

SOCIO-CULTURAL FACTORS AFFECTING GIRL-CHILD EDUCATION IN MAIDUGURI, BORNO STATE

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Abstract

The paper was a descriptive survey which sought to find out the socio-cultural factors affecting Girl-Child Education in Maiduguri, Borno State. The study covered three Secondary Schools in Maiduguri namely Government Girls Secondary School Yerwa, Shehu Garbai Secondary School and Maiduguri Capital school. Simple random sampling was used to select the three schools with three principals. 96 teachers and 210 SSI students out of 355 teachers and 4,256 SSI students. Three research questions and two null hypotheses guided the study. The instrument used was questionnaire developed by the researcher. The reliability alpha coefficient of 0.86 was established when Spearman Brown prophecy formula technique was applied on the instrument. The data collected were analyzed using simple percentages to answer the research questions and ANOVA in testing the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed among other things that culture, socio-economic factor, religion, ignorance, home background were impediment to Girl Child Education in Maiduguri, Borno State. Based on these findings, recommendations were made among which was that Government should enlighten parents on the importance of education of both boy and girl, campaign against early marriage.

Introduction

It is widely believed that for a society to be fully developed, all its citizens must be given equal opportunity to develop the right kinds of attitudes that will lead to a sense of civil responsibility. However, it has been observed that female child are faced with general problems of discrimination in education, work, politics and wealth (UNESCO, 1985). These problems may be more pronounced and more disturbing for some than for others. There are few if any society of the contemporary world whose citizens have not felt in some, way the repercussion of these problems (Aminu, 1985). According to the United Nations Report of 1967, Women represent 50% of the World's Adult Population and one third of the working hours and receive only one percent of the world property.

The picture depicted by the United Nations Report of 1967 still holds true in Nigeria. Until recently, education in Nigeria used to be directed to the male child only especially in the northern part of the country where many parents are still unaware of the values of Western Education (Ozigi and Ocho, 1981). Such parents regard western education with suspicion. They see it as suitable for socio-economic development of the community and not for spiritual and moral training which is paramount in their minds. Furthermore, the education of female child is less valued by parents because more financial help is expected from the male child than female child (Dubey, 1984). In addition, Williams (1986) and

Ndahi (1987) found that parents believe a female child belongs to her husband's family together with whatever belongs to her, and since a female child will eventually get married whether she is educated or not, there is no point wasting money on her education.

A Nigerian female child who is the focus of Girl-Child Education deserves every encouragement to pursue education so that she can enjoy the provisions of education for mankind for her own personal development and for the development of the nation. As the saying goes "*Train a man, you train a soul or just an individual but train a woman you train a nation*". Girls are mothers of the next generation therefore, they require the best education for the best foundation of the future generation to sustain our civilization. In this paper, Girl-Child Education is defined as the education of a young female child. It has the same objectives with women education i.e. education of the female folk so both of them will be used interchangeably in this paper. In this paper also, education means school education or western type of education or formal education, in other words, education provided in schools, colleges and universalities. There are so many definitions of education as we have many philosophers of education.

However, the following definitions are taken as operational terms: Education is the art of learning (Adeyinka, 1982), it is the art of acquisition of the art of utilization of knowledge (Whitehead in Ukeje, 1969); the art of acquiring knowledge, skills and values for adjustment in society and problem-solving (Ugwuadu and Adamu, 1996).

In Maiduguri, it has been observed that the education of female child is backward particularly among the illiterate people. This notwithstanding, the Borno State Government has been giving serious attention to the education of the citizens, to the extent that there are a good number of states government owned educational institutions (Primary, Secondary and Tertiary). In addition, the state has two Federal Government Colleges at Monguno and Maiduguri. There is also a Federal College of Education as well as a Federal Polytechnic. Despite efforts by the state government providing more school, statistics has shown that girls' education lags behind in the state. According to Borno State Educational Statistics, the enrolment of females into primary schools between in 1999 to 2004 stands at between 37% to 42% (see table 1:1).

Year	Total	Male	Female	Female %
1999/2000	448,736	259,621	189,115	42.1%
2000/2001	457,563	273,285	184,278	40%
2001/2002	476,547	287,668	188,879	39%
2002/2003	486,844	302,808	184,036	37%
2003/2004	512,467	318,467	193,722	37%

Source: State Primary Education Board

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Similarly, the enrolment of students into post primary schools between 1999 to 2003 shows very little improvement (see table 1.2). These percentages get into tertiary institutions. Student's enrolment into post primary schools (secondary) from 1998 – 2003.

Year	Total	Male	Female	Female %
1998/1999	76,279	49,082	27,197	35
1999/2000	77,931	47,677	30,254	38
2000/2001	79,776	50,315	29,461	36
2001/2002	87,590	56,042	31,548	36
2002/2003	89,711	58,461	31,250	34

Source: Borno State Ministry of Education Research and Statistics Department

Despite the increase in the number of schools and pupils, girls' enrolment in primary and secondary schools remains low when compared with that of boys. Girls tend to drop out of school earlier than boys do. In situations where education is not free, boys are given precedence over girls when parents have to make choice on whom to send to school. This situation in Nigeria is typical of the situation in Borno State, especially Maiduguri Metropolis. Most girls in Borno State do not go beyond primary school level. This is not surprising because the condition of boys' and girls' daily lives and their relative position within the societies are embedded in social, cultural and economic frame work and institutions. Girls are socialized into roles which reflect and maintain the subordinate and generally powerless status of most girls, while boys are socialized into roles which lend to enhance their privileged status. It is the domestic location of girls in a physical and epistemological sense, which underlines many of the difficulties they presently face.

Factors that influence provision for and access to education at primary level are carried on to post primary (secondary) level. Thus, the trend of disparity between boys and girls continues despite the concerted efforts made by the government.

The purpose of this paper therefore is to find out the socio-cultural factors affecting Girl-Child Education in Maiduguri, Borno State. An attempt was also made to identify some problems facing education with solutions and recommendations made for improvement.

Research Questions

The following are the research questions for this study:

1. What are the general views of people towards Girl-Child education?
2. What are the socio-cultural factors affecting Girl-Child's education in this area?
3. What are the future prospects of Girl-Child education in the area under study?

Null Hypotheses

Two null hypotheses were tested at the 0.05 level of significance.

These are: -

1. There is no statistically significant difference between the mean ratings of principals, teachers and students on the general views of female education.
2. There is no statistically significant different between the mean ratings of principals, teachers and students on the future prospects of female education.

Research Methodology

Design

The study was a descriptive survey research which assessed the mean responses of secondary school principals, teachers and students n the socio-cultural factors affecting Girl-Child Education.

Area of the Study

The study was carried out in three secondary schools in Maiduguri, Borno State (G.G.S.S. Yerwa, Shehu Garbai Secondary School and Maiduguri Capital School).

Population of the Study

The target population comprised of all the secondary school principals, teachers and their students identified in the three secondary school. In Government Girls Secondary School Yerwa, there are: 1 principal, 130 teachers and 1,201 SSI students. In Shehu Garbai there are: 1 principal, 85 teachers and 1,015 SSI students. In Maiduguri Capital School, there are: 1 principal, 140 teachers and 2,040 SSI students.

Sample and Sampling Technique

Schools selected with stratified random sampling technique. Also three principles, 32 teachers and 70 SSI students were selected each from the 3 secondary schools making the sample of 96 teachers and 210 SSI students.

Instrument

The instrument for data collection of the study was 24 items questionnaires developed by the researcher. The questionnaire was divided into two sections –

Section 1a: sought information on the general views of the respondents on Girl-Child Education. (1b) sought information on the socio-cultural factors affecting Girl-Child Education. Section B: sought information on the future prospects of Girl-Child Education. The weightings of the responses were: Strongly Agree = 4, Agree = 3, Disagree = 2 and Strongly Disagree = 1. For ease of analysis, only Agree and Disagree were used.

Validation of the Instrument

Two experts in research methods in Sociology Department in University of Maiduguri validated the instrument. The experts, after examining the instrument made some corrections in precision of items and ambiguity of statements. These corrections were effected in the final draft of the instrument.

Reliability of the Instrument

The spilt half method for testing reliability was applied. The researcher administered copies of the instrument to a sample of 2 principals, 40 teachers and 50 students in secondary schools that were not part of the sampled schools. Their mean ratings were separated into odd and even numbered items. The two halves were correlated using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation analysis. To obtain the coefficient for the whole questionnaire, Spearman Brown Prophecy Coefficient formula was used to get the reliability to be 0.86, which was satisfactory for the study.

Method of Data Collection

The researcher distributed the questionnaires by herself. The respondent took time to respond to the instrument. This resulted that all the copies were collected back (100%).

Method of Data Analysis

Mean scores were used in answering the research questions. The acceptable level of mean score was 2.50 and above. The two stated null hypotheses were tested using Analysis of variance (ANOVA). This is deemed appropriate because data was interval, and more than two mean groups were compared.

Results

The results were presented according to research questions in tables 1, 2 and 3 while the results of the hypotheses were presented in tables 4 and 5.

Table 1: Mean ratings on the general views of the respondents towards Girl-Child Education.

Section 1(A)

S/N	Items on the general views towards girl-child Education: Education factors such as:	Principals means	Teachers mean	Students mean	Decisions
1.	Male and female should be given equal level of education	3.55	3.40	2.56	A
2.	Female child should be educated up to University	3.65	3.20	3.15	A
3.	Educated females make good wives.	2.75	2.60	2.78	A
4.	Education helps female to contribute to Nigeria National Development	3.25	3.25	3.75	A
5.	Educated women are more useful to their husbands.	2.66	2.56	2.50	A
Socio factors such as:					
6.	Female are not supposed to be married off at an early age.	3.33	3.15	3.19	A
7.	Most parents believe that western education promotes immorality among female.	2.55	3.22	3.20	A
8.	Undecided girls do not get married easily	2.63	2.51	2.60	A
9.	There is need to educate female	3.25	3.17	3.20	A
Economic factors such as:					
10.	Improvement in Agric.	3.12	2.10	2.55	A
11.	Improvement in Health	3.10	3.12	3.11	A
12.	Improvement in Politics & education	2.55	2.63	2.65	A
13.	There will be peace at times in the country	2.78	2.60	2.55	A
14.	Quality of life of people will improve	3.00	3.20	3.25	A
Cultural factors such as:					
15.	Culture and ties of most community discourage female education	3.10	3.11	3.30	A
16.	Females are not to play their traditional role as home makers only	3.25	2.88	3.10	A
17.	Ignorance on the part of some parents	3.30	3.10	2.75	A
18.	Female children should be allowed to finish their education before marriage	3.11	2.78	2.60	A
19.	Educated female are respectful.	3.20	3.00	2.80	A

$(\Sigma X_1 = 58.13 \ \Sigma X_2 = 56.08 \ \Sigma X_3 = 55.39) [169.6]$

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Data in table 1 above showed that all the items in 1-19 scored above the accepted mean of 2.50 and above. This is an indication that all those items are general views which the respondents have towards girl-child education.

Section 1(B)

Table 2: Mean Ratings on the Socio-Cultural Factors Affecting Girl-Child Education.

S/N	Items on socio-cultural factors affecting Girl-Child Education	Principals means	Teachers mean	Students mean	Decisions
20.	Poor financial status of parents affects the education of female children.	2.66	3.32	3.00	A
21.	Parents prefer to invest on other business rather than educating their female children	3.15	3.21	2.90	A
22.	High cost of education demoralizes parents	3.23	2.98	2.88	A
23.	Religious belief hinder female education	3.20	3.19	2.85	A

$(\Sigma X = 12.24 \quad \Sigma X = 12.7 \quad \Sigma X = 11.63) [36.57]$

In table 2, all the respondents agreed that items in 20-23 reached up to the acceptable mean of 2.50 and above and thus indicated that all the items listed were socio-cultural factors that affect girl-child education.

Section B:

Table 3: Mean Ratings on the Future Prospects of Female Education Future Prospects of Female Education

S/N	Items on future prospects of female education	Principals means	Teachers mean	Students mean	Decisions
24.	Women education is source of man power for the Nation.	3.21	3.00	2.87	A
25.	Educated female helps in family life and the training of the young.	3.10	2.90	2.66	A
26.	Female should be educated to lower the rate of infant mortality	2.75	2.62	2.55	A
27.	Educated female have better employment opportunities; to be among the leader in the society	3.00	2.81	2.56	A

$(\Sigma X = 12.06 \quad \Sigma X = 11.33 \quad \Sigma X = 10.64)$

Data in table 3 above revealed that all the items scored up to 2.50 and above which is the acceptable mean thereby indicated that all the respondents agreed that items listed about should be adopted for the future prospects of female education to be improved.

Table 4: ANOVA Summary For The Mean Ratings of Principals, Teachers And Students on the General Views of Female Education (P<0.05 Level of Significance)

Source of variation	Sum of squares	Df	Mean square	F-cal	F-crit	Decision
Between groups	0.17	(K-1) 2	0.085	2.58	3.55	Ho Accepted
Within groups	5.94	N-1 18	0.33			
Total	6.11	20				

Data in table 4 showed that F-calculated is 1.37 while F-critical is 3.21. The F-calculated is less than the F-critical thus we fail to reject the null hypothesis of no significant difference.

Table 5: ANOVA Summary for the Mean Ratings of Principals, Teachers and Students on the Future Prospects of Female Education.

Source of variation	Sum of squares	Df	Mean square	F-cal	F-crit	Decision
Between groups	15.22	2	7.61	2.21	3.55	Ho Accepted
Within groups	61.46	18	3.44			
Total	76.68	20				

Data in table 5 revealed that F-calculated is 2.21 while F-critical is 3.55. The F-calculated is less than the F-critical. We fail to reject the null hypothesis of no significant difference. The ANOVA test for null hypothesis one showed significant difference between the mean ratings of principals, teachers and students’.

Discussion of the Findings

The finding in table 1 revealed vividly that the respondents- principals, teachers and students were of the consensus that all the listed items were the reasons for low female education. This result is in line with the finding of the research carried out by Osagie, (2007) which indicated that parents usually place emphasis on boy child education but neglect the girl . It is assumed that the best training a girl can get is to learn how to cook and help with household chores, like taking care of the house, the environment and assist the mother with child care (Fajana, 1978). In many parts of Nigeria, the female child reformed into early marriage. In most cases. the girls have no opportunity to choose her marriage partner, instead, it is regarded as family responsibility to choose a husband from friends of the family for the daughters.

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Data in table 2 also shows that some of the socio-cultural factors affecting girl-child education were: poor financial status of parents, high cost of education, religious belief among others. In case of limited fund in the family for payment of school fees, the girls were encouraged to go and marry while the boys were encouraged to go for higher learning. The traditional beliefs of parents have made them to believe that girl-child education is not important for the following reasons; The girl would soon get married and answer another man's name; educated women do not make good wives and are morally corrupt, barren, would reject parental choice of husbands that they would find it difficult to get a husband (Amanchukwu, 2005). Studies also reported on preferential treatments in favour of boys due to their socio-cultural beliefs collaborating, Dimka and Mangumat (2004) identified some factors that pose as impediments to female education such as economic, cultural, socio-political religious and educational factors. Ojo (2005) observed that social position of parents in Nigeria is closely related to the roles they play in society even in their children. Supporting the just mentioned ideas, Edewor (2005) stated that culture and tradition have been identified as factors in the downgrading of women. Researchers have consistently reported that parents from high and middle socio-economic status encouraged their children's education more than those from low economic backgrounds (Epstein, 1990) Mereno, 1997). To this end, in a situation where parents have limited fund for the education of their children, it has been generally observed that the boys are favoured to go to school while the girls may be encouraged to go for sewing, petty-trading and early marriages.

With regards to research question 3, all the respondents unanimously agreed that all the items listed are future prospects of female education would improve girl-child education. Ugwuadu (1996) stressed that cleanliness; proper hygiene and character of a child are better handled by an educated mother. In the words of Chaba (2002) "Women play different roles in society which range from cultural to socio-economic and political roles and when educated, the roles could be dynamic as to be facing the challenges of modern times". These notable roles of women for national development start from the home to the wider society. Women being the first teacher of their children are responsible for their being socialized into the norms of the society; they need quality education to prepare the young ones for their role expectations. A nation that has well-trained mothers has unlimited joy of having well-trained offsprings "teach the child the way he should go and he will never depart from it" (Proverb 22:6).

It is indeed the mother in the home that balances and resolves the nature nurture controversies in the child's growth thus, making him a disciplined and responsible citizen. Also at home, they provide food of high nutritional value as well as maintain good hygiene and sanitation. Anioke (1999) maintained that the standard of living in the family is raised through the mother's roles. Women are indeed, home makers, the shield-umbrella of the family, and custodians of social, cultural and fundamental values of their society. Amachukwu (2006) observed

that, a man's success depends greatly on the contribution of the wife who with education, performs her tasks effectively and efficiently in different facets of life.

Economically, women with good education generate resources for the family well-being; they are also good managers both at home and in their various places of work. By every indication, educated and professionally skilled women is more productive and an asset to the family. The problem in most families today is the fact due to lack of education and professional skill of the women. They are unproductive and sit at home as a full time house wives. In families where both husband and wife are educated and income earners, there will be greater financial stability, better fertility control, healthier and better informed citizenry.

Recommendation

The following recommendations were made as most of the respondents perceived that religion, tradition, education among others were factors affecting girl-child education.

1. Popularization of girl-child education by mounting enlightenment programmes using seminars, conferences, etc. The press, women commission and organisations, voluntary agencies, the church, Ministry of Education etc can join in this campaign to make girl-child education popular. By so doing, parents will be educated on the need for girl-child education so that they can invest in it and remove the cultural and religious biases in it.
2. Discouraging early marriage in Nigeria society. Parents should be educated on this and a special penalty given for such acts from parents.
3. The government should make education up to secondary/tertiary school level compulsory for school age children. This will ensure that girls have opportunity to attain tertiary school education. Furthermore, withdrawal of children for whatever reason should be stopped through proper legislation.
4. More girls' schools should be established by governments and fully equipped for effective teaching and learning of scientific and technological subjects.
5. Strict order should be given to visitors female schools especially from men to solve the problem of girl being spoilt at school as thus constitutes one area of fear from parents.
6. Religious and moral instructions should be included in the school curriculum to help mould character.

Conclusion

Education is a powerful organ that propels individuals to an enviable height. To achieve this, there must be adequate provision of both human and material resources. Both boys and girls should have equal access to these resources. The result of the study shows that principals, teachers and students investigated perceived there were some socio-cultural factors affecting girl-child education in the area (Maiduguri). These factors include harmful tradition and

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religious practices, and sidelined education and socio-economic background of parents. Reduction of these factors will promote future prospects of female.

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