

# Influence of Gold Mining on Boy-Child's Transition Rate from Primary to Secondary School Education in Rongo Sub-County, Kenya

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## Abstract

There has been a struggle to survive economically and academically. The objective of the study was to determine the influence of gold mining on Boy-Child's transition rate from Primary to Secondary School. The descriptive research design was adopted to guide the study. The target population was 4963 people who constituted by 89 head teachers of primary schools in Rongo Sub-County, 356 Class teachers, 4518 boys. A sample size of 30% of each category was included in the study to provide the required information about the implication of gold mining on boy-child primary education. This translated to 1355 boys, 107 class teachers, and 27 head teachers. Data collection instruments included structured questionnaires and interview schedule for the boy-child, class teachers, head-teachers and the sub-county education officer. The questionnaires were pre-tested using test-retest analysis technique to gain the desired reliability coefficient of 0.7 indexes. The test-retest method was also used to estimate the degree to which the same result would be obtained with a repeated measure of the accuracy of the same concept to determine the reliability. In the structured questionnaires, the question items helped the researcher to get information from the respondents. After collection, the data was coded and fed into the computer for analysis using SPSS Version 21 Statistical Program for Social Sciences. Findings indicated that there were 159 (99.38%) of the respondents who indicated that proximity of gold mines affected the retention and transition of the boy-child in primary schools. It was concluded that the parents and other education stakeholders to pay more attention to boy child transition. It was recommended schools be located far from the gold mining sites.

**Keywords:** Gold-mining, boy-child, transition education Kenya.

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## INTRODUCTION

All over the world, gold mining has been a cherished activity. Studies done by Shaw and Morgan [1] explicitly explain it as the selective recovery of minerals and materials, other than recently formed organic materials, from the crust of the Earth. According to Bissell [2], it is one of the oldest activities of the people and has been the primary source of the materials from which tools were made, almost from the beginning of the Stone Age, 2.5 million years ago or more. Bishop 2010 confirms that gold mining began when the predecessors of human beings began to recover selected rock types from which to chip their tools. Initial gold mining just involved digging the flints or other selected rocks from the ground. According to Ssewamala and Culy [3], the oldest identified underground mine, a mine for red ochre at Bomvu Ridge in Swaziland, in Southern Africa, has been dated to 40,000 BC. This significantly pre-dates the start of mining. Surface gold mining, of course, goes back much further in time. In other parts of Africa, gold

mining activities have been given prominence at the expense of subsistence farming, and this has led to widespread famine in some parts considerably. According to Chatty and Peterson [4], in Oman, children take agricultural and surface gold mining tasks at an early age of nine.

In Kenya, the people are blessed with mineral resources that are scattered around the country. In the 1930s, there was renewed Gold interest in the country with the discovery of new gold deposits at Kehancha, Masara and Macalder [5]. Many boys within the gold mining and lake regions have poor school attendance records or only drop out of school before the end of their primary education due to such activities like gold mining and fishing. It has been amazing that this activity is done by expert miners who often need the helping hand of the unskilled especially young, energetic school-going boys because of their availability and cheap cost of labor. Research done in France, by Brostrom [6] seems to suggest that young people especially the boys have been engaged in gold

mining activities to provide the cheap labor needed. As surface deposits are depleted, the pits grow deeper, forcing miners to participate in underground gold mining. This has increased the risks involved with the job as injuries are bound to occur.

Kenya as a developing country is not exceptional. According to Yambo [7] and Rono [8], some of the factors that hinder the boy-child's access and retention in primary school education include lack of financial capacity of the guardians to foot the core needs of the boy-child, forced child labor in the gold mines among some Kenyan communities, abandonment by guardians, corporal punishment and dislike for school among some boys especially truants leading to suspension and expulsion from schools.

Great emphasis has been put on the girl child concerning the child labor. However, of late, there has been a general concern and more information is being sought about boy-child education. In Central region of Kenya for instance, Gogo [9] posited that there have been concerns regarding the boy-child education. The boy child has become very vulnerable to drug and substances abuse, child labor (especially in gold mining and farming areas), prostitution or child sex. The boy child has not been given the prominence as opposed to girl-child and slowly they are slipping into serious vulnerability especially among the gold mining communities [7]. There is little if any that has been researched on the relationship between gold mining activities and the boy-child education. Therefore, this study seeks to investigate the impact of gold mining operations on boy-child education.

Under the theme of "Care and Support" from the Ministry of Education [10] all stakeholders (head teachers, teachers, caregivers, parents/guardians, heads of organizations supporting orphans, community leaders and education officers) are expected to care, educate and provide psychological support for boy child. All children should have equal access to primary school education and be retained in school. Therefore, the study focused on the implications of gold mining activities on boy child education in primary school in relation to the Ministry of Education's Education Sector Policy based on the context of Education for All (EFA) in Rongo sub-county, Kenya.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Worldwide, every child has a right to quality education. Retention and access to education will continue to be facilitated for vulnerable groups (both boys and girls, orphans, children with disabilities and special needs). Kenya, having joined the United Nation (UN) on 1 July 1965 and in her provision for education is bound by all UN charter provisions. Children are the most vulnerable members of the society under their age and stage of growth. Many schools going age boys in Rongo Sub-County are unable to go to school possibly

because of being influenced by violent gold mining activities in the region. Despite the government efforts to provide Free Primary Education (FPE) and related academic policies, to the boy-child, it is still an uphill task in accessing and continuing with primary school education in this area.

According to Chang'ach [11] the local Children's Welfare Office reported that an estimated 15,000 children are working in gold mines in the sub-counties of Rongo and Migori in western Kenya's Migori County, either in actual extraction or in ancillary services such as selling food, this number rises significantly at weekends and during school holidays. The researcher therefore sought to investigate both positive and negative influence of gold mining on the boy-child primary education in Rongo Sub-County and determine its effects on their academic performance despite the government's effort to put in place strategies to assist boy-child in Kenya.

### **Effect of Gold Mining on boy-child's transition rate**

Most parents in Africa still have traditional beliefs of preferring a particular sex to education. High education priority is given to a boy child as compared to girl child [12]. According to Chimombo [13], females have less access to education sector than males hence parents decide that educating their children is not relevant. Nevertheless, the school of the girls who will move to their husband's families when they marry plays a vital role in improving the economy and those gains in productivity or income due to education will accrue to the families of their sons in law rather than to them [14].

There is a concern however, for the school enrolment rates for secondary education of the children both male and female are directly related to family income hence the poorer a child's household; the less likely the child is to attend secondary school [15]. According to GOK [10], parents often bear the burden of school fees for secondary education. Education can help alleviate the poverty situation by way of catalyzing wealth creation activities due to the advancement in technology and increase in the literacy levels of the society. These calls for the empowerment of some parents with the aim of helping them realize their obligation of educating the children for the benefit of the citizenry.

The structural adjustment programs and debt servicing programs by the government have had far-reaching effects on households. This has had the net result of the erosion of spending power due to the shrinking of family's disposable incomes and the limited opportunities for earning and livelihoods. This causes many households the pain and suffering of toiling for daily sustenance and meeting of the core requirements in life. Parents are forced to forgo the secondary education for their children especially so in

the rural areas because they want them to be in regular work to earn an income and contribute to the sustenance of the family. There is evidence of reduced enthusiasm to proceed to secondary school in the rural areas because many consider it reasonable to stop learning and keep the household by way of earning a living [1].

In Africa, the children are often needed to work on the family's pieces of land, and the loss of their labor is a cost to their parents, even if paid employment in the 'modern sector' is not available. This propels parents not to educate their children especially the boy-child so that they work and provide for the family's daily needs. The boy-child often engages in manual jobs, does not attend schooling and exploited as result of child labor. Empirical studies contend that more emphasis should be placed on girl-child education in many countries [16]. This had led to back grounding of boy-child thus detrimental.

According to the EFA [16], constant campaigning for and advocacy training to ensure gender balance and equality in the education system and their stakeholders will have to be increased. It is worth noting that the development of realistic gender sensitive benchmarks and indicators is a critical variable in achieving EFA goals. However, targeting of the girl-child, and in some instances, the boy-child is necessary if not essential for EFA. This has led the boy child to be relegated to the end and not considered in education and thus affected their academic performance.

Furthermore, Dube [17] added that the Childhood Sexual Abuse (CSA) is a worldwide problem. Although most studies on the long-term consequences of CSA have focused on women, sexual abuse of both boys and girls is common. Among some

Kalenjin Communities in Kenya, the male child's schooling has been sacrificed for the sake of livestock herding and labor. This can be noted among the Kalenjin boys are taught to be masculine. This takes place in the various institutions of society such as the family, school, and church. The beliefs that the boy child is stronger, more intelligent and more reliable than girl-child, and therefore does not need protection as the girls, and therefore he is not expected to express his emotions or any weaknesses as the girls do [7]. Mostly in some communities, the boy-child is taught not to cry but always behave in a confident and brave way since he is expected not to display his weakness.

Hence, the boy-child tends to suffer in silence with no elderly to turn to. As a result, these factors that the boy-child faces have not only contributed to the neglect of issues that affect them but also the Kalenjin community as a whole. Furthermore, the society teaches males that they must be in control all the times. Therefore men tend to dominate in many aspects of life. The confounding power, control, and domination imply that males do not have problems. Quite often the men look well and confident on the outside, but are not so on the inside thus cognitive discordance [18].

**RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The study adopted descriptive research design as it describes the state of affairs, as it exists. Kerlinger [19], points out that descriptive studies are not only restricted to fact finding but may often result in the formulation of important principles of knowledge and solution to significant problems.

This study targeted the following groups as tabulated below:

**Table-1: Target Population**

| Respondents          | Target population | Percentage | Sample |
|----------------------|-------------------|------------|--------|
| Head teachers        | 89                | 30         | 27     |
| Deputy Head Teachers | 89                | 30         | 27     |
| Class teachers       | 356               | 30         | 107    |
| Boys                 | 4518              |            | 1355   |
| Total                | 5052              | 30         | 1516   |

From table 1, the target population was 5052 respondents who consisted of 89 head teachers and 89 deputies of primary schools in Rongo Sub-County, 356 class teachers and 4518 boy children. Out of this population, a sample of 1489 would be taken consisting of 27 headteachers, 27 deputy head teachers, 107 class teachers and 1355 boy children in the sub-county.

The study adopted simple random sampling technique to select 30% of the respondents in gold mining regions. This technique was more suitable because the research involved a large population. This technique also allowed each individual to have an equal and independent opportunity to be selected as a member

of the sample. While the sampling of head teachers, class teachers and pupils of primary schools was calculated based on 30 percent which is a number considered to be statistically representative enough [20].

After the researcher had developed the instruments, the experts from the Department of Educational Management of Kisii University reviewed and scrutinized the contents and relevance of the instrument in order to determine its validity and to ensure that the instrument accurately measured the variables it will be intended to measure.

To ensure reliability of the developed instruments, the questionnaires were pre-tested by being administered to 30 respondents from two schools, which were not being included in the study. The selection of the 30 respondents was done using purposive sampling procedure. The pre-test was later subjected to a test-retest analysis technique in order to gain the desired reliability coefficient of 0.7 indexes [17]. The Pearson's product moment coefficient for the test-retest was employed to compute the correlation coefficient in order to establish the extent to which the contents of the questionnaires were consistent in eliciting the same responses every time the instrument was administered [21]. A reliability coefficient of 0.7

and above was considered acceptable. Hence, the questionnaire was accepted as reliable.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents more findings from the analysis of data to test the research question below: In what ways has gold mining affected the boy child's retention and transition in primary education in Rongo?

### Boy –children population

The targeted population was boy-children from upper primary school (classes 4 to 8). A total of 1355 pupils were targeted for the research representing 30% of the sample population. The return rate was as indicated in table 2.

**Table-1: Boy- Child Respondents**

| Respondents Age | Number | Percentage | Returned | Percentage |
|-----------------|--------|------------|----------|------------|
| 6-9 Years       | 217    | 16.01%     | 212      | 97.70%     |
| 10 – 12 years   | 614    | 45.31%     | 614      | 100%       |
| 13 – 15 years   | 349    | 25.76%     | 349      | 100%       |
| Above 15 years  | 175    | 12.92%     | 175      | 100%       |
|                 | 1355   | 100%       | 1350     | 99.6%      |

From table 2 it was found that, most of the boy-child between the age of 6 and 9 years had the lowest response rate of 16.01% due to unanswered questionnaires. The Influence of gold mining on boy-child retention and transition in primary schools in Rongo sub-county Academic retention is key to improving the performance and completion of primary education of the boy-child [6].

From the data collected from class teacher, the deputy head teachers, the head teacher and the SCEO,

the researcher obtained the data in table 3. There were 159 (99.38%) of the respondents who indicated that proximity of gold mines affected the retention and transition of the boy-child in primary schools. This finding was in line with the work of Keizire [22] who reiterated that this was due to noise pollution, persuasion by adults through errands and tokens and presence of small-scale businesses for kids in the region.

**Table-3: Gold mining related factors affecting retention and transition**

|   | Factors affecting retention and transition    | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|-----------|------------|
| 1 | Proximity to gold mines                       | 159       | 99.38%     |
| 2 | Truancy/ Absenteeism and general indiscipline | 153       | 95.63%     |
| 3 | Child labor /forced labor                     | 160       | 100%       |
| 4 | Low academic performance/ forced repetition   | 58        | 36.25%     |
| 5 | High preference for quick cash                | 98        | 61.25%     |

**Table-4: Causes of Truancy**

| Causes of Truancy             | Frequency | Percentage |
|-------------------------------|-----------|------------|
| Child/personality/ peer group | 123       | 77.36%     |
| School environment            | 27        | 16.98%     |
| Family/ home condition        | 99        | 62.26%     |
| Community culture             | 43        | 27.04%     |
| Government policy             | 11        | 6.92%      |

Based on the data above, 1048 pupils (77.36% of the cases) were truant as a result of pupils personality or peer pressure. They would rather spend most of their time with their peers than with their teachers at school, leading to truancy behaviors. 230 pupils, constituting 16.98% of cases, attributed their truancy to the school environment, where students feel

harassed, embarrassed, and intimidated in class when questions are asked in topics that were covered in their absence and they cannot answer due to frequent absenteeism. Most teachers are also hard on frequent absentees, because they stagnate class progress and syllabus coverage. 62.26% of truancy cases (840 pupils) are due to family/ home conditions including family

income levels. In this regard, Arends-Kuenning and Amin [23] added that stability, parental guidance, and parental pressure to offer child labor made some to become truants. Arends-Kuenning and Amin [23] added that stability, parental guidance, and parental pressure to offer child labor made some to become truants hence dropped out of school.

## CONCLUSION

Generally, teachers, parents and other education stakeholders are better placed to pay more attention to boy child transition.

## Recommendations

Based on the key findings of the study, it was recommended schools be located far from gold mines that might lure the boys.

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