

**AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE FACTORS AFFECTING GIRL
CHILD EDUCATION IN NORTHERN PART OF NIGERIA (A CASE
STUDY OF MINNA, NIGER STATE)**

BY

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APPROVAL PAGE

This project has been read and approved as meeting the requirement in partial fulfillment for the award of Bachelor of Science (Ed) degree in Social Studies in the University of Benin.

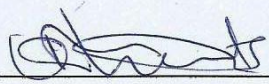
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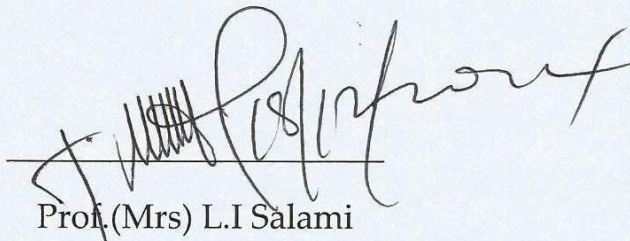
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DEDICATION

This research is dedicated to God Almighty for his hallowed provision, protection and guidance all through my stay in the University of Benin. Also to my comely parents Mr. and Mrs. Obianke for their inspiring affection, advice, financial and spiritual supports. Special dedication goes to my younger brother Daniel Obianke, to you all, I owe my gratitude.

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ABSTRACT

This study set out to analyze the factors militating against girl-child education in Mini Local Government Area of Niger State.

The survey research method was adopted using questionnaire as instrument to elicit information from the respondents. Findings from the analysis of the data gathered showed that several factors act as hindrances to girl-child education in Mina local government area of Niger State. Such factors among others include, poverty, sexual violence, sexual abuse, religion and culture. Further findings revealed that girl child education is poor in Mina Local government area, also that the attitude to girl-child education in Mina local government area is not encouraging.

Data also showed that female children do not have access to education like their male counter parts in terms of education in Mina local government area and that girl-child from wealthy homes have more access to education than those from poor background.

Based on the above findings, the study concluded that girl-child education is not given recognition in Mina local government area of Niger State.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

BACK GROUND OF THE STUDY

Education is a fundamental right of all including girls and women, yet despite significant effort made over the years on the issue, women are still less educated and more likely to be in many countries of the world (Olayele and Ajileye, 2004). This situation is critical and disturbing as it has the tendency of affecting the attainment of the national objectives. The problem confronting the girl child education in Nigeria are to a large extent multifarious, ranging from cultural practices and socio political and economic constraints, culturally, she falls victim of female genital mutilation commonly performed on young girls in the southern part of the country, while compulsory/early marriage and its attendant problem is the prevailing situation in the north. Economically, right from a tender age, the girl child is exposed to a variety of hazardous jobs like street hawking, begging escort, babysitting, house help etc. socially, she is marginalized even within the family system, she is welcomed to the world with mixed

feelings and her naming ceremony attracts less celebration and when it comes to education, more priority is accorded to her brother (Bello 2006).

Fatokun (2007) lamented on many parents' carelessness and insensitivity to their children needs. She noticed that many parents often claim to be ignorant and innocent while others easily defend themselves by asserting that they have all the right to treat their girl child any how since they are more or less their properties. Reports has also shown that the girls are subjected to series of abuse more than boys in the nation.

Gender stereotyping permits the school system manifesting in both direct and subtle ways. For instance, there are masculine subjects such as science technology and mathematics. There are also feminine subjects such as home economics, secretariat studies and literature. The language and illustration used in textbooks also betray a gender bias, boys are generally portrayed as brave, intelligent, decisive and adventurous, they returned to the home expecting a well cooked meal and loving acre from mother while girls on the other hand are shown as shy and timid, they both look after

siblings, do domestic chores and assists their mothers in getting the meals ready. Classroom interactions also favor boys because in mixed schools, the undoubted class monitors and school captain appointed by teachers are boys. (okeke 2004).

Other manifestation of gender stereotyping in school are what Alele Williams (1986) described as hidden curriculum which sends out messages to girls to conform to role expectations. For instance, most teachers in institutions of learning are males, implying an absence of role model to inspire female students to achieve. The question of girls access to and participation in education has taken the front burner various world summits. For instance the world education forum in Dakar 2006 had among other goals, “eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2015, with a focus on ensuring girls full and equal access to and achievement in basic education of good quality”. Ogunsola-bamidele (2004) carried out a study with the main object of finding out the strategies for supporting girls learning in schools. She discovered that school learning environment tends to favors males more than females and

that gender bias is associated with the content of various disciplines (subjects offered in schools). Hence, she opined that an effective teacher should as often as possible provide special compensatory learning activities especially in science and mathematics related courses. Okeke (2004) also observed that socialization tends to make male aggressive, assertive and domineering. While females socialization process tends to make them to be submissive, dependent and passive.

In qualitative terms statistics (NNESCO, 2013), show that at the secondary school level in Nigeria, the boys outnumbered the girls in the enrolment generally apart from Lagos, Osun, Oyo, rivers, Ekiti, Enugu, Imo, Abia, and Anambra state. A critical analysis on the data on female access to and participation in education shows that the situation is worst in the northern part of Nigeria a situation which has been in existence for nearly a century with the universal declaration of human right (1948), internationally convention on economic, social and cultural right (1960) etc. a 2007 UNESCO and UNICEF report, about 90million children are not in school and majority of them are children. Most girls do not have access to

education despite the fact that it is their right. The girl child is often saddled with responsibilities which may make her not to have access to quality education. Also a 2007 UNESCO and UNICEF report addressed the issue of education from a right based approach. The three interrelated rights are:

1. The right of access to education: that is, education must be available, for accessibility to and inclusive of all children.
2. The right to quality education: education need to be child centered, relevant and embrace a broad curriculum and be appropriately resourced and monitored.
3. The right to respect within the learning environment: education must be provided in a way that is consistent with human rights, equals for culture, religion and language and free from all forms of violence.

Beyond the basic needs for education to support oneself and family in later years, many social ills in the vacuum of free and accessible

education. UNICEF understood (underscored the link between child labor and a lack of education in their 2008 education for all global monitoring reporting reports over 100million children was accounted for 70 percent of all child laborers, work in agriculture. In rural areas where access to schools, availability of trained teachers and educational supplies is severely limited

However girl child education in the Nigeria context particularly in the eastern and northern Nigeria is even a more daunting one despite global efforts to re-design education at both national and internal levels. Nigeria as a nation in their need of sustainable development equally believes that worthwhile development and progress can only take place in the country when it's citizens are well educated and fully equipped to use their education as a means of solving the device and complex problems facing the country, for instance, many of the developed nations which have succeeded in large measures, in over-coming many of their national problems such as ignorance, poverty, diseases like (hiv /aids) infant (material mortality as well as social and political issues. These were done

through a deliberate educational policy and a program of national development.

It is pertinent at this juncture to state clearly what the girl-child is all about. It is a known fact that a any person who is seen below eighteen years is legally considered to be a child as such girl is a biological female offspring from birth to eighteen (18) years of age. This is the age before one becomes adult during which the child is under the care of an adult who may be her parent, guardians' and siblings. At this stage, the girl child is malleable, builds and develops her personality and character. She is very dependent on those who she models her behavior through observation, repetition and imitation, her physical, social, mental, spiritual and emotional development start and progress to get to the peak at the young adult stage therefore girl-child education is that type of education which equips the women with all the necessary tools needed for the effective discharge of their own peculiar roles in the service of the nation and indeed, to foster their personal development as well. It is also an avenue that prepares an individual to acquire knowledge and skills that

are life long assets unto them during the course of their stay in the world and the year after so, there has been an increase outcry of the education of girls at various forums, seminars, workshops and conferences where organized to address the problems forced by the girl child. This may be because of the fact that the most significant challenges facing Africa in general, Nigeria in particular. The education had been identified as one of the most significant one that the girl child becomes a strong issue of facing Africa in general and Nigeria in particular. The education of the girl-child education became a strong issue of concern since the jumtien declaration of the right of child (male and female) in 1989 and 1990 world's summit for children. It is the realization of this that government came up with various program aimed at up-lifting the socio-economic and educational status of the girl-child. However despite these various programs organized for the girl child training, history has shown that the girl child is still at a disadvantage position.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEMS

Today by UNICEF standard, Nigeria has not been accessed to have fared well enough in terms of social indicators of education health and wealth as determinants of the various overall indices of child development (UNICEF 2005, F.M Wands D 2006) it is obvious that there are social, economic, and political problems bedeviling the Nigerian children, these problems and policies put in place to address them have had their toll on the welfare and development of the over 39million children in Nigeria. For example, despite Nigerians signatory to various international conventions on the right of the children generally so far, very little has been achieved. The situation remains pathetic and serious for instance at the formation of the united nations which is almost six (6) decades old, the precarious situation of the children worldwide became so obvious that it became necessary to establish UNICEF with special focus on the needs of the children around the world. It is rather sad to note that for almost six (6) decades after UNICEF children's problem are far from solved, especially in the LCD's like Nigeria. The situation is best

captured in the following observation. There is a sense of powerlessness in our children, they are marginalized.

However there is a lot of apathy on the government. They (children) are afraid with a lot of uncertainty, confusion etc. all of these combine to give the child a cloudy and hopeless future. The impact is that the Nigerian government only pays lip service and lacks the political will to implement policies on children. A case in point is the Nigeria child right bill at the national assembly.

Nevertheless, the present study is interested in investigating the factors affecting and mutilating the girl child education in the northern part of Nigeria precisely Minna local government area of Niger state. It is hoped that the study will take the entire area where the problem especially in the entire area where the problem is seriously pronounced against this back drop, it becomes pertinent to ask what are the challenges of girl child education in Minna local government area of Niger state.

Thus, the problem this study seeks to investigate is the challenges the girl child faces in an attempt to be educated.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The broad objective of this study is to access the challenges of the girl child education in Minna local government area of niger state, specifically, this study aims at ascertaining the extent to which the girl child education is embraced in Minna local government area of Niger.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Based on the background of the study and the statement of the pattern, the following research questions were answered in the study.

1. To what extent is girl child education embraced in Minna local government area in Niger state.
2. What are the socio cultural factors affecting the girl child education in Minna local government area of Niger state.
3. What are the religious factors affecting the girl child education in Minna local government area of Niger state.

4. What are the economic factors affecting the girl child education in Minna local government of Niger state.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The result of the study would be significant for a number of reasons:

1. It would become a reference point for decision makers and planners to realize the socio-cultural, economic and religious factors affecting the advancement of girl child education in Minna local government area of Niger state.
2. It would serve as a source of enlightenment to parent and guardians on the values of educating the girl child education, thereby erasing all the earlier beliefs about educating the girls.
3. It would sensitize government and other agencies concerned with children education in the area to be gender sensitive and ensure gender streaming in admission award of scholarship and recruitment into various levels and positions.

4. It would serve as a point of advocacy for the right of the girl child to education and equality in other spheres.
5. The results of this study would serve to save the child from discriminations, sharp practices as well as exposure to diseases HIV/AIDS, INF, unwanted pregnancies and other forms of danger.

THE SCOPE/DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY

The scope of the study is intended to examine the various factors affecting or militating against the girl child education on Minna local government area of Niger state Nigeria. It will cover both male and female, educated and uneducated people and urban and rural areas found on Minna.

The study is delimited due to the fact that the researcher is faced with series of time and financial constraint and some of this constraint range from the high transportation, cost of the place of study to the sourcing of information or material relating to the study. Furthermore, poor health

during the period of this research world and **other** factors were problems encountered by researchers.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

As already established, this work focuses on the factors affecting girl child education. Therefore, some terms will reoccur and it is important to know the meaning of these terms to avoid misunderstanding, misinterpretation and lack of comprehension by the reader, such terms include;

1. **EDUCATION**; This involves the process of helping an individual to acquire adequate and appropriate knowledge, skills and attitudes and values known as cognitive, psychomotor and effective behavior to be able to function optimally as a citizen.
2. **GIRL CHILD**; A girl child is a biological female offspring from birth to (18) years of age. This is the age before one becomes an adult during which the child is totally under the care of an adult who may be her parent, guardians, and older siblings. At this stage, the girl

child is malleable, builds and develops her personality and character, she is very dependent on those whom she models her behavior, through observation, repetition and intention or imitation.

3. GIRL CHILD EDUCATION; Girl child education is that type of education which equips the women with all the necessary tools needed for the effective discharge of their own peculiar roles in the service of the nation and indeed, to foster their personal development as well. It is also an avenue that prepares an individual to acquire knowledge and skills that are lifelong assets to them during the course of their stay in this world and here after.

CHAPTER TWO

INTRODUCTION

This chapter will focus on the following areas;

- Concept of Education.
- Girl child Education.
- Socio-Cultural factors affecting the girl child.
- Religious factors affecting the girl child.
- Economic factors affecting the girl child.
- Ways/Strategies in solving girl child education problems in Nigeria.

The Concept of education

Education as a concept has refused to yield itself to a generally acceptable definition. This is because people use education to mean different things at different times. Generally education is perceived as a continuous process of learning from birth of an individual to his death. In some cases, people use education as a process, as a product, as an enterprise, and as a discipline.

According to Offorma (2009), defines education as the process of providing information to an inexperienced person to help him/her develop physically, mentally, socially emotionally, spiritually, politically and economically. According to her, the fact that at graduation ceremonies, one hears the vice-chancellors pronounce the words while awarding degrees to their institutions graduates you have been found worthy in character and learning can be attributed to the definition of education as given above. She added that it means that the individual has acquired adequate and appropriate knowledge, skills, attitudes and values, known as cognitive, psychomotor and effective behaviours to be able to function optimally as a citizen. These behaviours are the focus of training individuals in institutions of learning. According to Chidebulu (2010), education is a process of cognitive, effective and psycho motive development of an individual with a view to moulding the individual for a total contribution to the development of the community and the promotion of cultural heritage. This means that if one is educated, he

tends to develop himself and become productive in the society, thereby promoting his cultural heritage.

Furthermore, Whitehead view education as the acquisition of the art of the utilization of knowledge, that is, education is not just acquiring knowledge but the utilization of knowledge acquired for the benefit of the society (Whitehead Cited in Oladipo, 2007). To Gowon (2007), education is a process and system of providing information, knowledge, skills and training with an aim of changing a condition and situation. The change expected is usually positive in nature, and the education could be formal or informal. This definition is crucial in the case of Nigerian women whose condition needs to be changed for socio-economic transformation.

To Nwangu (2006), Education is the process by which every society attempts to preserve and upgrade the accumulated knowledge, skills and attitudes in its cultural setting and heritage in order to foster continuously the well being of mankind and guarantee its survival against the predictable hostile and destructive elements and forces of man and nature.

Nevertheless, education is the aggregate of all the processes by which a child or young adult develops the abilities, attitudes and other forms of behavior which are of positive values to the society in which he lives (Fafunwa, 1974). That is to say, it is a process of transmitting culture in terms of continuity and growth and for disseminating knowledge either to ensure social control or to guarantee rational direction of the society or both. There is no doubt that education involves showing the evidence of knowledge and breadth of understanding.

Consequently, in a well articulated statement by Julius Nyerere, he assumed the functions of education in the following ways: To transmit culture from one generation to another to the next, the accumulated wisdom and knowledge of the society and to prepare the young people irrespectively of their gender for their active participation in this maintenance of development to liberate both the mind and the body of man.

The concept of girl child education

It is pertinent at this junction to state clearly who the girl-child is and what girl-child education is all about. It is a known fact that any person who is below eighteen years is legally considered to be a child. As such, girl-child is a biological female offspring from birth to eighteen (18) years of age. This is the age before one becomes adult during which, the child is totally under the care of an adult who may be her parents, guardians and older siblings. At this stage, the girl-child is malleable, builds and develops her personality and character. She is very dependent on those whom she models her behavior, through observation, repetition and imitation. Her physical, social, mental, spiritual and emotional developments start and progress to get to the peak at the young adult stage. Therefore, girl-child education is that type of education which equips the women with all the necessary tools needed for the effective discharge of their own peculiar roles in the service of the nation and indeed, to poster their personal development as well. It is also an avenue that prepares an individual to acquire knowledge and skills that are

lifelong assets to them during the course of their stay in this world and the hereafter.

The concept of girl-child education incorporates the necessary attitude, cultural and behavioural training which parents give to their daughters at home to enable them become useful, resourceful and respectful citizens of their countries. It also includes the functional teaching or training in skills acquisition which many girls undertake in the shades of seamstress or in computer training centres, weaving/fashion designing centres as well as catering and interior decoration centres, etc. Most importantly, the concept is over specialized and highly controlled trainings acquired in schools, colleges and other institutions of higher learning, (Chidebelu, 2009). Ejikeme (2000) captured this fact when he said that denying girl-children access to early childhood education makes them socially excluded, creating room for them to grow up to become illiterate women in later life and be classified as disadvantaged candidates for adult education, women empowerment programmes and other women rescue remedial or support programmes that smack off underdevelopment.

Unfortunately, the right of a girl-child to access quality education has been denied and there are consequences. Though some of the challenges are deeply rooted in our traditional background, they have affected the society at large. Mangwat, (2005) agree with this when she says that operation and discrimination against women and girls have been so deeply ingrained, for so long in virtually every culture.

Socio cultural factors affecting the girl child

Cultural practices in Nigeria constitute great obstacles to access and equity in university education, particularly of women. Cultural factors which influence women's access to education include: early marriage, practice of seclusion, teenage or early pregnancy, sexual harassment, religious belief and fear of emancipation. The report analyses data from the Baseline study conducted for the Transforming Education for Girls in Nigeria and Tanzania (TEGINT) project in Nigeria and Tanzania between 2007 and 2009 and another study conducted by the Morley (2006) identified poverty, early marriage, early pregnancy, sexual harassments, ill

health and family reasons as obstacle to girls education. Higher education is often seen as being incompatible with women's bodies and life styles. It is felt that there is insufficient structural and social flexibility to cope with early marriage, child birth and care, (Morley, 2006).

In Nigeria, the girl child still faces several forms of discrimination from childhood to adulthood because of a wide range of deep rooted tradition and cultural practices that limit the girl child's access to education and activate participation in the development of the society. According to Tyoor (2009), "some of the major gender problems facing the girl child in Nigeria include: early marriage, teenage pregnancy, harmful cultural factors like scarification and female mutilation, child labour, child trafficking and illiteracy". In line with this, Okojie (1993) opined that, "The Nigerian Society is patriarchal, that is, there is a culture of male dominance. If in addition female seclusion is practiced as in many Muslim communities, women have limited access to education. This accounts for the low literacy rates in many Muslim areas in Nigeria". Furthermore, Ede (2010) stated that: Cultural practices of patriarchy and sex stereotype tend

to discourage females from access to university education. In some places, boys are given more attention because they (boys) perpetuate the family name. Male children are also more valued than females in Nigeria because of cultural segregation of children's roles along gender line.

Culturally, the decision of which child to invest in is governed by prevailing cultural practices, and many people do not believe in investing on female children because they think that boys are more important in family continuity, since they are the representatives of the family and have better educational investment than girls (Alumode, 2005). Furthermore in the patrilineal inheritance systems, boys are favoured in human capital decisions, because they are prime beneficiaries of family assets. Ede (2010), again noted that: Parents are worried about wasting money on the education of girls especially university education since girls are likely to marry or get pregnant before completing their schooling. It is believed that once girls marry, they become part of another family and all parental investment become lost. All these create inequality in university education in favour of boys.

In the past, education has not necessarily been a priority for girl child of cultural beliefs and poverty. It is not surprising because particularly in the Northern part of Nigeria, educating the girl child is not part of the culture, so girls are not allowed to go to school. It is believed that the place of the girl child is in her husband's house (Nikki, 2010).

Consequently, Social factor is another inhibiting factor affecting girl child education. Male preference is a nationwide accepted practice in social and psychological wellbeing of the girl child. According to Ezeliora&Ezeokana (2011), "male child is perceived as an asset, highly treasured in the family because he will perpetuate the family name. The female child because she will be married out to another family is treated with contempt and indifference". This practice is the genesis of the lifelong exclusion of girls/women from social mainstreaming. Girl/women are regarded as second class citizens and thus, are not trained to develop their nature given potentials as they are considered to be of low intelligent, incapable of making sound and rational decisions for themselves or for

others. Invariably, they are not expected to study hard subjects like science.

Idyorough (2005) observed that, "In Nigeria, gender discrimination exists where male children are preferred to have access to education while the girl child is denied access simply because she is a girl and is given out of marriage". This view was the reason why science was not taught in girls secondary schools in the early days of formal education in Nigeria, (Okeke, 1992). Some studies have indicated gender disparity in the enrolment of undergraduates in Science, Technology, and Mathematics. Adeyemi&Akpotu (2004), conducted a study on the trend and pattern of gender enrolment in Nigerian Universities. The study showed gap between male and female enrolment with lower female enrolment in all aspects of the Universities. The study also indicated a wide gap between Science and Non- Science based disciplines as well as between Northern and Southern parts of Nigeria. Similarly, Oke (2000) and Salman (2001) reported low enrolment of females in Science and Technological related courses at the University level of education. It is observed that females

take the least resistance by opting for disciplines designated as feminine such as liberal arts, education, nursing and shy away from courses in Sciences, Engineering, Medicine and Mathematics. For this reason, parents have low expectation of the girl child to do Science or succeed as Scientist. In contrast, it was found that in a single sex school, experiences served as enabler to the girls in allowing them to have a sound science education, avoiding Stereotyping of girls as fit only for the Humanities and making them as competitive as boys in aiming at higher education in 'prestigious courses'. This corroborates Osafisan et al (2003) study of the performance of secondary school pupils in Oyo State. According to them one policy maker stated that, "girls from good schools example Queens College, e.t.c; are generally found in engineering. Engineering is brain stuff, so we find brilliant girls there". Therefore, girls admission on merit in spite of the Stringent requirement of the Joint Admission and Matriculation Board shoes that access is not inhibited where other motivational factors are in place, (Sorhaindo& Morley, 2000).

Furthermore, to perpetuate the superiority of the male child over the girl child, the girl child is trained to put herself below her male siblings. This practice has helped to undermine her self esteem and self actualization. The female child socialized to be passive, inconspicuous, emotional dependent and aspires to be a good mother, wife and house-keeper, (Ezeokana, 1999). Again, when the family is low in finance, the girl child is used to raise money for the family. The girl child is made to stop schooling so that the available financial resources will be used to train the boy child. In some homes, in order to make up for financial inadequacy of the family, the girl child is sent out to hawk in order to raise money for the family needs, not for her own needs. Some of the girls are married off at a tender age so that the bride price will be spent on the education of the boy child and the family needs. In some cases, the girl child may be given off for domestic labour in urban area for a regular income to the family. In each of the above practices, the interest and development of the girl child is secondary, jeopardized and she may end up not being educated. In each of the situations mentioned above, the girl child suffers emotional

disorientation which at times results to feeling of insecurity, poor self esteem, destructive behavior, poor social relationship which interfere with positive development and adjustment to life of the girl child (Hiuzer, 2010). Generally, one major consequences of the above situation to girl child is lack of education. By implication, at the end, most girls may not have formal education or drop out of school.

Religious Factor Affecting the Girl-Child

Some religious beliefs do not allow the education of girls and women. They consider sending females to school as violating their religious faith. Religious seclusion is usually practiced in the Muslim communities. In this practice, females have limited access to education. This accounts for low literacy rates in many Muslim areas in Nigeria, (Okojie, 1993). They perceive girl education as irrelevant to the Muslim faith.

Religion has much influence on the status of women and their access to both secondary and university education relative to men (Alumode,

2005). The Muslim culture is known for its distinctive attitudes towards women's status, education, employment and fertility. The Purdah system keeps women away from school. It also reduces the chances of young girls of going to school. In this way equity in access to education is hampered.

Government involvement in providing and managing schools seems to minimize the religious misunderstanding among many Muslim parents. This situation, however, applies only to primary education. At the higher education level, most Muslims feel that sending their girl child to school simply implies allowing the girls religious orientation and loyalty to be tampered with. They also hold the view that immoral acts are learnt and perpetuated in higher institutions. As such, they hold tenaciously to the notion that any girl that has acquired a university degree is already spoilt. Awa (1990) noted that, "this notion discourages most Muslim parents from sending their girl child to higher institution". Only very few Christians have this belief, although it is more prevalent with the Muslim communities.

Some religious beliefs express the fear of a girl child being defiled, and that a girl child may indulge in immoral acts and university education may distract and influence the girl child from paying close attention to her usual worship. Greenhall (1985) noted that religion and cultural variations in most cases are related to ethnic factor so that attendance to school often varies with religion and culture. Thus, most Muslim parents feel reluctant to send their girl child to higher schools for the fear that the girl child may get defiled or converted to Christianity. They prefer sending them to Koranic school where they will mix with people of the same religious faith.

Economic Factor Affecting Girl Child

Economic factor is one of the major problems hindering female access to education in Nigeria. These economic factors in this regard include: Financial cost of education, opportunity costs in terms of forgone income and labour market opportunities. Financial costs of education include school fees, boarding fees, and costs of books, school uniform, transport fares and many others. Ede (2010:237) and Onwurah&Chiaha

(2007) pointed out that, "finance is one of the serious factors that affect access to higher education in Nigeria". According to Ede (2010:238), "Many Nigerians are not able to fund the University education of their children mainly because of poor financial backing". Some do not place university education on their priority list. They ask their children to look for employment after secondary education partly due to poverty and partly due to ignorance, (Ede, 2010) added. Female education is usually more expensive than males. Many parents consider women education as a waste of money, because of their belief that the girls will marry and go and live with her husband, thus leaving only the boys in her maiden family. "Whenever some families are faced with the options of choosing between sons and daughters education, the daughters are always the victims", (Aluko, 2005). Similarly, Okojie (1993) stated that, "for poor parents especially when a choice has to be made, female child is sacrificed". Some parents' experience very serious abject poverty, that they consider investment on their male children worthwhile than on female children. Studies conducted by Department for International Development (DFID)

(2006) reported that: Poverty means that families have to make strategic decisions about who should enter education. Investment involves risk. There is still a strong belief that sons will yield a higher returns on investment and that women represent a poor risk.

In another study by Morley (2006) found that, “even where there may have been financial constraints, such as in the case of a number of students in Nigeria, respondents claimed that parents often prioritized their daughters’ education above other family expenses”. Economic factors also include the prevailing private rates of return for higher education. Thus, economic participation of women, their presence in the work force in both qualitative and quantitative terms is important not only for lowering the disproportionate levels of poverty among women, but also as an important step towards raising household income and encouraging economic development in the country as a whole, (Tyoor, 2009). Some parents usually feel reluctant to send their girl child to school because they do not usually secure lucrative jobs due to their low level of educational attainment. Some of these parents prefer involving their girl child in

domestic business. The burden of work is usually heavier on girls, especially in rural households. Rural female's time is taken up by child-care, domestic work, farm work and other domestic activities. Girls spend more time on these activities than boys. The result is irregularity of attendance or non attendance at school and poor performance, as there is little time for home study (Anderson & Bowman, 1980; Okojie, 1993). In situations where there are economic constraints, parents usually prefer sending males to school, while the girl child is channeled to alternative vocations like hair dressing, tailoring and other domestic oriented jobs. According to Aluko (2005), "this is further reinforced by discriminatory employment practices, which restrict women to low paying jobs, thus discouraging parents from investing heavily on their girls' education". This is why most women in Nigeria are underrepresented in various sectors of the Nigerian Labour force.

Ways/Strategies in Solving Girl-Child Education Problems in Nigeria

Female involvement in education in Nigeria is still very low. There are still constraints and inhibitions which militate against their access to education. These also hamper their personal and national development. A situation where a substantial number of people do not participate fully in the national economy simply because they are women will only create distortions and inequality in the growth and development process. Therefore, in the light of the above discussions, the following ways and strategies are proffered towards enhancing female access to education in Nigeria.

- ◇ Financial incentives like special scholarship award, soft tuition loans and other financial grants should be made to women and girl child in order to encourage talented and promising ones who cannot afford the cost of education due to poverty.
- ◇ Government should increase the percentage of the national budgetary allocation to the education sector to at least 26% of the total annual budget as recommended by UNESCO.

- ◇ Parents should stop all forms of discrimination against their female children. They should treat every child equally by giving them equal parental care and support in their education.
- ◇ All cultural practices and religious beliefs that are harmful and inimical to the wellbeing of the girl child should be discarded.
- ◇ Female children should be enrolled in the same proportion with their male counterparts considering their high investment returns
- ◇ Laws should be passed and enforced on early marriage before the age 21 for girls and boys respectively, so as to discourage early marriage.
- ◇ There should be extensive enlightenment campaign to change stereotype attitudes, images and expectations of men and women that are inimical to progress.
- ◇ There is need for family re-orientation on practices that are harmful to women and girl child through mass media, seminar and communal discussions to draw the attention of parents and family

members on the effects of these traditional practices on the growth of the girl-child.

- ◇ The girl child should be educated on the consequences of these harmful practices in their developmental process and be taught the assertive mechanisms to free herself from such oppression.
- ◇ The mass media, traditional rulers, and women based institutions under the Ministry of Women Affairs should map out programmes that will support the girl child education in Nigerian tertiary institutions.
- ◇ Women should be given equal employment opportunities with good rewarding jobs with high pay packages.
- ◇ Government should base female access to tertiary education on 'target policy rather than quota system so as encourage many females to again admission into higher institutions and for gender equity.

- ◇ Government at all levels should take appropriate, legislative, budgetary and other necessary measures towards the full realization of the right of every child to free quality education, especially the girl-child.
- ◇ Government and non-governmental organization(s) should immediately commence a child-seeking mapping exercise with communities and schools participating to seek out children out of school, determine why they are out of school and bring them back to school.
- ◇ Much more than just implementing laws and policies to encourage girl-child education, provision for greater option by investing in girls and supporting their families.
- ◇ Gender disparities should be reduced to the barest minimum through gender budgeting, which involves budgeting to maximize programmes that have an impact on girls/women.
- ◇ The Government must intensify efforts to discourage child-labour through education.

- ◇ Early marriages which rob the girl-child of any academic pursuits must be discouraged.
- ◇ The self-esteem of the girl-child should be boosted to allow for optimized potentials particularly within the Bosso LGA.
- ◇ Adequate and sustained advocacy for the girl-child by female organizations and women in leadership will help in bridging the gap in girl-child education.
- ◇ Constructive engagement of community leaders, town criers and urban elites who have very close contact with the gender groups should be intensified.

Conclusively, Girl-child education in Bosso Local Government area of Niger State and Nigeria at large will continue to trail the boy-child education if the necessary policy actions are not put in place. The inability to address the issue will further widen the gender gap in education. Moreover, the desired level of development in Bosso local government area of Niger state can only be attained when girl-child education is given adequate attention. In this respect, policies, programmes and strategies

that can enhance the participation of girl-child in formal education should be pursued with vigour. Girl-child education is of great importance.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This chapter focuses on the design and the research procedure used for this study. This procedure is outlined as follows:

- Research design
- Population of the study
- Sample and sampling techniques
- Instrumentation
- Method of data analysis

Research Design

This study is design to investigate into the factors affecting girl child education in Northern part of Nigeria; a case study of Minna, Niger State.

Based on this research work, descriptive survey design will be used to collect data for the study.

Population of the study

The target population for this study will consist of residence adult males and females from Minna, Niger State.

Sample and Sampling Techniques

The sample for this study will consist of 240 subjects. This sample will be selected from six Districts in Minna Metropolis: Tunga, Sauka-Kahuta, Bosso, Tunga-goro, Limawa, Shiroro. The reason for the purposive selection was to allow the inclusion of District where the practices of negative attitude towards girl-child education are most predominantly practiced.

The category of subjects which this study will select will represent the sample which the researcher will use to get the needed information for the study.

Instrumentation

The data for this research work will be gathered through the use of self-designed questionnaire titled —Socio-cultural, religious and economic factors affecting girl-child education questionnaire (SCREFAGEQ).

The questionnaire will consist of four sections. Section “A” will demands for personal data of the respondents. While sections “B”, “C” and “D” will be on 2- point scale of “YES” or “NO” which are meant to tap information on socio-cultural, religious and economic factors affecting girl-child education respectively in the areas under review.

Each of sections B, C, and D consists of 10 items requesting information on the three factors of socio-cultural, religious and economic factors affecting girl-child education.

Method of Data Analysis

The researcher will use frequency count and percentages for descriptive analysis in analyzing the data that will be collected.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULT PRESENTATION, AND DISCUSSION OF FINDING

This chapter deals with the analysis and interpretation of data collected through questionnaire. The contents presented in this chapter also attempts to answer the research questions raised. The researcher presented a detailed analysis of data obtained. Items were grouped according to their relevance to the research questions raised, then followed by the discussion of results.

Research Question One

What are the socio-cultural factors affecting the girl child education in Minna local government area of Niger State?

Table 2: Socio-cultural factors affecting girl child education.

S/N	ITEM	S. A (%)	A (%)	D (%)	S. D (%)	Total agree	Total disagree
1.	Family influence	41.25	34.2	17.5	7.08	75.45	24.55
2.	Public criticism of the girl's family	37.91	30.83	22.92	8.33	68.74	31.6
3.	Cultural condemnation of mixing boys and girls	15.83	18.33	40.42	25.42	34.16	65.84
4.	Negative attitude to girl child's formal education	38.33	27.81	23.75	10.83	60.14	34.58
5	Child's right abuses among parents	20	37.5	26.2	16.25	57.5	42.5
6	Positive attitude towards boy child education only	41.25	34.2	17.5	7.08	75.45	24.58
7	Criticism of parents who support girl-child educations	32.08	28.33	18.75	20.83	60.41	39.58
8	Females are culturally meant for domestic works in that area	37.91	30.83	22.92	8.33	69	31
9	Lack of education among parents	20	37.5	26.25	16.25	57.5	42.5
10	Poor enforcement of social laws on girls right	27.92	30	22.92	19.16	57.92	42.08

Table 2 shows the analysis of respondents' perception of the socio-cultural factors influencing the girl-child education in Minna local government

area of Niger State. From this table, it is revealed that majority of the respondents believed that the ten factors identified significantly affect the girl-child education in the study area. However, items Positive attitude towards boy child education only and Females are culturally meant for domestic works in that area on attitude to boys' education only and the fact that they believe that girls are culturally meant for domestic works attracted the positive perception of the respondents. They are the major socio-cultural factors affecting girls' education in Minna local government area of Niger State.

Research Question 2

What are the religious factors influencing the girl-child education in Minna local government area of Niger State?

Table 2: Religious factors affecting the girl-child education

						Total agree	Total disagree
S/N	ITEM	S. A (%)	A (%)	D (%)	S. D (%)		
1.	Lack of religious obligation to western school education	27.92	30	22.92	19.16	57.92	42.08
2.	Parents seem to be more committed to marital orientation of girls	37.91	30.83	22.92	8.33	68.74	31.25
3.	Girl child education is morally condemned	30.83	27.1	23.75	18.33	57.93	42.08
4.	Lack of religious legal action against girl-child education	38.33	27.81	23.75	10.83	66.14	34.58
5	Fear of early pregnancy or pre-marital sex among girls	45.84	33.33	8.33	12.5	79.17	20.83
6	Absence of religious guidance on girl-child education	41.25	34.2	17.5	7.08	75.45	24.58
7	Parents valued Qura'anic education for girls than western education	42.5	28.3	12.5	11.25	70.8	23.75
8	Western education is not religiously building on adherents of Islam	40.83	30.83	22.92	8.33	71.66	31.25
9	Fear of religious interference	20	37.5	26.25	16.25	57.5	42.5
10	Fear of exposure of girls to the public	38.33	30	18.75	12.92	68.33	31.67

Table 2 shows the religious factors affecting the girl-child education in Minna local government area of Niger State. Items Lack of religious obligation to western school education, Parents seem to be more committed to marital orientation of girls, Fear of early pregnancy or pre-marital sex among girls, Absence of religious guidance on girl-child education, Parents valued Qura'anic education for girls than western education and 1Fear of exposure of girls to the public rank high among these religious factors. In addition, items, Girl child education is morally condemned, Lack of religious legal action against girl-child education, Western education is not religiously building on adherents of Islam and Fear of religious interference also drew the attention of many of the respondents. Invariably, all the items are considered important in affecting the girls 'education in Minna local government area of Niger State.

Research Question 3

What are the economic factors affecting the girl-child education in Minna local government area of Niger State?

Table 3: Economic factors affecting the girl-child education

S/N	ITEM					TOTAL	Total Disagree
		S. A (%)	A (%)	D (%)	S. D (%)		
1.	They believe of parents that girls can generate money for the family	41.25	34.2	17.5	7.08	75.45	24.58
2.	Girls involvement in hawking and daily generation of income	37.91	30.83	22.92	8.33	68.74	31.25
3.	Early courtship of girls attracts money from boys to parents	25.42	40.42	18.33	15.83	65.84	34.16
4.	Often, girls are made to act guides to beggars thereby generating income	38.33	27.81	23.75	10.83	66.14	34.58
5	Parents see school fees payment as a burden	26.25	37.5	20	16.25	63.75	36.25
6	Schools are seen as non-money making venture	41.25	36.25	15.41	7.1	77.5	22.51
7	School education is seen as a venture that does not yield immediate benefit	32.08	28.33	18.75	20.83	60.41	39.58
8	Girls are often engaged in works by parents thereby discouraging their education	37.91	30.83	22.92	8.33	68.74	31.25
9	Lack of total free education discourages girl-child education	26.25	37.5	20	16.25	63.75	36.25
10	Socio-economic status of families inhibit girl-child education	45.84	39.58	8.33	6.25	85.42	14.58

Table 3 shows that majority of the respondents agreed that all the economic factors identified affect the girl-child education in Minna local government area of Niger State. However, items Early courtship of girls attracts money from boys to parents, often, girls are made to act guides to beggars thereby generating income, Schools are seen as non-money making venture, Girls are often engaged in works by parents thereby discouraging their education and Socio-economic status of families inhibit girl-child education seem to be more important economic influences on the girl-child education in Minna local government area of Niger State.

Discussion of results

The first finding of this study on the socio-cultural factors affecting the girl-child education in Minna local government area of Niger State shows that respondents rated all the socio-cultural items high. Hence, fear of public criticism of sending girls to school, cultural condemnation of mixing boys and girls together in schools, females being culturally meant for domestic works, lack of girls rights were considered as the socio-cultural factors influencing the girl-child education. However, among

these factors, females being culturally meant for domestic works and positive attitude towards boys' education were rated higher than the others. The above findings support the conclusion of Federal Government of Nigeria (2006), World Bank (2001) and UNESCO (2001) that there is a lot of disinterest and ignorance concerning the education of girls. They observed that many Nigerian girls suffer the society's neglect of their education; such children have become vulnerable to various ills in the society.

Also, the study found out that some religious factors like lack of religious obligation to western education, parental commitment to the girl-child marital life, moral condemnation of girl-child education, lack of religious legal action for girl-child education, fear of early pregnancy, love of Qura'anic education, non-recognition of western education, fear of conversion to other religion, and undue exposure of girls to western education were rated high by respondents. These were the religious factors revealed by the respondents. These findings support the earlier conclusions of Usman (2007), Bagudo (2007), Giwa and Abdulmalik (2006)

and Daiyabu (2008) that many Muslim parents in the Northern part of Nigeria do fear that the involvement of girls in education might bring moral decadence. Such may include female promiscuity, exposure of female bodies, inducement by opposite sex, pre-marital pregnancy, and abortion or illegitimate children. They also observed that girl-child education will threaten girl-child chances of legitimate, cultural and religious marriage which the parents believe would deprive girl's Islamic moral training and orientation.

The third research question was on the economic factors influencing the girl-child education in Minna local government area of Niger State. The study discovered that factors such as parents'belief that girls can generate money for the family, girls can guide beggars and thus make money, girls early courtship can attract money, school fees payment is a burden, education does not yield immediate gain, family poverty, parental involvement of girls in money-making ventures and lack of free education'were considered as the economic factors influencing the girl-child education. These findings confirm the earlier concern of Ikwen (2006)

and Abolarin (2010) that poverty is a major factor that hinders the girl-child access to education. To them, parents look-up to income generating activities involving girls to sustain their families. They observed that parents see school fees as a burden and school as non-money making venture and girls are often engaged in works that could generate financial benefits for the family.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Summary

This chapter summarizes previous chapters, findings, conclusions, recommendation, suggestions for further studies. This research was developed to investigate the factors affecting girl child education in Minna local government area of Niger State

The essence of this study emanated from the fact that there has been discrimination and marginalization of girl-child in the Nigeria society. The study was to discover the factors that could be responsible for the marginalization of the girl- child in Education.

However, questionnaire was used to collect data on the factors affecting girl child education for the research. The sample consisted of two hundred and forty (240) respondents which were selected from six (6) districts from Minna Metropolis and the data collected were analyzed using frequent count and sample percentage. Three research questions were used to guide the study, the findings of the study showed that;

The Socio-cultural factors affecting girl child education includes; Family influence, Public criticism of the girl's family, Cultural condemnation of mixing boys and girls, Negative attitude to girl child's formal education, Positive attitude towards boy child education only, Criticism of parents who support girl-child educations, and Females are culturally meant for domestic works in that area.

The religious factors affecting the girl-child education includes; Fear of early pregnancy or pre-marital sex among girls, Absence of religious guidance on girl-child education, Parents valued Qura'anic education for girls than western education, Fear of exposure of girls to the public, Lack of religious obligation to western school education, and Parents seem to be more committed to marital orientation of girls.

The economic factors affecting the girl-child education includes; Socio-economic status of families inhibit girl-child education, Girls are often engaged in works by parents thereby discouraging their education, Schools are seen as non-money making venture, girls are made to act guides to beggars thereby generating income, early courtship of girls

attracts money from boys to parents, and they believe of parents that girls can generate money for the family.

Conclusion

This study discovered that parents have negative attitude towards girl-child education in Minna local government area of Niger State, Nigeria. Parents especially in large families with limited resources send girls to generate income by hawking, getting involved in some immoral dealings with the opposite sex, having early marriage and teenage pregnancy. To turn around these vices, parents should be encouraged to send girls to school so as to be educated, certificated, be skilful and have sources of income for sustainability and development.

Recommendation

The following recommendations are proffered accordingly:

1. Professional counselors and social workers should create national awareness on women education (including adult education) through public awareness campaigns, rallies, and seminars.

2. Collaborating with government and non-governmental organizations in reviewing school curriculum and teaching materials for gender sensitivity and for sustainable vocational and pedagogical skills.
3. Creating more chances for women employability and empowerment so as to serve as encouragement to later generations.
4. Enactment of legal policy against parents refusing girl-child enrolment in schools (to certification level).
5. Offering scholarship for girls' education at all levels.
6. Encouraging women cooperative societies and empowering women with soft loans for small scale industry and other enterprising ventures in urban and rural areas.

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APPENDIX

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY AND
CURRICULUM STUDIES

UNIVERSITY OF BENIN, BENIN CITY

EDO STATE, NIGERIA.

RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE

RESEARCH TOPIC: An investigation into the factors affecting girl child education in Northern part of Nigeria; a case study of Minna, Niger State.

Dear Respondents

This questionnaire is designed to gather information on the factors affecting girl child education in Northern part of Nigeria; a case study of Minna, Niger State.

The research work is purely academic therefore; any information given will be treated as confidential and used for the same purpose.

Thanks for your anticipated cooperation.

Yours faithfully,

OBIANKE ADEOLUWA GERRARD.

SECTION A- PERSONAL DETAILS

INSTRUCTION- TICK (√) the box in order to indicate your answers.

- 1. Name of Districts. _____
- 2. Sex: Male () Female ()

SECTION A

(Socio-Cultural Factors Affecting Girl Child Education)

S/N	Socio-cultural, factors affecting girl-child education	SA	A	D	SD
1.	Family influence				
2.	Public criticism of the girl's family				
3.	Cultural condemnation of mixing boys and girls				
4.	Negative attitude to girl child's formal education				
5.	Child's right abuses among parents				
6.	Positive attitude towards boy child education only				
7.	Criticism of parents who support girl-child educations				
8.	Females are culturally meant for domestic works in that area				
9.	Lack of education among parents				
10.	Poor enforcement of social laws on girls right				

SECTION B

(Religious factors affecting the girl-child education)

S/N	Religious factors affecting the girl-child education	SA	A	D	SD
1.	Lack of religious obligation to western school education				
2.	Parents seem to be more committed to marital orientation of girls				
3.	Girl child education is morally condemned				
4.	Lack of religious legal action against girl-child education				
5.	Fear of early pregnancy or pre-marital sex among girls				
6.	Absence of religious guidance on girl-child education				
7.	Parents valued Qura'anic education for girls than western education				
8.	Western education is not religiously building on adherents of Islam				
9.	Fear of religious interference				
10.	Fear of exposure of girls to the public				

SECTION C

(Economic factors influencing the girl-child education)

S/N	Economic factors affecting the girl-child education	SA	A	D	SD
1.	They believe of parents that girls can generate money for the family				
2.	Girls involvement in hawking and daily generation of income				
3.	Early courtship of girls attracts money from boys to parents				
4.	Often, girls are made to act guides to beggars thereby generating income				
5.	Parents see school fees payment as a burden				
6.	Schools are seen as non-money making venture				
7.	School education is seen as a venture that does not yield immediate benefit				
8.	Girls are often engaged in works by parents thereby discouraging their education				
9.	Lack of total free education discourages girl-child education				
10.	Socio-economic status of families inhibit girl-child education				