Exploring the challenges confronting girls in pursuing formal education as perceived by adults

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Abstract: This study examines exploring the challenges confronting girls in pursuing formal education as perceived by adults in Dutsinma Local Government, Katsina State. This study adopted a descriptive type of research design. The population for this comprised all adults in Dutsinma Local Government, Katsina State. Ten (10) villages were selected across the Dutsinma Local Government, based on the researcher's interest, and a total number of three hundred (300) adults were selected as the sample size for this study using a simple random sampling technique. A self-designed, structured, and well-constructed questionnaire titled “Questionnaire on Challenges confronting Girls in Pursuing Formal Education (CCGFE)”. The test re-test reliability method was used to determine the validity and reliability of the instrument using Pearson product-moment correlation (PPMC) and a coefficient of 0.73 was established. The three research questions and hypothesis raised for this study were analyzed using descriptive statistics such as mean and standard deviation and (ANOVA). The findings from this study showed that the lack of money, which is a consequence of marrying early and getting pregnant, results in girls not being able to study. Distance of schools and depleted school infrastructures, war outbreak and their family’s social status as well as their own personal choice of falling in-love than prioritizing their studies resulted to girl's poor access to formal education. Also resolving Challenges confronting Girl Child/women access to formal Education, government needs to Enacting laws that make educating the girl-child mandatory, And the hypothesis tested revealed that there was a significant difference parent's perception on the Challenges confronting Girls in Pursuing Formal Education in Dutsinma Local Government, Katsina State based on educational Qualification. Recommendations were made based on these finding

Keywords: Exploring; Perception; Challenges; Girl; Formal Education

INTRODUCTION

Girls all over the world suffer from sex-engendered denial and discrimination in most aspects of life; but of all the discrimination and denial of opportunities that the girl child suffered, perhaps the most damaging is the denial of the right and opportunity to education, (Sule, 2018). According to the UNESCO report 2004, data collected from 154 countries showed that 115.4 million school-age children were not in school, and out of them, 56% were girls. 94% of them came from the least developed countries while one-
third of them were from Sub-Saharan Africa. Data from the UNESCO Institute of statistics (2010) indicates that the dropout rate for girls, as they struggle with gender disparities at every level of education remains high.

According to Ferguson (cited in Sule 2018) Education is a human right that should be accorded to all human beings solely because of being human. Many International Human Rights institutions advocate for education as a fundamental human right. One of the key objectives of the World Education Forum on Education for All (EFA) adopted by the World Summit for Children in 1990 is universalizing access and promoting equity in the area of education. This Forum identified the provision of access, the improvement of quality education for both girls and women and removing obstacles that hinder their active participation and all gender stereotyping in education as urgent priority areas for development intervention.

The 1995 Beijing conference on the Convention on the Rights of the Child recognizes that States Parties shall respect and ensure the rights outlined in the present Convention to each child within their jurisdiction without discrimination of any kind, irrespective of the child's or his or her parent's or legal guardians race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinions, national, ethnic or social origin, property, disability, birth or status (UN, 1996). In September 2000,189 Head of State from around the world signed the Millennium Declaration and established the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). While most goals aim to achieve significant progress in development by 2015, two goals are directly about women, and girls' child education and development. Goal 2 of the MDGs emphasized the achievement of Universal Primary Education whose target is to ensure that by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of basic education. Goal 3 aims to promote gender equality and empower women. Its target is to ensure gender parity in primary and secondary education by 2005 (MDGs Survey, 2015). Nigeria, like many countries, fully embraced the MDGs as operational targets around which to mobilize and focus their development agendas.

Women are at the heartbeat of most societies regardless of whether they are working or not because they are very influential in the lives of children therefore; educating girls is one of the most important investments that any country can make to its future. Still, in 2000, the Dakar Framework for Action as a follow-up to the World Declaration on Education for All (EFA) convened in 1990 in Jomtien Thailand had 1100 participants from 181 countries. They reaffirmed their commitment to achieving Education for All by the year 2015. The Framework for Action sets out an ambitious agenda on gender equity, both in terms of enrolment and in educational opportunities and outcomes (UNESCO, 2009). Dakar goal 5 focused on: Eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005 and achieving gender equality in education by 2015, with a focus on ensuring girls full and equal access to and achievement in basic
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education of good quality. There has been a lot of emphases, particularly in recent times for all citizens of the world to have access to Basic Education. Girl-Child Education known to be the best investment in development has become a major issue in most Third World Countries, especially in Sub-Saharan Africa where a large number of young girls do not attend school, and some drop out before completing Basic Education (UNESCO, 2009).

Nigeria recognizes education as a fundamental human right and is a major signatory to the conventions and protection of the rights of the Children. With the launch of the Universal Basic Education (UBE) in Nigeria on 29th September 1999 with determination and much commitment, the Country enacted the UBE Act in 2004 to fast-track the attainment of Education for All goals. The enabling legislation – The Compulsory, free “UBE Act” provides 9 years of continuous and uninterrupted formal education (comprising 6 years of Primary and 3 years of Junior Secondary Education) known as “Basic Education” for every child of school-going age, as well as reduce the incidence of drop out from the formal school system through improved relevance and efficiency.

Despite the launching of the UBE in Nigeria, the quality of Basic Education in the country is extremely very poor with about 8 million children of Primary school age out of school leading to low demand and an unacceptable low Net Enrolment ratio (NER) of 80% suggesting that a substantial proportion (20%) of primary school age population are not enrolled in primary schools nationwide. (MDGs Survey Report, 2015) This represents about 5 million Nigerian children aged 6-11 years old that do not have access to Basic Education. In 2014, the net attendance rate for primary school was 68.70 per cent which represents a 3.2 per cent decrease from 71.00 per cent recorded in 2012, and junior secondary school’s net attendance ratio was 57.4 per cent in 2014, recording a minimal increase of 4.7 per cent from 54.80 in 2012. Primary 6 (six) completion rate was about 74.0 per cent in 2014 which dropped by 15.6 per cent when compared to the 2012 figure. There was also a slight increase in literacy among young women by 0.15 per cent from 2012 to 2014. The survey revealed that the proportion of boys and girls attending primary school declined in 2014, while those attending secondary schools increased minimally. However, the primary 6 completion rate recorded a slight decline in 2014. (MDGs survey report, 2015).

In the Northern part of the country, the number of children out of school is particularly high and the proportion of girls to boys in school's ranges from 1 girl to 2 boys and even 1 to 3 in some states, with the North West and North East presenting worst scenarios (UNICEF 2007). Many girls in part of the rural communities of Northern Nigeria do not attend school; these are attributed to the less importance given to formal education in the part of the country as stipulated by Osita-Oleribe (2007). Education is seen in most northern communities as a fear of change and now with globalization, the
fear becomes even greater: fear to lose the cultural identity, fear of moving towards the unknown or unwanted (Aja-Okorie, 2013). Furthermore, the gender disparity is exacerbated by the powerful economic and social rationale for investing in the education of sons rather than daughters, as daughters are perceived to be less valuable once educated, and less likely to abide by the will of the father, brother, or husband. (Oniye, 2010).

Based on literature review, there exists a gap on the assessment of the Challenges confronting Girls in Pursuing Formal Education as perceived by Adults. While such studies by expert organizations, patrons, and policymakers have shown that education for females in the developing world is important and has many benefits associated with education, they have, however, failed to show the many challenges that females in the developing world face in the process of attaining a formal education. While this paper takes it as a given that education is valuable and worth pursuing and having, From the existing literature, this question is not clearly answered. Objectives of the Study are to determine the Challenges confronting Girls in Pursuing Formal Education in Dutsinma Local Government, Katsina State and To find out how the challenges confronting Girls in Pursuing Formal Education be resolved in Dutsinma Local Government, Katsina State.

METHODS

The descriptive survey design was adopted for this study. It depends on detecting, describing, and analyzing data that is related to the participant’s opinion on a particular subject understudies survey enables researchers to gather information from a representative sample, (Foluke and Mary 2017). Dutsinma Local Government, Katsina State has a population of about 169,829 as at the 2006 national population census with twenty-four (24) villages/towns. In which ten (10) villages/ towns (Bagagadi, Dorawa, Kutawa, Sha, Kuki, Rayi-Faguwa, Salihawa, Sabon Garin Turare, Yan Shantuna, and Makera), were selected across the Dutsinma Local Government, Katsina State based on researcher’s interest and a total number of three hundred (300) adults were selected as the sample size for this study using a simple random sampling technique. The main purpose for using this technique is due to the fact that it gives equal chance to all villages/towns and adults in those villages/towns of getting selected. A self-designed, structured, and well-constructed “Questionnaire on Challenges confronting Girls in Pursuing Formal Education (CCGFE)” Was used as a research instrument for the collection of data. The questionnaire was designed on a four-point Likert scale that is, Strongly Agree, Agree, and Disagree and Strongly Disagree. And five (5) items of closed-ended questions were generated under each research question. The following Likert scale point used was weighed as shown below: SA (4 points), A (3 points), and SD (1 point) based on whether it is a negative or positive statement. Meanwhile, items generated under research question two were weighed in reverse order since they are all negative statements. The test-re-test reliability method was used to determine the
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validity and reliability of the instrument using Pearson product-moment correlation (PPMC) and a co-efficient of 0.73 was established. Furthermore, the research questions raised for this study were analyzed using descriptive statistics such as mean and standard deviation while formulated hypothesis was analyzed by the inferential statistic of Analysis of Variance (ANOVA).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Research Question 1: What are the Challenges Confronting Girl Child/Women access to Formal Education as perceived by Adults in Dutsinma Local Government, Katsina State?

Table 1. Summary of Respondent’s opinion on Challenges Confronting Girl Child/Women access to formal Education in Dutsinma Local Government, Katsina State

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/N</th>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Dev</th>
<th>Rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Financial constraints</td>
<td>2.81</td>
<td>0.89</td>
<td>1st</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Insurgency and insecurity, Ignorance and nonchalant attitude by both Parents and the girls, hawking, and House chores</td>
<td>2.65</td>
<td>1.02</td>
<td>2nd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Government attitude and teacher’s welfare</td>
<td>2.51</td>
<td>0.89</td>
<td>4th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Distance of schools and school infrastructures</td>
<td>2.61</td>
<td>1.06</td>
<td>3rd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Early marriage and teenage pregnancy</td>
<td>2.81</td>
<td>0.82</td>
<td>1st</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Weighted Mean</strong></td>
<td><strong>2.68</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fieldwork, 2022. Cut off Mark 2.50

Table 1 shows an item-by-item analysis of the respondent’s opinions on the Challenges confronting Girl Child/women access to formal Education in Dutsinma Local Government, Katsina State. The respondents' opinions were varied and ranked. However, the result revealed that Items 1 and 5 which is "Financial constraints/Poverty and early marriage and teenage pregnancy” with a mean score of 2.81 respectively were ranked 1st, followed by item 2 which is "Insurgency and insecurity, Ignorance and nonchalant attitude by both parents and the girls, hawking, and house 2.65, followed by item 4 which is “Distance of schools and school infrastructures” with a mean score of 2.61 while the least ranked was item 3 which is “Government attitude and teacher’s welfare” with a mean score of 2.51. Hence, any item that the mean score is above the cut off mark of 2.50, Implies that the respondents had a positive perception of such item as the Challenges confronting Girl Child/women access to formal Education in the study area while any item that the mean score is below the cut off mark of 2.50. Implies that
the respondents had a negative perception of such items as Challenges confronting Girl Child/women access to formal Education in the study area.

Research Question 2: How can these Challenges confronting Girl Child/women access to formal Education as perceived by Adults be resolved in Dutsinma Local Government, Katsina State

Table 2. Summary of the Respondent’s Perception on Challenges confronting Girl Child/women access to formal Education as perceived by Adults be resolved

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/N</th>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Dev</th>
<th>Rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Provision of scholarships</td>
<td>2.89</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>2&lt;sup&gt;nd&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Enacting laws that make educating the girl-child Mandatory</td>
<td>3.05</td>
<td>0.98</td>
<td>1&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Penalizing parents/guardians that refused to send Their girls to school</td>
<td>2.64</td>
<td>1.02</td>
<td>4&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Introducing gender-related subjects into the Curriculum</td>
<td>2.50</td>
<td>1.05</td>
<td>5&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Strengthen the role of the family in improving The status of the girl-child</td>
<td>2.72</td>
<td>1.10</td>
<td>3&lt;sup&gt;rd&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Weighted Mean 2.78

Fieldwork, 2022. Cut off mark 2.50

Table 2 shows an item-by-item analysis of the respondent’s opinions on Challenges confronting Girl Child/women access to formal Education as perceived by Adults be resolved in Dutsinma Local Government, Katsina State. The respondents’ opinions were varied and ranked. However, the result revealed that Item 12 which is “Enacting laws that make educating the girl-child mandatory” with a mean score of 3.05 was ranked 1<sup>st</sup>, followed by item 1 which is “Provision Scholarship” with a mean score of 2.89, followed by item 15 which is “Strengthen the role of the family in improving the status of the girl-child” with a mean score of 2.72 was ranked 3<sup>rd</sup>, followed by item 13 which “Penalizing parents/guardians that refused to send their girls to school” with a mean score of 2.64 was ranked 4<sup>th</sup> while the least ranked was item 14 which is “Introducing gender-related subjects into the curriculum” with a mean score of 2.50 was ranked 5<sup>th</sup>. From this table above, it can be deduced that the respondents had had a positive perception of any item that the mean score is above the cut off mark of 2.50, as a way of resolving Challenges confronting Girl Child/women access to formal Education while any item that the mean score is below the cut off mark of 2.50. Implies that the
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respondents had a negative perception of such items as a way of resolving challenges confronting girl child/women access to formal education.

Table 3: Analysis and summary of respondent’s opinion on whether there is a significant difference in the parent’s perception on the challenges confronting girls in pursuing formal education in Dutsinma local government, Katsina State based on educational qualification.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Decision</th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Square F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>157.075</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>52.358</td>
<td>7.14</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>2178.071</td>
<td>296</td>
<td>7.358</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>2335.147</td>
<td>299</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Sig. &lt;0.05</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fieldwork, 2022

Table 4 showed the degree of freedom of (3, 296) and the F value yielded 7.14. The null hypothesis was rejected since the significant value of 0.000 is less than 0.05 at the alpha level (0.000 < 0.05). This indicated that there was a significant difference parent’s perception on the challenges confronting girls in pursuing formal education in Dutsinma local government, Katsina State based on educational qualification.

Discussion of Findings

With all the items above the cut off marks of 2.50, this implies that the lack of money or being poor, which is a consequence of marrying early and getting pregnant, results in girls not being able to study, distance of schools and depleted school infrastructures, war outbreak and their family’s social status as well as their own personal choice of falling in love than prioritizing their studies resulted to girl’s poor access to formal education. This aligns with Bako’s (2016) assertion who examined girl-child education and its challenges in Kagarko and Sabon Gari Local Government Areas of Kaduna State. It was found that there are frequent enrolments of the girl-child into schools but they sometimes withdraw due to financial constraint, ignorance and nonchalant attitude by parents and girls, early marriage and teenage pregnancy, poor learning environment, house chores and hawking and distance of schools among others. This finding is further against the study of women academics in the tertiary institutions of Edo State which findings did not agree that religion and poverty were among the challenges faced by girl-child education; these findings support the positions of Momodu (2000) in terms of religion. Although the assertions from various authors such Hephzebah-Awulor (2017), Alozie and Ohanu (2017), Igbinedion and Maha (2017), tend to counter these findings. It was a shock that the findings of religion and poverty were not part of the challenges the girl-child education faces.
With all the items above the cut off marks of 2.50, this indicated that resolving Challenges confronting Girl Child/women access to formal Education, government needs to Enacting laws that make educating the girl-child mandatory, also Provision Scholarship will go a long way in achieving the aim, as well as Strengthen and enlighten the role of the family in improving the status of the girl-child, Penalizing parents/guardians that refused to send their girls to school as well as Introducing gender-related subjects into the curriculum.

There was a significant difference parent’s perception on the Challenges confronting Girls in Pursuing Formal Education in Dutsinma Local Government, Katsina State based on educational Qualification. This finding agreed with Kanu’s (2014) finding that the respondents with a higher level of education have positive views on educating the girl-child while the younger respondents also have a positive perception of girl-child education than older respondents.

**CONCLUSION**

Based on the findings, it is concluded that the Challenges confronting Girl Child/women access to formal Education ranges from Financial constraints/poverty, Insurgency and insecurity, Ignorance and nonchalant attitude by both parents and the girls, Government attitude and teacher ‘s welfare, Distance of schools and school infrastructures, Early marriage and teenage pregnancy among others. While resolving the Challenges confronting Girl Child/women access to formal Education include government needs to Enacting laws that make educating the girl-child mandatory, also Provision Scholarship will go a long way in achieving the aim, as well as Strengthen and enlighten the role of the family in improving the status of the girl-child, Penalizing parents/guardians that refused to send their girls to school as well as Introducing gender-related subjects into the curriculum.

Finally, here was a significant difference parent’s perception on the Challenges confronting Girls in Pursuing Formal Education Educational Qualification. Government and other stakeholders should make girl child education their utmost priority and mandatory for every household. School curriculum should be revisited, to ensure gender and cultural sensitivity. Parents should be enlightened on important of educating their girl-child. Gender balanced curriculum and education policies should be established. Early marriage should be discouraged especially in the northern part of Nigeria. Government should provide scholarship in order to motivate household to send their girl-child to school.
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