



**BARRIERS TO GIRL CHILD EDUCATION IN THE NORTHERN
PART OF NIGERIA AND THE MEASURES TO CURB THEM.
(Using Zaria city in the Kaduna state as a case study)**

**MSc. BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT AT HUNGARIAN UNIVERSITY OF
AGRICULTURE AND LIFE SCIENCES**

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APRIL 2024

Summary of the Study

The result of the study clearly shows the wide disparity between the male and female child in terms of access to education in Zaria community of Kaduna State of Nigeria. The study highlights the importance of girl-child education to the socio-economic development of a society and some of the challenges militating against the girl-child education. The study also outlines some of the factors responsible for the lack of awareness of the impact of girl child education and the measures to be put in place to improve girl child education in our community.

A month was used to disseminate a questionnaire for this study at the Zaria community of the Kaduna state in Nigeria. This questionnaire was distributed, and responses were received with the help of the researcher's family foundation in Nigeria. The collection of the responses of this study started on the 3rd of March 2024 till the 4th of April 2024. In all we had 100 responses, and some short interviews were also conducted. It was a very successful exercise because of the corporation of the respondents.

Out of the 100 respondents 61% of the were male whiles 39% were female and revealed that most of the respondents living in the Zaria community have a lower educational level, 45% of the respondents just have junior high school certificate and 5% of the respondents hold no school certificate hence such a high illiteracy rate which also affects the possibility of sending the girl child to school. The study also revealed that most of the people in the community are into Animal rearing, crop farming, trade and craftsmanship study also revealed that 68.7% of the respondents are into Islam and 32.3% are Christians and the misguided interpretation of the Islamic religion and the gender stereotype affects the education of the girl child hence trying to undermine the potentials of girls and limiting them to the kitchen and house chores making the boys supreme and head of the household. From the study it can be found that the income level of the respondents was very low hence it makes it difficult to afford the schooling expenses of their ward, comparing the parents to keep the girls at home to help the family with chores or to help the parents with their trade to get money to for the family upkeep. 57.6% and 24.3% of the respondents strongly agree and agree respectively and believe that the enrollment of the girl child in schools is lower than compared to the boy child and 79% of the respondents also believe that preference is given to the girl child early marriage than to educate them. From the analysis of the response 77% of the respondents believe that the parents in this community think that educating your girl is a waste of

resources because she will finally marry, give birth and becomes a house wife so it will make financial sense to use the available scarce resources to educate the boy who at the end will be the head of the household and will steer the affairs of the family.

Socio-economic factors which include school fees and costs of schooling, Poverty in the family, exposing the girl child to work to generate funds for the family and insecurity, contributes negatively to girl-child education in Nigeria. Recently 300 schoolgirls were kidnapped by Boko haram while they were in school. These issues put parents in a state of trauma and fear sending their girls to school since there is no conducive and secure environment for educating the girls. It will make a natural sense to keep your girl at home than to send her to school to be kidnapped.

Cultural/Gender norms, and stereotypes, early marriage, premature pregnancy, and religion are the different aspects of the traditional/socio-cultural factors that affect girl-child education in northern Nigeria. The perception of some parents and the doctrine of some religion put the girl child to a great disadvantage when it comes to education in the northern Nigeria.

The impact of educating the girl child such as improvement of gender equality, reduction of early marriage, birth control and small family size, reaching of the full potentials of the girl child were also known. This study also revealed the factors that affect lead to lack of awareness of educating the girl child and such of these factors are illiteracy and ignorance, narrow and conservative mindset, language barrier, misguided interpretation of religion and lack of women leaders and role models.

From Chapter 4 of this study some measures were put out by the respondents as a measure to improve the girl child education which some of these are secure learning environment, provision of school amenities, extracurricular activities, fighting against child labor, educating the public about the need for girl child education, Free education, financial assistance, and scholarships to motivate girls to be in school.

Some objectives were set for this study, and I must say that these objectives were achieved after the collections of the responses and careful analysis of the results. The study helped us to outline the impacts of educating a girl child in our community, impacts which includes the gender equality, helping the girls to reach their full potential, reducing child labor, better health and quality of life,

Better educated children, positive change, and national development, reduces early marriage, peace and stability in our society were unfold during this study.

The study also unfolds some barriers to girl child education. Socio economic barriers such as poverty, illiteracy rate of parents, cost of schooling, accessibility of school amenities and insecurity of the girls at schools were unfold by this study. Other barriers that are socio cultural like religion, gender stereotype, early marriage and premature pregnancy also came to the limelight through this study.

The study also helped us to derive some of the factors that can be put in place to curb the situation of girl child education in the community. The study brought out factors like provision of secure learning environment, free education, scholarship and financial assistance, provision of school amenities, public education on the need of girl child education as the measures that can be put in place to improve girl child education in the community.

Conclusion

The study's result clearly shows the vast disparity between male and female children in terms of access to education in Taraba State. The study highlights the importance of girl-child education to the socio-economic development of society and some of the challenges militating against girl-child education. The implications of the disparity in educational enrolment and accessibility between the girl-child and the boy include reducing her earning power, ability to care for her family, economic disempowerment, and perpetuating a vicious cycle of poverty in society. The study agrees that when you educate a man, you educate a single person, but when you educate a woman, you educate a nation. Thus, no society can afford to toy with the education of its citizens, especially the girl-child, who will be the mother of tomorrow. This study, therefore, aligns itself with other crusades aimed at dismantling all forms of institutional and artificial impediments to girl-child education in the state and the country at large.

The study clearly shows the limited income level of the community, therefore, to get the girls to be in school, education to be made free and compulsory, financial aids to be provided to curb this situation. It was revealed in the study that the government has done much towards the improvement of the girl child education in the community but there is more to be done. Especially the most serious issue of girls kidnapping while they are in schools. The government can provide whatever

financial assistance the community needs when the girls are not safe to be at school no parent will ever be encouraged to enroll them because of their safety.

Traditional rulers should be involved in making policies relating to education and particularly the girl-child education. Through this they can make their fatherly contribution to the education of the girl-child. Government, through the help of local chiefs and community leaders or the leadership structure at the local level can create enlightenment that will ensure that girls complete their schooling. In addition, the public enlightenment campaign should be intensified to increase awareness of the need and value of education by parents and society at large. Early withdrawal of girls should be addressed through the intervention of enlightened parents and traditional rulers by persuasion and appeal. There is evidence that incentives may be a successful way to retain the girl-child in school in context of absolute poverty. Desirable incentives include free-of-charge learning materials and uniforms, subsidized transport to school, and employment or vocational training opportunities following the completion of primary schooling. The government should improve the economy of the nation so that parents will be able to cater to the educational needs of their children, including the girl-child. Scholarships should be provided for the girl-child at the basic level of education.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study the following recommendations are made.

- I. The state government should step up budgetary allocations to women organizations and the Ministry of Women affairs to help them sensitize the women populace on the importance of girl child education.
- ii. Government should launch massive and aggressive functional adult literacy education, especially for the womenfolk in all local government councils in the state.
- iii. Individuals, groups and non-governmental organizations should sponsor an educational campaign through the mass media, rallies, seminars, workshops, and conferences to discuss the needs and way forward for girl-child education in the state and country at large.
- iv. Religious leaders and organization should preach the need for formal education, particularly the girl child education as a necessary tool for advancing spiritual fulfilment.

v. Scholarship and bursary should be given to females as incentives to encourage them to progress in their educational pursuits.

vi. Secure learning environment free from Kidnapping should be provided to guarantee parents the safety of their girl child and to encourage them to send them to schools.