Gender Equity in Primary Education in Artisanal Mining Communities Lessons from Kahama District in Rural Tanzania.

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Abstract:

This paper focuses on gender equity in primary education in Kahama District, one of the artisanal mining communities in Tanzania. The focus is on Grade I registration, Standard VII completions, and pass rates. Data used in this paper came from the Artisanal and Small-scale Gold Miners' survey conducted in 2010 in Bugarama ward. Two questions are addressed; first what is the status of gender equity? Secondly, if inequality is widening, who are the most affected between boys and girls? Primary data were synthesised from discussions with key informants; while, secondary data were obtained from primary school records. Findings indicate that the first half of the last decade was characterised by high gender disparity with boys being ahead of girls in each variable studied. However, over time, gender disparity was declining modestly. The reason among others could be hinged on an enabling policy environment and the desire by the Tanzania Government to achieve national and international targets. Based on these findings, three education policy interventions should be formulated and effectively implemented so as to spur gender parity in primary education. The first policy intervention should focus on gender parity during Grade I registration; the second one should aim at controlling school attrition of both boys and girls until graduation with an idea in mind that artisanal mining activities may act like a magnet to some of the school children. Finally, the third policy intervention should focus at sustaining gender equity once it has been attained.