

# Problem of Girl-child Education in Damaturu Metropolis

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## ABSTRACT

Girl child education as the expression implies deals with an attempt or effort to change the thinking, attitude or mindset of girl-child who reaches the age of 18 or little less socially, mentally, emotionally, physically, spiritually economically and of course politically so that she will be raised to the awareness of her environment on education. The study attempts to examine the problems girl-child faces when trying to acquire education in Damaturu metropolitan development by making policies and implement these items for the grasp of these objectives on girl-child education. The study looked into the challenges girls face when receiving western education and identified the attitudes of parents towards it. The study used both primary and secondary data. The study intent to examine the problems of girl child education in Damaturu Metropolitan Yobe State Nigeria. It is in record that male gender outnumbered female gender in most educational arena or in almost all endeavours of life from schools to places of work. The study concluded that parents and policy makers should make anything possible to introduce a new dimension that will girls to attend schools.

**Keywords:** *Girl Child, Problems, Education, special programme, poor families*

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## INTRODUCTION

In Africa especially the sub-Saharan region, the number of girls or girl-child who dropped out of school has been on the increase from approximately 20 million from the 1990s to almost 24 million in 2002 Twenty –five (25) African countries were selected to be studied from these numbers fifteen (15) were from sub-Saharan Africa. Some of the criteria selected as a base for the study included: low enrolment in the education system and gender gaps some of the main causes of these drop out are conflict, war, HIV/AIDS, migration, disease, war and sexual harassment mainly in majority of African Countries (UNICEF, 2003).

As stated above, war is one of the factors that cause child-girl drop out south Sudan has been identified as one of the countries that suffered this consequence of civil war. UNICEF observed with dismay that if countries faced with war should wait until the end of the war for the children to be enrolled then it means girls will be denied the fundamental rights. In south sudan, out of school girl-child represent 15% that are out of school. When girls counterpart reached the upper level of school, girls are not there. In south sudan for instance there is a territory called number the territory sees girls living in solitary condition because about 540 out of for instance 8,000 teachers are women which represents 7% (Nduru, 2003). Globally it was estimated that there are about one hundred and twenty one (121) million children out of school of which out of this number about two third of this number representing 53.8% are girls and live in sub-Saharan Africa. Sub-Saharan Africa in this case and especially in all the continents has been suffering from out of school girl-children or dropped out children. Most of the African if not all are developing countries they lack even the numeracy or semi-literacy education. These reasons are not far-fetched from the negative consequences of abject poverty, war, drug addiction, migration, communal clashes, nomard-farmers clash and drought (Ibrahim, 2012). According to Offorma, (2009) Nigeria always occupy the highest position when it comes to the issue of out of school children and this may be due to its high number of population and aggravated by lack of basic skills to keep life moving. This sort of skills or informal education will assist the girls to at least contribute towards the development of society even when they get married (Ngwu, 2011). Girls are peace loving human beings, so all they need in their homes and society in general is peace so as long as a girl will acquire the basic knowledge of living and survival she will make a great difference because he stays and live children every time. Ifeancha, Ubaand Chukwuji (2018) stated some challenges faced by girls as presented below:

- The girls often prefer little jobs that will bring them immediate financial benefit than formal education that will usually take longer time to gain from it.

- The uneducated girls have traditional believe of superstition and ignorance and derive themselves away from modern technology that will expose them to the outside world of social media and modern educational programmes.
- Lack of qualified teachers in the educational set up also add to these girls for instance, lack of ICT units, instructional materials and lack of electricity.
- Females are considered human beings with full of weakness in our traditional societies. Cases such as rape, broken home, local house chores and effect of war mostly affects girls so there is the need to overcome these hazards.
- Most of the sustainable form of education programmes are not sustained owing to the lack of funds.

The term education seeks to expose a person to the new world and new ideas of life, a world of curiosity, a world of discovery and innovation. Education exposes a person to totally change his character to the world of realities and develop his mental, emotional, physical, social, economic, spiritual and political faculty (Grace, 2009) it helps younger persons to become functional members of society and allow girl to develop their potentialities for self-actualization. We live in a cultural and material world so education will serve as a tool that will allow girl-child to explore and discover new cultures in a society (Ocho, 2005). Girl-child represents a young person of feminine gender who is at the age of eighteen or a little less. Girl-child according to Muktar et al (2011) is a human being of opposite sex with male that is not above 18 years. This age or series of years comprise infancy stage and late adolescent stage.

They are usually members of the family and receive order from their parents. Just like any other creature, they pass through different levels of development and need extra care to grow to their potentials (Muktar, et al. 2011). Girls are often the most disadvantaged groups and they are mostly discriminated in almost all facets and these sorts of practices lead to their inability to realise their capabilities (Tyoakaa, Ifeanyichukwu & Apine, 2014).

#### **AIM OF THE STUDY.**

This study has the following as its objectives:

1. To look and identify the problems facing girl-child early education.
2. To assess the attitudes of parents early education of their daughters.
3. To find out possible solutions that militate against girl-child education.

#### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This study is on girl-child education. Two major data source sets were used in this study; Primary and secondary data. The primary materials included one-one chat with some parents and studying first hand materials obtained from concerned authorities while the secondary materials are documents accessed from the state ministry of education.

#### **MEANING AND CONCEPT OF GIRL-CHILD EDUCATION**

The term girl-child refers to a child of feminine background usually from the age of 1 year to perhaps 18 years. The stage is often respected to stages of childhood before she becomes an adult (Grace, 2009). Educationally at this stage, a child is expected to attend nursery level (1-5) years primary level (6-12 years) and secondary school level (12-18). Parents for guardian at this level or stage are expected to fully take control of their child (Grace, 2009). At this stage, the girl child, especially, needs the love and sympathy of her parents as she develops herself into full potentiality, including her character, attitude and early signs of motherhood. Parents at this level, although it depends on cultural inclination, observe the girl-child with all curiosity. For instance her dependency on others and whom she adopts as her role model. Parents often teach her through repetition and imitation, observation and of course through trial and error and mining. All the support she needs will be giving to her physically, mentally, spiritually, socially, and emotionally as she passes through different levels of development (Grace, 2009).

The knowledge girl-child will acquire if she is educated will make her financially and economically a viable member of the society. When a girl is educated, there will be peace in society, there will be prosperity and harmony in the society. Merits of girls' education can be highlighted in the following ways (Hadiza, 2017; Akunga, 2010):

- i. Girl-child education will uphold and improve financial status of the family
- ii. It will improve girls' access to ICT and Technology
- iii. It will educated and expose them on how know and fight for their rights
- iv. It will encourage give their own voices towards nation building.
- v. It will increase productivity among girls

## CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT OF NIGERIA REGARDING GIRL-CHILD EDUCATION

The Nigeria Child's Right Act provisions and its applications as its contents in chapter IV of 1999 Constitution of Nigeria spelt out the girl Rights and Responsibilities of a child gave the girl child the full legal right of education.

In its document, precisely, article 26 adopted by the UN General Assembly on individuals fundamental rights of human right it states that every individual has a non-compromising right to quality education be it male or female. The December 1949 agreement of the UN General Assembly states the following:

1. Ending, education or elementary education is made compulsory while other professional education for instance technical education shall be provided where applicable.
2. Likewise, those girls with merit should be given a chance to attend higher institutions of learning.
3. Parents shall be left with total power and right to choose suitable education for their children (Nwangwu, 1976).

## REASONS BEHIND EDUCATION FOR ALL MAY INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING:

1. Comprehensive care for the child. The child relies heavily on his parents for survival, upbringing and growth, hence this provision.
2. As the child grows his/her level of participation in the affairs of society depends heavily on his level of education and quality of instructions he obtains. By this she/he should know how to exercise her right effectively and according to the rule of law.
3. Since even the older generation benefitted from the early education, the younger ones too have the right to be educated by their predecessors (Ocho, 1988).

## RIGHT TO EDUCATION

In the words of Kofi Anan, on the significance of education; where families are having limited resources to use in educating their children and they have a difficult choice of whom to educate between males and females, they often go for males because they think that girls usually end up in marriage but males will always be the bread winners where ever they are young girls in typically African setting are mostly sent for petty jobs to earn income to the family. Mostly the money they earn is not used for their education but rather either to keep the whole family moving or to prepare her for early marriage (Grace, 2009).

Grace continues buttress the point that is was reported on BBC News in (2006) that Africa is a society that favours boys because often maintain and propagate family lineage so they could do anything passive to education him. Girls usually stay at home to nurse relatives. Most of the mothers in Africa have not had formal education, hence they don't see the reason to educate the younger ones. Although this belief is changing tremendously but in the recent past, girls did suffer from this terrible practice (Grace, 2009).

In Uganda, it was reported by Birungi (2008) that there were rampant fire outbreak in schools normally allocated to girl-child but government seems to have done nothing to avert it and other schools are facing flood and are in state of disrepair but government is indifferent about it. Likewise, in Kenya various forms of diseases have denied girls from accessing right education. Similarly, other cultural practices are also contributing factors that make education a mirage. Notwithstanding the introduction of free formal primary education in Kenya which results to an increase in students enrolment, still a large number of students are still unattended to. Girls are still find themselves the most disadvantaged members of the society because they are not allowed to attend to primary education. The reason for this practice may be related to their demand to carry out common house chores and early child marriage.

Some of these African girls are married against their wishes or disposed as bargain chips in the past or even disowned. These girl-child are married at a very early age because of the dowry their parents receive from the would-be husbands. This practice has not taken out the parents from poverty and the parents may not show something tangible realized from the dowry they collected (Grace, 2009).

Most of these beliefs are considered outdated, for example some parents are of the belief that if a girl child is educated the possibility of her getting husband is blink because they thought that the girl might have reach a level that she is not going to be controlled. Others believe that girl's education is taboo because a girl that receives western education is considered alien to the society, she may not get married and this may be the only way to preserve an age old tradition. This common practice is still in existence in some societies in Africa (Grace, 2009).

## THE ISSUES OF GIRL-CHILD EDUCATION

Girl-child education is recognised globally by the fact that they make an indelible mark on the progress of society. Ukwuaba (2008) affirmed that girl child education takes a vital and dominant role in any society. When a girl is educated, her

knowledge transmits and makes positive impact on the whole populace of a society. We have noticed around the world how female leaders changed the architecture of several nations like in Germany during the Chancellorship of Angela Merkel, Margaret Thatcher in UK and the Liberian leader Ellen Johnson Sirleaf. All these ladies and many more have contributed because they received a great deal of education at their early years. Their achievements have been felt across nations and they impacted on so many countries especially in their effort to reduce poverty and child mortality ActionAid (2012 & 2011). These are the essence of girl-child education Ebunife, (2018) Maduwesi, Aboho, Ezeoba, & Rita, (2012),

- It has been confirmed that girl child serves as a gateway and a key to the new world so equipping a girl with early education will certainly reduce inequality and protect them from being ostracized from the society.
  - Economically, when a girl child is educated, she will have the ability to compete with her peers. Girl makes a skillful workforce when educated appropriately. Africa has witnessed powerful ladies that made changes to world economic architecture like Dr Ngozi Okwonjo Iweala, Obigeli Ezekwesili and Chimamanda Adichie.
- Other points are as follows:
- Decrease child marriage in the society
  - Increase involvement in political process
  - Decrease support for militancy
  - Produce future educated generations. The future of our upcoming generation will be protected if the girl-child is educated. Sending a single girl to school is like sending the whole family because of the sympathy and caring she is endowed with.

#### DATA ANALYSIS

**TABLE 1: the table below shows the approximate nature of school enrolment among males and females in Damaturu Metropolis as at 2003**

STATE	MALE ENROLMENT	%	FEMALE ENROLMENT	%
NEW FOUNDATION SEC. SCHOOL	1200	60	800	40
BRIGHTER ACADEMY DAMATURU	2000	52.63	1800	47.3
ROYAL ACADEMY DAMATURU	1250	38.46	2000	61.53
ESSIEN ACADEMY DAMATURU	950	63.33	550	37.66
GOVT. SEC. SCH. GONERI DAMATURU	2250	71.14	1250	28.86

**Sources: Field survey 2021**

From the above table it was indicated that the rate of enrolment of in New Foundation Sec. Sch. Of male is 60% representing 1200 while that of the female is 40% representing 800, the second school Brighter Academy Damaturu also has male is 52% representing 2000 while that of the female is 40% representing 1800, the third school is Royal Academy Damaturu has male is 38.46% representing 2000 while that of the female is 61% representing 800, fourthly, Essein Academy Damaturu has male is 63.33% representing 950 while that of the female is 37.66% representing 550, and finally, Govt. Sec. Sch. Goneri Damaturu has male is 71.14% representing 2000 while that of the female is 28.86% representing 800. The table indicated the favourable nature of males' enrolment.

**Table 2: 2004 Primary and post-primary enrolment figure**

	<b>PRE-PRIMARY</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>PRIMARY</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Post Primary</b>	<b>%</b>
Male	937, 997	51.13	12, 273, 046	55.12	1, 567, 011	56.54
Female	896,522	48.87	9, 994,361	44.88	1, 204, 623	43.46
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1, 834, 519</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>22, 267, 407</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>2, 771, 634</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 3: 2005 Enrolment from primary to post primary gender-based presentation**

	<b>PRE-PRIMARY</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>PRIMARY</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>SECONDARY</b>	<b>%</b>
Male	956, 475	51.42	12, 273, 046	55.12	1, 559, 038	56.21
Female	903, 796	48.58	9, 994, 361	44.88	1, 214, 380	43.79
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1, 860, 271</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>22, 267, 407</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>2, 773, 418</b>	<b>100</b>

## EMPIRICAL REVIEW

Studies have shown that millions of girl-child have not been given proper education. This has been justified by numerous efforts placed by many authorities. Okeke, Nzewi and Njoku (2008) stated that some of the factors that prevent girls' from attending schools are abject poverty, broken home, child labour, lack of sponsorship, truancy, war, insecurity, tribalism and other forms threats. Recent study has shown that about a quarter of African population go to bed daily without eating one-square meal a day. This situation is quite absurd not to even think of going to school. So it is indisputable that poverty is the main cause of girl child educational backwardness (World Bank, 2003).

Girls are often abducted and used as slavery or forced marriage when they are mostly less than eight years old in Ethiopia. In some West African countries, some girls are used as war servants, some are even taken out of the country and used as servants abroad, especially in neighbouring countries. In Nigeria, it is a common place to find house servants most houses. They are usually paid a very meagre amount for the service rendered to a wealthy family. Some governments have enforced a law on parents that send their children especially, girls for forced labour.

Owing to religious inclination, in Nigeria, girls suffer the most than boys. In northern west, Northeast and possibly northcentral Nigeria parents prefer Islamic education to western education. In States like Kano, Katsina and Sokoto as soon as girl memorized the Holy Quran, then a festivity will be organised for her and then her hand will be given to marriage. Unlike in Southern part. The south and south east, girls are given upper hand to attend western education from primary to tertiary institution but this tradition is now facing a new challenge because poverty is now trying to bring a new dimension. Some parents in southern part of the country are now given out their girl child to human traffickers for a bare little amount of money. Notwithstanding the following challenges, the southeastern part are at least experiencing higher number of girl child in schools than in the northern part (Offorma, 2008).

The number of girl child enrolment in the educational system has moved up to about 53% in post primary school in South Africa. In the country there is almost 100% attainment of primary schools by the girl child which equals that of the boys. National Programme Officer for Ghana Education Campaign Coalition stated that there is great disparity in the enrolment, retention and completion of girls in most school. Making effort to remove this hitch can never be seen as an achievement but a statutory responsibility by all. There is every need to have collaboration among all arms of government and civil society to see that basic education to girls is safeguarded and should be given to absolute and immediate attention this will help in achieving recently introduced sustainable development goals and Ghana will maintain its position to realizing various educational goals.

## EFFORTS TO ENCOURAGE GIRL-CHILD EDUCATION

The 1990 Conference named as (Jonatien) marked Education for all (EFA). This initiative sought education should be given compulsory education in the first ten years and priority should be placed on girls to ensure that they achieve potentials. Most of the African countries did implement this initiative where Nigeria introduced Universal Basic Education which mainly focused on primary schools and indicators have shown that this programme has achieved more (Grace, 2009).



The programme is in agreement with millennium development goals (MDG). By given the girls quality education, they will be able to contribute immensely to the knowledge-based modern economy of the current economy. But there are some factors that hinders initiatives to see that girls are successful in their pursuit towards better education, these factors may include: gender-biased curriculum, lack of instructional materials, lack of qualified primary school teachers, and of course constant strike (Grace, 2009).

UNICEF education chief in South Africa added that the term quality education is not determined by how a child performs educationally but there are some factors that will add to retain the child in school and eventually make a successful candidate in life. These factors should be discouraged totally. They are discipline in schools, sexual harassment, child abuse, corporal punishment, child abuse and exclusion among peers (Grace, 2009).

A statistics carried out by United Nation in collaboration with Non-governmental Organizations (2005) consistently indicated that girls are always placed as the most disadvantaged groups in society. This view is supported by the fact that girls receive lesser healthcare attention, lower literacy rate and they are often the poorest members of the society because they use the little they get to take care of themselves and other cultural or feminist endeavours (Grace, 2009)

Technology is appreciable and indispensable to a functional society. Efforts should be geared towards application of essential technology to encourage or ease participation of girl-child education. In countries like Turkey, Singapore and South Korea and India the use of technology dramatically improved the participation of children especially in hard-to-reach areas access to quality education. This can be seen in the use of mobile schools and other visual materials that take learning to the door step of these children. Through the use of technology, information can be passed in the blink of an eye ( Banjoko, 2018, Adedaja, 2020; Abugu, 2012).

#### **Other effort to encourage girl-child education:**

- i. Incentives should be given to those that attend school on regular basis.
- ii. Establishment of entrepreneurship development centre
- iii. Free job opportunities
- iv. Free scholarships
- v. Compulsory education from primary to secondary school levels.

#### **POLICIES CONDUCTED BY GOVERNMENT**

Nigerian government recently introduced a school feeding programme. The programme was introduced in 2005 in line with the UNICEF's agitation to see all children have equal access to education. There was an estimated number of about 7.3 million out of school children. A programme was introduced by UNICEF through NEPAD to feed children while in active school period. The main aim of this programme is to provide one square meal to primary school pupils in Nigeria. A balanced ratio of food is provided so that it will improve the health and of school children and increase their enrolment capacity. Since the initiation of this programme, the enrolment has increased and school attendance of these children has also become stable.

In Kenya hopes are not dashed as government has introduced similar initiative towards promoting children's right and welfare. Any body found guilty of disregarding this law may be subject to imprisonment so child's right to welfare and better education becomes imperative.

Non-governmental organizations are now one of the major forces in educating girls and young women through different media. Their presence is felt in many developing countries including Africa. In collaboration with other NGOs, they different education packages to both primary and secondary schools. The central organization that controls them is UNOCHA.

The NGOs also created counselling and rehabilitation zones. Girls that were rescued from forced marriage and some that went through trauma are brought to these centres for necessary support and guidance. This sort of support is in consonance with government's dream of keeping those out of school children to realise their lifelong targets.

According to Braun, Swaminathan and Rosegrant (2004;11) the school children feeding task has achieved so much. In Bangladesh for instance, the school feeding programme has raised the number of schools children overall to 35% and 44% increase in girls number. This practice should be emulated by other countries that face similar dilemma.

One of the cardinal points to consider is the distribution and quality of teachers if we want to achieve the Millennium or sustainable development goals. Schools in urban areas where the girl child face these threats are experiencing acute

shortage of qualified teachers because of the living condition in the rural areas. So social amenities should be provided, job security should be on ground, and hazard allowances should be maintained if qualified teachers are to stay in rural areas.

**Some useful suggestions towards the predicament of girl-child education.**

- Effective policies should be introduced by the government to give favourable room to girls.
- Supervisions should be stressed by the Ministry of Education and placed emphasis on the number of girl-child in schools.
- Although some cultures are against it, government should devise a means of educating female folks on sex and marriage education.
- Basic Education as it is in some parts of Nigeria, should be made free especially on female gender and other fees should be eliminated from the system. Such as PTA fee exam fees, exam fee and other basic needs should be provided free.
- Schools should be located closer to homes and female teachers should be given upper hand in terms of employment so that parents will not express doubt or dissatisfaction for a long walk to school.
- Government should embark on brutal campaign on the essence and ramifications of educating girl child.
- Policies that will favor the girl child education should be enacted in the country by the government.
- There should be synergy between families and communities and they should be partner in progress to fight for a common cause.
- Schools environments and conditions of teaching should be made accommodative to girls and there should be separate facilities for girl-child to get a sense of comfort rather than sense of molestation.

### CONCLUSION

Education serves as a tool that transforms an individual so girl too should not be if she is to contribute to the progress of her society. If girls are not educated it means they are deprived of their basic survival rights. Without formal education girls may not contribute positively to the economic progress of her society. Schools in rural areas face serious threats because they lack standard schools, they lack basic amenities and even isolations. Many classes in Africa are heavily overcrowded with about one hundred to two hundred pupils in class with poorly constructed classrooms. There should be separate schools that are meant for girl-children like it is now the common practice in some parts of Northern Nigeria. Authorities should also consider introducing technology into teaching and learning especially in favour of girls so that at least the main aim of educating girls will be achieved. African countries should act with one voice and possibly pass a legislation that will see girls in the promise land. Why is education imperative in the human world today? Education is a tool for reformation, a tool for liberation and is a means of changing the mindset of an individual, hence, the need for girls' inclusion.

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