



Problems and Solutions of Girl Child Education in Nigeria

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Girls' education in Nigeria has been marred by various challenges ranging from poverty, cultural barriers, early marriage, poor educational infrastructure, gender discrimination, and insurgent activities. Despite numerous efforts by the government and non-governmental organizations, the girl child still faces several barriers to accessing quality education. This research article reviews the current state of girls' education in Nigeria, identifies the challenges hindering their education, and proposes possible solutions to these problems. The study relied on a thorough review of relevant literature and reports. The findings reveal that the Nigerian government needs to implement policies that promote equal opportunities for girls' education, invest in infrastructure development, and prioritize education in the country's budget allocation. Non-governmental organizations should also partner with government agencies to provide scholarships and support services to girls from impoverished backgrounds. Finally, cultural and traditional practices that discriminate against the girl-child need to be addressed through sensitization campaigns and community-based interventions.

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Abstract

Girls' education in Nigeria has been marred by various challenges ranging from poverty, cultural barriers, early marriage, poor educational infrastructure, gender discrimination, and insurgent activities. Despite numerous efforts by the government and non-governmental organizations, the girl child still faces several barriers to accessing quality education. This research article reviews the current state of girls' education in Nigeria, identifies the challenges hindering their education, and proposes possible solutions to these problems. The study relied on a thorough review of relevant literature and reports. The findings reveal that the Nigerian government needs to implement policies that promote equal opportunities for girls' education, invest in infrastructure development, and prioritize education in the country's budget allocation. Non-governmental organizations should also partner with government agencies to provide scholarships and support services to girls from impoverished backgrounds. Finally, cultural and traditional practices that discriminate against the girl-child need to be addressed through sensitization campaigns and community-based interventions.



I. Introduction

Education is one of the fundamental human rights recognized by the United Nations, which means, education is a right that every child should have access to, irrespective of gender. However, in many parts of the world, including Nigeria. Nigeria is the most populous country in Africa with a population of over 200 million people. The country is rich in cultural diversity and has over 250 ethnic groups. Despite the cultural and linguistic diversity, the country is united in the pursuit of education. Education is highly valued in Nigeria, and there is a widespread belief that it is the key to success. However, despite the efforts made by the Nigerian government to promote education for all, there are still significant gaps in the education of girls in Nigeria. In Nigeria, girls' education has been characterized by various challenges, including poverty, early marriage, gender discrimination, lack of adequate educational infrastructure, and insurgent activities. These challenges have contributed to low enrolment and high dropout rates among girls. The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) estimates that over 10 million children are out of school in Nigeria, with girls accounting for more than half of the figure (UNESCO, 2018). The aim of this study is to review the challenges facing girls' education in Nigeria and provide possible solutions.

II. Problems of Girl Child Education in Nigeria

Despite the efforts of the Nigerian government to promote education for all, the education of girls in Nigeria still faces several challenges. Some of the problems of girl child education in Nigeria are:

Poverty: Poverty is one of the major challenges hindering girls' education in Nigeria. Poverty has made it difficult for many families to afford basic necessities such as school uniforms, textbooks, and tuition fees. In many cases, families prefer to send their male children to school instead of their female counterparts. This preference is due to the belief that investing in boys' education will yield better returns, as they are likely to support the family financially in the future. In relation to this, many families cannot afford to send their daughters to school, and girls are often seen as a financial burden. This has resulted in many girls being forced to drop out of school



to work and contribute to the family income. Poverty, therefore, has been one of the major obstacles to girls' education in Nigeria.

Early marriage: Early Marriage: Early marriage is another significant challenge facing girls' education in Nigeria. Early marriage is prevalent in Nigeria, and many girls are forced into marriage before they reach the age of 18. This often leads to girls dropping out of school to become wives and mothers, which results in them missing out on the opportunity to complete their education. According to the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), Nigeria has the highest number of child brides in Africa, with 44% of girls married off before the age of 18 (UNICEF, 2020). Early marriage deprives girls of their right to education, as they are often expected to assume domestic responsibilities and bear children instead of attending school.

Gender-based violence: Gender-based violence is a significant problem in Nigeria, and it has a direct impact on the education of girls. Girls who experience gender-based violence are often too traumatized to attend school, and they may drop out altogether.

Gender Discrimination: Gender discrimination is also a significant challenge facing girls' education in Nigeria. Some cultural and traditional practices discriminate against girls, limiting their access to education. For instance, in some communities, girls are not allowed to attend school during their menstrual cycle and are also expected to stay at home to perform domestic chores.

Lack of access to education: In some parts of Nigeria, there is a lack of access to education for girls. Schools are often far from their homes, and transportation is expensive. Additionally, many schools lack basic amenities such as toilets and clean water, which makes it difficult for girls to attend school.

Cultural barriers: Some cultural beliefs and practices in Nigeria discourage girls from attending school. For example, in some parts of Nigeria, girls are expected to stay at home and take care of the household, while boys are sent to school.

Poor Educational Infrastructure: Poor educational infrastructure is another significant challenge hindering girls' education in Nigeria. Many schools lack basic amenities such as adequate classrooms, electricity, water supply, and toilets. In



some cases, schools are located far from the communities, making it difficult for girls to attend school.

Insurgent Activities: Insurgent activities such as terrorism and banditry have also affected girls' education in Nigeria. The activities of Boko Haram, a terrorist group that is opposed to Western education, have led to the closure of several schools in the North-East region of the country. The group has also abducted hundreds of schoolgirls, with some of them still in captivity.

III. Solutions to Girls' Education in Nigeria

Nigeria has made significant progress in increasing access to education for girls in recent years, but there are still many challenges that need to be addressed to ensure that all girls in Nigeria have equal access to quality education. Here are some potential solutions to improve girls' education in Nigeria:

Increase access to education: The Nigerian government needs to invest more resources into expanding access to education for girls. This could involve building more schools, providing transportation to and from school, and offering scholarships to girls who would otherwise not be able to afford to attend school.

Eliminate gender-based violence: Gender-based violence, including sexual harassment and assault, can discourage girls from attending school. The Nigerian government needs to take steps to eliminate gender-based violence and provide support and protection to girls who are victims of violence.

Improve the quality of education: Improving the quality of education in Nigeria is critical to ensuring that girls receive a good education. This could involve training teachers to teach effectively, providing resources such as textbooks and technology, and improving school infrastructure.

Increase awareness and advocacy: Raising awareness about the importance of girls' education and advocating for policies and programs that support girls' education is critical to increasing access to education for girls in Nigeria. This could involve working with local community leaders, religious leaders, and parents to change attitudes about girls' education.



Engage parents and communities: Engaging parents and communities in girls' education is crucial to ensuring that girls have support and encouragement to attend and complete school. This could involve holding community meetings and workshops, partnering with local organizations, and involving parents in school activities.

Provide mentoring and role models: Providing mentoring and role models to girls can help to inspire and motivate them to pursue their education. This could involve pairing girls with successful female professionals or older female students who can provide guidance and support.

IV. Conclusion

The problems of girl child education in Nigeria are complex and multifaceted. Poverty, early marriage, gender-based violence, lack of access to education, and cultural barriers are some of the factors that contribute to these challenges. Addressing these issues will require a coordinated effort from the Nigerian government, civil society organizations, and the international community. It is only by working together that we can ensure that every girl in Nigeria has access to quality education and the opportunity to achieve her full potential. Overall, improving girls' education in Nigeria requires a comprehensive approach that addresses the multiple barriers that prevent girls from attending and completing school. By investing in girls' education, Nigeria can improve the lives of individual girls and women and also contribute to the development of the country as a whole.



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About the Author

Usman Al-amin, Ph.D. is a lecturer in the Department of History, University of Maiduguri, Nigeria. He received his B.A. and M.A. in social and intellectual history from the University of Maiduguri. Dr. Al-amin bagged his Ph.D. from the Centre for the Study of Manuscript Cultures, University of Hamburg. A specialist in the documentation and history of Arabic Literature, Sufi traditions, and Islamic manuscript cultures, his main fields of research include Islamic history, Sufism, and book history of Islamic manuscript cultures dealing with content, thematic, codicological, and paleographical analysis in the context of Nigerian social and intellectual history, in particular, the formative period up to the 20th century, and the historiography of Islamic sects in modern and contemporary Nigeria. He has collaborated on several international projects about Islamic manuscripts and recently carried out a research project on one of the Tarjamo Kanembu Qur'anic manuscripts attributed to the seventeenth-century Bornoan scholar Goni Musa. Dr. Al-amin's current research project focuses on the digitization of Islamic manuscripts and books across the Yobe/Borno axis in Nigeria. He has published extensively in journals and presented many academic papers in local and international conferences. In addition, he has been invited to research, write papers, and make presentations for several government functions and civil society fora.