

Negative Effect of Early Girl-Child Marriage on Nigeria the Way Forward

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ABSTRACT

Early girl-child marriage is a barbaric act, man's inhumanity to man, is a common practice in most developing countries. Every minute a girl-child is married off against her will, education attainment terminated and dreams aborted by this reoccurring act. This has called for a clarion call and a serious concern to the international community at large. The research seeks to look inwardly into variables that invigorate the common practice, how it affects the Nigerian society and the way forward. Secondary and primary source were applied in retrieving data for the study, 296 self-administered questionnaires were completed by female respondent between the ages of 10-45years. The location of the study was kastina state, the Northern part of Nigeria where early girl-child marriage is predominantly high. Two research hypotheses were tested using Chi-square and the result shows that early girl-child marriage has a negative effect on Nigeria. The study recommended feasible and applicable way forward to abolish and manage the victims of early girl-child marriage.

Keywords: Girl-child, Marriage, Education, Poverty

I. INTRODUCTION

Marriage is a union ordained by God and is the only remarkable event in a human life that is associated with choice. The choice to be married and stay married is a personal decision, but is unfortunate that this present world most girls do not have the opportunity to choose rather they are forced into marriages at early age without their approval. According to a report by UNICEF 2017 about 17% of Nigerian young girls are married before 15years while 43% are married before they attain 18years. However, child marriage report defer from regions, North-west geopolitical zone of Nigeria record about 76% while South-east zone record 10%. The fact still remains that a girl-child is married off in every 3 seconds in developing countries. The constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria Section 23 states that a " person under the age of 18years is incapable of contracting a valid marriage, in the event such marriage hold, it should be proclaimed null and void" while Section 29(4b) states that any woman who is married shall be deemed to be of full age. This section implies that irrespective of a woman's age for the fact that she is married she is assumed an adult; this has indirectly encouraged girl-child marriage. Oxford dictionary defines a child as a young human being below the age of puberty or legal age. UNICEF defines early marriage as a formal marriage or informal union before the age of 18; it further states that is a violation of fundamental human rights. Jain et al (2011) refers to child marriage as any marriage carried out below the age of eighteen (18yrs) years before the girl is physically, physiologically and psychologically ready to shoulder the responsibilities of marriage and child bearing. In international law article 16 of the universal declaration of human right states that marriage should be engage freely with the full consent of the parties and that a person must be at full age as at the time of marriage. The Nigerian Child Right Act 2003 defines a child as a person who has not attained the age of 18years. However, Nigeria has not official declared null and void the contradictory section of the constitution section 29 (4b) which gave right for any person engaged in marriage as an adult.

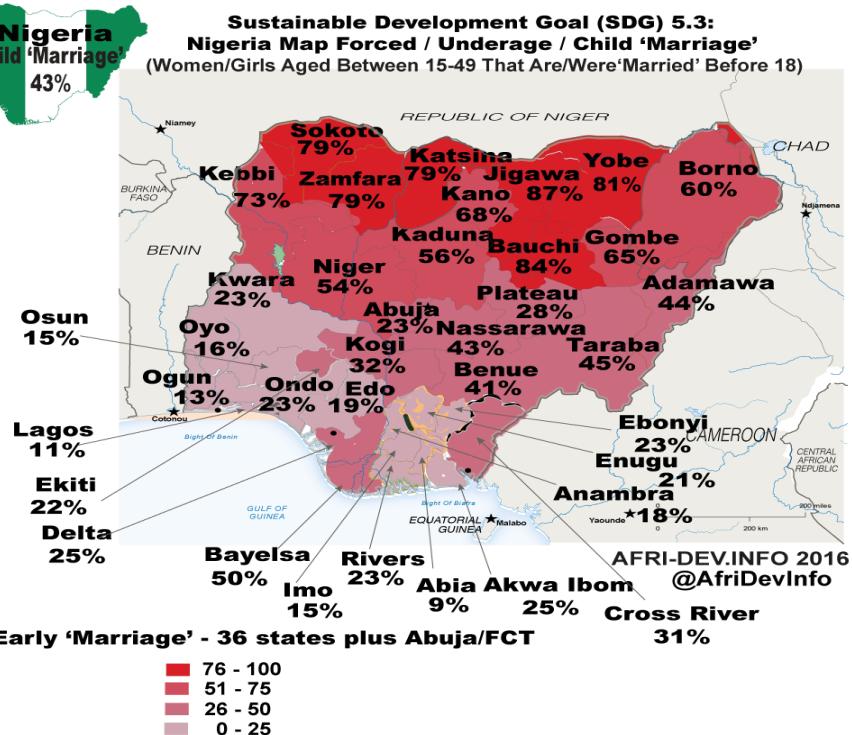
Figure 1

Global Top 10 Underage/Child/Forced 'Marriage' - Under 18 Years		
Ranking	Country	Underage/Child/Forced 'Marriage' Under 18 Years
1	Niger	76%
Joint 2	Central African Rep.	68%
Joint 2	Chad	68%
3 Non African Country	Bangladesh	65%
4	Mali	55%
Joint 5	Burkina Faso	52%
Joint 5	Guinea	52%
Joint 5	South Sudan	52%
6	Malawi	50%
7	Mozambique	48%
7 Non African Country	India	47%
8	Somalia	45%
9	Sierra Leone	44%
10	Nigeria	43%

Afri-Dev.Info 2015

In the year 2015 as shown in figure 1. Nigeria was ranked the 10th country with 43% out of 20 countries with the high rate of child marriage. Association for Reproductive and Family Health (ARFH) affirms that child marriage affects a child's physical development in which the aftermath is early pregnancy, school dropout, health issues, domestic violence, zero level of empowerment and segregation from social life.

Figure 2



Source: <http://www.afri-dev.info/>

Figure 2. Shows the 36 states of Nigeria and the percentage of female marriage before the age of 18 years. This agrees with the fact that child marriage act is predominantly in the northern region of Nigeria, the distribution are as follows: Jigawa 87%, Bauchi 84%, Yobe 81% while Sokoto, Katsina and Zamfara has 79% each, the location of the study katsina has 79% which is still very high. These girls are married off against their will, their social life and education aborted, early pregnancy with complications and health risk. It is verifiably on record that obstetric fistula is an ailment mostly found in the northern Nigeria due to early marriage practice, 120,000 new cases erupt every year. The probability of a girl-child having fistula is very high; most girls lose their lives or their child at birth while some give birth to still born. Can a child take care of a child? The answer is a capital 'No' without a clause, Legal laws of

countries and previous research makes it point and clear that a girl below the age of 18years is considered a child therefore cannot mother a child. Neonatal mortality is on the rise as these girls lose their babies due to lack of experience and proper care. Child marriages tend to vary with a girls educational attainment and financial capability of the family, applicable calculation shows that a girl who completes secondary education is liable to marry at the age of 23years for wealthy families while for poor families 21years. That's the feasible age when a girl is ripe and ready to face the challenges that comes with marriage. The fact still remains that education is the basis that indicate the marriage of a girl, research shows that 82% of girls without formal education were married off before the attainment of 18years whereas girls who complete secondary education about 13% marry at the right age. The reality of the inhuman practice of early girl-child marriage must be a thing of the past, it is the worst social injustice and man's inhumanity to man. The side effect of this barbaric act are enormous, the physical and psychological trauma is out of place as it affects both the society and the girl.

1.1 Attributes of early girl-child marriage

Early girl-child marriages are triggered by some factors such as financial constraint, lack of education, religious/traditional belief, gender inequality and insecurity. For the purpose of this study these attributes are discussed below.

Poverty: poverty is said to be a disease, when a man has the poverty of the mind and mentality: he is also said to be crippled. Financial problem has lured a lot of people to this mess of giving out their girl in marriage in other to be free from the burden of female expenses. Child marriage is predominately in the northern part of Nigeria due to their polygamous marriage practice; their religion supports a man to marry more than one woman and the proceeds of the numerous marriages are multiple child births. They bring forth children they cannot train due to poverty, the alternative is to enrich their pockets or up lift the burden of training a girl child by giving her out in marriage at a tender age as an exchange.

Lack of education: Education is paramount to attaining greater heights in the future but the dreams of a girl-child are cut off at early marriage. Family educational background has a vital role to play in a child's educational attainment, the probability that an educated parent will marry off her girl-child at early age is very slim as they know the value of education. Lack of education propels parents to believe that training a girl-child is a waste of resources, that marriage is the only alternative that will protect her without knowing the precautions of the act. They are also made to believe that it is safer, more economical to train a boy because it entails limited resources compared to a girl. Many of them do not know the aftermath of early child marriage due to the fact that they still hold on to their ancient beliefs.

Traditional/Religious beliefs: Most traditions and religious belief varies; some are based on old time religious traditions which encourage child marriage. There is a certain age a girl is married off in other not to bring shame to the family and they also believe that a girl must be married as a virgin, to maintain their belief parents marry off their girl before she becomes sexually active. Also child marriage can be an avenue for settling obligations/debts or sealing family relationship, in this aspect the girl child is formally betrothed to the man as soon as she is born. However, this makes it easier for marriage as soon as she attains a certain age.

Gender Inequality: Gender inequality is one of the challenges women face presently, were more preference are given to men over a woman, this is practically transferred to young girls of nowadays. This is one of the main attribute that has facilitated early girl-child marriage. It is believed that no matter how you train a woman she will certainly end up in a man's house, so therefore they marry their girls off in other not to waste their resources.

Insecurity: This is a contributory factor to early marriage; parents are concerned about security of their girls without thinking of the consequences of early marriage. Female sexual harassment, rape and teenage pregnancy keeps increasing on daily basis, in other to secure and protect their girls they give them out to a much older men.

1.2. Consequences of early girl-child marriage

The results of early marriage are enormous, for the purpose of this study some of the aftermath will be elaborated for a clear understanding.

Domestic Violence: Most men are inpatient when they marry a young girl forgetting the fact that the so called wife is a child that needs to be corrected with love. They unleash their anger at every mistake by the child, thereby causing physiological trauma for the child. Often times they live in fear of the unknown, due to the series of abuses from the husband or his family members. Inflated injuries from violence or physical abuse pose a threat to her existence; it can lead to premature death. It's on record that most girls lose their lives in the name of marriage, when they run back to their parent they are sent back, they digest all the violence because they are made to believe that marriage is for better or worse.

Illiteracy: A girl-child's education is terminated, dreams cut short due to early marriage. In most cases during the marriage the men promises to send the girl to school but could not keep the promise as the girl is turned to baby making factory. The survey indicates that 55% & 63% of the female respondent are illiterates they can neither read nor write (see table 4).

Early Pregnancy: Early pregnancy is associated with early marriage, the girls life is endangered due to the fact that their reproductive system is not mature for pregnancy. Para venture, they get pregnant the risk is very high in most cases they either lose their lives or that of their babies at birth. Complications due arise due to lack of proper medical care which result in so many health issues in the long run.

Health Risk: In most cases child marriage results in many issues one of such is Vesico Vaginal Fistula (VVF) is a hole between the female vagina and the bladder, this erupts from a prolonged obstructed labour of a girl-child. The child suffers this after child birth for

a long run, during the period the girl-child leaks urine or feces sometime both uncontrollably. Often times VVF leads to chronic medical issues like constant infection, kidney diseases and infertility. Medically it is observed that a female organ is open and vulnerable to infections they are at risk of suffering sexual transmitted disease which could be contacted from sex, toilet and unclean environment. The girls face the challenges of severe pain during intercourse due to their sex organs are not developed enough.

Social stigma: Arises from early marriage, most especially for those that survive fistula, they are often sidelined by their friends and families. They hardly identify or associate in any occasion or ceremonies as they are enclosed to forced life of introvert. The stigma of lack of education not being able to express one's self among peers, contribute to discussion or knowledge of the things happening in the community also affects the girl.

Hypothesis formulated for the study

H_0 Early girl-child marriage does not affect Nigerian society rather individual

H_1 Early girl-child marriage negatively affects Nigerian Society

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

In Africa there are lots of programs advocating for the abolishment of early girl-child marriage, studies which include research projects and numerous surveys are on the rise on the issue of early marriage in Nigeria and other developing countries that still practice the act. According to Health Demographic survey (1992) it was observed that Niger state had 47% of young girls between the ages of 20-24years were already married before they attained the age of 15years, 87% was married before 18years while 53% of the girls already had children before the age of 18years. UNICEF (1994) observed that the negative impact of child marriage does not only affect the individual rather the society at large. The society shoulders mostly all the burden that arises from early marriage as the girl has formally turn to liability for the society. Part of this burden can be alleviated from the society when a girl child is given an opportunity for a formal education in other for her to decide her future. Bunch observed that early girl-child marriage practice contributes to poverty widespread in a developing country, which makes it difficult for developed countries to render assistance while Holborn (2011) concur with an observation that early marriage affects the lives of the girl-child negatively as the marriage was carried out without maturity and consent of the child. According to Forward (2008), the practice of child marriage is predominantly in the rural area and poor communities, a girl is seen as a liability to the family in other to reduce the so called burden that comes with girl child training, the parents marry her off. He further stated that poverty level of a country is enough to encourage girl child marriage, is perceived as family building strategy and economic strategy. Girl's marriages sometimes are treated as commodities were the families use their daughters to settle debt or seal a family long tiles/relationship. A survey was conducted by Adedokun et al (2012) on the maternal health constraints of early married young mother in Gombe State Nigeria. He applied the data retrieved from 200 female respondents between the ages of 15-24years, the result indicates that family decision, and education level of the female, age at first marriage and current age contributes to maternal health issues. The study also shows that 70% of the respondent had experienced complication either before or after childbirth, 60% attained only primary education before marriage, while 50% are already married for 5-9 years. According to Malhotra et al (1997) there is a relationship between delayed marriage and adult earning. He further explained that when a woman attain full age of marriage with the required education, there tends to be labour participation and contribution to economy growth, these can never be achieved at early marriage as dreams are cut short and poverty level increases. Giyan (2009) observed the Islamic religious context, he noted that the religion invigorate the early girl-child marriage practice, on the other hand their belief forbids a girl child to be pregnant before marriage. Early marriage has been defended in Nigeria as clearly permissible by the Islamic religion, but with the cautionary measure that such marriages can only be consummated when the bride is mature enough. He concluded that most times these decisions are often made without the consent of the child and with no recourse to the consequences of the actions. Abdallah (2011) opined that Nigeria is amongst the highest countries that practice child marriage in the world. With the 42% of girls been married before adulthood basically in the northern part of Nigeria while 20% are married before 15years in other parts of the country where the practice is low. He further stated that Nigeria is so entrenched in the practice which is practically linked to religion, culture and traditional beliefs. Bayisenga (2012) observation was basically on Sub-Saharan Africa, his discoveries indicates the factors that propels parents to child marriage, the aftermath of the act and its effects on the development of the countries involved. The factors includes but not limited to family pressure, economic survival, insecurity, wars and civil conflicts, traditional and religious beliefs. He further stated that the act deprives young girls of her personal development, legal right and right to the future. The challenges country face due to the aftermath of the acts is that it increases population pressure, decline in human development and increase in health care cost. Millennium Development Goals (MDGs); advocates for basic education for a child, eradication of poverty, prevention of HIV/AIDS and reduction of high maternal mortality.

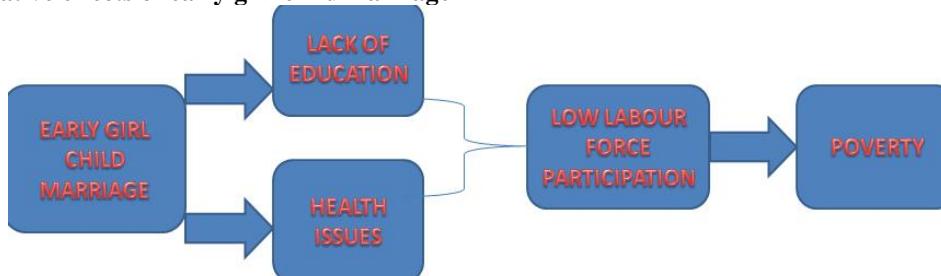
1.1 Negative impact of early girl-child marriage on Nigeria

Personal development of a girl-child is aborted when her education is terminated for marriage, this do not only affect the girl it also affects the community and the future generation. According to Klasea et al (2012) child marriage affects female labour force participation in the area of returns when they are actively employed, this is due to lack of education which has contributed to the increase in unpaid house work. While Chaaban & Cunningham (2011) further opined that female decrease in labour force participation has negative effects on the economic growth of the societies, as well as the women and their families. It noted that early girl-child marriage contributes immensely to the quick increase in population size of any country involved; this is associated with child bearing

of the girl-child who is a novice in family planning. Due to lack of education the tendency is obvious that she will bear children without spacing, often times they deliver more than the family can train thereby populating the society with liabilities. It also contributes to increase in unemployment for the children and decrease in work force participation for the women due to child rearing; this has an adverse effect on the economic growth of the country.

Koblinsky et al (2012) observed that early girl-child health issues or complication contributes to labour force withdrawal thereby affecting the economic development of a country

Figure 3
Negative effects of early girl-child marriage

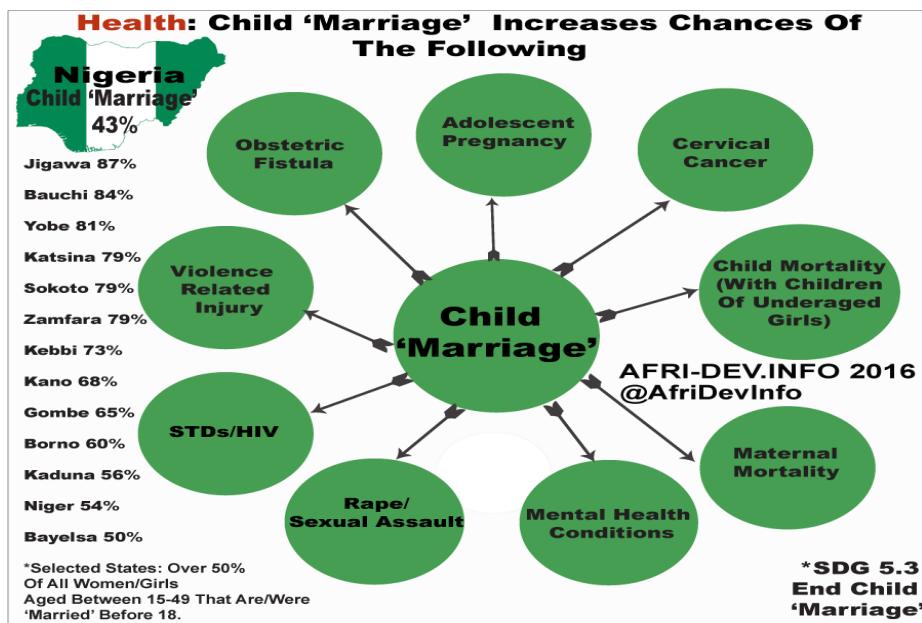


Source: Authors description

Low participation in labour force increases poverty level of a family likewise a decrease in the household contribution to the economic growth of the society. Poverty limits the capability of the individual in the society; there is no access to education in their predicament. There is the saying that information is knowledge or wealth, due to poverty their access to information is limited this is as a result of lack of education. The effect of early marriage on a girl child is also transferred to their children, they lack the basic capacity to build and train a child, and poverty is automatically transferred to the children. It also contributes to increased early marriages for their girl child which poverty is the architect that lures them to repeat the same mistake made by their parents.

Lack of proper medical care leads to premature death of girls who married below the age of 18years, they have no knowledge on how to maintain their health. Premature death is a loss to the economic growth of Nigeria. According to Xu e tal (2003) they observed that young marriages are typically immature girls who lack the proper knowledge and medical care during pregnancy. The study further stated that early child births endanger the life of the girl likewise the child. UNFPA (2013) discovered that complications from early child pregnancy and childbirth are the second leading causes of death among girls of 15-19years with recorded estimates of 70,000 deaths yearly. Wach (2008) confirmed that children of young mothers are likely to have low-birth weight and poor nutrition. UNICEF (2014a) states that infant mortality among babies born of mothers under age 18 is 60% higher than those born of mothers above 18years.

Figure 4.



Source: <http://www.afri-dev.info/>

Skills and productivity is entangled together, lack of skills and less productive has an adverse effect on the economy of the Nigerian society. A marriage of a girl-child aborts her educational attainment and future dreams; education is the basic and formal skills required to be productive in the society. Skills acquired increases empowerment and it also plays a significant role in the success of ones carrier in life, its impact to the growth of individual and the economy are enormous. However lack of education limits a child's social network achievement which has a psychological impact that traumatizes them in life. Khanna et al (2013) also opined that depriving a girl of the opportunity to learn limits her prospects for employment and her ability to gain useful skills.

Early girl-child marriage aftermath to the society includes low participation in decision making both in their household and the society, gender disparity has encouraged it the more where women are marginalized in decision making roles. Nigeria has few women in the parliamentary and leadership roles in the country this due to lack of educational attainment which has limited women in active role in the country. It's already observed by stakeholders during the International Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA) annual meeting of 2018, that there is a decline participation rate by women in the upcoming general election 2019. To be active in decision making, education must be achieved as these young girls are silenced in their household which limits their decision making. There is an adage that says "you need to look beautiful at home before coming outside", it means that charity begins at home. These young women can neither take decision on personal issues, child bearing nor household finances which has a contributory effect on the economic development of a country. Beaman et al (2012) is of the opinion that early girl child marriage is accompanied by lack of voice in the household decision and civic participation has immensely limit young women's input into the society and national development. The author concurred to the other research that affirmed that it is likely for an increase in investment of social service when women participate in political decision making.

III. METHODOLOGY

The dependent variable used for the research was basically from primary sources. The location of the study was Kastina State Northwest geopolitical zone of Nigeria; random sampling was applied in selecting 350 female respondents. A semi-structured self-administered questionnaire was applied in retrieving critical information's from the girls for a stipulated period; at the end 296 questionnaires were properly completed and were used in the data computation. Ages 10-30years and above gave their full consent to support the survey. Chi-square test was adopted in other to ascertain the negative effect of early girl-child marriage on Nigeria. In other to get maximum participation and responses from the female the survey was conducted after school at their respective homes, those in the labour field and streets were also captured.

1.1 Data analysis and interpretation of result

Table 1: Distribution of the respondent according to age

Age group	Respondent	Percentage(%)
10-15	70	23.6
16-20	87	29.3
21-25	64	21.6

26-30	32	10.8
31- above	43	14.8

Source: Field data 2018

Table 2: Distribution of respondent according marital status

Marital Status	Respondent	Percentage(%)
Married	132	45
Single	94	32
Widowed	42	14
Divorced	28	9

Source: Field data 2018

Table 3: Age at first marriage

Age at first marriage	Respondent	Percentage (%)
10-18years	94	48
19-24years	54	27
25-30years	33	16
31-Above	18	9
Total	202	100%

296 respondent minus 94 Singles= 202 Total no of Married

Source: Field data 2018

Table 4: Child marriage by Education and literacy status

Education level	Ages 10-22 (%)	Ages 23-Above (%)
No education	22	31
Primary drop out	17	22
Primary complete	13	10
Secondary drop out	16	11
Secondary complete	21	16
Higher	8	10
Literacy		
Cannot read/write	55	63
Limited ability	28	30
Full ability	17	7

Source: Field data 2018

Table 1. Indicate the distribution of the respondent by age; the age bracket 10-15years has 23.6% of the female respondent while 16-20years has 29.3% which was the highest of the respondent in the survey. **Table 2.** Shows the respondent marital status, from the table 132 female respondent are married which has the highest percentage of 45, 94 is the total no of single respondent which ranked 2nd in the table with 32%. 42 female respondents were widow which represents 14% of the entire respondent in the survey while divorced female represents 9% which was the least in the distribution table. Divorced is seen as a western culture in northern part of Nigeria due to their tradition and religious belief, very few of their females are divorced reason being that it is against their belief. **Table 3.** Represents the ages of respondent as at the age of their first marriage, 48% of the girls were married before the attainment of 18years. **Table 4.** Shows the educational level of the respondent, it shows 23% and 31% has no formal education where as 17% and 22% has partly primary school education while 13% and 10% virtually completed primary school. From indication there was an increase in secondary attended and completion but a drop in higher level as they could not further their education due to one constraints or the other. Though most completed their primary and secondary education but the illiteracy level was a bit high due to lack of qualified teachers. It is seen from the distribution that 55% and 63% of both the educated and non-educated cannot read nor write. Thus 28% and 30% has limited ability while only 17% and 7% has the full ability to read and write with proper communication. From the table it shows that the illiteracy levels of the respondents are high.

Table 5: Attributes of early girl-child marriage by distribution

Attributes	Respondent	Percentage(%)
Poverty	141	48
Education of parent	75	25
Traditional/religious belief	69	23
Gender Inequality	58	20

Insecurity	33	11
Source: Field data 2018		

Table 6: Consequences of early girl-child marriage by distribution

Consequences	Respondent	Percentage(%)
Domestic Violence	123	42
Illiteracy	74	25
Early pregnancy	58	20
Health Risk	52	18
Social Stigma	51	17
High maternal mortality	47	16
Sex slave	44	15
Neonatal mortality	31	10

Source: Field data 2018

Table 7: The Negative effect of early girl-child marriage on Nigeria

Effects	Respondent	Percentage(%)
Poverty	89	30
Decrease in Labour force participation	78	26
Lack of power	67	23
Premature death	36	12
No skills & less productive	26	9

Source: Field data 2018

Table 5. Indicates the attributes of early girl-child marriage on Nigeria, 141 respondents which represents 48% opined that poverty and financial capability of their parents lured them into marriage, it is a major problem in Northern part of Nigeria as men marry more than one wife thereby producing many children without the capability of training them. It is noted that an educated parent lives a developed life which is basically transferred to their children, this fact is confirmed from the distribution that most of the parents are uneducated, 25% of the respondent agree to the fact that their parent gave them out for marriage because they don't know the value of education. An educated parent knows the value of education and therefore will not subject their girl-child to early suffering in the name of marriage. Traditional and religious beliefs is also seen as a challenge that contributes to early girl-child marriage in the northern region, it ranked 3rd in the distribution with a percentage of 23. Most religion forbids training a girl-child to a certain level, as it is viewed as a waste of time and resource. 20% of the respondent opined that gender inequality has denied them their right, it has been a big challenges in the Nigerian system were more preference are given to the men, in this study it also indicates that the parents of these girls prefers to train the boys with a superstitious belief that training a girl-child is a waste and that they will eventually end up in marriage responsibilities. 11% represents insecurity, were by the parent of the girl-child feels insecure over their girl-child safety. They believe that keeping a girl-child for long will affect her sexual life; they want their girls to get married untemper. **Table 6.** Represents the consequences of early girl-child marriage in a distribution. From indication it shows that domestic violence ranks the highest, 42% of the respondent attest to the fact that violence is being seen as a norm in their marriage, as they cannot voice out due to the punishment that comes thereafter. For this reasons they are treated like a no body by their imposed husbands. 15% affirmed that they are sex slaves to their so called husbands, as they are forced to sex at any time against their will. 25% of the female respondent concur that most of them are illiterates because they had no opportunity for formal education. From table 4, it shows that 55% and 63% of the females that had no formal education and those that attended school cannot read nor write. This was practically confirmed by the author during administering the questionnaires to the respondent, it was hectic as most of the female do not understand English which is a general acceptable language for communication in Nigeria. For the survey to be hitch free the author employed the services of an interpreter, who got useful information's from the female respondents. Early pregnancy represents 20%, this situation where a young girl gets pregnant before her reproductive system is ripe, the respondents affirmed that most of them get pregnant after they are married off against their will which pose a serious health issues for them. 18% of the female lamented of having complications from child-birth, sickness which has affected their normal life, while neonatal and maternal mortality was represented by 10% and 16% respectively this is also caused by early girl-child marriage most of them die at child birth, prolong labour while some lose their child due to lack of experience. Social stigma represents 17%, the females posit that their social life is dead; they cannot associate with their peers due to the stigma of early marriage. **Table 7.** The consequences of early girl-child marriage have a damaging effect on the society and economy of Nigeria. The girl-child ought to be our future leaders but their dreams have been cut short by early marriage. Presently they cannot make any impact in the society rather they turn out to be liabilities to the Nigerian society. Poverty ranked highest with 30%, as it is poverty can never be alleviated in this context as the basic instrument

education is missing. Decrease in Labour force participation is represented in the distribution by 26% which is agreed that it dwindle the economy growth of Nigeria as well as the individual involved. 23% of the female respondent affirmed that they are powerless rather liabilities to their husbands and the country. They have no positive contributions to their lives or their environment and this is also transferred to their children which at the long run affects the country. It is in the know that a skilled mother will always transfer and educate her children thereby reducing the poverty level and increasing the economic growth of Nigeria. Furthermore 12% of the females noted premature death; they lose their loved ones out of early marriages. In most cases of early pregnancies young mothers and their children survive on a narrow escape living them at the mercy of death, thereby affecting the society. 9% of the female are less productive as they are worried that they are not able to work and earn a decent living due to lack of education and skills. This had a negative impact to Nigerian economy as the female labour force participation is decreasing due to these facts.

Table 8. Computation of the distribution X^2

Effects	O	E	O-E	$(O-E)^2$	$\frac{(O-E)^2}{E}$
Poverty	89	59	30	900	15.25
Decrease in Labour force participation	78	59	19	361	16.11
Liability	67	59	8	64	1.08
Premature death	36	59	-23	529	8.96
No skills & less productive	26	59	-32	1,024	<u>17.35</u> $\Sigma=48.75$

Source: Authors computation

Table 8. Is a broad explanation of chi-square computation, the sum of the value is $X^2_{cal}=48.75$ while the tabulated value is $X^2_{tab}=9.49$. In this scenario the calculated value is more than the tabulated value ($48.75 > 9.49$) which obviously indicates that there is a negative effect of early girl-child marriage in Nigeria.

1.2 Hypothesis Testing

Chi-square test was applied in testing the hypothesis in order to comprehend the negative effect of early girl-child marriage on Nigerian society. The formula for chi-square computation is below:

$$X^2 = \sum \frac{(O-E)^2}{E}$$

Representation of the symbols

Degree of freedom (df) = n-1

E= Expected frequency

$$5-1=4 \quad \alpha = 5\% = 0.05$$

O= Number of observation

$$X^2_{cal} = 48.75$$

N = Number of observation

$$X^2_{tab} = X^2_{0.05} = 9.49$$

Σ = Summation

X^2 = Chi-square

If $X^2_{cal} > X^2_{tab}$ the study reject the null hypothesis H_0 early girl-child marriage does not affect Nigerian society rather individual and accept the alternative hypothesis H_1 early girl-child marriage negatively affects Nigerian Society. From the outcome of the survey, it is very obvious of the effect on the economic growth of Nigeria, this result also agree with previous research result by Envuladu et al (2016) observed that early girl-child marriage aftermath is worrisome, the authors further stated that it affects the child medically and socially in the society.

IV. THE WAY FORWARD AND CONCLUSION

Early girl-child marriage is mostly associated with culture and religious belief which may be difficult to alter, but it can still be limited and abolished. It's also noted in the study that early marriage is part of the gender discrimination that women face in the society where prevalence are given to the boys over the girls. The study revealed that education is the most paramount instrument required to abort early marriage, as the research perceived its prevalent more in the northern part of Nigeria where educating a girl-child is viewed as a waste of resource. In most cases were parent give out their girl due to poverty with a selfish interest of being empowered in return by the husband of the girl, this act is heartless and self-centered because they never considered the interest of the girl-child. At long run when their child is maltreated they are unable to protect their child due to the fact that they have sold their birth right when they were settled financially. In the aspect of the girl-child she is rubbed off her future dreams, her right violated due to the termination of her education, social, economic and psychological development.

This study proposes the way forward:-

* Firstly, the constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria Section 29(4b) which states that any woman who is married shall be deemed to be of full age should be amended and clearly state the punishment for any community/parent involved in the barbaric act. Nobody is above the law.

* Compulsory completion of secondary school education, it should be free in other for the poor citizens to access and take advantage.
*Strong advocacy and awareness should be established in collaboration with religious and community leaders, so as to inculcate the need for the abolishment of early girl-child marriage in Nigerian society.
* Young girls who married early should not be a write off from the society; a rehabilitation center can be established as this will contribute in resuscitating the psychological effect of early marriage on them.
* The services of social workers is also important in assisting the girls recuperate back to the society, they can still be productive if guided properly.
*Empowerment centers ought to be established were they can still gain skills irrespective of their predicament as this will alleviate them from poverty.
* A functional government organization should be established, their basic role should be on early marriages to take reports on any location, they also will take prominent action to prosecute and as well protect the girl-child.
* Nigeria encourages community policing, early girl-child marriage policing should be considered, this will enable individuals to report immediately it is noticed.
To an extend it will curb the madness, it is said that whatever that effects the tongue, directly or indirectly affects the mouth in other words early girl child marriage do not only affect the individual negatively rather the entire country at large.

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