

Girl Child Education and Its Socio-Cultural View in Our Society

Abiodun Eunice Olatide

Department of Social Science Education, Faculty of Education, Ekiti State University, Ado-Ekiti

Email: euniceolatide8@gmail.com

Abstract:

The study examined the importance of girl child education and its significance to our society and entire nation in general. The paper also reviewed literature on the cultural, economic, social and traditional aspect of people's life, particularly on girl child in our society and its benefits to training a girl child and to provide for their needs. Girl child education in some countries of Africa and some culture in Nigeria were also considered. The study examined girl child education among the secondary school students of four selected local government areas and 5 schools where 20 students that make up 400 students was used as sample for the study in Kwara State. Two research questions were raised while two hypotheses were formulated. Descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. The findings revealed some cultural, traditional beliefs and practice of the people have constituted the major challenges to girl child education.

Keywords:

education; girl child; cultural and traditional practice

I. Introduction

Girl child refers to female offspring from between the period of 2 to 8 years of age. It is the period from crèche, nursery, and primary school to secondary level. The girl is expected to be under the watch of parents, guardians or teachers. She is dependent secretly on elders around her for character modeling and behavior observation. The social, physical, mental and emotional development starts and progresses to adult stage during this period.

On the other side, education is the knowledge imparted to prospective and able individual to become adequate and elicit, appropriate in attitudes, skills and also, to be able to function as a citizen of the nation. Ocho (2005) asserted that education is a process through which the young ones can acquire knowledge and realize their potential for self-actualization, to be useful to oneself. It is also, a means of transmitting, improving and preserving the culture of one's society that are worthwhile to be useful to the fellow young ones. Educational philosophy according to national Policy of Education (2014) stated that Education is a instrument for national development through interaction. It helps to integrate and formulate ideas. Educations also promote progress among people through school programmes. Education was viewed by Ajaegbo and Ibezime (2001) education as training of both mind and character for an effective performance. Also Fafunwa (2004) asserted education as an aggregate process of development of ability and attitude of young, adult and children behavior that have positive values to the society in which we live. The development of individual into sound and effective citizen involves full integration of individual into the community. Provision of equal access to educational opportunities for all citizens of the country at all levels of education.

Everybody must have right to education. Every child is born, but relies on parents and guardian in society for growth, need and survival. However, the degree and quality of education depend on participation of people in society both political and citizenship duties. Every citizen has to benefit as a result of knowledge “education” received from elders and older generation in any society they found themselves. The essence of education of a girl child and every able human being in every nation is charged with the responsibility of citizen to educate particularly the girls child because they are parents and future leaders. It is imperative that all families in our society should raise to the challenge of bringing their ward up socially, mentally, physically and all round development. This can only be made possible through proper upbringing of girl child education because they have larger role to play.

II. Review of Literature

2.1 Education of Girl Child

Education of a girl child is the knowledge that will enable girls to have a bright future because education is light to so many things in our life political, social, economic, and other aspect of our life. A common adage that says educate a man, you educate an individual but educate a woman you have educated a nation. This is an indicator that education of a girl child has emphasized as crucial to all round development of human being. In another words, education has contradicted the cultural practices and belief when a girl get married, she is no more useful to her family when her responsibilities belongs to somebody else. Igube (2004) asserted that some tradition sees women as sole dependent on her husband for everything that she needs. Some culture in Nigeria belief that girl does not have any other responsibility to bear in any other place than in the kitchen. But contrary to the belief, a girl child needs to be enlightened for self-protection against sexual assessment, decision taking rights to life to be economically productive, independent and live a sustainable life. Education is the bedrock of human being as they grow to be future leaders, parents or guardians.

In view of girl child education, Jane Butigh Ajayi (2008) submitted that due to cultural norms and domestic assignments in the home, there has been low level of demand for education that burdens the family. Education to some people does not worthwhile because the girl child will move to join the husband, thus, the gain of productivity of money spent on education will accrues to son-in-law rather than the entail family when some educate their girl child, in order to charge high bride price in return.

Nwanyi (2004) viewed that diseases, poverty and backward cultural practices had contributed in no small measure to deny of girl child right to education, despite the introduction of free primary education which was supposed to account for mass enrollment of children in schools. In some community, special attention is still accord to traditional practice and costume of the people with no regard to girl child. It has been that the practice of the parents in relation of socio-cultural beliefs, tradition and engagement in domestic markets, customs of early marriage and initiation which marks the transition of child hood to adulthood in some community in sub-saharah and African countries are still in practice which accounted to low turnout and enrollment in our various schools.

It has been observed that some social occurrence that courses set-back in education of girl child in part of Africa, in Nigeria (Zanfara) and other places. In most cases, where school programme overlap with cultural ceremonies, absenteeism and drop out are recorded, which has adverse effect on girl child education. The initiation ceremonies of girl child often affect their presence and academic activities in the school. They see themselves as adult, hence put

up an unruly behavior to teachers when they are back in school. These and other factor constitutes no small measure to the upbringing of girl child education particularly in Nigeria which calls for further investigation.

2.2 Girl Child Education in Some Countries in Africa

Awan and Ahmed (2015) asserted that education plays a significant role in development of human resources in all aspect of life socially and economic life of people by creating opportunities, develop those deprived sections in the society. When women get the proper education, her prospective facilities will improve and get better knowledge to discharge her duties in an appropriate manner. Nevertheless, all child needs to get sensitized, right from background because the future depends on the how the child is brought up and educated from youth, this matter most when the child is growing later in life. In a nutshell, educated women can educate the whole family and can make the society better. World Economic outlook (2019) emphasized that a good society without education of women is a waste of time and opportunity. Okajie (2002) postulated that girls that have formal education participate positively in the education than those from illiterate homes. Sllovenia (2008) in his opinion added that education makes a girl to gather educational needs, all necessary educational or learning are for her convenience and such must have come from enlighten home, hence such environment is supportive towards girls child education.

Cultural practice in some countries in Africa, where girls start school at the age of 10 and getting to school is another constrain on the fear of sexual harassment, abduction and also distance of school from home, has accounted as hindrance to education, or early marriage on fear of teenage pregnancy among others. It has also been observed that, girl child education and other discrepancies lie within the tradition, customs and mindset of people generally in our society. In Asia countries sexual abuse, bad health care, while girl child are generally marginalized. All these factors cause hindrance to education. This includes injustices among the people. It was gathered that girls are abducted for marriage at the early age of eight some were recruited for families and domestic workers. Togunde and Cater (2006). In South Africa, Hisman Rights Watch (2008) observed that sexual violence and abuse hampers girl access to education and other educational benefits. Guttman (2009) noted that UNESCO courier journalist recalled that 60% of 113 million of children are out of school due to customs, poverty and fear of violence in South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa. However, Offorma (2009) pointed that socio-cultural factor such as poverty, epidemics of diseases due to over crowdedness in cities where they live as well as warfare has adverse effect on education of girl child because they have no access to education as it should be.

In Cameroon, Christian parents were found to marry their daughter at puberty even when they are still expected to be in school for fear of teenage pregnancy and these has also resulted to drop-out is some causes. Whereas in New Guinea, it was observed that girls were given in hand of marriage to ensure their protection and prepare for the event in their society. Some who live outside their family are found to be indulging immoral activities that course diseases like HIV/AIDS and the rest of it. Cultural practice serves as hindrance to girl child because they are inaccessible to education which makes them vulnerable to diseases and also early marriage. Banki-Mozom the Secretary General of United Nation, in his speech on Literacy Day (2011) explained that, illiteracy undermines efforts to eliminate social ills like poverty, sickness and it serves as threat to nation stability ill-health and all the rest of it. This has accounted to low turnout and enrollment of girl in schools, which will have adverse effect on the society in future.

Observation of China education recorded that women were limited to the teaching of social ethics and family tradition that emphasised how to become virtues as a women or wife in the home. The system later developed to learn some skills that were acquired from their parents as housekeeping, knitting, sewing and cotton-spinning that makes them probably get married in their earlier life and serves their parents-in-law. The position of women improved with the influence of people that migrated from North to the South in pursue of some work like brush and ink work. Over time, some women teach their children how to read and write what was termed “Book of Mother”, while few words was taught to women, such as fuel, fish, rice which was turned down to indoctrination that might cause more harm than good, The teaching of social ethics and family traditions was introduced which brings about virtues wife and good mother among them. Women education took new dimension in the later life when girls were given official enrollment to university that took over the traditional to modern education.

Njoku (2008) postulated that certain factors are responsible among them, such as truancy on the part of the child, due to inability by the parent to provide school needs as requested by the child. Some lack sponsorship that might have resulted from broken home, as well as engagement of girl child as child labour or house help.

In addition to girl’s child education, British Broadcasting Cooperation News (2006) had it that, societal view of focusing education of boys over that of girls, remain that, boys are the ones that maintain the family lineage, girls do not have adequate access to education particularly in Africa. No wonder, the dropout number of girls as recorded by UNICEF (2003)) out number that of boys as a result of civil war and other related factors as cultural and bearing the household burden. This in turn has added no small measure to unemployment and neglect of girl child education. It has been observed that girl child enrolment in school is lower than that of boys in the northern part of Nigeria. Effort are been made to improve girls child enrolment in school to bridge the gap of inequality or disparity created in educating a girl child. Offorma (2008) affirm that girls child education is at the disparity in the northern part of Nigeria, when the southern is in favour of boys.

Adekeye (2002) attested that, it was the main effort of parents and families member to socialize the children to become productive citizen. Where necessary resources and skills are efficiently used joyfully, for the upbringing of their children then the entire people would benefit in the society and the whole nation will develop through peacefully co-existence in general. Vellyrnall (2012) observed that environment where the child lives, will enable them to learn attitude, skills and behavior that could educate their life to be a productive and successful citizen. On the order hand, the occupation of the parent or guardian plays a significant role in the provision of educational resources for their word. Thus the children of a particular parent will demonstrate appropriate effort towards their studies. The performance of such child will be an excellent outcome because they want their children to succeed them in their profession. Hoare and Gell (2009) emphasizes that, there is a sort of mistrust in the ability of women together with the prejudice or stereotyped role accord the girl child in the society. However, our society often assume women to be inferior in term of occupying a leadership position and in contributing their own cota in carrying out their duties effectively irrespective of posts they found themselves.

Hence Vecchio (2002) postulated that male leaders are regarded to be more effective than female leaders. But UN’s reported (2001) contended that participation of female in the workforce would go a long way in reducing poverty at the level of household and in

contribution to growth and development of the nation. Ogbogu (2011) and Olaogun (2014) submitted that anti-discrimination faced by women still course women to be under-represented in many occupations, but this would not be an over statement when Bristin (2006) confirmed that, women lead differently than men or in the same way, to be tough and active in nature. Bass and Biggio (2006) contended that, transformational role recorded by men reviewed that they exceed women, but in transactional leadership, it was vice versa. However, the nature of patriarchal in our society showed that, male child are more valued than female, thus Agee (2009) opined that, men were raised with the hope that they will achieve in life endeavor when given encouragement and grooming to face the realities of lifes, while the female were train for motherhood, marriage and domestic purposes of life. It has been observed that women have occupied reputable positions in our society, for instance the post of vice chancellor in state, private and federal universities. Punch newspaper (2015) recorded some women like Aize Imoukhane Obayon (covenant university) Charity Angya (Benue State University) Oluyemisi Oluremi Obilade (Tai Solarin University of Education) Grace Alele Willams University of Benin) and Juliet Elu (Gregory University) to mention but few. We also have women who had served in various capacity in the Federal and State level and have performed excellently well Professor Okojo Owola a notable minister of finance, Dora Akinwale in charge of Drug enforcement Agency. Certain situation or commitment such as having a child, parental illness often call for women to be less active and pressure received both at home and work place as well as the need to fulfill the care demand of life. The assumption and common belief of Africans geared towards manpower needs, but not towards education, and economic opportunities. Women are prone to face with various challenges and responsibilities of child rearing and home makers. Lawrence (2010) attested that the traditionally women are second class citizens by the customary practice hence, this assumption has properly make it impossible to accept the fact that women are very vital in the family, society and in the nation at large. Ajaegbo and Ibezim (2001) posit that education has a training of both mind and character for an effective performance. Fafunwa (2004) asserted that, education has the aggregate process of development in ability and attitude of adult and children in forms of positive values to the society in which we live. Aliu (2001) observed that education has the method of transmitting knowledge value and culture from one generation to the next one. The view of Ajeregbo and Ibezim is in line with Fafunwa as well as Aliu in that, they all agreed that knowledge required, seems to be useful to one self. This is in line with Ocho that knowledge is the potential for self-actualization. Najoku observed that certain factors has constituted hindrance for educating a girl child such as truancy on the part of child, financial constraints, when some society felt that, focusing education on boys implies that, they are the one that hold the family in futures, while some supported the cultural views that boys bears the family boarding not girls. Vellyrnnall agreed that, the environment that dictates the occupation nature and perception of mind of the people to educate the girl child. Some are of the view of mistrust to educate a girl child and the ability to perform when some writer supported the under representation and discrimination faced by women in term of occupation has negative. Although, there are a lot of cultural practice in some area that makes a girl child look inferior and other bias attitude against women. When the political, social and economic aspect of life is viewed, This has resulted to assume women as an inferior beings, hence they should not be instrumental to decision making in many places and part of the country, rather they are regarded as second class citizens before human civilization, according to Marx (1848) women have no legitimate right on things, there are injustice against girl child. All these continue in some part off Africa including Asian Countries and many other occurrences such as sentiment and discriminations which have brought about negative attitude towards girl child. All these views have call for investigation into the purpose of the study. The study is being undertaken for the following objectives:

1. To consider the link between the education and girl child,
2. To determine the impact of educating a girl child and the societal aspiration,
3. To actualize the importance of educating a girl child in our society.

The purpose of the study is to find out the extent to which:

1. The involvement of girl child education in our society has been unable to the people.
2. Sensitize each home and society on the consequences of neglect of girl child education
3. How the age of girl child is not a barrier to education.

Research Questions

The following research questions have been raised to guide of the study:

1. What is the level of education of girl child in Kwara State?
2. Is there any difference between girl child educations based on age?

III. Research Methods

The study made use of a descriptive design of the survey type. It examine the causes and differences between girl child education based on age and level of education of girl child in Kwara State. The population comprised all the students in all the schools, while the sample was done through random sampling technique. Five schools were selected from 4 four local government of the 16 sixteen local government Area of Kwara State. Twenty students were use from each of the schools that total up to 400 students for the study. A questionnaire girl child education (GCEQ) was used to obtain the data while the expert in Test and measurement validated the instrument to ascertain the appropriateness. The descriptive Analysis was used to determine both the mean and standard deviation also the level of girl child education in the state .The re-test was conducted after two weeks on 25 students that were outside the study zone in other to ascertain the reliability of the instrument. The finding revealed that, there was difference between girl child education based on age and the education generally moderate.

IV. Results and Discussion

4.1 Results

a. Research Question 1

Table 1. Descriptive Analysis of the level of girl child education in Kwara State

Level	N	X	S.D
High	13	6.74	2.36
Moderate	28	9.31	4.78
Low	9	4.42	1.39

Table shows the mean and standard deviation of the level of girl child education in Kwara State to be 6.74:2.36, 9.31: 4.78 and 4.42: 1.39 for high, moderate and low respectively. The means score of the level is apparently higher in moderate than high and low level. This implies that the girl child education level in Kwara State is moderate.

b. Research Question 2

Table 2. Descriptive Analysis of the level of girl child education based on age

Level	N	X	S.D
10 – 12	16	7.96	4.11
13 – 15	29	13.84	6.79

16 – 18	3	1.72	1.03
19 and above	2	1.89	1.10

Table 2 shows the mean and standard deviation of girl child level of education based on their respective ages to be. 7.96 : 4.11, 13.84: 6.79, 1.72:1.03 and 1.89:1.10 for age 10 to 12, 13 to 15, 16 to 18 and 19 years and above respectively. The mean is apparently higher for girl child within the age range of 13 to 15 than their counterparts in other age range. It could be said from the above table that there is a difference in girl child education level based on age.

4.2 Discussion

The findings of this study showed that generally a girl child needs more encouragement in all aspects particularly provision of school materials, promote payment of school fees to level up the gap with that of other age range. The findings are in-line with that of Njoku, who confirmed that certain factors such as financial constraints and inability to provide adequately for school needs and other materials are hindrances for educating a girl child in our society. Adekeye was also in support of parent to provide necessary resources and skills for upbringing of their children which will in turn benefit the society and the nation as a whole.

Agee opined that women are raised with the hope to achieve life endeavour and that girl child should be given real opportunity and encouragement to face the realities of life. They should be trained for motherhood, marriage and domestic purpose of life hence the hypotheses is rejected. Lawrence however attested that women regarded as second class citizen, that hold the pillar of life.

V. Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study supported adequate provision of school materials, payment of school charges and parents or guidance's should give encouragement to guide their wards for purpose of concentration and adequate attendance in school that will boost intellectual capability to learning.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are made from the findings.

1. Parents should make the provision of schools material as a parent to encourage girl child to be more committed to learning.
2. Parents are enjoy to provide the needs of their children irrespective of their.
3. Girl child can learn well, when they are given equal opportunity to do so, irrespective of their environment, hence government should sensitize the parents of the need to train a girl child.

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Women's education in traditional and modern china women's History Review. ISSN, 0961. 2025 (Print) 1747-583x (online) journal homepage; <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/rwhr20>.