

EMERGING BARRIERS TO GIRLS' EDUCATION IN JIGAWA



The Issue:

Girls face difficulties with their education in many respects. In the last three years, COVID-19 and insecurity have added to these worries in Jigawa; these difficulties are barriers to Girls' Education.



Out-of-school children



Coronavirus pandemic in 2020

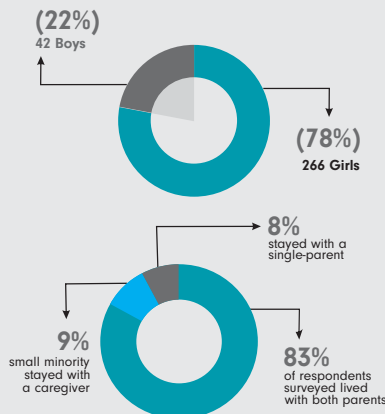


Growing security threat

How do we know of the difficulties or barriers?

A survey was conducted in Jigawa, in November and December 2021, where a total of **308 students** participated in the exercise, to find out some of the difficulties they face in their education.

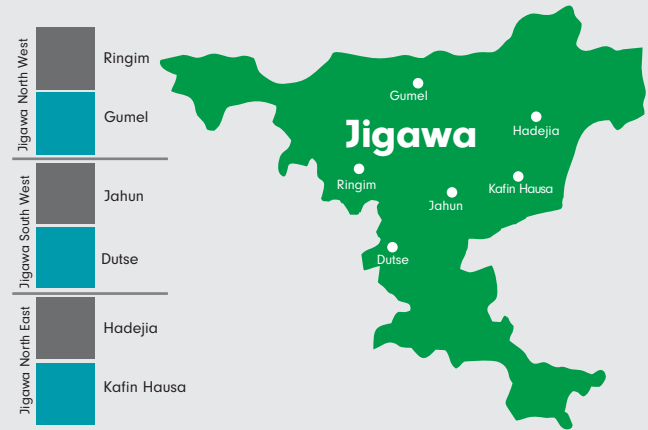
Survey sample and distribution



Total number of respondents
308 Students

The average age of respondents was
16 Years

27 Schools
23 Public schools
4 Private schools
were sampled across 6 LGAs



What constitutes a barrier for Girls?

Physical Barriers Access to school is frustrated by long distance Risks of harassment and threats Insufficient classroom infrastructure	Health Barriers Poor water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) facilities Lack of access to menstruation kits	Personal Barriers Fear of bullying Corporal punishment Stigmatisation	Economic Barriers Poverty, or parents' inability to pay schooling associated expenses e.g. uniforms, supplies etc. This burden leads to child labour sometimes.	Social Barriers Early marriage over completion of basic and senior school education Forced marriage of girls Exploitation or participation in illicit acts
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Illustration of the Difficulties, Fears/Barriers for Girls: An Example of the COVID-19 Lockdown Period

Dealing with stay-at-home orders

What the survey found out
Girls were more likely than boys to report feeling apprehensive as schools closed and interstate travel was prohibited in March 2020.

- 86.5% Girls worried or afraid
- 96% Girls in the North East senatorial zone that indicated feelings of stress
- 76.2% Boys worried or afraid

What the respondents said

- They were afraid of falling ill
- Concerned about kidnapping
- Fear of sexual assault
- Fear of being bullied

Trends related to gender-based violence

What the survey found out

Drop in the number of cases reported by the Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC)

What the respondents said

Fear of some form of sexual assault by adults.

Coping mechanisms and preventive tactics deployed during the lockdown

What the survey found out
Coping techniques and preventative tactics of female Jigawa student respondents

19.4% Avoided People
60% Mostly stayed home

Their male counterparts used similar avoidance strategies. It should be highlighted that these techniques were only used during the lockdown, when stay-at-home orders rendered this the most appropriate behavior for all inhabitants, even young females.

What the respondents said

- 60% Stayed at home
- 19.4% Avoided others
- 20.6% Were near a trusted person

Hardest aspect of not being in school

What the survey found out
The main issues raised by the students who participated in the poll were learning obstacles notably:

- Anxiety about taking exams and falling behind in school work
- The fear of performing poorly in class was the most common response

Girls were more prone to worry about :

- Academic success
- Career advancement
- Missing out on peer social engagement

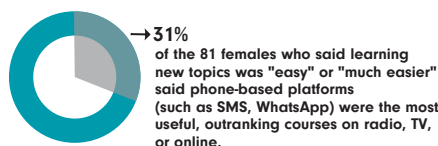
What the respondents said
Respondents were concerned that a delay in finishing school would have an impact on marriage. The top respondents expressed concern about losing interest in school especially if they find something they enjoy doing.

Learning experience during the lockdown

What the survey found out

Students in Jigawa's South-West senatorial zone appear to have received better service than their counterparts in other districts. According to direct student feedback, access to remote learning platforms was generally limited across the state. This has consequences for the efficacy of remote learning, whether it is used to facilitate continuing learning in crises or complement classroom-based learning.

Assessing receptiveness to learning new topics remotely is one technique to judge the efficacy of home-based learning efforts



Some of the reasons offered include:



- Ease of access
- Instant messaging tools that allow contact with other students and teachers
- Search functions that allow for additional reading
- Access to free learning resources on the internet



What the respondents said

"Radio is easy because the teacher takes time to explain the topic repeatedly for better understanding"

"Radio is easy to understand because both English and Hausa language are used for the lessons"

Perception of safety and security

What the survey found out



59.1%
Reported feeling "unsafe" or "very unsafe" on their commute to school

Significant personal exposure

48.9%

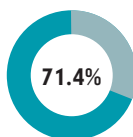
Girls in Hadejia

41.1%

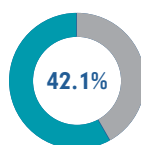
Girls in Ringim



Hostels, sanitary facilities and open areas within the school premises were the places where girls felt most exposed.



Girls enrolled in Gumel schools were more likely to report feeling 'unsafe' or 'very unsafe' on their journey to school.



Girls across board opted for teachers, but with clear references to the limitations of teaching staff and school management to ward off violent attacks.

What the respondents said

"No one here can protect me. The teachers are not armed, the security personnel are not well equipped and usually they don't come on time when there's an attack."

- 19-year-old, female day student, Hadejia

"We cannot attend the schools located outside of town because they are unsafe. They [the government] should hire a lot more security guards."

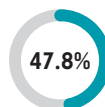
- Hadejia, female, 15 years old

Retention challenges and reasons for discontinuing school

What the survey found out



Prior to the COVID-19 outbreak, girls were already disadvantaged in Jigawa State.



Early marriage was the single most frequently cited reason for girls dropping out of school.



Several respondents reported knowing female peers who had been married off within this period.

Statements made by parents and caregivers point to the tough decisions parents and legal guardians were pushed to make, as well as the strong cultural link between marriage, long-term personal security, and social acceptance.

What the respondents said

"Honestly our parents want us to get married and also be educated but they don't have the resources to support us to that extent. So [it] is better we just get married."

- Dropped out in SS3, Sabon Gari

"Yes, I personally was worried because I have young daughters. I want them to finish schooling before being married off. The lockdown prolonged the process [of secondary school completion]. The suitor insisted that we should go ahead with the marriage and that he will allow her continue schooling after the wedding if the lockdown is eased off. Very intelligent girl. She used to top her class. She got As in her results. But he kept her at home after the marriage." - Parent, Dutse

"There are more dropouts in so many schools. Because of the constant stories being circulated about kidnapping, most parents withdrew their children from school especially those in boarding school. There has also been a shift in prioritisation towards boys' education over girls. Insecurity has forced parents to think twice of their girls in school."

- Representative of NUT, Dutse, Jigawa

Focus group meetings and one-on-one interviews with out-of-school girls provide more insight into the experiences of female dropouts. All discussants cited financial reasons as the primary driver, specifically the lack of school fees, books and learning tools, but also the lack of parental support and valuing boys' education over that of girls.

"My grandmother needed my support. Even before they closed schools, sometimes I could not go to classes until I get firewood or water first. We needed to survive first before going to school. Nobody is supporting us."

- dropped in JSS3, 15 years, Ringim, lives with grandparents

No, my step dad is very supportive. It was just hardship. I was going to school but my step dad is old and cannot take care of everything. - dropped in SSS2, Kafin Hausa, above 16 years

My uncle was helping before I wrote my JSS exams, but he could not continue to support my education due to hardship and his farm did not yield as much this year. We agree that my brother should go to school while I support the family through hawking.

- dropped in JSS2, Kafin Hausa, 14 years

Yes, to some extent. The economic situation has made some of us to begin to rethink of prioritising who to sponsor. After all the girls will eventually be in someone's house anyway. - Parent, Dutse

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