

Cultural Traditions and Practices of the Parents as Barriers to Girl-child Education in Zamfara State Nigeria

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Abstract- This conceptual paper titled the cultural traditions and practices of the parents as barriers to girl-child education in Zamfara state Nigeria, aimed at enumerating cultural activities of the parents in the study area that prevent them from sending their girl children to school. The paper reviews literature on how cultural traditions practiced by the parents affect the education of their girl children. The paper also examines the negative role of parents' cultural traditions and practice on the Educational process of their girl children. The study reveals that cultural practices serve as hindrance to girl-child education and that inaccessibility of the girl-child to education makes her vulnerable to diseases such as HIV/AIDS, early marriage, denial of rights and child labor. In addition, studies and researches from the previous works of scholars relating to the factors militating against girl-child education were also analyzed and discussed throughout the paper. The discussion in the paper is base on theoretical framework of ecological model of Bronfenbrenner's theory. This theory is appropriate for the study because it allows the reader to understand how girl-child education is seriously hampered by the cultural traditions of their parents. Finally, Suggestions for parents on how to modernize this cultural traditions and practice to help in the Educational process of their children were presented. Conclusions from the literature were drawn, and the paper concludes that Parents' cultural practice and tradition serve as barriers to girl-child education in Zamfara State Nigeria.

Index Terms- Cultural and traditional practice, girl-child, educational process, parents, Zamfara State, Nigeria.

I. INTRODUCTION

Education is the right of every girl everywhere and also the key to transforming both the life of girl and the life of her community. Girls without education are denied the opportunity to develop their full potential and to play a productive and equal role in their families, their societies, their country and their world at large. One of the most important tools available to empower women within the family and within society is education. In addition, educating girls has cascading benefits. Literate and educated women are less likely to die in childbirth; more likely to have smaller, healthier and better educated families; and better able to protect their families and themselves from HIV/AIDS, trafficking and other forms of violence (Unicef 2009). Despite all these facts, in Zamfara state girls continue to be locked out of

school and locked into inequality due to cultural traditions and practice of the parents. The cultural and societal obstacles that girls face in Zamfara state are huge. Other barriers to quality Education include poverty, poor quality education, child labor, child trafficking, HIV/AIDS, remote geographic location, inadequate infrastructure, discrimination, mother's lack of education civil inflict, natural disasters, and violence. United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan (2005) has clearly identified girl's education as an urgent development priority for the entire UN system where he is reported to have said that:

"If we are to succeed in our efforts to build a healthier, more peaceful and equitable world, classrooms must be full of girls as well as boys. By educating girls, we will help raise economic productivity and reduce both maternal and infant mortality. By educating girls, we will improve nutrition, promote health, and fight HIV/AIDS. By educating girls, we will trigger a transformation of society as a whole—social, economic and political." (Video message to the Conference on Gender Parity in Education, Washington, D.C., 2 March 2005)

II. BACKGROUND

The greatest enemy and greatest evil which keep people in darkness, bound to their traditions and superstitions is illiteracy; It also makes people resistant to change and new ideas and isolated from progress, thus unaware and incapable of meeting the demands of their changing environment and ever progressing world (Nasution in Omolewa1985). Today, girl-child education is a matter of concern for nations in the world. Girl-children are discriminated against thereby making it difficult for them to exercise their rights; they are victims of various traditional and cultural practices, they suffer degradation, they are objects of poverty, their faces are only to be seen but their voices not to be heard, they are seen as being sub-servient to their male counterparts; they are the inferior set, their place is in the kitchen. A number of negative thoughts and actions are expressed on the girl-child. To set the girl-child free from all these negative hold, there is need for her sound education. Giving her education will give her sound mind to reason, to liberate her from poverty, and develop her as well as the nation in which she lives. With education, the girl child can become a self-sufficient adult who has more decision and control over her life. Jatau in Esomonu (1999) believes that the burden of nation building rests much on women. She goes on "we need women to create a blissful home, have well-educated and well-behaved children...."

it is after these that the task of nation building can be a success". This will start from the education of the girl-child. The importance of educating the girl-child is further brought to the fore by Abacha (1997) while stating his view to support the fact that development has to be participatory and sustainable. He believed that "Progress is only feasible if we create a Nigeria made up of a united people with a united purpose... our nation needs men and women who are bold, and imaginative, dedicated and committed, people who put honor, service and patriotism above everything else. These men and women are not only needed in politics, they are also needed in business, in our traditional institutions, youth organizations, in academics and other professions".

The above statement indicated that, society should stop looking down on women and they should be seen as first-class citizen and not rated as second-class citizens. Through education the girl-child (who transforms later into a woman) will be empowered to be strong and resourceful in such a way that she is able to contribute maximally to the sustenance and development of the society in which she lives. According to Alkali (2000) cited in Adedokun & Olufunke M. (2010) if all limiting barriers against women are removed, "women can lead, lead to the battle, and if necessary fight for her society and win for her people". Educating a girl child therefore will bring about self-awareness, increased self assertiveness in the society, raising the consciousness of women to encourage their participation in national development (Awe 1992, cited in Adedokun & Olufunke M. 2010). Paying particular and close attention is therefore important, to the education of the girl-child. Finding the right solution to the issue of girl-child education will not only move the girl-child forward but pushes the nation to a greater height. Considering the virtues embedded in the issue of girl child education, the issue should be rated very high.

III. THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES

The study is based on ecological theory of Bronfenbrenner. Unlike various development theories that place emphasis on the nature and nurture interaction in the development of children, Bronfenbrenner's ecological system theory looks at the child's environment in terms of its quality and context. According to Bronfenbrenner, the interaction within these environments becomes more complex for a child when he develops. The arising of this complexity depends on the growing and maturation of child's physical and cognitive structures. So, given that nature continues on a given path, how does the world that surrounds the child help or hinder continued development?"

The ecological model of Bronfenbrenner's theory attempts to explain the differences in individual's knowledge, development and competencies through the support, guidance and structure of the society in which they live. In this regard therefore, children's education depends largely on the support, guidance and structure of the society which has to do with cultural Traditions and practice of their parents. In many cases the education of children is linked with the cultural Tradition and practice of their parents who are said to be the microsystem according to ecological theory. Many a times cultural traditions and practice of the parents used to contradict the Western system

of education as a result they may serve as barriers to its effectiveness.

IV. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The main aim of this study is:

1. To define the term 'Girl-child' and identify the rights of Girl-child according to the Human rights organization.
2. To identify and review existing research on cultural traditions and practice of the parents that served as barriers to girl-child education
3. To identify the current range of information and findings related to cultural traditions and practice of the parents against girl-child education.
4. To provide some recommendations on the importance of Girl-child education.

V. LITERATURE REVIEW

TRADITION, GENDA AND CULTURE BARRIERS TO GIRL CHILD EDUCATION

Zamfara state is culture enveloped and tradition friendly especially when it pertains to the female sex "women should seen not heard" which gives them a perpetual position in the kitchen. The world belongs to the men folk. These are some of the humiliating traditional sayings directed to females. Right from the onset the traditional Zamfaras's placed girls and females in a domestic servant status where they perform such duties such as farm works, fetch firewood, cook for the family and do petty trading to sustain their families and given out early in marriage, while the boy child go to school just because of the cultural traditions and practice of the parents. In agreement with the above observation, Sperling (2005) cited in Angela O. (2011) reported that rightly or wrongly impoverished parents often feel they need their girl-child" labor for additional income, just to help with the grueling requirements of life... Records have it that two thirds out of 13 million children around the globe poorest nations who don't have access to school is girls (UNICEF, 2007). Sperling (2005) also went further that 60% of girls in an estimated population of 110 million children in the developing world, where Nigeria is one will not have the opportunity of entering school while the few girls enrolled will drop-out. This emerging scene is a thing of concern. This is not only in Zamfara State of Nigeria.

A study in 1996 in Niger discovered that only 12% of girls in the rural areas were enrolled in primary school against 83% of girls' enrolment in the urban city (Phi 2005 as in Angela O. 2011). The current humiliating child-trafficking trend has a high percentage of primary school age girls. This unwelcome idea has kept many girls out of school, since their parents prefer to use them as a pledge for loan. On the other hand, once girls gain access to schools, however, they may experience both direct physical threats and more subtle assaults on their confidence, self esteem and identity (Pigozzi, 2002 in Angela O. 2011). The journey to school may be unsafe, since many girls experience harassment and physical attacks either on public transpiration in urban areas or remote part in rural areas. In some cases extreme physical assault, including rape may be perpetuated against girls

at school. The threats that come in the form of unequal treatment, harassment, bullying and undervaluing girls harm them in profound and long lasting ways in terms of school attendance.

VI. WHO IS A GIRL-CHILD?

For the purpose of this paper, a girl-child can be seen as female children between the ages of 6 and 15. These categories of children are expected to have free access to the free Federal Government provided Universal Basic Education in Nigeria. Kofi Annan (2001) said in respect of Girl-Child Education that “No development strategy is better than one that involves women as central players. It has immediate benefits for nutrition, health, savings and re-investment at the family, community and ultimately, country level. In order words, educating girls is a social development policy that works. It is a long-term investment that yields on exceptionally high return”.

The above statement represents a call for girl-child education. It is however, discovered that girl-child education is not easy to come by as it is usually proclaimed as many impediments stand in the way of the girl-child. The rights of the girl-children are always being denied and this denial leads to lack of access to education. Inaccessibility to education thus results in child labor, which deprives the girl-child of her childhood potentials, dignity and joy. The resultant effect is poverty and the only key to ending poverty among women-folk, as a whole is education of the girl-child because as the saying goes “catch them young” for the young girl-child will grow to full woman in later years.

VII. RIGHTS OF THE GIRL-CHILD

According to Adedokun and Mery Olufunke (2010), every individual in the society is entitled to some rights as citizens of that particular society. The same is true of the girl-child. She is entitled to a lot of human rights but because she is regarded as being weak she is vulnerable to the violations of these rights. Like any other person in the society, she likewise requires the right to enjoy and exercise these rights. Some of the rights of the girl-child as stated by The People’s Movement for Human Rights Education (www.humanrights/girledu...) include the following:-

- Right to freedom from discrimination based on gender, age, race, color, language, ethnicity or the status of the girl-child’s parents.-

- Right to a standard of living adequate for a child’s intellectual, physical, moral and spiritual development.-

- Right to a safe and healthy environment-

- Right to equal access to food and nutrition.-

- Right to freedom from cultural practices, customs and traditions harmful to the girl-child including female genital mutilation.-

- Right to education- free and compulsory primary education and freedom from all types of discrimination at all levels of education. Linked with the above rights is the right to information about health, sexuality and reproduction, protection from physical and mental abuse.

VIII. SOCIO-CULTURAL BARRIERS

Jane Butigah Atayi (2008) observed that Parents’ demand for the education of their daughters is low, reflecting both cultural norms and girls’ work in and around the home. This is worsened by cultural perceptions of girls as child minders, marriage material and a burden to the family. Some parents decided in many cultures that, education is not worthwhile for their daughters who will move into their husbands’ families when they marry and that the gains in productivity or income due to education will accrue to the families of the sons-in-law rather than to them. In other societies parents only educate their daughters with high bride price in mind because the more education a girl has, the higher the bride price payable. ‘Literate and academically trained parents are more likely than illiterate and traditionally trained ones to enroll their daughters in school; and at the same time regions with the highest proportions of traditions and cultures and also highest proportion of illiterate adults are therefore those with the widest gender gaps.’ It has been further documented that 36 percent of children whose mothers have no education are out-of-school compared to 16 percent for children of mothers with some education in Uganda (Atayi 2008). Demographic surveys across the developing world show that a significant percentage of girls get married by the age of fifteen and with very few exceptions, marriage ends their schooling. Conducting a research on disabling barriers to girl’s primary education in Aura District (Uganda) Atayi further said that “Although teenage pregnancy has substantially declined from 43% in 1995 to the current level of 31%, Uganda has the highest teenage pregnancy rate in Africa south of the Sahara and these pregnant teenagers usually drop out of school either by themselves or the school forces them to, while others are forced into early marriage. This adds to the vicious cycle of maternal illiteracy – diminishing the chance of daughters’ schooling”. Other studies also show that maternal illiteracy is a far more significant factor than paternal illiteracy in depriving girls of schooling (Challender 2005, Chimombo 2005:133-134, UNESCO 2005b, W.B.2003).

In many countries traditional cultural practices strongly impact girls’ enrolment. Where family resources are limited, families tend to place the highest priority on educating boys, recognizing them as future heads of household. Where girls are enrolled, they often face many more barriers to learning than boys do. For example, given the paucity of adequate day-care centers throughout much of the developing world and high levels of women’s participation in the informal and formal labor markets, it is not uncommon for young girls to have to bring younger siblings to school with them, disrupting not only their own studies but those of other children (Leach 2003:75). Moreover, studies have revealed that on average, girls are likely to have far less time available after school to study. They typically have to assume a multitude of household chores including cooking, cleaning and even serving as a principal caregiver for younger siblings—responsibilities that boys are virtually never expected to assume (M. Ward, & Penny, A 2003). This study found that these competing demands on girls’ time had translated into relatively poorer academic performance than their male counterparts, often leading to high repetition and, ultimately, higher dropout rates. In addition, socio-cultural norms promulgating early marriage and childbirth cut short if not

preclude girls' education in many countries. In many countries, girls who become pregnant (out of wedlock) are not permitted to return to school although no equal sanction is borne by the fathers of such children. Considering that one in five pregnancies in Africa occurs among teenagers aged 13-19 and that more than 50 percent of girls are married before the age of 18, these norms become significant obstacles on girls' path to education.

IX. CULTURAL TRADITIONS AND PRACTICE OF THE PARENTS

In Zamfara state like many other part of the world inaccessibility, low participation, withdrawal and dropping out of girl children's from schools is attributed to many factors of cultural traditions and practices of the parents towards the education of their daughters, prominent among these factors are: socio-cultural beliefs, customs, early marriage, pregnancy, insecurity, harassment, employment in domestic markets, personal engagement, parental services and other traditions practiced by the parents; and also the female students' own decisions to drop-out of schools (UNESCO, 2002).

Another contributing factor influencing cultural traditions and practices of the parents on girl-child education is the initiation ceremonies which still mark the transition from childhood to adulthood among communities in Sub-Saharan Africa Zamfara inclusive. Evidently lot of confusion and dilemmas faced by girl-children were created by attending ceremonies more especially when the schedules of such ceremonies overlap with the school calendar and that leads to absenteeism and dropouts. Although, communities accept the girls as adults, teachers or schools continue to consider them as children. Sometimes they may be punished for not participating in some activities which adults do not normally participate in. Traditionally, initiated girls may also feel it difficult to continue schooling after passage to adult hood as the next step is expected to be marriage (UNESCO, et al, 2002).

Among the other cultural constrains on girl-child education that creates similar dilemmas to those who pass-through initiation ceremonies is Circumcision. Normally Circumcised girl- children become negative influences on their uncircumcised peers and perceive themselves as adults and as a result of this become rude to teachers and often reject schools as institutions for "children" by exhibiting abnormal behaviors of frequent absenteeism and reduced performance which leads them to drop out from schools and eventually to marry (Ghaghara, 1993). According to Njau and Wamahiu (1998) circumcision functions to enhance the social status of teenagers and acts as a mechanism for curbing female sexuality and premarital pregnancy, with the help of payment of bride price and early marriage which emphasized female virginity before marriage, these practices were perceived to increase economic returns to the family through bride wealth. Security and the needs for physical safety or protection are traditions that often demand special concern for girls' privacy and social reputation (Herz et al., 1991; Njau and Wamahiu, 1998). In cultures and traditions where female seclusion is practiced, the impact of that Low Participation of girl-child in schools tradition on girl's enrolment after puberty is substantial. Odaga and Heneveld (1991) indicate that in some rural areas of Mozambique families keep daughters out of schools after their first menstruation and initiation of rituals. In

some of the countries, distance from home to school gives rise to issues of special concern for security. Adolescent girls may be victims not only of sexual harassment but also of abduction, after which they are forced to marry their abductors.

A relationship has been found in many countries between late entry of girl's to schools, frequent absenteeism and finally dropping out of school. Girls may start school at the age of 10, since the distance from school may be too great to allow small children without older siblings to walk on their own. At the age of 11 or 12 they are forced to leave school as their parents may be afraid of sexual harassment and abduction (UNESCO, 2002). Girl-child pregnancy and the incidence of dropout are closely related throughout Africa (Njau and Wamahiu, 1998). Usually unwanted, these pregnancies end the schooling of girl-child both through self-withdrawal and national pregnancy policies that ensures the expulsion of girl children from the education system with little or no chance of re-entry. Najau and Wamahiu (1998) argue that it is the societal responses to pregnancy rather than pregnancy per se that push girl-children out of school and hamper their opportunities for educational and career development. They note that in most African countries, school policies and practices are based on the mistaken assumption that the problem of premarital girl-children pregnancy is caused by the pregnant themselves, and to a lesser extent, by their parents. The tendency has been to portray them as easily susceptible to becoming pregnant while still in school and eventually dropping out. Odaga and Heneveld (1995) indicate that fear of pregnancy is another factor for parents to remove their children from schools. They refer to a study in Cameroon where Christian parents were found to marry off their daughters at puberty even if they have not finished primary school for fear of pregnancy. The health implications of teenage pregnancy are another reason for early dropouts. A study in Kenya showed that female students from secondary school who had been pregnant were twice as likely to report poor health as those with no pregnancy history (Yom-i, 1993).

In rural and poor families, the education of girls is often seen as worthy of consideration only up to marriageable levels. One study from Kenya found that, compared with boys, more girls are made to repeat so that they are at least educated enough to find a husband (Kirui, 1982). Surveys of parents of dropouts in India indicate that they withdraw daughters from school when they see education as conflicting with marriage (Nayana, 1985). Similar practices have been reported in Papua New Guinea: In the province of West Sepik, some girls as young as 9 or 10 are promised in marriage and then taken out of school to "insure their protection and to prepare for the event. Others leave their families to live with the family of their betrothed, until they are of marriageable age and this may lead the girl-child to indulge in sexual activities which will eventually course diseases like HIV/AIDS" (Yeoman, 1985). It is therefore, pertinent for the girl-child to be educated to be liberated from the hold of child-labor as well as the scourge of HIV/AIDS and other social ills as faced by the girl-child.

Cultural practices serve as hindrance to girl-child education and that inaccessibility of the girl-child to education makes her vulnerable to diseases such as HIV/AIDS, early marriage, denial of rights and child labor. In his message to, the United Nations International Literacy Day the Secretary-General Banki-moon

(2011) explained with a warning that illiteracy undermines efforts to eliminate a host of social ills such as poverty and sickness and threatens the very stability of nations. He said "Illiteracy exacerbates cycles of poverty, ill-health and deprivation. It weakens communities and undermines democratic processes through marginalization and exclusion. These and other impacts can combine to destabilize societies." The Global Campaign for Education states that seven million cases of HIV could be prevented in the next decade if every child receives an education (UNAIDS 2010).

The international community has made numerous commitments to women's literacy, getting more girls into school, and to ensuring that schools are providing empowering quality education. Yet concrete action to match these commitments and to address the linkage between access to quality education and HIV prevention has been lacking. It is clear that strengthening girls' education is inextricably linked to effective HIV prevention. Indeed, growing evidence points to the fact that education levels are often correlated with factors that substantially lower HIV risk, such as delayed sexual debut, greater HIV awareness and knowledge, and higher rates of condom use.

The Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) has highlighted these links. The agreed conclusions of the 53rd session concluded that there is a clear need to '*strengthen education.....to achieve gender equality and the empowerment of women and ensure women' and girls' rights to education at all levels and the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health, including sexual and reproductive health.....as well as sex education based on full and accurate information in a manner consistent with the evolving capacities of girls and boys, and with appropriate direction and guidance*'. Keeping girls, notably the most vulnerable and marginalized, in school, beyond primary, into secondary is therefore critical as well as ensuring that schools remain safe and empowering spaces for girls and women, where they can learn free from all forms of violence and discrimination. In order to reach the millions of women and girls that are out of school or have never received any formal schooling, it is equally important to diversify women's and girls' educational opportunities throughout life by ensuring their access to quality technical, vocational, literacy and life skills education and training.

To help address these gaps, UNAIDS Accelerated Agenda For Women, Girls Gender Equality and HIV supports access to comprehensive sexuality education for young people, both in school and out of school, that promotes gender equality and human rights and that equips youth with evidence-based knowledge, skills and resources necessary to enable them to make responsible choices about their social and sexual relationships.

X. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The learner who is a customer in the educational industry primarily occupies a prominent place because the school exists mainly for his or her benefit (Igwe, 2002 cited in Angela O. 2011). As such the rate of girl-child enrollment becomes an issue of concern for national development and empowerment of every child. Zamfara state of Nigeria is a typical rural state with almost

50% of the population been illiterates and peasant farmers who are yet to embrace modern birth control measures hence the rapid increase in population of children with majority not having access to basic primary education (NPC 2010).

The findings of this study agree with the World Bank Review Report (1995) which indicates that developing nations have the largest number of children who don't have access to primary education. The report reviews that 72 million out of the 113 million primary schools age 50 children are estimated to be out of school by 2015. In Zamfara state, the finding of this study has revealed a very slow progress in girl-child participation over the years due to cultural traditions and practice of the parents. The enrollment has been in favor of the boys, which is a clear expression of male dominance in academic activities and a rift in the gender issue. UNESCO study (1980) aligns with this study proving that 64% of women in Africa girl-child inclusive, are illiterate and can neither read nor write. UNESCO also noted that in the mid 1980s, fewer than half of school-age girls were enrolled into primary schools. Ejembi (1994 as cited in Angela O. 2011) also discovered that 77.8% of women in Africa got married before 15years of age. This trend should be checked, particularly, in Zamfara State of Nigeria in order not to keep reducing the productive base of the society at large and Zamfara in particular.

The study has also proved that more children enroll in urban than the rural areas. As such government and stakeholders should concentrate more on education development of rural areas in order to benefit children of peasant farmers mostly found in rural areas. A boy-child has no better potential than the girl-child; as such female children should not be discriminated against or treated inferior to their male counterparts. Bridging gender gap would in no small measure increase national output. This is a major goal of (UNESCO's EDI, 2006) that many countries of the world are making commitment to ensure compliance. Following UNESCO Global Monitor (2006) which has reported that, 40% of Sub-Saharan African countries have Gross Intake Rates (GIRs) below 95%, which implies that ordinary access to primary education is still not-realistic, especially for the girl-child. Across sub-Saharan Africa, it is worthy to note that enrollment ratio of the girl child are rising progressively while gender gap is gradually closing up. Yet, countries like Nigeria and Zamfara State in particular are still battling with low enrollment ratios and inability to accommodate all children of primary school age. This assertion is supported by Daily Trust News paper report (Published on Thursday, 29 August 2013 05:00) Written by Shehu Umar, Gusau where he wrote "Zamfara State has over one million out of school children, making it the state with highest number of such children in Nigeria, Director, Junior Secondary Schools of the State Universal Basic Education Board, Alhaji Sani Mailafiya, has said". The writer who was a news man further elaborated in the following words:

"Speaking at an interactive session with stakeholders in Zamfara, Mailafiya said the number of children in school was confirmed through the state's primary education assessment committee". Presenting a paper at the event, chair-man of Kaura Namoda Local Government Area, Alhaji Lawali Liman, said out of the school age children that get access to primary schools, only 50 per cent of them complete their primary education and move to secondary schools". Additionally majority of these

children are girls and this may be due to cultural tradition and practice of their parents. However this calls for efforts to expand what is on ground and pave a way for quality.

UNESCO-Global Monitor (2006) has also indicated a likely increase of school-age children by 34million (32%) over the next decade and a significant percentage of the above figure is expected to emanate from Nigeria due to its population explosion in Africa. Zamfara State is well known as a rural state of mostly peasant farmers where archaic customs and practices are still held in a very high esteem in a way that they dictate the trend of event, education is not left out. To buttress compulsory access to education of the girl-child, World Bank Review (2006) also reiterated that education at primary level is no longer considered a casual affair but rather a serious issue that emphasizes the right of every child in every country to be enrolled in primary school. With government solid support, this dream could become a reality.

XI. CONCLUSION

In this paper, an attempt has been made to examine the issues surrounding the girl-child education in Zamfara state Nigeria, more especially cultural traditions and practice of the parents in the area, the rights of the girl-child, and hindrances to girl-child education, the benefits that come to individual girl-child as well as the community and nation through the education of the girl-child. The paper also teaches us that educating the girl-child eradicates poverty, backwardness, diseases and illness in any nation and it promotes personal as well as national development. The paper concludes that Parents' cultural practice and tradition serve as barriers to girl-child education in Zamfara State Nigeria.

Recommendations

In the light of the above importance of educating the girl-child, the following recommendations were made:

-Gender balanced curriculum and education policies should be established. Such curriculum must consider the interest of the girl-child so that she is motivated to learn.

-Girl-child hawking should be stopped through public enlightenment and legislation.-

-Parents should be educated on the values of modern education to the girl-child.

-Awareness should be made to sensitize people on the fact that an end can only come to poverty cycle through educating the girl-child. The reality is that an uneducated girl that marries early also gives her child in marriage very early; so she becomes a grandmother who eventually has to fend for her grand-children who could not be adequately supported by (her daughter) their mother. Thus, the unmerciful cycle of poverty continues.

-Parents should take advantage of the UBE programme and educate their girl-children.-

Government at all levels, NGOs, media houses should be involved in awareness programme on the education of the girl-child.

-Women should be given the opportunity to formulate and help execute policies especially those relating to girls and women.

-The girl-child should be sensitized as to the importance of her being educated so as to fight for her rights.

-The government at all levels should legislate the rights of the girl-child.

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