

## **Addressing Enrolment and Attendance Disparities in Rural and Urban Primary Schools Post-Insurgency: Enhancing Library Services for Equitable Education**

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**Amina Ibrahim Makintami, CLN, PhD**

School of General Studies, Yobe State University, Damaturu  
[amakintammi13@gmail.com](mailto:amakintammi13@gmail.com) / +2347035870146

And

**Muhammad Zannah-Bukar Badia, CLN, BLS, MLS, PhD (In View)**

Nigeria Arabic Language Village,  
(Inter-University Centre for Arabic Studies)  
Library Department  
Ngala, Borno State  
[mzbadia78@gmail.com](mailto:mzbadia78@gmail.com) / +2348035453199

### **Abstract**

The study investigated and addressed the disparities in enrolment and attendance rates of pupils in primary schools in the North zone of Yobe State after the insurgency. According to a report by the UNESCO Institute for Statistics in June 2022, there has been an increase in school enrolment and attendance among pupils in sub-Saharan Africa between 2009 and 2020. The gross percentage of female enrollment was reported to be 93–98%, respectively. However, a policy study by the World Bank in Sub-Saharan Africa in 2021 stated that there was no progress in enrolment or attendance in primary education in Africa. The report mentioned that enrolment decreased from 79% in 2009 to 72% in 2020 due to the poor condition of primary schools in Africa. A report in A Child Report of 2016 indicates that 87.7% 2015 Female Population with No or Uncompleted Primary Education was recorded in Yobe state, and 12.8% Primary School Attendance Rate. The study has two research objectives: to determine the differences in enrolment between urban and rural primary schools and to determine the differences in attendance between urban and rural primary schools in the zone. The study addresses two research questions. The survey research method was used, and data was collected through questionnaires. The findings of the study indicate a significant difference in pupil enrolment between urban and rural primary schools, with urban schools having 76% of the enrolment and rural schools having 22%. Furthermore, the study shows a difference in attendance between rural and urban primary schools, with urban

*schools having 81% attendance and rural schools having 19%. The recommendations made, among others, include: efforts should be made to improve physical access to schools by constructing more in closer proximity to students' homes; the curriculum should be revised to meet the basic needs of primary school-age children, taking into account their socio-cultural context; and so on.*

**Key-words-:** *Library Services, School Enrolment, Students' Attendance.*

## Introduction

Library services play a crucial role in improving school attendance by providing students with a supportive and stimulating environment that complements their educational journey. Libraries offer a wide range of resources, programs, and assistance that not only enhance learning but also contribute to student engagement, motivation, and academic success. In this introduction, we will explore how library services can positively impact school attendance and encourage students to actively participate in their education. The major educational issues in Africa today are the stagnation of enrollment and the erosion of quality. This is so because most schools in sub-Saharan Africa have poor learning conditions.

A report in 2016 indicates that 87.7% female population with no or uncompleted Primary Education was recorded in Yobe state, and 12.8% Primary School Attendance Rate, while in Yobe Education of 2018 indicated that, educational attainment in 2018 dropped to 74.1% Population with no or uncompleted Primary Education. The National Audit Office reported that more primary schools have been established in Yobe State, with an enrolment figure of over 500,000 pupils as of 2004. However, after visiting the schools in December

2004, the attendance figure was only 215,640. The primary schools were established mostly on political grounds, and after enrolling the pupils, they failed to attend classes (National Audit Office 2005). Okebukola (2000) identified six main problems that affect enrolment and attendance in Nigerian primary schools, including difficulty with physical access, the inability of the curriculum to meet the basic needs of primary school-age children, inadequate facilities and health issues, socio-economic constraints, and socio-cultural problems. However, Black (2014) argues that school attendance is reinforced through continuous teacher guidance and parental or guardian encouragement. When schools are located far away from pupils' homes, problems with enrolment and attendance can increase. Some pupils may leave their homes to find a suitable place to play until after school hours if they feel they will face problems at school. They may then return home and claim to have attended school. Other issues include sitting on the floor or under shaded trees without furniture, which also affects the enrolment and attendance of pupils in schools; the poor status of some parents, that is., their inability to afford provisions such

as school uniforms, books, and writing materials for their children; and so on. Upholding financial responsibilities by parents in rural areas discourages pupils from attending classes. Some parents argue that most of the teachers who teach in rural areas do not live in their assigned villages, making it difficult for them to attend class on time and leaving the pupils in the care of their fellow schoolmates. This also causes some students to lose interest in going to school regularly.

Moreover, the physical environment of rural schools discourages enrollment and attendance. There are not enough classrooms to accommodate the pupils, and many of them sit under shaded trees on the bare ground to attend classes. The absence of teachers also discourages students from attending school in rural areas. But, in the case of urban schools, the situation is overcrowded classrooms, with between 60 and 80 pupils enrolled per class. The classes are inadequate to accommodate the growing number of pupils. In some classes, the teachers may appear to be in the class, but there are not enough qualified teachers to manage the entire school population.

Generally speaking, in the aftermath of an insurgency, rebuilding the education system is often a critical priority. Primary education, being the foundation of a child's academic journey, plays a pivotal role in this recovery process. However, both rural and urban primary schools face a significant challenge in ensuring equitable access to education. Enrollment and attendance disparities are common in such settings, and it is crucial to address these disparities to

promote inclusive and equitable education. One effective way to achieve this is by enhancing library services in these schools. Moreover, in the aftermath of the insurgency, the study area often experienced significant challenges in education, particularly in the area of human capital and infrastructure facilities. Scores of teachers and other school administrators were slain or displaced, so also hundreds of students and pupils were either killed or kidnapped, parents, and many other stakeholders might have undergone traumatic experiences. Many more infrastructural facilities were burnt down or damaged. These challenges can have a severe impact on enrollment and attendance rates. In rural areas, limited resources and access to quality education exacerbate the problem, while in urban areas, overcrowded classrooms and inadequate facilities can deter students from attending school regularly.

#### Statement of the Problem

Lack of library services poses a major issue, leading to restricted educational resource access for students. Those without libraries may struggle to find necessary materials, creating educational inequalities. Students with library access have advantages in assignments, research, and knowledge expansion. Furthermore, the absence of libraries hinders the development of literacy and information skills, crucial for academic success. Libraries also provide quiet, safe study spaces; their absence may impede focus and hinder academic engagement. Recognizing these challenges emphasizes the need for

well-equipped libraries to enhance students' educational experiences. It is evident from the report of the State Universal Primary Education Board (SUPEB) that enrolment and attendance disparities in rural and urban primary schools in Yobe State are a matter of great concern to the Universal Basic Education Board (UBE) and the state government. The study focuses on the period from 2006 to 2011. It will be valuable in examining the specific problems of enrolment and attendance in both rural and urban primary schools. By comparing the experiences and challenges faced by schools in different settings, the study can determine whether the problems are similar or different. Identifying the specific factors contributing to low enrollment and poor attendance is crucial for developing effective solutions.

The issues highlighted by the SUPEB, such as lack of effective policy implementation, underfunding of primary education, neglect of traditional rulers' roles, and inadequately qualified teachers, are important areas to explore in this study. The study dwelt on a causal comparative analysis by examining the relationship between these factors and enrolment and attendance rates in rural and urban schools. This will provide valuable insights into the underlying causes of the problem and help suggest lasting solutions. The study has the potential to contribute to the ongoing efforts of the state government and education authorities in addressing the challenges of enrolment and attendance in primary schools. By providing evidence-based recommendations, the research can inform policy decisions and interventions aimed at improving access

to quality education in both rural and urban areas of Yobe State.

### **Research Questions**

1. Is there a difference between rural and urban enrolment in primary schools in northern Yobe State?
2. What are the differences in attendance between urban and rural primary schools?

### **Literature Review**

School attendance denotes the consistent participation of learners in timely or regular school activities. School attendance, according to Epstein and Sheldon (2002), requires a commitment to classroom time and activities throughout the entire academic program. Sekiwu, Sempala, and Frances (2020) indicated that research has shown that school attendance is a significant factor in academic performance. Roby's (2004) School Attendance hypothesis suggests that regular attendance can help learners achieve academic excellence. While, Fleming (2008) advises that learners need regular attendance to be highly engaged in classroom activities, In the context of the North Zone of Yobe State, it is important to examine the specific factors that contribute to enrolment and attendance disparities in rural and urban primary schools' post-insurgency Factors such as infrastructure damage, displacement, security concerns, and socio-economic challenges may have a significant impact on school attendance rates in the region.

In another development, Schoeneberger (2011), Nichols (2003), and Rana, Iqbal, and Tasneem (2015) categorize school attendance into attendees and absentees, with the United States Department of Education (2019) further categorizing attendees into irregular and regular attendees. Zubrick (2019) proposes five dimensions of school absenteeism, including truancy, dropout, mobility, absenteeism, and expulsion. Absenteeism refers to deliberate and unsanctioned absence from school, may be prevalent among certain age groups, and can be influenced by legal implications (National Audit Office, 2005). Child protection laws forbid harsh punishment for non-attendance, which may lead to persistent absenteeism. In some African societies, compulsory school attendance is not yet a legal requirement, which may explain the increase in truancy rates (Sekiwu, 2013).

In the North Zone of Yobe State, it is crucial to explore how these dimensions of school attendance, including dropout, mobility, and absenteeism, manifest differently in rural and urban primary schools' post-insurgency. Understanding the specific challenges faced by each type of school can inform targeted interventions to improve enrollment and attendance rates and ultimately enhance educational outcomes in the region. And Mele (1993) opined that the lack of classroom accommodation in rural areas is because it was generally found that, aside from the inadequate number of classrooms, the existing ones are either generally dilapidated, have blown-off roofs, or have even physically collapsed.

In many areas, temporary zinc classes have been enacted, while others still conduct classes under trees.

The problem of enrolment and attendance in this part of the country can be attributed to historical, socio-economic, and religious misconceptions. It has been observed that some parents refuse to enroll their children in primary school because the cost of sending the pupils to primary school is far higher than the cost of sending them to Qur'anic schools. In a related development, the researcher noted that nomadic schools in some districts had few pupils because the cattle Fulani still do not understand the importance of education for their children. The socio-cultural and moral religious factors affect pupils' attendance in primary schools of Yobe state, some parents do not want to send their children to school because they help them on the farm and look after their animals and properties in the market.

### **Research Methodology**

A survey research design was used to gather information from a sample of ten (10) schools in both urban and rural settlements. It is particularly useful for obtaining data on people's opinions, attitudes, behaviors, and experiences. In this study, the survey method allows for the collection of data on enrollment and attendance patterns in rural and urban schools in the northern part of Yobe State. This aligns with the study's objective of investigating enrolment and attendance differences between rural and urban schools, which is an issue of

concern in the education sector. The survey method provides a structured approach to collecting data from a representative sample of schools in the study area. The survey method is appropriate for this study as it allows for the collection of data on enrolment and attendance patterns, which are essential for understanding the differences between rural and urban schools in the northern part of Yobe State.

Moreover, the population for this study covers two primary schools each in five local government areas under study, which makes a total of ten primary schools. This is for the convenience of work and for saving time and scarce resources. Five urban and five rural schools were selected for the study, making a total of ten schools in all. A random sampling is the best method of drawing a population sample in such a way that all samples were randomly selected from each local government, one each from rural and urban areas. Descriptive statistics and percentages

are used to analyze the data. To reject the null hypothesis, frequency and percentages was used. Total enrolment and attendance for each school were calculated and arranged into a total for the period of six (6) years. This is to determine the extent of enrolment and attendance between the urban and rural schools.

**Data Analysis.**

The first research question was to determine the difference in enrollment between rural and urban primary schools. Table 1 below shows the nature of enrolment in both primary schools in the areas of study. The study provides information on the total enrolment in urban and rural primary schools for a period of six academic sessions. The total enrolment from each of the sampled schools was calculated. In the table, columns show the total enrolment for the schools, while rows show the total enrolment for urban and rural primary schools.

**Table 1 shows the enrollment difference between rural and urban primary schools.**

Local government	Total enrolment in urban and rural	Urban enrolment	% Percentage	Rural enrolment	% Percentage
Bade	76,159	46,038	78	30,121	22
Nguru	53,517	29,593	79	23,924	21
Karasuwa	269,58	16,532	73	10,426	27
Machine	15,218	8,589	77	6,629	23
Geidam	99,150	60,118	67	39,032	33
Total	271,002	160,870	76	110,132	24



The findings from Tables 1 and 2 indicate a significant difference in enrolment and attendance between urban and rural primary schools. The higher enrolment and attendance rates in urban schools compared to rural schools suggest that there is greater awareness and importance placed on education in urban areas. This could be attributed to factors such as higher socio-economic status, better infrastructure, and more access to educational resources in urban areas. The low concentration and attendance rates in rural areas may be influenced by factors such as the need for child labor in agricultural activities and a lack of awareness about the benefits of education. As mentioned by Obanya (2000), parents in rural areas may prioritize the economic contributions of their children over their education.

To address this issue, it is

important for the primary education board, in collaboration with the state government, to allocate more resources and funding towards the development of primary education in rural areas. This could include building more schools in closer proximity to rural communities, providing financial assistance to parents who cannot afford school provisions, and improving access to teaching aids and resources in rural schools. Additionally, sensitization campaigns should be conducted to raise awareness among parents and communities about the importance of education and the negative consequences of absenteeism. Generally, addressing the disparities in enrolment and attendance between urban and rural primary schools requires a multi-faceted approach that considers the socio-economic, cultural, and infrastructural factors that contribute to these differences.

Local Gov't	Total Attendance: Urban/Rural	Urban Attendance	% Percentage	Rural Attendance	% Percentage
Bade	75,833	45,855	81	29,978	19
Nguru	53,274	29,488	86	23,786	14
Karasuwa	26,650	16,405	77	10,245	20
Machina	14,987	8,493	80	6,495	20
Geidam	93,839	59,985	69	38,857	31
Total	264,583	160,225	81	104,358	19

**Table 2 shows differences in attendance between urban and rural primary schools.**

Based on the analysis in Table 2, it can be concluded that there is indeed a significant difference in enrolment between urban and rural primary schools. This finding supports the earlier observation that enrollment and attendance rates are generally lower in rural areas compared to urban areas. It highlights the need for targeted interventions to address the specific challenges faced by rural communities in accessing and participating in primary education.

Table 2 shows that there is sufficient evidence to convince people that there is a significant difference in attendance between urban primary schools and rural primary schools in the study areas.

### **Conclusion**

When formulating policies and interventions to address the issue of enrolment and attendance in primary schools, it is crucial for the government of Yobe State to consider the socio-economic factors that may contribute to parents' reluctance to send their children to school in rural areas. This could include addressing the need for child labor in farms and markets by implementing measures to support families economically, such as providing alternative income-generating opportunities or agricultural support. Additionally, awareness campaigns should be conducted to educate parents in rural areas about the importance of education and the long-term benefits it can provide for their children's future. By considering these factors and implementing targeted interventions,

the government can work towards reducing the barriers to enrolment and improving attendance rates in rural primary schools as well as in urban primary schools. In post-insurgency settings, addressing enrollment and attendance disparities in primary schools is a crucial step towards rebuilding a stable and inclusive educational system. In the same vein, enhancing library services can play a pivotal role in achieving this goal. Libraries offer a wealth of resources, promote reading culture and create an inclusive environment where students can thrive. By investing in library services and implementing effective strategies, both rural and urban primary schools can work towards providing equitable education opportunities for all students, regardless of their backgrounds and circumstances.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the findings of the study, the problem of enrolment and attendance affects more rural schools than schools in urban areas. The recommendations below would assist in reducing or curbing the problems of enrolment and attendance in primary schools in the state and areas of study in particular.

1. It is highly recommended to give priority and allocate resources to library services because of their crucial role in boosting school attendance. Libraries act as essential centres for educational materials, ensuring equal access for all students. By offering a diverse range of books, materials, and digital



resources, libraries enable students to excel in assignments, research, and overall learning. Moreover, libraries are instrumental in developing fundamental literacy and information literacy skills, crucial for academic success and continuous educational involvement. Additionally, these spaces provide quiet and secure environments conducive to focused study, positively influencing students' ability to attend school regularly, complete assignments, and actively engage in their academic pursuits. Acknowledging and emphasizing the significance of library services can significantly contribute to creating a thriving educational environment and fostering consistent school attendance.

2. Efforts should be made to improve physical access to schools by constructing more schools in closer proximity to students' homes, and the curriculum should be revised to meet the basic needs of primary school-age children, taking into account their socio-cultural context.
3. Socio-economic constraints should be addressed by providing financial assistance to parents who cannot afford school provisions for their

children, and health issues should be addressed by ensuring that schools have proper sanitation facilities and access to healthcare services.

4. Sensitization campaigns should be conducted to raise awareness among parents and communities about the importance of regular attendance and the negative consequences of absenteeism, and monitoring and evaluation systems should be put in place to track attendance and address any issues that may arise.
5. Collaboration between the government, NGOs, and other stakeholders should be encouraged to tackle the problem of enrolment and attendance in primary schools, and continuous training and professional development should be provided to teachers to enhance their teaching skills and motivation.
6. Efforts should be made to address socio-cultural issues that may hinder enrolment and attendance, such as gender disparities and cultural beliefs, and research and studies should be conducted regularly to assess the progress made in improving enrolment and attendance rates and to identify any new challenges that may arise.

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