

Reflectivity of Educational opportunities from Mother and Child Education Programme for disadvantaged and marginalized Groups in Yobe State, Nigeria

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Abstract: The Mother and Child Education Programme (MCEP) is a non-formal education programme initiated through the EFA, with financial support from patrons and friends and technical support from UNESCO, in one the southern states of Nigeria (River state). The provision of educational opportunities such as provision of literacy and life skills training, socio-economic empowerment of women and community youth to train as literacy facilitators and to earn an income in the programme covered disadvantaged and marginalized groups such as Mothers and children of Ogoni land, which is made up of six local government areas in Rivers State.

This paper therefore intends to identify the reflectivity of those educational opportunities which were availed from the programme implemented in the southern state and bring out the reflection of those educational opportunities to attention of Yobe state government to adapt the Mother and Child Education Programme (MCEP) through non-formal education structure and use it as measure to provide educational opportunities around literacy and life skills training, socio-economic empowerment of women and community youth to train as literacy facilitators and to earn an income in order to cushion the hardship of disadvantaged and marginalized groups such as widows, divorcees and abandoned wives and also help them to provide means of livelihood in Yobe state.

Key Words: Educational Opportunity, Mother and Child Education Programme, Disadvantaged and Marginalized Group and Reflectivity.

I. INTRODUCTION

For every state or society to boost its social-economic development for their people in Nigeria, it must uphold the Nigeria's educational philosophy in provision of equal educational opportunities to all regardless of status, region, tribe, class, sex and religion of the people, they may belong to. As enshrined in National Policy on Education (2013), The 1948 Universal declaration of human rights is emphatic that "everyone has the right to education. It states that education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory This was echoed by many scholars such as Erese (1983) and Tomasevski (2003) when they affirmed that every person has the right to education and shall be made available to all children and in the same way as higher education shall be

made accessible on merit with parents having the priority to choose the right education for their children.

In spite of these provisions of National Policy on Education in Nigeria yet, some state educational system, educational policy, cultural, attitudinal and traditional practices greatly affect the provision of equal educational opportunities with bearing consequences on quality of life in some groups in Nigeria. For instance in northern Nigeria harmful attitudinal practice on widow, or divorcee and abandoned wife that separate or lost her husband is left with responsibility to cater the needs of children this challenges often affects their well-being sometimes the situation may predispose them to street begging or street hawking in searching for the means of their livelihood. Similarly, reported by UNESCO (2011) as cited in UNESCO, River State Government, Federal Ministry of Education, River State Universal Basic Education Board, River State Adult and Non-Formal Education Agency World Bank Fadama III and Ecumenical Foundation for Africa (EFA MCEP, 2015) has stated that unequal educational opportunities among people with Cultural and traditional practices greatly affect the quality of life in some southern parts of Nigeria. For instance, in Ogoni land, which is made up of six local government areas in Rivers State, cultural practice dictates that a family's first daughter is not allowed to marry even though she is allowed to have children in her parents' home. Children that grow up in families often face formidable challenges affecting their well-being.

It was against this background that a group of professionals from tertiary institutions established the Ecumenical Foundation for Africa (EFA) in 1999. In 2005, the EFA, with financial support from patrons and friends and technical support from UNESCO, created the Mother and Child Education Programme (MCEP) in Nigeria (EFA MCEP, 2015).

The MCEP, a constituent programme within the much broader and holistic Kwawa-Ogoni-UNESCO Educational Development Project (KWUEDP), primarily seeks to make education more accessible to women (mothers) and children and, by extension, to promote women's empowerment appropriate child rearing and rural development.

According to Omachi (2015) (Project Coordinator) as cited in (EFA MCEP, 2015) The MCEP has provided significant educational opportunities on overall educational development in rural areas such as The provision of literacy and life skills training and the resulting socio-economic empowerment of women has helped to decrease the rate of rural-to-urban migration, a phenomenon that has previously led to inappropriate child rearing practices, as children were often left in the care of grandparents. Furthermore, the empowerment of women through training and support to establish income generating projects has led to sustainable self-reliance and improvements in the living standards of rural families. Women have also been empowered to lead more independent lives, as they no longer rely on others to assist them in activities such as writing letters or opening bank accounts.

He has further contended that the creation of ECE centres, where children spend the day, also offers the opportunity for mothers to engage in other crucial livelihood activities without disturbance or distraction from their children. The MCEP has created invaluable opportunities for community youth to train as literacy facilitators and to earn an income. This has helped to prevent them from engaging in anti-social behaviour out of economic necessity. Others, after working for some time as teaching assistants, have been motivated to pursue further education and training.

It is in line with this prospect from educational opportunities of Mother and Child Education Programme (MCEP) in Rivers State, Nigeria. This paper assumes the idea that the reflection of such educational opportunities of Mother and Child Education Programme (MCEP) in Yobe state is crucial for people of educationally and socio-economically disadvantaged group such as widow, divorcees and abandoned wives to help them improve means of livelihood in Yobe state.

II. CONCEPT AND OVERVIEW IN NIGERIA

2.1 The MCEP

Mother and Child Education Programme the MCEP is an integrated and intergenerational (family-based) educational and literacy programme, sometimes referred to as the 'civic approach' to mother and child education. It is 'civic' because it is a people-oriented programme, based on the development of a 'power base' and 'voice' for participants. The programme seeks to make education more accessible to all, but particularly to the vulnerable, poor majority living in disadvantaged and marginalized rural communities. Although the MCEP is an inclusive family and community-based educational programme, it particularly targets mothers and children (ages 0-8 years) who, as noted above, have been marginalized from existing educational and literacy programmes. Therefore, the provision of basic adult literacy and life skills training to women and early childhood education is central to the MCEP. This is cited in the (EFA MCEP, 2015)

It further explained that in order to effectively address the diverse learning needs of women and children from different socio-linguistic backgrounds, the MCEP employs an integrated and bilingual (English and mother tongue) approach to literacy and life skills training. The programme therefore places greater emphasis on subjects and activities that are central to the learners' socio-economic context and everyday experiences and needs, such as the following:

Adult literacy and ECE, including mother-to-child education
Health (e.g. HIV/AIDS awareness and prevention, nutrition and sanitation)
Civic education (e.g. human rights, conflict resolution and management, peace building, child rearing, leadership, gender and inter-religious relations)
Environmental management and conservation
Income generation or livelihood development
Reading and Democracy: Promotion of reading culture and democratic principles through book and library development
Rural employment promotion with direct links between mothers and government and International development partners' projects, such as the World Bank Fadama III project and credit and loan schemes for their small businesses.

2.2 Early Childhood Education

The component of programme first began as an incentive for mothers to participate in the literacy component. Mothers have often had difficulty finding somewhere for their children to go when they are working at farms or small businesses during the day. This means that children are often left in hazardous environments and, even if they accompany their mothers to the farms, they are often left unattended. The ECE component of the programme provides a space for children to go and also requires the participation of the child's mother in the literacy programme. Even though the literacy programme is compulsory for mothers, however, they are eager to participate, as they are then exposed to skills' acquisition, loan and credit schemes or, alternatively, to other government and international development partners projects. The exact amount of empowerment given to mothers through the programme depends on their interests, as well as the available opportunities in the area. The literacy programme is not an end in itself, but serves as the fulcrum for all available opportunities for women to empower themselves.

2.3 Programme Objectives

Promote intergenerational (family-based) and bilingual (English and mother tongue) learning
Provide parents with appropriate child rearing skills, including the supporting role of fathers
Empower women to participate actively in their children's education by providing links between home and the literacy centres/schools. Equip women groups with the functional or livelihood skills necessary for improving their families' living standards and access to markets. Promote the spirit of volunteerism and self-reliance
Foster ecumenical principles of equity, justice, peace and social control
Provide capacity building and training for volunteer teachers, literacy facilitators and women leaders from various projects and members of community development committees for self-

reliance of mothers, and an effective local management structure as an exit strategy for the NGO.

2.4 Programme Implementation: Approaches and Methodologies

The implementation of community-based educational and literacy programmes is often encumbered by a lack of financial and material resources, human resources (professional and/or semi-professional instructors) and, most importantly, community involvement and support. In order to circumvent these challenges and to ensure the success and sustainability of the MCEP, the EFA has prioritized the active involvement of local communities in the development, planning and implementation of the programme. In order to do this, the EFA has organised programme participants into community-based learning groups. Local leaders, primarily chiefs and chairmen of community development committees, have also been lobbied to lend their support to the programme, thus encouraging their people to participate. Traditional leaders, community development committees, and leaders of the learning groups also assist the EFA in developing and designing the programme curriculum, which is often verified by established educational institutions. The curriculum not only addresses the specific existential needs of the local communities, but is also relevant to their cultural systems and traditions. Similarly, the community is also actively involved in the development of teaching-learning materials, which are often made locally. The learning groups are also responsible for establishing and managing Community Learning Centres (CLCs), including ECE centres.

In order to cut programme costs, EFA has also recruited a volunteer cohort of community-based, professional ECE, adult literacy and life skills teachers who are responsible for teaching the programme in their local communities. These professionals are often assisted by semi-professionals, usually young secondary school graduates.

2.5 Recruitment and Training of Instructors /Facilitators

In order to enable them to carry out their teaching duties effectively and efficiently, EFA provides volunteers with further training and mentoring in the following; Adult and child-appropriate teaching-learning methods Classroom and mother and child center management Development and production of teaching-learning materials Assessment of learning processes and outcomes Family mini-library management of resources and books Cultural and human rights ICT-based ECE and family literacy.

2.6 Recruitment of Learners

Learners are selected according to the community they live in and, due to the acute lack of resources in rural areas each participating community must have already established a primary school. The community school ensures the availability of classrooms and volunteer teachers for the original implementation of the programme. With the full support of the community, three volunteer teachers is enough to kick-start the literacy part of the programme and, as the

center gradually grows and more volunteer teachers are recruited, other aspects of the programme are established. Families with children (0-6 years) are registered and the initial focus is put on the most vulnerable group in the family: mothers and young children.

Empirical Review of Educational opportunities with disadvantaged and marginalized Groups in Nigeria

Education is a concept that is universally accepted as being the impeccable instrument for the development of the potentialities of a nation which would ultimately bring about national development by way of combating poverty, illiteracy, disease and other social and economic problems (Muftahu, Salihu, and Hazri 2015)

As it was also cited in (Muftahu, Salihu, and Hazri 2015) that equal educational opportunity is a birth right and not a privilege of every citizen of any country as it was declared on (1948) by The Universal Declaration of Human Rights. This was echoed by many scholars such as Erese (1983) and Tomasevski (2003) when they affirmed that every person has the right to education and shall be made available to all children and in the same way as higher education shall be made accessible on merit with parents having the priority to choose the right education for their children. To facilitate these, Imam (2012) suggested that government should strive to make education available, accessible, acceptable, equitable and adaptable regardless of their background and social stratification in the societies.

In spite of these universally legal provisions on equal educational opportunities for all, yet in some part of Africa countries such equal educational opportunity there would have hardly reached out to all groups which Nigeria is inclusive. For example, Birchall (2019) has rigorously reviewed the concept of Social Exclusion in Nigeria by which he has examined different groups vulnerable to social exclusion in Nigeria. It is divided into: women and girls; people with disabilities; ethnic and religious minorities; migrants and internally displaced people; children and young people; older people; sexual minorities; people without identification; people living with HIV; and people living in different locations.

He has also stated that however, it is important to note the intersectional forms of exclusion that each of these groups face. The UNDP (2018) has noted for example, that “women and young people are often victims of multiple and interlocking forms of discrimination and exclusion that can lead to an imbalance of power that excludes them from participating in educational and socio-economic development and affairs that affect them, ultimately undermining their needs and aspirations”

In the review of his paper, he has continued to identify and examine each of the groups below, social exclusion is experienced as a result of complex and intersectional factors that combine to reduce their participation in society.

Women and girls

Gender inequality and discrimination against women and girls in Nigeria is a well-recognized cause of social exclusion. Nigeria ranks 118 out of 134 countries in the Gender Equality Index (World Bank, 2018) as cited in Birchall (2019)

Women and girls in Nigeria face a range of formal and informal barriers to social inclusion. These barriers arise from a combination of restricted access to employment, education, health services, legal rights and public participation, and gendered social norms that position women and girls as wives and caretakers while men and boys are breadwinners and decision makers. This means that boys' rights – whether to education, health care or adequate nutrition – are prioritized over those of girls from an early age (Mayah, Mariotti, Mere and Okwudili 2017)

Women are less likely to be active in the labour market, more likely to be in lower-earning opportunities like farming and informal jobs, and they earn less for a given level of education and experience than men of the same level (Enfield, 2019). Women's estimated earned income is 65 percent of men's (World Bank, 2018). In both poor rural and urban areas in Nigeria, women work longer hours than men, spend more time on unpaid care work and subsistence agriculture, and have less time to engage in paid work and social and cultural activities (Budlender and Moussie, 2013). As all cited in Birchall (2019)

There are clear disparities in education between women and men, and between girls and boys. The out of school rate is 32 percent for girls and 28 percent for boys, and the completion rate of primary education for boys is around 80 percent while only 66 per cent for girls (World Bank, 2018). 55 percent of women and girls age 15-49 have completed six or less years of education, compared with 38 percent of men and boys (UN Women, 2019)

People with disabilities

People with disabilities in Nigeria face a range of attitudinal, environmental and institutional barriers to social inclusion (Wapling, 2019) as cited in Birchall (2019) As with women and girls, people with disabilities experience a combination of formal barriers (which mean that adjustments are not made and services are not accessible) and informal barriers (arising from discriminatory attitudes and exclusionary practices).

Estimates of disability prevalence in Nigeria vary across sources, and range from two to ten percent. The Joint National Association of Persons with Disabilities (JONAPWD) and World Health Organization have estimated that there are over 25 million people with disabilities in Nigeria, whereas other estimates are only around 3.3 million (Holden 2019 and Thompson, 2019) as cited in Birchall (2019)

People with disabilities are disproportionately affected by poverty in Nigeria, with nine out of ten living below the poverty level (Thompson, 2019). Rates of youth unemployment for people with disabilities are 77.3 percent,

compared with 49.2 percent for people without a disability. The adult unemployment rate is 62.5 percent for people with disabilities compared to 21.5 percent for those without disabilities. Women with disabilities are more likely to be unemployed and uneducated than men (Thompson, 2019) as cited in Birchall (2019)

One recent study suggests that only 36 percent of children and young people with disabilities in Nigeria are literate. (Holden, Clark, and Abualghaib, 2019) stated that the participation rate in education is 12 percent for children with disabilities, compared with 57 percent for those without disabilities. While those children with disabilities who are in school have good primary completion rates, JONAPWD estimates that 90 percent of children with disabilities are out of school in Nigeria (Thompson, 2019). Barriers to education for people with disabilities include long and difficult journeys to school, poverty and school fees, negative attitudes and stigma, inaccessible infra

Migrants and internally displaced people

Nigeria is a country of origin, transit and destination for different types of migrants (Government of Nigeria, 2015) as cited in Birchall (2019) Evidence suggests that migrant workers in Nigeria experience social exclusion, particularly if they are working in less regulated sectors such as agriculture, textiles, construction, mining, the food industry and domestic work (Committee on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families, (2017) Crichton, Haider, Chowns, and Browne (2015) Government of Nigeria, 2015). Internally displaced people (IDPs) face significant social exclusion. The International Organization for Migration (IOM) currently estimates that there are around 1.9 million IDPs in Nigeria (IOM, 2018).

Displacement negatively impacts on livelihoods and creates further exclusion and marginalization. By 2016, more than 800,000 people in Nigeria stopped receiving a regular income because of displacement, and only 53 percent of the individuals who received some income prior to displacement continued to receive any part of it after it (World Bank, 2018). IDPs in Nigeria experience continued food shortages, unemployment, congested housing settlements, poor sanitation, targeting by Boko Haram and lack of access to education and healthcare. There are significant gaps in medical, psychosocial and legal services for internally displaced people (Nigerian Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development, 2018; Le Van et al, 2018), and many IDPs experience increased rates of malaria, acute watery diarrhoea, measles and pregnancy related diseases (UNDP, 2018).

Children and young people

Nigeria has a young population; in 2017, 44 percent of the population were under the age of 14, and 19 percent were between 15 and 24 years old (Wapling, 2019) as cited in Birchall (2019) However, Nigeria scores below regional and global average in all six Human Capital Indicators measuring

outcomes for children around survival, schooling, and health (World Bank, 2018) Children who cannot access education, health, and other basic services needed for their wellbeing and participation in society, are at significant risk of social exclusion.

The UN Committee on the Rights of the Child has expressed a range of concerns about children in Nigeria, including: the varying legal definitions of child across Nigeria's states; discrimination against girl children, children from minority ethnic groups, internally displaced children and children with disabilities; access to health and education; economic and sexual exploitation; and harmful traditional practices (Committee on the Rights of the Child, 2010) as cited in Birchall (2019)

There are an estimated 17.5 million vulnerable and orphaned children in Nigeria, 8.7 million Primary age children Nigeria are out of school; 32 percent of girls and 28 percent of boys, and there are more out of school children in the north and in rural areas. The primary completion rate is higher for boys (80 percent) than girls (66 percent) (World Bank, 2018) Children are out of school for a range of reasons; many (especially girls) are engaged in unpaid care work. Others are in paid work; the child labour ratio is 25 percent (Thompson, 2019). In the north east of the country many schools have closed due to the Boko Haram insurgency or are being used to host IDPs (UNDP, 2018). In addition, children attending Qur'anic schools ('almajiris') count as one of the largest groups among out of school children as they are not included in official statistics (Bierman and Powell, 2016).

Young people in Nigeria also face a range of barriers to social inclusion. An estimated 83 percent of the population is below the age of 40, and 62 percent are under 25 years old (UNDP, 2018). Young people age 15-29 are particularly prone to economic and social exclusion. While a high proportion of this age group is literate, the group has the highest unemployment and inactivity rates; only one third are employed. Poverty rates for young people increased by 6.3 percent between 2011 and 2016 (World Bank, 2018)

Older people

A study looking at the socioeconomic situations of older people in Ijebuland, Nigeria found that older people are experiencing disadvantage and exclusion due to an ageing society increasing the demand for social support, and changes in the nature and structure of the family as young people leave agricultural employment, obtain education and move to urban areas. Older people, especially in rural areas, do not have access to formal support systems and social security benefits in place of traditional family support; this leaves them, the author argues, facing "falling income, deteriorating health conditions, poor nutrition, isolation, and boredom" (Wahab, 2011) as cited in Birchall (2019).

Older women can be more vulnerable to social exclusion. Due to the patriarchal power relations underpinning Nigerian institutions, structures and communities, widowed women

may face greater social exclusion than those who are married. This can include being dispossessed of property after their husband's death and 'widowhood practices' such as seclusion, humiliation and ill-treatment from in laws and communities (Durojaye, 2013). Once again, intersectional factors are at work; one study found that Muslim widows in rural areas of Nigeria had better nutritional status and were less likely to be dispossessed of property or to be ill-treated, when compared to Christian widows (Milazzo and van de Walle, 2018).

People without identification

Social exclusion is also more likely for populations who do not have official identification, and in Nigeria, less than 50 percent of residents have any ID at all (World Bank, 2018) as cited in Birchall (2019) Living without an ID makes it difficult for individuals to access social protection, education, healthcare or financial services, and they may be unable to vote in elections or cross borders legally. Le Van et al. (2018), in their study of marginalized groups in the context of ID in Nigeria, discuss several groups who are more likely not to have ID, and to experience exclusion as a result. These are: IDPs; slum dwellers and informal housing residents; women; people with disabilities; religious minorities; migrant and border communities; and minority groups experiencing geographic marginalization. When combined with other causes of marginalization such as gender, disability or displacement, the result of being without official ID can be systematic social, economic and political exclusion (Le Van et al., 2018).

People living with HIV

Prevalence figures for people living with HIV vary across different studies and sources, but the UNAIDS figure is 1,900,000 people. The percentage of people living with HIV – among adults age 15-49 years – is 1.5 percent, The Joint United Nation Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS, 2018) as cited in Birchall (2019) Women are disproportionately affected, making up 56 percent of people living with HIV. In 2018, 26,000 new HIV infections were in young women aged 15–24 years, compared to 15,000 in young men of the same age. However, HIV treatment was higher among women than men; 68 percent of adult women living with HIV were receiving treatment compared to 37 percent of adult men (UNAIDS, 2018).

People living with HIV in Nigeria experience stigma and discrimination from individuals and communities, and unwillingness to treat people with HIV from healthcare workers (Odimegwu, Akinyemolai and Alabi, 2017). 47 percent of Nigerian women and 46 percent of men think that children living with HIV should not be able to attend school with children who are HIV negative, and 53 percent of women and 50 percent of men say they would not buy fresh vegetables from a shopkeeper with HIV

People living in different locations

As the sections above have shown, Nigeria is an extremely diverse country, with significant differences in experiences

and causes of social exclusion across its 36 states. Much of the literature talks about differences between the north and south, with the north lagging behind the more prosperous south. Since 2011, much of the Nigerian population in the north has seen declining consumption, but in the south, even the poorest households have experienced at least modest improvements in welfare. Similarly, poverty has increased in rural areas and in the north, but fallen in the southern zones (World Bank, 2018) as cited in Birchall (2019) UNDP Nigeria's Intensity of Poverty by Region measure shows that in the north east 45 percent of people is experiencing poverty. In the North West the percentage is very similar at 44 percent, while the south east and south west percentages are both 38 percent (UNDP, 2018). The proportion of people in the south who have no education ranges between 5 and 8 percent, while in the north the numbers are between 32 and 69 percent (World Bank, 2018). However, unemployment is highest in the southern

Challenges of educational opportunities with disadvantaged and marginalized Groups in Yobe state

The deprivation of educational opportunity in Nigeria and Yobe state inclusive is driven by various social exclusion factors as Birchall (2019) provides a critical review of the nature and basis of those social exclusions in Nigeria. Other factors including economic barriers and socio cultural norms and practices Regulation of Education, National Policy on Education on equal distribution of educational opportunity Education system that deprive non-formal education system Owoicho (2017)

Despite Yobe state's commitment to educational transformational reform still some the educational mandate of some groups for equal educational opportunities remains unattainable especially in rural communities without numerous opportunities such as literacy and life skills training such of widows, divorcees and abandoned wives.

Regulation of Education in the state underscores the importance of thinking about the distribution of educational opportunities that, the vast majority of such opportunities are provided through and regulated by the state. This means that, unlike other policy levers, education is typically under the control of state institutions and has the potential to reach the vast majority of the nation's people regardless of Ages, status, gender-based divides religious and class. The state, for example, cannot justly provide unequal benefits to groups on the basis of such factors.

This was buttressed in Yobe state educational policy and system, Gambo (2018) reiterated that Yobe was giving priority attention also to primary education system. The non-formal system of education has not been well taking care of which leads to educational inequality within the state.

The evidence shows that Yobe state's education system is not doing enough to address inequality between the most and least advantaged young people, and disadvantaged and marginalized groups especially in rural communities similarly,

family background still plays an unacceptably large role in determining his or her educational pathway as well as some features of the system may actually be widening the gap.

As clearly it was pointed out that in Birchall (2019) the northern part of Nigeria comprising of (Borno, Yobe and Adamawa) the picture is even bleaker, with a net attendance rate of 53 percent, getting out-of-school children back into education poses a massive challenge. It has further stated that Gender, like geography and poverty, is an important factor in the pattern of educational marginalization. States in the north-east and north-west have female primary net attendance rates of 47.7 percent and 47.3 percent, respectively, meaning that more than half of the girls are not in school. Educational provision in predominantly rural areas and the impact of insurgency in the northeast present significant challenges. In north-eastern and north-western states, 29 percent and 35 percent of Muslim children, respectively, receive Qur'anic education, which does not include basic skills such as literacy and numeracy. The government and policy of education considers children attending such schools to be officially out-of-school. In north-eastern Nigeria, 2.8 million children are in need of education-in-emergencies support in three conflict-affected States (Borno, Yobe and Adamawa). In these States, at least 802 schools remain closed and 497 classrooms are listed as destroyed, with another 1,392 damaged

III. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Empirical evidence from the (EFA MCEP, 2015) has shown that the Mother and Child Education Programme approach (MCEP) in one the southern states of Nigeria (River state) by UNESCO was crucial for availing educational opportunities to disadvantaged and marginalized groups from rural communities with numerous opportunities such as literacy, life skills and training resulting into socio-economic empowerment of women has helped to decrease the rate of rural-to-urban migration, the empowerment of women through training and support to establish income generating projects has led to sustainable self-reliance and improvements in the living standards of rural families. Women have also been empowered to lead more independent lives, as they no longer rely on others to assist them in activities such as writing letters or opening bank accounts in Ogoni land, which is made up of six local government areas in Rivers State. Despite the background challenges of disparity in equal educational opportunities distribution perceived from educational policy the programme was however, successful according to Omachi (2015) (Project Coordinator) as cited in (EFA MCEP, 2015)

Since the evidence has vindicated imperativeness of the Mother and Child Education Programme approach (MCEP) of counterpart disadvantaged and marginalized rural groups in southern state of Ogoni land, which is made up of six local government areas in Rivers State.

However the situation vis-à-vis in northern part of Nigeria particularly Yobe state, the evidence, has revealed that the circumstances in disparity in equal educational opportunities among disadvantaged and marginalized groups from rural

communities in Yobe state is complex, and differences in academic outcomes are linked to differences in participation and engagement at all levels of the education system, and policy definition which Yobe state government is assumed doing less commitment to literacy Programmes especially in non-formal education programme to address issues in disadvantaged and marginalized groups especially in rural communities, buttressing to this Gambo (2018) reiterated that Yobe was giving priority attention only to the formal primary education system leaving behind non formal system with huge challenges around dysfunctional services delivery which by implication would not have carried only the educational needs of disadvantaged and marginalized groups across 17 local government areas in Yobe State as shown in the increase in educational, economic and social exclusion in disadvantaged and marginalized groups in Yobe state and Nigeria at large as cited in Birchall (2019).

It is on this ground therefore, Yobe state should identify and reflect educational opportunities from Mother and Child Education Programme approach (MCEP) as an integrated (family-based) educational and literacy programme to mother and child education. Because it is a people-oriented programme, based on the development of a 'power base' and 'voice' for participants as non-formal education programme relevant and beneficial to disadvantaged and marginalized rural groups of widows, divorcees and abandoned wives in availing and extending opportunities to them and their children and help them also cushion the hardship of life in the widowhood and divorcees in their respective rural communities in Yobe state hence, the Mother and Child Education Programme (MCEP) is fundamental.

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