

# Male Factors in Childcare Practices: Involvement, Knowledge and Cultural Beliefs in Kanam Communities, Plateau State, Nigeria

\*Sunday Jacob<sup>1</sup>, Audu Andrew Jatau<sup>2</sup>, John Wukatda Darbe<sup>3</sup>, Falade Job Olakunle<sup>4</sup>, Helen. S. Jacob<sup>5</sup>,  
Mohammed Buhari<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Social Studies Department, Federal University of Education, Pankshin, Plateau State, Nigeria.

<sup>2</sup>Physical and Health Department, Federal University of Education, Pankshin, Plateau State, Nigeria.

<sup>3,5,6</sup>Home Economics Department, Federal University of Education, Pankshin, Plateau State, Nigeria.

<sup>4</sup>Department of Psychology, Federal University of Education, Pankshin, Plateau State, Nigeria.

DOI: <https://dx.doi.org/10.47772/IJRISS.2025.907000469>

Received: 16 May 2025; Accepted: 23 May 2025; Published: 23 August 2025

## ABSTRACT

This study explores the role of male factors in childcare practices within Kanam communities of Plateau State Nigeria, focusing on three key dimensions: involvement, knowledge, and cultural beliefs. Despite the growing recognition of fathers' contributions to child-rearing, limited research exists on male engagement in these communities. A purposive sampling method was employed to recruit 150 married men living in the selected communities to obtain valuable insights into men's involvement and beliefs about childcare. Using a quantitative approach, the research employed structured questionnaire and focus group discussions with male caregivers, fathers, and community leaders to gather insights into their experiences and perceptions regarding childcare practices. Findings reveal that cultural beliefs significantly shape men's involvement in childcare, often dictating traditional roles and responsibilities. While many participants express a desire to be more actively engaged, barriers such as societal expectations and lack of knowledge about child development persist. The study highlights the need for community-driven initiatives to enhance male involvement in childcare, emphasizing education and awareness to challenge existing cultural norms. By addressing these aspects, the research aims to enrich the wider discussion on gender roles in childcare and shape policies that support shared parenting responsibilities in the Kanam communities.

**Key words:** male involvement, childcare practices, knowledge systems, cultural beliefs, Kanam Communities

## INTRODUCTION

World-wide, almost all childhood diseases and deaths are adduced to poor childcare. Father's lack of active involvement in childcare is attributed to child malnutrition, poor growth, and poor development and sometimes death. This suggests that male involvement in childcare is critical in the child's growth, development and survival. Father's involvement in childcare simply means his interactions, behaviours, emotions, knowledge, beliefs, attitudes and practices associated with providing children with health, nutrition, responsive caregiving, safety and security and early learning (Jacob et al, 2024a). These practices encompass breastfeeding, food preparation, psychosocial stimulation and nutrition support. Also, hygiene behaviours such as clean environment, provision of portable water, as well as safe and clean toilet facilities are included (Jacob et al, 2024b).

A father's involvement in childcare can be measured as the time he spent together with children. He is considered as an involved father if his relationship with his child can be described as being sensitive, warm, close, friendly, supportive, intimate, nurturing, affectionate, encouraging, comforting, and accepting (Mogusu et al, 2015). Literature revealed that men's roles in childcare practices include helping prepare meals, helping with domestic tasks, accompaniment to growth monitoring sessions. Provision of food, playing with the child

and providing clean water, clean environment as well as clean toilet facilities (Thuita et al, 2021). Unfortunately, most men's involvement in childcare appears to fall below international standard. The study of Jacob et al, (2024a) on parental childcare practices related to nutrition, psychosocial support, water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) revealed that parental child care practices related to nutrition ( $\bar{x} = 1.92$ ) and WASH ( $\bar{x} = 2.30$ ) were poor, while practices related to psychosocial care was an average ( $\bar{x} = 2.57$ ). Furthermore, the findings of the study revealed that there was no significant difference in parental child care practices related to nutritional support, psychosocial stimulation and water sanitation and hygiene. The study of Mogusu et al (2015) on knowledge, attitude and practices regarding child care among fathers of under five children further revealed that 45.5% of fathers had poor practices on childcare, 30.5% had average practices and only 24% had good practices towards under five childcares. However, the study of Sachdeva and Gupta (2022), show that 80% male childcare givers always encourage wife to breast feed the child, 77% always look after the child when the wife is not around, 82% always accompany the wife to the child health clinic and 63% always play and spend time with the children.

Despite the recognized significant role that men play in childcare practices, and the benefit therein, men still possess limited knowledge (Doyle et al, 2018). This may result in poor childcare practice that can predispose children to malnutrition, poor growth and development, and sometimes death. Sachdeva and Gupta (2022) assert that men's lack of involvement in child care stems from insufficient knowledge; based on this, they do not view themselves as authoritative advisors and are not even viewed by other members of the family as childcare givers. Empirical evidence show that fathers have low knowledge of childcare. The study of Sachdeva and Gupta (2022) on knowledge, attitude and involvement of fathers in childcare practices indicated that only 10% and 30% subjects were categorised as having very good and good knowledge about infant and childcare practices respectively. Furthermore, their study revealed that maximum subjects 43% were categorised as having an average knowledge. Conversely, empirical studies provide evidence that fathers possess a high level of knowledge regarding childcare. For instance, Mogusu's (2015) study revealed that a majority of fathers (52%) demonstrated good knowledge of under-five childcare, while 26.5% had average knowledge and only 21.5% were classified as having poor knowledge.

Cultural beliefs still have stronghold in Nigerian men. This can negatively influence the practices of men toward childcare. Due to the traditional beliefs of most societies related to parental care, the responsibility of the father as regard childcare, is perceived as only to help financially for the household activities and provide foods whereas women are responsible for looking after the household and managing the daily chores, along with raising children and taking care of their nutrition. Sociocultural, it is believed that anything that concern childcare is for women and do not concern men. The ill assigned gender roles when it comes to maternal and childcare completely exclude the man from participating in childcare except to provide money, security and shelter for the child (Okafor et al, 2022).

The study of Okafor et al (2022) revealed that the barriers to male involvement in child care were sociocultural beliefs and time constraints. Their studies further indicated religious beliefs, cultural beliefs, traditional beliefs and health system as the major predictor of male involvement in childcare. Prevents men's involvement in childcare, because when the community sees men helping their wives with works, they feel they are going against the tradition of the community. Historically, it is believed in some cultures that childcare is exclusively women roles. Men involvement has been depicted as obstructive or non-existing in childcare matters. They either impede on the childcare women accord to children or become non-responsive (Kabagenyi, 2014)

Available evidence from developing countries including Nigeria indicate that childcare practices including food preparation and feeding, psychosocial stimulation, hygiene practices and care during illness are mostly performed by mothers as primary care providers (Moyo, 2019). Thus, non-involvement of men in child care often result in their (men) inability to make informed decision and show of less interest in practices related to child care (Ampt, 2015). The study of Omobowale et al (2023) indicated that 50 (89.29%) of the respondents believed that mothers are responsible for taking care of the children. Furthermore, the study reported that willingness to participate in childcare practices was low due to some societal perceptions around male involvement in childcare. However, a few respondents agreed to secretly helping out with household chores.

In particular, male involvement in childcare practices has not been studied adequately in developing countries where male childcare is documented by men. Furthermore, there is dearth of data with regard to male involvement in childcare, males' level of knowledge related to childcare and beliefs influencing male's childcare especially in Kanam Communities. This study therefore assessed the level of fathers' involvement in childcare, fathers' level of knowledge related to childcare practices and cultural beliefs in Kanam communities.

### **Purpose of the Study**

This study examined male's childcare practices in terms of involvement, Knowledge and beliefs in Kanam Communities. Specifically, the objectives of the study were:

To examine fathers' level of involvement in childcare practices in Kanam communities.

To assess fathers' level of knowledge related to childcare practices in Kanam communities.

To identify fathers' cultural beliefs as regard to their involvement in childcare practices in Kanam communities.

### **Research Questions**

The study sought to answer the following questions:

1. What is the fathers' level of involvement in childcare practices in Kanam communities?
2. What is the fathers' level of knowledge related to childcare practices in Kanam communities?
3. What are the cultural beliefs of fathers regarding childcare practices in Kanam communities?

### **Theoretical Concepts**

In examining male factors in childcare practices involvement, knowledge and cultural beliefs in Kanam communities, various theoretical concepts can be utilized to understand the underlying dynamics. Gender Roles Theory suggests that societal norms dictate the behaviours and responsibilities assigned to individuals according to their gender, and that these roles are learned through socialization. Consequently, the theory suggests that males and females will acquire distinct skills and attitudes, leading to different behaviours. In many African societies, including Nigeria, traditional roles often designate women as primary caregivers and men as providers, leading to the perception that childcare is primarily a woman's responsibility and potentially limiting men's involvement in these practices (Omobowale et al., 2023). Social Norms Theory indicates that individuals' behaviours are shaped by the perceived expectations of their social groups. Cultural Beliefs and Practices dictate that men should prioritize economic provision over nurturing roles, which can impact their knowledge and willingness to engage in childcare practices as they may not perceive it as part of their responsibilities. Thus, reinforcing the notion that such roles are feminine and creating barriers to male involvement due to potential social stigma or peer disapproval. Community Engagement Theory highlights the significance of involving community members in health and social interventions. By engaging men as partners in childcare programs can improve child health outcomes, challenge existing gender norms, and shift cultural beliefs while enhancing knowledge about the importance of shared parenting responsibilities (Omobowale et al., 2023). Grasping these theoretical concepts offers valuable insights into the factors affecting male involvement in childcare practices within Kanam communities. It is essential to address the cultural beliefs and societal norms that influence these dynamics to promote increased male engagement in childcare.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **Research design and study area**

A community-based cross sectional study utilized a mixed-methods research design that integrates both qualitative and quantitative approaches, offering a thorough understanding of the topic. The study was conducted in Kanam Local Government Area of Plateau state, North Central Nigeria. Kanam Local

Government Area (LGA) with projected population of 246,500 (population projection, 2022) is situated within the geographical boundaries and located in the north-eastern part of Plateau State with diverse ethnic groups, rich cultural heritage, and significant agricultural activities.

### Study Participants

The study population was made up of married men within the ages 20 – 50 + years living in Kanam LGA who provided consent and had fathered a live child in two years prior to the study were deemed eligible. Men who were single or did not cohabit with their wives were excluded from participation. Four rural communities (clusters) with functional Primary Health Care (PHC) centres in Kanam Local Government Area were intentionally chosen due to their proximity and accessibility to serve as coordinating centres for the studies.

### Sampling technique

A purposive sampling method was used to identify community organizations, parenting groups, religious organizations and cultural community centres within the four clusters to identify eligible participants. The sample size was calculated based on the assumption that 50% of the targeted fathers would participate in childcare practices, allowing for a 5% margin of error at a 95% confidence level. Based on these assumptions, a sample size of 150 was established for the study using Cochran's (1977) sample size formula for categorical data, focusing on one-point sample estimation to gain valuable insights into men's involvement, knowledge and beliefs regarding childcare practices.

$$n = \frac{t \times p(1 - p)^{26}}{m^2}$$

where n = required sample size, t = confidence level at 95 % (standard value of 1.96), p represents the proportion (50.0 %) of fathers involved in childcare activities and m = margin of error at 5 % .

Sensitization meetings were conducted in the four clusters with the help of community leaders, the study participants provided informed consent after receiving detailed information on the study objectives and their role in the study. In each cluster, 37 eligible participants (men) were selected amongst community organizations, local networks, religious organizations and cultural community centres.

### Data Collection

A structured questionnaire was developed and pretested for reliability (0.78) to assess fathers' involvement and knowledge in childcare. The information collected on fathers' involvement using a structured interview questionnaire included kinds of activities father do with children at home and support for partner in child raising to examine individual experiences and beliefs, using a modified version developed by Thuita et al. (2021). The level of fathers' involvement was determined by responses, assigning a score of '1' for "yes" to indicate that the father played a role, and '0' for "no" to indicate that he did not.

Knowledge and cultural beliefs related statements are based on common parameters related to appropriate childcare practices, and were measured on a four-point Likert scale with response options (strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree). A score of 1 was given to strongly disagree responses while a score of 2 was assigned to disagree and 3 for agreeing to positive and 4 for strongly agree. A summative score for knowledge and cultural beliefs was obtained for each respondent, with scores categorized as positive if the total correct responses were equal to or above the median score; otherwise, they were considered negative. All interviewers spoke the local dialect (Hausa) fluently, and interviews with fathers, who were primarily farmers, were arranged for late afternoon after they returned from their farms.

Four focus group discussions (FGDs) were held at the local Primary Health Centre with fathers of children aged 6–59 months, each averaging 10 participants. Key informants were included to enhance the data from fathers, as their regular interactions with parents and community residency allowed them to offer valuable insights into local perceptions and attitudes. The discussion centered on how cultural beliefs influence

perception of fatherhood, norms that exist around male involvement, factors that encourage and discourage men participation, challenges faced by men's engagement, changes observed in the expectations of men's role, consequences of maintaining traditional gender roles and peers influences in childcare practices. All group members participated equally, while a recorder documented the discussions in Hausa using a digital voice recorder. This qualitative study is part of a larger project, with the fieldwork team having established strong rapport with the communities during initial data collection.

### Statistical analysis

Through structured approach, qualitative data were analyzed while quantitative data was conducted using SPSS software version 26 and Microsoft Excel, with research questions evaluated through frequency and mean, applying a decision point of 2.50 to determine the acceptability of the questionnaire items.

## RESULTS

### Fathers' level of involvement in childcare practices

Table 1: Responses of fathers' level of involvement in childcare practices in Kanam communities.

	Fathers' involvement in childcare practices	Percent
<b>1</b>	Aside food and other provision, do you have other roles you play with your children	92.6
	<b>Kind of activities father do with children at home</b>	
	Bathing children and cleaning the house	35.7
	Play together with material like balls, and reading materials	42.9
	Taking child to hospital when sick	17.9
	Provision of resources to pay bills	3.6
<b>2</b>	<b>Support for wife/partner in child raising</b>	76.0
	Bathing of the babies and other house chores	51.9
	Provide food for the children	40.7
	Play more with the children	7.4

Table 1 presents the levels of fathers' involvement in childcare practices in term of activities and support to their wives/partner in Kanam Communities. The result shows level of activities areas and father's support in childcare practices. Activities areas like playing balls and reading things with children was 42.9%, bathing of children and cleaning of the houses was 35.7%, among others. 76.0% of fathers support their wives in child raisin. However, the support include bathing of the babies/house chores 51.9%, provision of food for the family 40.7% while interacting with the children was 7.4%. The result shows that, there is some level of fathers' involvement in childcare practices and support to wives/partners among fathers in Kanam communities. However, the overall percentage (41%) of fathers' levels of involvement are inadequate. The implication of this is that, inadequate of fathers' involvement in childcare practices may lead to imbalance in child growth and development.



## Fathers' knowledge level regarding childcare practices

Table 2: Mean Response on Fathers' knowledge relating to childcare practices

s/n	Fathers' knowledge relating to childcare practices	SA (4)	A (3)	D (2)	SD (1)	Mean	Decision point
1	The Infant should start having complementary food after six months of birth	114	27	4		3.76	Accepted
2	Women should breastfeed the children for at least 24 months of birth	93	45	4	2	3.59	Accepted
3	Fathers are expected to provide advice for mother on children diet/hygiene/play	110	32	3		3.74	Accepted
4	Fathers are expected to make available nutritious food for children and themselves	109	30	6		3.71	Accepted
5	Fathers are expected to provide financial support to buy nutritious food/play materials for children	98	42	3	1	3.65	Accepted
6	Fathers need to complement social and emotional support in the child development	20	41	54	30	2.17	Rejected
7	Fathers are expected to help nursing mother with household chores	30	30	56	25	2.39	Rejected
8	Fathers needs to assist in cooking a food for the children	23	30	63	29	2.32	Rejected
9	Fathers need to be accompanying mother to medical facilities and monitoring child's growth	99	40	3	3	3.62	Accepted
10	Fathers need to provide appropriate information about young child feeding/hygiene/play activities	21	25	65	24	2.31	Rejected
	<b>Overall mean</b>					<b>3.13</b>	

Table 2 presents the fathers' level of knowledge related to childcare practices in Kanam communities. Ten item questions were presented to ascertain the level of their knowledge. Six of the question items were accepted based on 2.50 decision point set. The result revealed that, fathers' has some considerable level of knowledge in childcare practices but is not sufficient enough the overall mean obtained was 3.13 indicating their knowledge level based on the response obtained. However, areas such as complementing social and emotion support, assistant to nursing mother, involvement in cooking and provision of information about children feeding were rejected and found that father's knowledge are inadequate. The implication is that father's knowledge needs to be enhanced in more appropriate childcare practices among the fathers in Kanam communities.

## Fathers' cultural beliefs regarding childcare practices

Table 3: Mean Response on Fathers' cultural beliefs regarding involvement in childcare practices

s/n	Fathers' cultural beliefs regarding involvement in childcare practices	VO (4)	O (3)	S (2)	N (1)	Mean	Decision point
1	People discourage father to take any active role in child feeding, hygiene and play activities	70	24	22	24	3.00	Accepted
2	People laugh and criticize some father's involvement in child feeding, hygiene and play	63	27	22	29	2.88	Accepted
3	Caring for children is traditionally regarded as women specific role in your community	44	33	39	23	2.71	Accepted
4	Hygiene practices are traditionally women specific role in your community	51	36	27	26	2.80	Accepted
5	Community think, child feeding, hygiene and play is the sole responsibility of mothers	59	27	33	20	2.90	Accepted
6	Provision and use of hygiene material/substances is traditionally gender specific in the community	53	37	28	22	2.86	Accepted
7	Practices associated with cleaning of environment is the sole responsibility of mothers	57	33	24	26	2.86	Accepted
	<b>Overall mean</b>					<b>2.86</b>	

Table 3 presents the mean response on fathers' cultural beliefs regarding their involvement in childcare practices in Kanam communities with accepted based on 2.50 decision point set. The results revealed that cultural beliefs in Kanam communities hinder fathers' involvement in childcare practices. Discouragement from taking active roles in feeding, hygiene, and play often leads to criticism that these responsibilities belong to women, an overall mean of 2.86 indicates that such norms significantly negate fathers' participation in childcare.

Cultural beliefs shape how fatherhood is defined and perceived. Several fathers mentioned that "Culturally, fatherhood is associated with being the breadwinner, while caregiving responsibilities typically rest with mother" limits their daily involvement in parenting. Only a handful of fathers expressed that "the community's perceptions of fatherhood affect their approach to childcare, as they often feel judged for being overly involved" Many fathers also noted that "discipline is an important aspect of their cultural background, as men emphasize the importance of teaching respect and responsibility". Some fathers argued that "societal stereotypes depicting fathers as less capable caregivers discourage many from becoming more involved". Regarding factors that encourage male participation in childcare, a few fathers stated, "We often draw on the childcare practices our parents employed; it feels like a way to honor our family traditions." Participants noted barriers to fathers' involvement in childcare, including work commitments, gender stereotypes, lack of willingness, unpreparedness, and concern about judgment for taking on roles seen as "women's work." .

## DISCUSSION

### Extent of fathers' involvement in childcare activities

This study investigates male factors influencing childcare practices, focusing on involvement, knowledge, and cultural beliefs within the Kanam Communities of Plateau State, Nigeria. The results of this study indicated that a significant number of fathers participated in childcare activities. This finding aligns with other research from African countries, such as Saaka et al. (2023), Berhane et al. (2023), and Thuita et al. (2022), which reported that fathers were involved in feeding, cooking, providing companionship, and cleaning the child,

particularly when mothers were away from home. A recent study conducted in an urban slum in Jinka, Ethiopia, also reported the involvement of fathers in childcare (Orkaido et al., 2024). Paternal involvement in childcare and related activities has been assessed in various ways around the world, with levels of engagement differing based on local factors, including cultural contexts (Yogman & Garfield, 2016; Kansime et al., 2017). While some men's involvement in childcare, such as bathing, cleaning, hospital visits, covering bills, and play, appears limited, there is still notable engagement in the Kanam communities. Moyo (2019) found that childcare practices such as food preparation, feeding, psychosocial stimulation, hygiene, and care during illness are primarily carried out by mothers as the main caregivers. The results indicated that fathers primarily contributed to childcare by providing money for food and transportation to health clinics. This finding aligns with multiple studies showing that men prioritize their economic contributions to the household over direct involvement in other childcare activities (Rakotomanana et al., 2021), while mothers were more involved at the interaction level with children than fathers (Jacob et al. 2024b). Fathers' positive attitudes toward childcare activities led to greater involvement in child feeding, a finding supported by other studies (Saaka et al., 2023; Mithra et al., 2021). Fathers' involvement in childcare is associated with positive developmental outcomes, as engagement in activities like playing and reading enhances children's cognitive skills, emotional regulation, language development, and overall well-being (Rakotomanana et al., 2021).

### Studies of Father's knowledge about childcare practices

The results indicated that most fathers (47.8%) had good knowledge of childcare, while 22.6% had average knowledge and 25% had poor knowledge. Fathers' knowledge about childcare practices varies. This finding agreed with the study of Mogusu (2015) which showed that majority of the fathers had good knowledge of under-five childcare while some had average knowledge but few had poor knowledge. Similar study by Sarkadi et al. (2008) in Wardha, Maharashtra, found that men are taking a more active role in childcare, with 20% of fathers having poor knowledge, 42% average knowledge, and 38% proper knowledge. Fathers play a vital role in childcare, as their knowledge and active involvement significantly enhance children's cognitive, social, emotional, and academic development (Sachdeva and Gupta, 2022). A positive correlation exists between fathers' knowledge and attitudes toward childcare, but they were less involved in child care (Shinde et al., 2023). This is possibly because, culturally, men are perceived as providers and controllers of resources in most households and not caretakers. Participation of fathers in childcare activities is associated with improved child development outcomes, especially regarding dietary diversity and psychosocial stimulation (Jacob et al., 2024a).

### Cultural beliefs of fathers regarding child-rearing practices

Cultural beliefs shape how fatherhood is defined and perceived. In all focus group discussions, participants traditionally see fathers as providers rather than caregivers, which limits their daily involvement in parenting, despite cultural traditions highlighting their roles in rituals. Cultural norms strongly encourage fathers to actively engage in nurturing and caregiving, yet participants maintain the belief that childcare is primarily a woman's responsibility. The findings align with several studies from African countries where fathers are increasingly acknowledged for their role in childcare, their involvement varies widely across contexts, with some studies showing positive effects on child development, while others reveal that mothers predominantly handle tasks like feeding and healthcare (Saaka et al. 2021, Rakotomanana et al. 2021). Frustration with stereotypes of masculinity, which hinder emotional engagement and nurturing in fatherhood, underscores a desire for a cultural shift that supports diverse parenting roles and shared responsibilities. Sachdeva and Gupta (2022) assert that men's lack of involvement in childcare stems from insufficient knowledge, however encourage discipline and teaching respect are vital in their cultural background, societal stereotypes portraying them as less capable caregivers discourage greater involvement in childcare. The results further support the findings of Okafor et al. (2022), which identified sociocultural beliefs, time constraints, religious beliefs, traditional norms, and health system factors as the primary barriers to male involvement in childcare. Factors encouraging male participation in childcare include supportive partners, positive role models, and community resources. Peer influence significantly shapes attitudes toward fatherhood, as supportive friends encourage greater involvement in childcare, while negative peer pressure can discourage nurturing behaviors by labeling them as 'not masculine'. Although several fathers noted that cultural expectations shape their experience as a father while they strive to create their own identity, this finding indicates that some are interested in



participating in various aspects of childcare beyond their traditional roles as providers and playmates. Based on the findings, increasing awareness in the Kanam communities about the importance of fathers' involvement in childcare and family life through culturally sensitive messages could change perceptions of engaged fathers and facilitate their participation.

The selection of fathers poses a limitation for this study, as only about a third were available and willing to participate in the focus group discussion due to work commitments; those who did participate may have been more involved in childcare but might also have had less education, given their rural backgrounds. Despite these limitations, the study effectively explores fathers' involvement, knowledge, and cultural beliefs regarding childcare practices in Kanam communities.

## CONCLUSION

The study therefore, reveal that male involvement in childcare practices within the Kanam communities of Plateau State is significantly influenced by factors such as active participation, knowledge of child-rearing, and deeply rooted cultural beliefs. While many men express a desire to engage more in parenting, traditional norms often limit their roles. Addressing these cultural barriers and promoting educational initiatives can empower fathers, enhance their involvement, and ultimately foster healthier family dynamics. Embracing shared parenting responsibilities can lead to improved outcomes for children and strengthen community ties.

## RECOMMENDATION

The study suggests enhancing advocacy for male involvement in childcare, encouraging fathers to acquire and utilize knowledge that supports women's contributions for better child welfare outcomes. Additionally, future research should explore effective interventions to engage fathers in childcare and their effects on child development, promoting more equitable and nurturing family structures.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The team remains grateful to Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) for funding the project through National Research Grant.

### Ethical consideration

This study received approval from the Ethics Committee of the Federal University of Education Pankshin as part of larger field work. eligible participants were informed about its purpose and given the chance to ask questions regarding their voluntary involvement. Informed consent was obtained from all participants prior to any data collection activities.

## REFERENCE

1. Ampt, F., Mon, M., Than, K. Khin, M., Agius, A. & Morgan, C. etal (2015). Correlates of male involvement in maternal and newborn health: Across-sectional study of men in a peri-urban region of Myanmar BMC. Childbirth Pregnancy 15 (122): I:II
2. Berhane, H. Y., Tewahido, D., Tarekegn, W. & Trenholm, J. (2023). Fathers' experiences of childcare and feeding: A photo-elicitation study in a low resource setting in urban Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. PLoS ONE 18(7): e0288487. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0288487>
3. Bilal, S., Spigt, M., Czabannowska, K., Mulugetta, A., Blanco, R. & Dinant, G. (2016). Father's Perception, practices and challenges in young child care and feeding in Ethiopia. Food Nutrition Bulletin, 37(3), 329-339
4. Cochran WG (1977) Sampling Techniques, 3rd ed. New York: John Wiley & Sons.
5. Doyle, K., Levto, R.G., Barkor, G., Bastian G.G., Bingenheimer, J. B., Kazimbaya, S. etal (2018). Transformative Bandereho couples intervention of male engagement in reproductive and maternal health and violence prevention in Rwanda: Findings from a randomised controlled trial –Plos One . 13(4) 0192756

6. Jacob, S., Jatau, A. A., Darbe, J.W., Olakunle, F.J., Jacob, H.S., & Buhari, M. (2024a). Parental childcare related to nutrition, psychosocial support, water sanitation and hygiene in Kanam communities, Plateau state, Nigeria. *European Journal of Development Studies*, 4 (2) 28-34 ISSN 2736-660X.
7. Jacob, S., Jatau, A. A., Darbe, J.W., Olakunle, F.J., Jacob, H.S., & Buhari, M. (2024b) Nexus of Socio-economic Background of Parents and Malnutrition of Children in Kanam Communities of Plateau State, Nigeria. *The International Journal of Humanities & Social Studies*, 12(3). <https://doi.org/10.24940/theijhss/2024/v12/i3/HS2403-019>.
8. Kabangenyi, A., Jennings, L., Ried, A., Nalwadda, G., Ntozi, J. & Alunyanbe, L. (2014). Barriers to male involvement in contraceptive uptake and reproductive health service: A qualitative study of men and women perception in two rural districts in Uganda. *BMC: Report Health*. 11(21). 1-9. <https://doi.org/10.186/1742;4755;11-21> PMID; 2459/502
9. Kansime, N., Atwine, D., Nuwamanya, S. & Bagenda, F. (2017). Effect of Male Involvement on the Nutritional Status of Children Less Than 5 Years: A Cross Sectional Study in a Rural Southwestern District of Uganda. *J Nutr Metab*: ,3427087. doi:10.1155/2017/3427087.
10. Mithra, P., Unnikrishnan, B., T. R., Kumar, N., Holla, R & Rathi, P. (2021). Paternal Involvement in and Sociodemographic Correlates of Infant and Young Child Feeding in a District in Coastal South India: A Cross-Sectional Study. *Front Public Health*. 9:661058. doi:10.3389/fpubh.2021.661058.
11. Mogusu, H. K., Mubashir, A., Ashwini, B. N., Agre, D.H. & Jitendra, K.S. (2015). Assessing the knowledge, attitude and practices regarding childcare among the fathers of under five-children in Ramnagar Area: A cross-sectional study. *International Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies (IJIMS)*, 2(6) 113-117. <http://www.ijims.com>
12. Moyo, S.A, & Schay, N. (2019). Father's perception and personal experiences of complementary feeding of children 6-23 months in South-Western Zimbabwe. *World Nutrition*. 10(3):51-66, <https://doi.org/10.265961wn.20193351-66>
13. Okafor, I. P., Chukwudi, C.H., Igwilo, U. U. & Ogunowo, B.E. (2022). Men are the head of family, the dominant head: A mixed method of male involvement in maternal and child health in a Patriarchal setting, Western Nigeria. *Plos One.*, <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0276059>;
14. Omobowale, O., Adebayo, A. & Iyande, T. (2023). Male involvement in childcare: A qualitative exploration of mens opinion in Nigeria. *Journal of Community Health Research*. 12(1):126-133
15. Orkaido, O., Tadesse, H., Desalegn, N., Urmale, A., Kasse, T. & Batele, B. (2024). Father's involvement in child feeding and associated factors among fathers having children aged 6-24 months in Jinka town, Ethiopia. *Sci Rep*. 15(1):15150. doi: 10.1038/s41598-025- 00281-2.
16. Rakotomanana, H., Walters, C. N., Komakech, J. J., Hildebrand D., Gates, E G., Thomas, G. D., Fawbush, F & Stoec, J. B. (2021). Fathers' involvement in child care activities: qualitative findings from the highlands of Madagascar. *PLoS One* 16, e0247112
17. Saaka, M., Awini, S., Kizito, F. & Hoeschle-Zeledon, I. (2023). Fathers' level of involvement in childcare activities and its association with the diet quality of children in Northern Ghana. *Public Health Nutr*. 26(4):771-778. doi: 10.1017/S1368980022002142.
18. Sachdeva, S. & Gupta, S. (2022). Knowledge, attitude and involvement of first-time fathers in infant and young child feeding and care practices. *Current Research in Nutrition and Food Science*. 10(3):959-970.
19. Sarkadi, A., Kristiansson, R., Oberklaid, F. & Bremberg, S (2008). Fathers' involvement and children developmental outcomes: a systematic review of longitudinal studies. *Foundation Acta Paediatrica*, (97): 153–58.
20. Shinde, J., Mojes, J., Londhe, P., Hirve, S. & Mali, A. (2023). A correlational study on fathers knowledge and attitude towards their role in childcare. *International Journal of Scientific research*. 12(7).2277-8179:Doi:10.3610j/ijshr.
21. Thuita, F., Mukuria, A., Muhomah, T., Locklear, K., Grounds, S. & Martin, S. (2021). Fathers and grandmothers experiences participating in nutrition peer dialogue groups in Vihiga County, Kenya. *Maternal child Nutrition*, 17(S1): e13184. :<https://doi.org/10.1111/mch.13184>.
22. Yogman, M. & Garfield, C. F. (2016). Fathers' roles in the care and development of their children: the role of pediatricians. *Am Acad Pediatr* 138, 1128. doi: 10.1542/peds.2016-1128