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**Topic: An Assessment on Girl Child Education In Gombe Local Government**

Abstract

The importance of girl-child education cannot be over stressed. Moreover, the research thereforescrutinized the difficulties and encounters of girl-child education in Gombe State,particularly in Gombe Local Government Area. The schoolwork adopted a brilliant survey research design. The populace for the schoolwork comprised of all the thirty (30) primary schools and fifteen (15) secondary schools in Gombe L.G.A. However, a sample of fourteen (15) primary and four (4) secondary schools was randomlydrawn from the schools. Two research questions were articulated, while data collection was majorly through the use of saved data such, specification/record and interviews, and analyzed using simple expressive statistics and tables. The study shown that, the difficultiesfronting girl-child education in Gombe state is not far fromreligious misunderstandings, marriage at early age,poverty and cultural complications. Recommendations are enlisted among others are:the coming together of the government,traditional and religious leaders, non-governmental organizations, parents, in the campaign for the benefits and need to educate a girl-child. As the wise men do say educating a girl child is like educating the world.As the saying goes “*Train a man, you train a soulor just an individual but train a woman you train a nation”*.

**I. Introduction**

The term ‘girl-child’ refers to a female between the ages of 6-18 years (Mukhtar et al., 2011). The
National Child Welfare Policy (1989) as cited by Ada (2001) defines the girl-child as a female below 14 yearsof age. Offorma (2009) defines it as a biological female offspring from birth to eighteen (18) years of age. Thisold-fashioned is made up of infancy, childhood, early and late adolescence stages of development. The girl-child isseen as a young female person who would eventually grow into a woman and marry. May girl-child finds it difficult to study due to the gender discrimination in and within our community, which lead her being a victim of pre-existing socio-cultural male dogmatism. Furthermore, onthe account of gender, girl-children are subjected to all multiple forms of oppression, exploitation anddiscrimination.The world record shows Girl-child education has then become a major issue of concern in most developing countries of theworld today, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa, where a large number of young girls do not attend school.According to UNICEF (2007), as cited by Grace (2010), the global figure for out-of-school children isestimated to be 121 million, out of which 65 million (approximately 53.8%) were girls and over 80 percent ofthese girls live in sub-Saharan Africa.
Primary school completion rates in Africa have been the lowest in the world and this remains a concern
as half of the world’s out-of-school children (OOSC) are concentrated in 15 countries, eight of which are in subSaharan Africa (Ibrahim, 2012).In sub-Saharan Africa, the number of girls out of school each year has risen from 20 million in 1990 to24million in 2002 (Offorma, 2009).Also, according to Goodluck (2011), Nigeria has 9 million (37%) out-of-school children, which is morethan 0ne-third of its primary school age children and this is the highest in Africa. The number of out-of-school childreni Nigeria is increasing annually. This inclinationdiffers zone to zone even within the country. For example, inSouth Eastern Nigeria, which is dominated by the people of Igbo ethnic group, there is however low boy-childenrolment in school as compared to girls. This is because the boy-children are sent to the market to assist their male parents in the sales as the learn how to run the businesses. Thereverse is the case in Northern Nigeria where there is lowgirl-child education as compared to boys. Nigeria is among the West African countries that have the highestnumber of girls that are out of school, and more than 75% of the 3.4 million children out of school are girls(UNICEF, 2007). The National School Census (NSC) (2006), also revealed a net enrolment ration of 80.6%suggesting that a substantial proportion (19%) of primary school age population between 6-11years are notenrolled in primary schools nationwide, and this represents about 5million of Nigerian children of the agebracket of 6-11years old that do not have access to primary education.

A Nigerian female child who is the focus of Girl-Child Educationdeserves every encouragement to pursue education so that she can enjoy theprovisions of education for mankind for her own personal development and forthe 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”*.
In the Northern part of Nigeria, which comprises three geo-political zones: the North East, NorthCentral and North West. The north Central shows an improvement over others, these zones cannot boast ofappreciable number of girls’ enrolment at primary and secondary schools level, not to talk of tertiary level ofeducation, as compared to boys’ enrolment.Statistics from the Federal office of statistics (2004) shows that, literate women constituted only 20%from the North -West, 20% North- East, and 45% from the North Central. This indicates the levels ofbackwardness of women as compared to men in Northern Nigeria. The National School Census (2006) reportedthat the number of children out of school in Northern Nigeria is particularly high and the proportion of girls toboys in school ranges from 1 girl to 2 boys and even 1 girl to 3 boys in some states. The education of girls in thenorthern cluster has always been a thorny and unresolved issue. Typically, girl-child education in northern statesfollows a specific pattern which ends with the girls being denied from the system, the chances to attend primaryschool or further their education beyond primary school. Enejere (1991) avers that gender inequality especially
in Northern Nigeria is promoted by religious and communal customs, which has grave consequences for boththe individual and the society making her a dysfunctional member of the society.A lot of factors have been accountable for the low enrolment of girls in schools in NorthernNigeria. Mukhtar et al. (2011) identified religious misinterpretation, cultural practice, poverty, early marriage,illiteracy, inadequate school infrastructure as some of the factors militating against girl-child education. Tomajority of the parents, girl-child education is less important because no matter what level of education the girl
attains, their hope is to see the girl-child get married. To some parents, western type of education is termed to bea way of negative transformation and initiation of an individual into materialism, promiscuity and inculcation ofwestern cultural ideologies.
As recorded, 70% of the Nigerian population living below the poverty line, girls are regularly sent to hawkon the dusty and unsecured streets. Barriers to girl-child education in Nigeria especially in the north have been identified aspoverty, early marriage, cultural and religious misconceptions as well as teenage pregnancy (Williams, 1960).Gombe State, like every other state in Northern Nigeria, struggles with low girl-child enrolment in school andcolleges. This has become a major source of concern and worries to Gombe State Government, Nongovernmental organizations and other stakeholders in the educational sector. This unpleasantinclination has, over the years,continued to excavate the educational and economic disproportion between the men and women in the state.
Furthermore, the rural areas in Gombe State are the nastiestknockout; they do not only lack schools but also see no needfor enrolment of the girl-child. This brutalizing ignorance has continued to plague most rural dwellers in thenorth from year to year. It is really a pathetic situation where people, from generation to generation, fail torealize that they could be of any use not only to themselves but to the larger society.
Gombe Local Government Area, unlike any other local government in Gombe State, has its own major
challenges of providing basic education to its citizenry especially in the rural areas and particularly to the girl child. Its failure to provide adequate basic education for the rural population has continued to heighten thediscrimination between the male and female children enrolment in schools.
That does not mean that, the problems of girl-child education in Gombe Local Government Area are not
insoluble. It only needs the political will on the part of the Gombe State Government, Gombe Local
Government Council and other stakeholders like Religious leaders, traditional rulers, parents and Non-Governmental organizations to play critical parts in eye-catching the situation.
**Purpose of the Study**This research work sought to identify the major snags bedeviling girl-child education or responsible
for low girl-child enrolment in schools in Gombe Local Government Area of Gombe State with a view of
giving solutions to them.
The research work also hoped to identify factors that are peculiar to Gombe Local Government Area of
Gombe State, so as to present an in-depth analysis on the infrastructural, political, economic, demographical,religious and cultural issues as they affect the education of the girl-child in Gombe Local Government Area.
**Statement of the Problem**Education is meant for all; in fact, it is the fundamental human right of every child whether boy or girl,
able or disabled to acquire the basic education. No discrimination as to who goes toschool and who does not, hence education recognizes and helps to unlock the potentials in every child.Low enrolment of the girl-child in school is spreading the educational and economic gap between themen and the women population in Northern Nigeria and Gombe in particular. Addressing the complications and challengesof girl-child education in Gombe LGA has become necessary in view of not only the ignorance of rural dwellerson the importance of education, but also the assaulting practice of keeping the girl-child out of school.
**Significance of Study**This study will enable the stakeholders in the area of education in Gombe State to address the problems
of girl-child. It is also hoped that the GombeLocal Education Authority (LEA) and Gombe State Ministry of Education will find this work most useful in planning their educational budget so that the rural population ofGombe LGA is put on the plinth of equal and adequate educational opportunities for all citizens.
**Research Questions**This study hoped to provide answers to the following research questions:
1. To what extent do girl-children enroll in primary schools in Gombe L.G.A?
2. To what extent do girl-children enroll in secondary schools in Gombe L.G.A?

3. What are the socio-cultural factors affecting Girl-Child’s education in this
area?
4. What are the future prospects of Girl-Child education in the area under
study?
**II. Methodology
Research Design**This study was a descriptive survey research which assessed the meanresponses of secondary school principals, teachers and students in the sociocultural factors affecting Girl-Child Education, which was used to observeor explain phenomenon without manipulating any variable.
**Area of Study**This research work was carried out in Gombe Local Government Area of Gombe State. Gombe LGA was
created in the military edict of the Federal Military Government of Nigeria in 1996, with it’sheadquarter in thetown of Gombe. It has an area of 52km² (20 sq mi), which is part of the old Bauchi state, sharing boarders with Borno, Adamawa, Taraba Bauchi and Yobe states respectively.
At present, Gombe LGA has fourteen (15) communities/areas. They are: Checheniya Quarters, Jekadafari,Tudunwada, Bolari, Pantami, Yelenguruza, Federal lowcost, GRA, Dawaki, Kumbiya Kumbiya, Alkahira, New GRA, Kasuwan Mata, Herwagana, state lowcost, Buhari Estate, Orji Estate, Nasarawo and many more.
**Population and Sample**The population for this study comprise of all the fifteen (15) secondary schools and thirty (30) primary
schools located within Gombe LGA. Meanwhile, a sample of Four (4) secondary schools and Fifteen (15)
primary schools was randomly selected from the population. Meanwhile, fifteen (15) representative primaryschools with the highest number of pupils enrollments, were selected from each sampled community in thefifteen (15) communities within the local government area, which were the Primary Schools established by the state government are used in this research work.
**Instrumentation**The main instruments used for data collection in the course of this study were, the checklist, Inventory
and Oral interviews.
**Data Collection and Analysis**Data for this research was basically archival, collected through the Checklist/Inventory and Oral
interviews, while the analysis was done using simple descriptive statistics and tables.
**III. Results and Discussion
Results
Research question 1.**To what extent do girl-children enroll in primary schools in GombeL.G.A ?
**Table1: Percentage enrolment of girls for the year 2013/2014 academic
session in the representative Government primary schools.**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **S/N**  | **Name of primary school**  | **Number ofmales** | **Number offemales** | **Total noof pupils** | **% enrolment offemales** |
| 1  | Bubayero Primary School | 85  | 24  | 110  | 23% |
| 2  | Jawlo Waziri Primary School  | 121  | 92  | 213  | 43% |
| 3  | Hassan Central Primary School  | 217  | 52  | 269  | 19% |
| 4  | Idi Primary School  | 258  | 127  | 385  | 33% |
| 5  | Karangada Primary School  | 169  | 45  | 214  | 21% |
| 6  | Family Support Primary School  | 155  | 82  | 237  | 35% |
| 7  | Model Primary School  | 335  | 306  | 641  | 48% |
| 8  | JauroTudun-wada Primary School  | 183  | 73  | 256  | 29% |
| 9  | Nasarawo Primary School  | 153  | 45  | 198  | 23% |
| 10  | Jekadafari Primary School  | 167  | 37  | 204  | 18% |
| 11  | Herwagana Primary School  | 129  | 48  | 177  | 27% |
| 12  | Tudun –wadanPantamiPrimary School  | 137  | 77  | 214  | 36% |
| 13  | Kamara Primary School  | 136  | 70  | 206  | 34% |
| 14  | Buhari Estate Primary School  | 119  | 51  | 170  | 30% |
| 15 | Orji Estate Primary School | 129  | 48  | 177  | 27% |
|  | **Total**  |  |  |  |  |

**Source:** LEA Office, Gombe (2014)

Table 1 shows the grand percentage enrollment of girls in Gombe local government area, in the year 2013/2014academic session to be 32%. This indicates that there is a poor state of enrolment.
**Research question 2.**To what extent do girl-children enroll in secondary schools in GombeL.G.A?
**Table 2: Percentage enrolment of girls in Government Day Secondary School Pilot for the year 2013/2014 academic session**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **S/N**  | **Class**  | **Number of boys**  | **Number of girls**  | **Total**  | **% enrolment of girls** |
| 1  | JSS 1  | 207  | 140  | 347  | 40% |
| 2  | JSS 2  | 200  | 130  | 330  | 39% |
| 3  | JSS 3  | 173  | 105  | 278  | 38% |
| 4  | SSS 1  | 161  | 71  | 232  | 31% |
| 5  | SSS 2  | 206  | 65  | 271  | 24% |
| 6  | SSS 3  | 217  | 55  | 272  | 20% |
|  | **Total**  | **1164**  | **566**  | **1730**  | **33%** |

**Source:** Government Day Secondary School (GDSS), Pilot.
Table 2 has clearly revealed the state of enrollment of girl-children in Government day secondary
school Pilot to be 33%. This is followed by the higher number of boys enrollment which is 1164 at against 566for that of girls.
**Research question 2.**To what extent do girl-children enroll in secondary school in GombeL.G.A?

**Table 3: Percentage enrolment of girls in Gandu Secondary School for the year 2013/2014 academic session**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **S/N**  | **Class**  | **Number of boys**  | **Number of girls**  | **Total**  | **% enrolment of girls** |
| 1  | JSS 1  | 175  | 141  | 316  | 45% |
| 2  | JSS 2  | 177  | 135  | 312  | 43% |
| 3  | JSS 3  | 150  | 111  | 261  | 43% |
| 4  | SSS 1  | 188  | 72  | 260  | 28% |
| 5  | SSS 2  | 175  | 67  | 242  | 28% |
| 6  | SSS 3  | 243  | 60  | 303  | 20% |
|  | **Total**  | **1108**  | **586**  | **1694**  | **35%** |

**Source:** Gandu Secondary School (G.S.S).
Table 3, shows that out of 100% girl-children enrollment rate required from the Gandu Secondary School in the year 2013/2014 academic session, the average percentage enrollment of girlswas only found to be 35%. This also shows a low percentage enrollment.

**Table 4: Percentage enrolment of girls in Government Day Comprehensive Secondary School for the year 2013/2014 academic session**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **S/N**  | **Class**  | **Number of boys**  | **Number of girls**  | **Total**  | **% enrolment of girls** |
| 1  | JSS 1  | 175  | 141  | 316  | 45% |
| 2  | JSS 2  | 177  | 135  | 312  | 43% |
| 3  | JSS 3  | 150  | 111  | 261  | 43% |
| 4  | SSS 1  | 188  | 72  | 260  | 28% |
| 5  | SSS 2  | 175  | 67  | 242  | 28% |
| 6  | SSS 3  | 243  | 60  | 303  | 20% |
|  | **Total**  | **1108**  | **586**  | **1694**  | **35%** |

**Source:** Government Day Comprehensive Secondary School.
Table 4, shows that out of 100% girl-children enrollment rate required from the Government Day Comprehensive Secondary School in the year 2013/2014 academic session, the average percentage enrollment of girlswas only found to be 35%. This also shows a low percentage enrollment.

**Table 5: Percentage enrolment of girls in Ahmadu Gombe Memorial Secondary Schoolfor the year 2013/2014 academic session**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **S/N**  | **Class**  | **Number of boys**  | **Number of girls**  | **Total**  | **% enrolment of girls** |
| 1  | JSS 1  | 175  | 141  | 316  | 45% |
| 2  | JSS 2  | 177  | 135  | 312  | 43% |
| 3  | JSS 3  | 150  | 111  | 261  | 43% |
| 4  | SSS 1  | 188  | 72  | 260  | 28% |
| 5  | SSS 2  | 175  | 67  | 242  | 28% |
| 6  | SSS 3  | 243  | 60  | 303  | 20% |
|  | **Total**  | **1108**  | **586**  | **1694**  | **35%** |

**Source:** Ahmadu Gombe Memorial Secondary School.
Table 5, shows that out of 100% girl-children enrollment rate required from the Ahmadu Gombe Memorial Secondary School in the year 2013/2014 academic session, the average percentage enrollment of girlswas only found to be 35%. This also shows a low percentage enrollment.

**IV. Discussion of Findings**The findings obtained from table 1 shows the percentage enrollment of girls in the year 2013/2014
academic session from the sampled primary schools as: Bubayero Primary School 23% , Jalo WaziriPrimary School 43%, Hassan Central Primary School 19%, Idi Primary School 33%, KarangadaPrimary School 21%, Family Support Primary School 35%, Model Primary School 48%, JauroTudun-wadaPrimary School 29%, Nasarawo Primary School 23%, Jekadafari Primary School 18%, Herwagana Primary School 27%, Tudun-wadanPantami Primary School 36%, Kamara Primary School 34%, Buhari Estate Primary School 30% and Orji Estate Primary School,thereby, bringing the average percentage enrollment to be 32%.
Also, from the overall result of the percentage enrollment of girls in the four sampled secondary
schools, Government Day secondary school Pilot,Gandu Secondary School,Government Day Comprehensive Secondary School and Ahmadu Gombe Memorial Secondary School the averagepercentage enrollment for the 2013/2014 academic year from JSS 1 to SSS 3, was found to be 32% and 35%respectively in Gombe local government area, which shows a low level of enrollment and commitment.
These findings are in line with the earlier findings of Ibrahim (2012), who says that primarary school
completion in Africa have been the lowest in the world. Similarly, Offorma (2011) and Goodluck (2011) alsoaffirms that the number of girls out of school each year in sub-saharan Africa is on the increase on yearly basis,and that Nigeria grapples with increasing number of out- of- school children, annually. Most especially girls.
**V. Recommendations**In view of the various problems affecting girl-child education in Gombe LGA as unraveled, the
following recommendations among other things were put forward to help tackle and address those problems.

1. Government at all levels should make concerted effort to alleviate poverty at the grass root, as this willundoubtedly overcome the challenge of not sending the girl-children to school by parents for reason ofpoverty.
2) Another responsibility that government should take up so as to tackle this menace is to provide free,compulsory primary and secondary education in all the fourteen (14) villages in Gombe LGA. Schoolsshould be built, well-staffed and equipped to provide quality education so that the children can competefavorably with their counterparts from other parts of the country.
3) Parents should be enlightened to encourage the girl-child to acquire basic education, at least, that will makeher self-reliant and to secure a better future for herself. Governments, Non-Governmental Organizations,Religious leaders and traditional rulers have a major role to play in leading these awareness andenlightenment campaigns on not only the importance of western education for the girl-child but also on theneed to discard the various cultural and religious misconceptions that have militated against girl-childeducation in Northern Nigeria over the years.
4) Governments should also make a promulgation by rising the age of marriage for girls to at least twenty (20)years of age or above.
**VI. Conclusion**Barriers to girl-child education in Nigeria especially in the north have been tied to several factors suchas poverty, early marriage, cultural and religious misconceptions or misinterpretations, as well as teenagepregnancyvarious studies have also been enumerated which identified religious misinterpretations, culturalpractices and economic factors as issues militating against girl-child education in Nigeria especially in the North(Nwagwu, 1976).
It has also been revealed that the inability of parents to provide adequate and basic education for theirgirl-children by sending them to school which is their sole responsibility, either as a result of illiteracy, poverty,cultural or religious misconceptions has created inequality between the male and female children enrolment inschools and the local government area at large

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