Girl-Child Enrolment and Completion in Selected Secondary Schools Oyo North Education Zone, Oyo-State, 2014-2019

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Abstract

This study investigated Girls' enrolment and completion in secondary schools in Oyo North Education Zone, Oyo State. Five schools were sampled.Data were collected for enrolment from five school principals and in-depth interview was conducted with some secondary school girls and parents to generate information on the factors that have kept girls or are keeping girls from enrolling or staying up till completion in secondary schools in the area of study. Data revealed that more girls than boys were enrolled in secondary schools. But on the contrary, girls' completion is lower than boys' completion. ***The studyalso revealed that Pregnancy, parents' poverty and parents' perception of relevance of education accounted for the shortfall in completion. It was therefore recommended that, girls should be sensitized to stay in school till completion.G****overnment needs to continue to fund campaigns to curb cultural practicesthat constantly inhibit girls' right to sustainable secondary education in Oke-Ogun areas of Oyo State.*

Keywords*:* Girl-child, Enrolment, Completion, Culture, Oke-Ogun\

Introduction

Education is a fundamental right of every citizen of the countryand girls anywhere in the country have to enjoy education as a right and not a privilege. The National Policy on Education (2014) stated that education is compulsory and a right of every Nigerian irrespective of gender, social status, religion, colour, ethnic background and any peculiar individual challengeEducating a girl gives her the opportunity to give the right definition to her life and also allow her to contribute meaningfully in the community she lives in. Assessing education helps the girl to develop to her full potential and she is able to play a more fruitful role in her family and her nation. One of the most effective tools made ready to empower females within the family and society is education. Hence, educating girls has multiple benefits for girls and their entire family members.

Education has been defined as a process through which individual acquires skills, competencies, and attitude. It is the right of every child to be educated, be it traditional or western education.Osokoya (2010) stated education as a continuous process which the society establishes to assist its members to understand the heritage of the past and to participate productively in the future. This definition sees the education of every child either boy or girl as the duty of every society, every adult in the traditional African society consciously and effectively worked to educate the younger once in the society, so educating achild was a collective responsibility of the entire members of his or her immediate society.

This definition by Osokoya is very appropriate for this study because it justifies the usefulness of education to every child in the society. Here, education is beingregarded as culture to man, people and the nation of the world at large. This explains why man has to educate himself and his progenies in the society. Theenergy is more unique for the girl child who is seen as a child today but who later becomes a woman and also a mother. Educating the girl means educating the whole family. And what is true of families is also true of communities and ultimately the whole nation (UNICEF, 2004).To educate a girl child means to train her mind, character and abilities, education is a fundamental human right that should be availed to every girl child irrespective of the age and nationality.

The importance of education in the life of a girl child can never be over-emphasised. The greatest favour a girl child can receive is to be educated and enjoy sustainable years of formal schooling. To Stromquist (2000) women with some formal education are more likely to seek medical care, ensure their children are immunized, be better informed about their children's nutritional requirements, and adopt improved sanitation practices. As a result, their infants and children have higher survival rates and tend to be healthier and better nourished. According to The International Centre for Research on Women, the education that a girl receives is the strongest predictor of the age she will marry and is a critical factor in reducing the prevalence of child marriage.

The World Bank education report (2018) stated that 89% of girls complete primary education, but only 77% complete lower secondary education, the document also affirmed that universal secondary education for girls could increase the ability to engage in altruistic behaviours, and their ability to assess institutions and services. It further estimated that an additional year of schooling for 1,000 women helps prevent two maternal deaths.When girls complete secondary education,theyare better positioned to receive increase in lifetime earnings and decrease in fertility and mortality rates.

Nigerian women are presently making advancements in the society, in recent years, three male dominated professions, the Nigerian Medical Association, the Nigerian Bar Association and the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Nigeria, have been led by female presidents. Despite recent educational attainments and drives to engage girls and young women in education, there remain significant impediments to the progress of the girls, this include such as cultural norms that do not recognize the value of girls' education, pregnancy,early marriage and motherhood, security concerns, over long distances especially with the nefarious activities of the herdsmen along paths to school among others.Enjoying education has not been very easy for the girl child in Africa and especially the Nigerian girl in the rural areas.

There is limited available statistics to show the enrolment rate or level of literacy within the ruralareas of Nigeria. However, success can be felt with an increase in the enrolment rate of girls in primary school from over 32% in 1970 to over 86% in 1994. In 1991, the National Commission for Mass Literacy Adult and Non-formal Education (NMEC) was created to end illiteracy in Nigeria. Women and girls are well prioritized in the projects of NMEC. Other policies were also created in the 1990's to project more girls enrolment in education, this include, the Family Support Basic Education Programme which was aimed at increasing access to education for girls living in rural areas.

A number of factors have contributed to the educationally

disadvantaged position that the Nigerian girls have found themselves. Studies have shown the interplay of cultural, personal and family factors which have consistently aided the Nigerian girls' backward position in education (Fapohunda, 2011). Meena (2005) and Kayode-Olawoyin (2016) revealed that parental involvement, place of role models,feminine inclination, socio-cultural values among others have constantly been fixing girls and women's roles in the society.Stromquist(2000) lamented that the girl-child is discriminated against in terms of education and given out to marriage early thereby denying the girl-child the required competences for community development but World bank (2018) revealed that the cost of not educating girls to enjoy the straight twelve years of schooling is colossal, countries lose $15 trillion and $30 trillion dollars in loss of lifetime productivity and earnings.

To address the needs and challenges girls face and promote girls' empowerment and the fulfilment of their human rights, the United Nations in October 2012, declared October 11th as the International Day of the Girl-Child. The day's celebration was with the theme "with her a skilled Girl force", and one of the requirements needed to achieve this theme is education. This is simply because education in any normal society is accepted as an instrument to power, prestige, survival, greatness and advancement for both men and women.

The influence of the UN's Millennium Development Goals set in 2000 for 2015, which explicitly included goals focused on universal primary education and promoting gender equality and the more recent UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that look towards 2030 gave a beautiful direction to girls and women education globally. The 17 SDGs, focused on eradicating poverty, combatting global warming, and ensuring equality and justice, this include specifics such as: ending child marriage, harmful traditional initiation rites, and increasing female political participation.

The National Policy on Gender in Basic Education was launched in 2007, the objectives are to promote equal access and participation in the basic enrolment of girls and boys, achieve high level of retention completion and performance rate, advocate for the support of key stakeholders, enabling environment for planning, implementation and achievement of the goals. To support this policy, the Federal Ministry of Education further designed the National Framework on Girls and Women in Education which was aimed at increasing the quality of education accessible to girls amongst other techniques.

More adolescent girls are completing more years of school than ever and the number of girls out of primary school has been cut in half since the early 2000. This is because policy makers and researchers have constantly turned their attention to the issue of closing the gap especially since the Beijing call for action in 1995. The Millennium Development Goals experience(2000-2015) demonstrated that focusing attention and resources on gender disparities in education and employment, failed to produce the social transformation needed to achieve gender equality. The more recent SDGs goal 5 is also aimed at achieving gender equality and empowering all girls by 2030. The family support basic education aimed at increasing the access of rural girlsto education and alleviating poverty, what about the issue of completion? Does access mean completion? How are the girls fairing in secondary education in the rural areas? Does this mean parity has been achieved in secondary school?

It is therefore necessaryto strengthen data collection efforts in rural areas to better understand the root causes of gender inequality, this is why this study was carried out in Oke-ogun area of Oyo state.Oke-ogun has 10 local governments which are primarily agrarian, the area has also been tagged as the food hub of the state. It is then germane to look into the education work being done in the area as we get set for the achievement of the sustainable development goal 5 globally.

Statement of the problem

Nigeria is a signatory to Education forAll, MillenniumDevelopment Goals, Commonwealth Plan of Action, all these treaties are supposed to ensure equality in education, Nigeria, therefore cannot afford to be seen to lag behind other Nations in giving effect to these very important instruments. The country was unable to meet MDG Goal 3 of gender equality by end of December, 2015.Despite the increased campaigns and formulation of policies to encourage girls' enrolment in schools, research shows that the overall learning process of girls in schools and the completion of girls among secondary school students is not encouraging. There has always been an old and existing rigid belief among people of rural areas of developing and underdeveloped nations that enrolling female children in schools is like wasting one's own precious resources.

Essentially, United Nations, other private institutions and stake holders have made a lot of effort for enlightenment and campaigns in rural areas across Nigeria to make these people see the importance of girl-child education and its contribution to the development of the society. The level of gender disparity of education in education remains obvious. Females still have low access to education, low participation and poor performance in many subjects, many factors which are home (Parents), community and school based, continue to restrict developments in female education.

Schools and Local Government Area	No of Male enrolled in 2014 J.S.S.1	No of Female enrolled in 2014 J.S.S.1	No of Males in 2019	No of Female in 2019

Today, approximately 63 percent of all secondary school aged children are enrolled in secondary education worldwide. Although there are many more girls attending school today than ever before gender equity in secondary school enrollment remains vague. Out of 162 countries, only 56 percent are prepared to graduate equal numbers of boys and girls from the last grade of primary school.It is against thebackground that thisstudy examined the enrolment and completion of secondary school girls in Oke-Ogun area of Oyo state and also tried to specifically

understand factors and challenges affecting girls' enrolment and completion in secondary schools. The study also examined if there has been any improvement in the girls' enrolment and completion in secondary schools in the area.

Research Questions.
The research questions that guided the study to which answers are provided include:

1. Are girls sufficiently enrolled in secondary schools in Oke-ogunarea of Oyo State?
2. What are the main factors affecting girls'secondary education completion in Oke-ogun area of Oyo State?

Methodology
The study adopted a descriptive research design of an ex post facto type in which the researcher did not manipulate any of the variables.The survey research design was adopted for this study. The participants were female studentsfrom five public Secondary Schools in Oke-Ogun area of Oyo State. Five Local government areas were randomly selected from Oke-Ogun. One school was selected in each LGAs, Female students schooling in each of these selected schools were purposefully selected and principals of each schools were all selected for the study.Parents of the school girls who were willing to grant interviews wereinvolved in the study. The schools selected were, Muslim Grammar School Iseyin (IseyinLocal Government), Muslim Grammar School Oje-Owode (Saki East Local Government), Baptist High School Idi-Araba (Saki West), Ipapo Community Grammar school Ipapo (Itesiwaju Local Government), Ansarudeen Society High School Ago-Are(Atisbo Local Government).The instruments used in this research are stamped copies of written data that contained the enrolment of students in each of the selected school, numbers of students both boys and girls were monitored in each level till their final year. Also, oral interviews were conducted with students, parents and school administrators as respondents and their responses were recorded and later coded. Data were analysed using simple percentage

1. Muslim GrammarSchool. Iseyin.	97	115	83	85
2. Ipapo Community Grammar School, Itesiwaju	12	36	30	22
3. Ansarudeen SocietyHigh School, Ago – Are.	40	35	30	24
4. Baptist High School, Saki West.	70	90	68	70
5. Muslim Grammar School, Oje-Owode Saki East	64	53	60	41
Total	**283**	**329**	**271**	**242**
Over all total for the boys and girls.	**612**		**513**	

Table1: shows the Rate of Male and Female students' Enrolment and Completion from 2013/2014 – 2018/2019 Academic session in the five schools of Oke-Ogun in Oyo State.

Summary of table:
Total Enrolment for Boys and Girl = 283 + 329 =612

Total Boys and Girls completion = 271 + 242 = 513

% of Boys enrolment = $283/612 \times {}^{100}/_{1} = 46\%$

% of Girls enrolment = $^{329}/612 \times {}^{100}/_{1} = 54\%$

% of Boys completion = $^{271}/513 \times {}^{100}/_{1} = 53\%$

% of Girls completion = $^{242}/_{513} \times {}^{100}/_{1} = 47\%$

Table 2: showing the Responses on the factors affecting Girls' completion in Secondary Schools inOke-Ogun Area of Oyo State (coded from the interviews).

The summary of the interviews coded in Table 2

	Total Parents Responses	Total Students Responses	Total School Administrators Responses	Total
Financial constraint	5	5	5	**15**
Inability to cope with academic challenges	3	3	5	**11**
Unemployment	4	5	5	**14**
Death	-	1	-	**1**
Pregnancy	5	5	5	**15**
Love for trading	5	5	5	**15**
Low parental interest	-	2	5	**7**
Religious bias	5	-	5	**10**
Expulsion	-	3	3	**6**
Repetition	-	3	4	**7**
Transfer	-	5	5	**10**

A more concise version of Table 3 is found below:

Factors	**Rating**
1. Financial Constraint	15
2. Females' inability to cope with academic challenges	11
3. Unemployment	14
4. Death	1
5. Pregnancy	15
6. Love for trading	15
7. Low/ Lack of parental interest	7
8. Religious bias	10
9. Expulsion	6
10. Repetition	7
11. Transfer	10

Analysis of collected data is so crucial to giving meaning to a particular gathered data in research, as data itself can not spell out the meaning embedded in it, but until it is analysed. The data collected while carrying out this research include the enrolment and completion specification list(s) of each of the five schools visited and the responses from the parents, the female students and the school administrators during the interviews conducted for them. The students' enrolment list for the 2013/14 academic Session and the completion list for the same set, which terminated at 2018/19 academic Session of boys and girls in the schools were analysed using simplepercentage. Moreover, the responses gotten from the interview were coded and the major factors for the incompletion of secondary school girls in particular were identified and rated 1 to 15.

Discussion

The findings presented in table 1 revealed the percentage for the boys' enrolment is 46% while the percentage for the girls' enrolment is 54%. Two major factors that informed this gap: one, girls were found to be more populous in Oke-ogun area. Another reason is that parents have passion for sending their female children to school, making them to be exposed to western education as boys. The individual girl also claimed to have passion for western education.Meanwhile, the percentage for boys' secondary school completion is 53% while the percentage for girls' secondary school completion is 47%. These disparities show that male students from Oke-ogun have higher completion of secondary education than female students.

The major factors militating against female students' completion include financial constraint, pregnancy and love for trading.The factor in prominence is unemployment, even for those that have good educational qualifications. Next down the ladder of prominence is inability to cope with academic challenges. Religious bias and transfer attract the same rating, and so they form the next prominence down the ladder. Low or lack of parental interest in western education and repetition are the next down ladder of prominence. Expulsion is the one next to the least prominent factor, while the least factor contributing to girls' incompletion of secondary education is death for it was only mentioned by a student.

The result has shown that the male students from Oke-ogun though have lower enrolment compared to female students, the boys have higher completion rate. Attrition rate is still very high with secondary school girls of Oke-Ogun. The major reasons for this were identified from the coded responses from the interviews conducted for the parents, female students and the school administrators in each school visited. These findings corroborate Stromquist (2000), Fapohunda (2011),Kayode-Olawoyin (2017)

andWorld Bank(2018)who found in separate studies that factors of poverty and wrong conception of the value of girl-child education are factors accounting for incompletion of secondary education by girl-child.

Conclusion

This study has been able to reveal that secondary school girls in Oke-ogun are well exposed to western education, majority of the girls were even willing to stay unto completion but different challenges have kept them away from completing the secondary education they enrolled for. It was revealed also that the girls performed better than their male counterparts. However, boys are discovered to complete secondary education more than girls. The various contributing factors have also been identified and discussed in this work.

Recommendations

Educating girls at all level will help them to have a voice in the issues that affect them generally, the girls of today shall also become mothers of tomorrow hence, we cannot afford to leave women and girls who represent half of the word population to remain uneducated and underpowered.

It is therefore recommended that, girls should be sensitized to stay in school till completion and boys should ready to work alongside girls to achieve complete their secondary education.

Parents should be more willing to finance their children education and encourage their girls to stay till completion and increase the age they can give out their adolescent in marriage.

Jobs should be provided for secondary school leavers especially those who would want to work before proceeding to higher institution, this will make secondary education more relevant.

Lastly, government needs to continue to fund campaigns to curb cultural practices that constantly limit girls and women's right to sustainable empowerment in Oke-Ogun area of Oyo State. Government should also allocate more fund to cater for girls' education and educational research to improve girls' education and Nigerian education at large.

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