief funds for the achievements of the MDGs. The Federal Government launched a major education reform programme in 2006 stressing the importance of institutional reforms to improve efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery at all levels of education. Similarly, the Nigerian states developed individual State Empowerment and Economic Development Strategies (SEEDS) which prioritized education provision at the state level.

More specifically, the following are some of the high-level policy documents and regulations surrounding education in Nigeria.

1. The National Policy on Education 1977, 1981, 1998, 2004 and 2013 which emphasizes broad-based curricula, academic and vocational, which respects the dignity of labour and offer all learners the opportunity to choose their development paths.
2. The Universal Basic Education Act (2004) demonstrates Nigeria's commitment to the following important International Agreements: the Jomtien Declaration of 1990 which advocates the right of all people to education and knowledge; the Delhi declaration of 1993 which requires countries to drastically reduce illiteracy within the shortest possible time frame; the Durban Statement of Commitment of 1998 which requires African Education Ministers to pursue goal of life-long learning; and the OAU Decade of Education in Africa (1997-2006) which requires African States to universalize access to qualitative basic education as a basis for sustainable socio-economic development.
3. The Harmonised National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS-II) and the 7-point Agenda which recognizes education as a vital transformational tool and a formidable instrument for empowerment.
4. The education component of the New Partnership for Africa Development (NEPAD) with education attention on distance education and teacher development; science and mathematics education for primary and secondary teachers; and Basic Education for All

**Some Regional Conferences on Access to Education: A Look at the MDGs and EFA**

In 2004, the United Nations International Conference on Population and Development encouraged governments worldwide to ensure *access to all to education* beyond the primary level. The Lagos State 2009-2020 Education Sector Plan (2012) writes on the 8 Millennium Development Goals highlighting on the two that specifically addressed education namely goals 2 and 3. Goal 2 expected nations to achieve Universal Primary Education while goal 3 targeted the promotion of gender equality and women empowerment.

In response to the widespread concern over education systems deterioration during the 1980s, the World Conference on *Education for All* was convened in Jomtien, Thailand in 1990 according to the Lagos State 2009-2020 Education Sector Plan (2012). The conference concluded with the unanimous adoption of the “World Declaration on Education for All” and countries endorsed a “Framework for Action to meet Basic Learning Needs”. Following this, Nigeria took measures to translate the declaration into reality in accordance with her own philosophy and goals. The activities embarked upon included advocacy, mobilization and sensitisation campaigns, discussions and consultations with various stakeholders and the development of a national plan of action. One of the outcomes of the post-Jomtien steps produced the introduction of the 9-year schooling programme in 1992, re-launched as an aspect of the Universal Basic Education (UBE) Scheme in 1999.

In 2000, the World Education Forum (WEF) was held in Dakar, Senegal and took stock of the achievements of EFA since Jomtien meeting in 1990. It was realized that not enough progress had been made due to some critical factors such as lack of genuine partnerships, credible plans and prevalence of diseases and natural calamities. The WEF proceeded to re-affirm its commitment, this time with a new target date of 2015 for achieving EFA.

This commitment sought to actualize the delivery of EFA in addition to addressing the six goals within the Dakar Framework for Action by 2015. Countries were mandated to ensure the rights of people to education and knowledge as unanimously adopted at the World Declaration on Education for All. Goals 2 and 5 respectively targeted access to education by 2015 particularly girls and eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary schools.

**Research Questions**

The study sought answers to the following questions:

1. What is the trend of enrolments, by sex, over the sessions considered?
2. What is the ratio of enrolments of girls to boys?
3. What is the average enrolment by schools over the sessions?
4. What is the teacher/student ratio over the sessions?
5. What is the ratio of the female teachers to their male counterparts?
6. To what extent has the Lagos state government met the gender parity of the MDGs and EFA by 2015 target?

**Hypotheses**

The following null hypotheses guided the study:

1. There is no significant difference between female and male enrolments over the sessions considered.
2. There is no significant difference in staff employment between female and male teachers.

**Methodology**

**Research Design**

The study makes use of *expost-facto* design.

**Population and Sample**

All the teaching staff on the Lagos state government’s pay roll and students enrolled in both the Junior and Senior Secondary Schools in the State from 2008/2009-2014/2015 sessions. These were purposively taken as the sample for the study as well.

**Source of Data**

The secondary source of data was utilized as supplied by the Lagos State Ministry of Education.

**Analysis**

Both descriptive (Figures and Tables) and inferential (t-test) statistics were used.

**Presentation of Data and Analysis**

Research Question 1

1. What is the trend of enrolments, by sex, over the sessions considered?

Session	No of Schools	Students’ enrolments by sex		Female:Male	Total	Teacher employ-ment by sex		Female: Male	Total	Average enrol-ment/school	Teacher: Stu-dents
		Male	Female			Male	Female				
2008/2009	626	292489	301559	1.03	594048	6713	11439	1.7	18152	948.96	32.73
2009/2010	612	281537	293234	1.04	574771	6982	12292	1.76	19274	939.17	29.82
2010/2011	638	297021	306461	1.03	603482	7147	12273	1.72	19420	945.9	31.08
2011/2012	637	294605	315472	1.07	610077	7643	13291	1.74	20934	957.73	29.14
2012/2013	641	289502	303556	1.05	593058	7068	12004	1.7	19072	925.21	31.10
2013/2014	668	277080	288165	1.04	565245	9463	16003	1.69	25466	846.18	22.20
2014/2015	673	275241	289517	1.05	564758	7192	12337	1.72	19529	839.16	28.92

Source: Lagos State Ministry of Education (2016)

Table 1 shows students' enrolments and teacher employment between 2008/2009 and 2014/2015 sessions by sex. Total students' enrolments have been fluctuating, rising and falling between the sessions considered. However, there have been more increasing enrolments on the side of girls than boys. This trend is better captured in Figure 1 below:

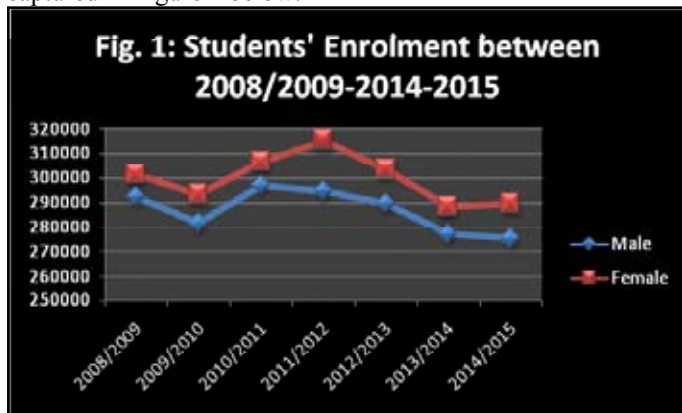
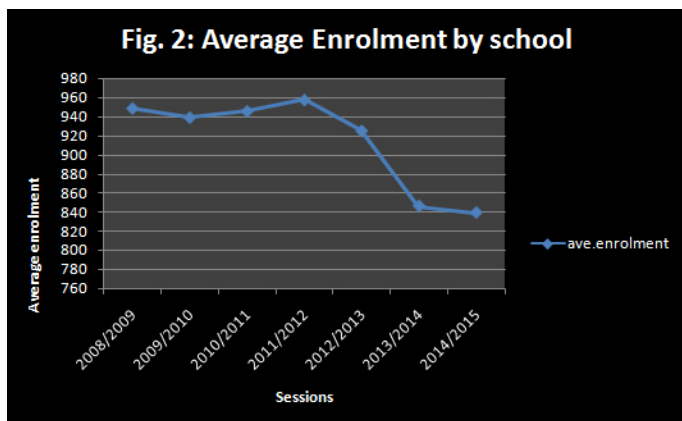


Fig. 1, taking a somewhat normal curve shape, shows the fluctuating trend and the higher enrolments of girls over boys.

2. What is the ratio of enrolments of girls to boys?

From Table 1, over the seven sessions considered, the ratio of girls to boys in enrolments was favourable to girls as also reflected in Fig. 1.

3. What is the average enrolment by schools over the sessions?



As shown in Fig. 2, the average enrolment over the sessions is not encouraging. It fell a bit at first and rose to its peak in 2011/2012 session and drastically fell till the last session.

Table 2: Mean Difference in Enrolments between Boys and Girls

Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
staff employment	Equal variances assumed	.910	.359	-7.973	12	.000	-5347.286	670.67129	-6808.55	-3886.02
	Equal variances not assumed			-7.973	9.948	.000	-5347.286	670.67129	-6842.70	-3851.87

The conclusion from Table 2 is that there is no significant difference in enrolment between boys and girls over the sessions considered ( $t=2.583$ ,  $df=12$ ,  $p=0.024$ , two-tailed).

2. There is no significant difference in staff employment between female and male teachers

4. What is the teacher/student ratio over the sessions?

Table 1 displays the teacher/student ratio which has been favourable to students over the seven sessions with one student to about 33 recorded in 2008/2009 session and the best recorded in the session 2013/2014 session with a ratio of one student to about 22 teachers.

5. What is the ratio of the female teachers to their male counterparts?

Table 1 also shows that there have been more female teachers in the teaching sector than the male counterparts over the sessions considered, say almost two female teachers to a male teacher.

6. To what extent has the Lagos state government met the gender parity of the MDGs and EFA by 2015 target?

Table 1 summarises the efforts of the Lagos state government at meeting the educational goals, Millennium Development Goals and that of the Education for All which centre around gender parity between boys and girls in enrolments and increasing enrolments. To a large extent, gender parity has been achieved, however, efforts need be intensified at increasing enrolments in schools generally.

Test of Hypotheses

1. There is no significant difference between female and male enrolments over the sessions considered

Table 3: Mean Difference in Teacher Employment between Female and Male

Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for								
									95% Confidence Interval of the	
							Mean	Std. Error		
staff employment	Equal variances assumed	.910	.359	-7.973	12	.000	-5347.286	670.67129	-6808.55	-3886.02
	Equal variances not assumed			-7.973	9.948	.000	-5347.286	670.67129	-6842.70	-3851.87

The conclusion from Table 3 is that there is a significant difference in teacher employment between female and male teachers in favour of the female teachers as could be observed from Table 1 ( $t=7.973, df=12, p=0.0005$ , two-tailed).

**Discussion**

The question of ensuring parity in enrolments between boys and girls in schools as enshrined in the Millennium Development Goals (Goal 3) and the Education for All Conference Report (Goal 5) has been addressed by the Lagos State government going by the insignificant difference that existed between both sexes over the sessions considered, with the marginal advantage in favour of girls. This, according to the Lagos State 2009-2020 Education Sector Plan (2012) is a landmark in the history of educational development in Nigeria. This contrasts sharply with Okebukola's (2008) observation that in some states in the South-East, female participation in the Junior Secondary consistently increased in absolute and relative terms at the expense of male participation while female participation is significantly lower than that of males in many Northern states especially in Sokoto, Kebbi, Taraba, Yobe, Bauchi and Kano.

The MDGs and EFA recognize gender equality in all ramifications to which attention has been directed towards by the Lagos State government as could be observed from Table 1 as more women were on the State government's pay roll than their male counterparts. This was made possible due to the opportunities offered the girls several years ago.

Another achievement in education by the state is the manageable class size maintained by the State consistently over the years considered. This is far better than even the National Policy on Education (2013) of one teacher to 40 students. The state government has even surpassed its own benchmark of one teacher to 50 students as contained in the Lagos State Ministry of Education's Report (2016).

**Conclusion**

Given the relevance of education in national and individual developments, its provision, in a highly subsidized form, if it cannot be provided free, is not debatable. The girl-child education is even more valuable in national lives than any other consideration given the background of the study and a larger dose of this commodity should be given to girls than boys, or at least, at par as recommended by the MDGs and EFA.

**Recommendations**

1. Efforts should be intensified by the state government to increase enrolments in schools going by the average decline in enrolments per school.
2. Facilities should be improved alongside increasing enrolments,

given its achievement to maintain quality education as upheld by the MDGs and EFA

3. Increasing employment in favour of males would not be a bad idea given the preference of women over men for all the sessions considered. It is often believed that men enforce discipline more on students than women, though may be debatable.
4. The state government should always measure or evaluate these statistics in relation to students' academic performance, being the major, if not the sole determinant, of the internal efficiency of an educational system.
5. It might be necessary for the state government to once in a while assess each school based on its peculiarities. The aggregated data may not speak of what goes on each school and this may put some schools at an undue advantage over others.

**References**

- [1]. *Lagos State 2009-2020 Education Sector Plan (2012)*. Lagos State Ministry of Education. Ikeja: Lagos state government
- [2]. *Lagos State Ministry of Education (2016). Lagos state school census report*. Ikeja: Lagos state government
- [3]. *National Policy on Education (2013)*. Federal Ministry of Education. Abuja: Federal government of Nigeria
- [4]. *Okebukola, P. O. (2008). Education reform imperatives for achieving vision 20-2020. National summit on education on repositioning Nigeria's educational system for the achievement of the National vision 20-2020 vision, held at the Sheraton Hotel, Abuja*
- [5]. *Olaniyonu, S. O. A. and Gbenu, J. P. (2016). Educational planning and policy. Ogun state: Laideb printers*
- [6]. *Olatunji, W. (2013). Planning the location of schools: issues in school mapping and records. Ibadan: Joytal printing press*
- [7]. *Vision 2020 Paper (2010). Office of the presidency. Abuja: Federal government of Nigeria*

## Author's Profile



*Gbenu, Jide Pius (Ph.D.) was born in Lagos bagging his first and Ph.D. degrees in Lagos State University, Ojo-Lagos, Nigeria specializing in Educational Planning. He also holds Masters in Educational Administration and Measurement & Evaluation from the University of Lagos, in addition to holding Masters degree in Economics from the Lagos State University. He is currently a Senior Lecturer in the*

*Department of Educational Management, Lagos State University, Ojo-Lagos, Nigeria. e-mail: piusjide@gmail.com*



*Lawal Rasaki Olanrewaju is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Educational Foundations and Management at Michael Otedola College of Primary Education, Noforija-Epe, Lagos Nigeria. He attended Lagos State College of Education (now Adeniran Ogunsanya College of Education), University of Nigeria, Nsukka and Lagos State University, Ojo, Lagos Nigeria where he*

*obtained Nigeria Certificate in Education (NCE), B.Sc(Ed) and M.Ed in Educational Management respectively.*

*Lawal, R.O was formerly the Head of Department, General Studies in Education and currently the Head of Department Educational Foundations and Management at Michael Otedola College of Primary Education, Noforija-Epe, Lagos. He is currently a PhD student at the Lagos State Univeristy, Ojo, Lagos Nigeria. He has many chapters in different edited books and has published several articles in both local and international journals. e-mail: raslaw228@gmail.com*