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**Influence of Parents' Educational Background on Girl-Child Education in Kebbi State, Nigeria****By****Danjuma, Mairo (Ph.D)**

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**ABSTRACT**

*The study examined the influence of parents' educational background on girl-child education. Descriptive survey research design was employed. The population of 38,595 female students was derived from the 82 secondary schools in which girls are enrolled. A sample of 450 students was drawn using stratified sampling technique, proportionately and 39 stakeholders were drawn using purposive sampling procedure, while a sample of 78 parents was drawn using quota sampling. The quantitative instrument used was a questionnaire for students on the Influence of Parents Educational Background on Girl-child Education (IPEBGCE). The qualitative instruments used were Focus Group Discussions (FGD's) guide for students and In-Depth Interviews (IDI's) protocol for parents. All the instruments were validated by experts. A test re-test method was used where reliability index of 0.69 was realized. Expert scrutiny from the perspective of both academic and field practice enhanced the reliability of the qualitative instruments. With the use of the research question and research hypothesis data were collected through personal visit. The quantitative data was analyzed using t-test and the alpha level of significance used was 0.05. Content analysis was used to analyze data obtained from the FGDs and IDIs. The study found out that differences exist between educated and non-educated parents influence on girl-child education. The study recommends among others that there is a need for efficient adult literacy programmes which should be targeted towards influencing parents' educational background to improve girl-child enrolment, retention and participation in education in Kebbi State.*

**INTRODUCTION**

Parents' educational background is supposed to play a significant role in determining the extent to which educational achievement and aspirations are realized. Various studies have indicated how parent's perception on the need for girl-child education affects enrollment and retention rates of girls in schools. As stated by Khan, Iqbal and Tasneem (2015), education of a child needs multi-dimensional efforts: students, teachers, institute and parents all have their importance in their process of learning. Parents' education is such a crucial factor for a child for his/her future. It has been shown that the children of educated parents are more confident, resourceful and experienced than the children whose parents are with no formal education. These statements are supported by Board (n,d), educational attainment of the parents

determine their understanding about parenthood and child care. Students with highly educated parents have optimistic attitude towards learning and can integrate extra learning strategies compared to children of parents with lower level of education. Parents with higher levels of education are also more likely to believe strongly in their abilities to help their children learn. Therefore, a positive correlation exists between parental behaviours and children's school performance.

Research shows that the literacy of parents strongly affects the education of their children. One of the reasons why parental education strongly affects their children's education is because "parents who have gone beyond a high school education are found to be more involved with their infants and children than those who did not finish high school (Okenwa,

2014). Adding that, there was no correlation between parental education attainment and students' academic performance. The study was done in secondary school level. This implied therefore that, parental educational attainment has no effect on academic performance of secondary students. Most of the researchers who found a strong correlation between the two variables did their research in the lower level (primary schools) where parents' level of education could influence students' academic performance.

According to Kainuwa & Yusuf (2013) there exists a difference between children of educated parents and students with parents having completed only primary school or not. They further stated that for fathers with university degree, their children perform considerably well and get the highest score in examination. It is important to note that many studies done have indicated that the education of parents greatly affect the achievement of their children. It has been found out that parents who are educated do influence their children positively while the uneducated parents have a negative influence. In regard to this children of educated parents do post high scores in school as compared to children of uneducated parents. It's therefore clear that the level of education of parents is very instrumental in determining the academic achievement of their children. The education that children receive is very much dependent on the education that their parents received when they were children. King and Hill (1993) observed that several indicators including measures of literacy, enrolment and years in school reveal important patterns and trends in women's education in developing countries.

Maduwesi (2000) in Mohammad (2004) observed that certain socio-cultural and religious considerations have put some special groups (adult illiterates, the girl-child inclusive) at disadvantages with regards to participation in formal education. Mohammad (2004) stated that parents have an obligation to ensure that children under their care avail themselves the opportunities to go to school. According to Osofia (2006), the education of the girl-

child refers to the skills and competences acquired by a girl-child to adapt into society positively so as to achieve an all-inclusive development: socio-economic, political and cultural. The family socio-economic and cultural status determines largely the education life chances of the child. Thus, parents' negative or positive attitude to education has enormous effect or influence on the education of the child (Mahuta, 2007). Offorma (2009) was of view that, in rural areas, social and cultural patterns combined with relatively poor quality schooling, place girl's education and development at a disadvantaged and vulnerable position. Tsauri (2010) stated that in the far North, some parents isolate many girls from being enrolled in school and those that are allowed were removed after primary school or the junior secondary education. Osaat and Temaagalo (2011) maintained that for even and overall development to occur, it is very important for the populace to have access to a right-based education that is rooted in gender equality. The United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 2013) observed that, in the lower secondary school, there are 34 million female adolescents out of school, while on literacy two thirds of the 774 million illiterate people in the world are female.

Although girl-child education (GCE) programmes started and gained acceptance in Kebbi State specifically with the inception of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in 2005, the State Ministry of Education is faced with the challenges of ensuring that girls are enrolled and retained in schools till completion. In the 2011/2012 academic session, male enrolment was 79,994 (66%) while that of females was 41,423 (34%) in the 127 secondary schools under the Secondary Schools Management Board (SSMB, 2012). In the 2013/2014 academic session, there were 143,623 (67%) males while that of females was rated 70,641 (33%) in the 160 secondary schools under the Secondary Schools Management Board (SSMB 2013). This trend shows a difference among boys' and girls' enrolment in education and which warranted for a study in factors that influence the gap.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Kebbi State is among the north eastern States where less number of girls are enrolled, retained and successfully graduated from secondary schools. Adebesan (2007) in Adeola and Adefunke (2010) revealed that 33.7% of females had no form of education in north eastern States of Nigeria (Borno, Yola, Adamawa, Bauchi) in the north western States (Kano, Kebbi, Sokoto, Jigawa, etc) adding that 87.8% of females had no formal education although the case is slightly better in the southern States. Parents' educational background plays an enormous influence on the education of their children and most importantly in girl's access and participation in education in most societies. The State Ministry of Education in Kebbi State is less bordered about girls terminating school or being withdrawn at the stated terminal points of primary six and junior secondary school three. This has led to a marginal difference of boys and girls enrolment in to junior secondary school one (JSS1) and senior secondary school one (SSS1) across the State. The study examined the influence of parents' educational background on girl-child education.

The study is meant to encourage positively parents with such perceptions that are relatively socially and culturally inclined towards improving girl-child education. This is because gender inequality in education can be said to have contributed significantly to the seemingly slow pace in development issues as women constitute half the population in Nigeria. The study will through the government of Kebbi State, State Ministry of Education, culturally inclined leaders and religious leaders serve as yard stick in tackling educational problems of the girl-child especially in Kebbi State.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The study embraced the conflict theory which helps sociologists to view society through the eyes of those segments of the population that rarely influence decision making. From a conflict perspective, the inhibiting effects of education are particularly

apparent in the hidden curriculum and the differential way in which status are bestowed. The perspective is found suitable for the study as parents' educational status and the tendencies surrounding the girl-child influence her education and achievements in life.

### **Objective of the Study**

The objective of the study is to determine:

The differences between educated and non-educated parents influence on girl-child enrolment in education

### **Research Question**

The research question is:

Is there any difference on how educated and non-educated parents' influence girl-child enrolment in education?

### **Research Hypothesis**

The research hypothesis is:

There is no significant difference on how educated and non-educated parents' influence girl-child enrolment.

## **METHODOLOGY**

A survey research design was employed for the study. The population of the study exists in four categories: schools, students, parents and other stakeholders (village/district heads, schools administrators/head teachers and religious leaders/clerics). The 82 schools where girls are enrolled had a population of 38,267 female students. The target population of parents was derived from the population of the girls. The target population of the stake holders was derived from the population of schools under study. The choice of parents cut across educated and non-educated parents. The choice of other stakeholders became necessary because they are believed to be custodians of culture, religion and schools. The schools were arranged according to the three senatorial districts and using stratified sampling method 13 schools were drawn. A sample of 450 female students was drawn proportionately. Quota sampling method was used in selecting the sample of 78 parents. Using purposive sampling 39 stakeholders were selected. The instruments used were a questionnaire on the Influence of Parent's

Educational Background on Girl-child Education (IPEBGCE). The questionnaire contained three segments: Part A dealt with biographic data, B and C dealt with questions on socio-cultural issues. The responses of students with the YES options were scored two points while those with a NO option were scored one point. A focus group discussions schedule for students and an in-depth interview schedule for parents were used. The 24 item questionnaire was validated by experts and the reliability was determined using a test-re-test, the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient process was used to arrive at an index of 0.67. The validity of the

qualitative instruments was determined through the use of multiple instruments while the instruments administration on a wide range of respondents both for academic purposes and on the field enhanced reliability. Data were collected through personal visits. Using t-test and content analyzes data were analyzed.

### **Qualitative presentations**

**Research Question:** Is there any difference on how educated and non-educated parents' influence girl-child enrolment in education?

**Table 2:** Distribution of IDI Respondents by Educational Status

Status	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Formal education	48	42
No formal education	66	58
Total	114	100

Source: Fieldwork 2012

Table 2 shows the distribution of educated or non-educated parents. There are 48 educated respondents representing 42% and 66 non-educated respondents representing 58%.

### **FINDINGS**

The varied challenges faced on girl-child education are multi-faceted. Parents' responses on their influence on girl-child enrolment in education were derived among non-educated and educated parents alike. Although some respondents see girl-child enrolment as independent of the factors enumerated by the parents (community interference, fear of immorality, inadequate sensitization and inadequate role models), these factors affect the influence of non-educated parents and contribute to parents' reluctance in enrolling girls in school.

#### **Community interference**

Parents who send their girls to school and refuse to withdraw them when mature are often

disregarded and seen to contribute to their girls becoming immoral in the community. The participants observed, friends of their parents at the '*majalisa*' negatively discuss issues relating to the girls and their education. The girls complained of being harassed on the routes leading to school by youths, their friends (boys and girls) who do not attend school accompanied by deformation of character anytime a suitor comes to seek for their hands in marriage. These have made many parents not to enroll girls and allow them complete their secondary education. This the parents do so as to maintain their status quo in their respective communities. A respondent (District Head) at Kambaza (Kebbi Central) maintained that "the locality is one of the major reasons girls education lag behind adding that adult education programmes are no longer in practice and even if they are women hardly participate". It was added by another respondent that:

The presence of too many uneducated parents contributes to poor enrolment of girls in school especially where they prefer to marry girls out to prospective suitors. This is not far also from the ancient and cultural beliefs and because there were no schools during their own times. Being it a rural area makes girl-child education and its relevance difficult to understand. The educated ones are not resident in Kambaza, therefore they are not there to support the educational system. However during immunization exercise and whenever women are needed for house to house immunization, the services of females are sought from places like Aliero and Gwandu (Adult, Male, Rural, 60 Years)

The respondents observed that most students who are enrolled and finish school or further to higher institutions are from educated homes. Educated parents' positive influences exceed all forms of

interferences that occur in their respective communities. A respondent in Tondi (Kebbi South) who was a civil servant but now a politician was of the opinion that:

Every member of the community is entitled to his or her opinion. In this regard one has the right to treat a child as he or she pleases and so with or without community interference, early marriage and girl-child education are issues of choice or personal decisions and not necessarily what the community thinks. There are more educated people than used to be so it is believed girl-child enrolment is on the increase (Adult, Male, Rural 55 Years)

### ***Fear of Immorality***

Parents in virtually all the communities studied, expressed the fear of their girls becoming immoral (engaging in pre-marital sex, illicit relationships and unwanted pregnancies) while most students support the parents and in some instances think that parents need to trust their actions whether at home or in

school. Moreover, some of the students revealed that friends could be of a very bad influence while in school. Some of the respondents indicated that fear of immorality is a serious problem confronting girl-child education in their respective communities. Thus, a respondent at Tugan Nufe (Kebbi Central) observed:

When girls are enrolled in schools that are outside the community, it is believed they are gallivanting about with their peers. This is why parents are encouraged by their own friends to deny girls access to school. Both male students and teachers do show interest in the girls, although no cases of rape have been recorded in the school in this community. (Adult, Male Rural, Farmer, 45 Years)

The respondents are of the opinion that one of the factors which stop parents from sending girls to school despite the need to do so is the fear of unwanted comments from the people living around

them. The female students are also of the opinion that parents express fear in their girls engaging in acts that will tarnish the image of their families. Although a 16 year old SSS I participant in Tondi (Kebbi South)

was of the opinion that their *parents need to accord them a benefit of doubt, as not all of them engage in acts which are deterrent to the moral teachings embedded in their communities.* The FGD participants were of the view that friends could be of bad influence to one's character both inside and

outside school which was why some parents deny them access to school. As a result, as soon as parents become suspicious of a girl's character, the next action is to withdraw her from school and marry her out. Elaborately, a 17 year old SSS III student from Tondi (Kebbi South) highlighted thus:

Apart from lack of awareness on the importance of girl-child education, some parents fear that their girls will engage in immoral acts. Some parents think that children who go to school, especially to the higher institutions, go there and engage in pre-marital sex or associate with bad peers. It is true that sometimes bad friends influence each other's characters and parents fear such instances. One thing parents fail to understand is that, engaging in such acts depends on one's interest and willingness. Friends can obviously be of bad influence but one can withstand their pressure.

In addition, parents observed that people living in rural communities believe that when a girl is educated she becomes disrespectful, hard to control and can tarnish the image of her parents. This is

because it is assumed she has been exposed to the world and has no shame in whatever she does. While the girls think and as observed by a 16 year old SSS II student in Felande (Kebbi North) that:

No matter our circumstances as girls who attend school, we stand better chances of being morally sound than those girls who do not attend school and those who have become worst after being withdrawn from school by their parents, for the fear of their girls indulging in pre-marital sex, getting pregnant and so on.

### ***Inadequate Sensitization***

Most parents observed that lack of sufficient sensitization, awareness and or sensitivity are one of the most disturbing factors that affect girl-child education. They observed that to salvage girl-child education government should embark on sensitization

campaigns, indicating that the radio has so far served as the only means through which people are informed about girl-child education. A respondent in Kimo (Kebbi South) observes why the lag in girl-child education:

As far as girl-child education is concerned, the people are still conservative and accord no relevance to it. People fail to realize that religion does not discourage seeking for knowledge of both boys and girls. Lack of enlightenment on the value of education, government support and above all lack of fully practiced adult education programmes are seen among the reasons why girls lag behind in education (Adult, Male, Retired Educationist, Rural, 65 Years)

From the students' perspective is the idea of getting married. This reflects in their level of awareness and upbringing. The group of participants in Tondi (Kebbi South) unanimously agreed that 'we

*think of getting married as a future ambition than we think of being functionally educated.* The respondents pointed out the desire of the girls to get married even while at the verge of particular level/class and which the parents often accepted without any reservations.

This indicates to an extent parent's laxity in dealing with issues affecting young girls and their education.

### ***Inadequate Role Models***

There were not more than one to two role models in each of the study areas who are resident or non-resident (teachers or health workers) in the 13 communities. The following table shows the distribution of teachers across the schools.

**Table 3:** Distribution of Teachers per Studied Schools/Communities

Community	Teachers	Males	Females	M%	F%
Kimo	13	12	1	6	5.5
Gebbe	11	11	-	5.5	-
Felande	25	19	6	9.5	3.3
Zamare	21	20	1	10	5.5
Tondi	15	11	4	5.5	2.2
Bayawa	29	26	3	13	16.6
K/Jantullu	15	15	-	7.5	-
K/Sani	13	13	-	6.5	-
Lailaba	20	19	1	9.5	5.5
Besse	19	18	1	9	5.5
TunganNufe	13	13	-	6.5	-
Jandutsi	11	10	1	5	5.5
Kambaza	10	10	-	5	-
Total	211	199	18	100	100

Source: Fieldwork 2012

There are 211 teachers across the schools; Bayawa has the highest with 26 male and 3 female teachers representing 13% and 16.6% respectively. Kimo has 12 male and one female teachers representing 6% and 5.5%. Gebbe has 11 male teachers representing 5.5% with no female teacher. Felande has 19 male and six female teachers representing 9.5% and 3.3%. Zamare has 20 male and one female teachers representing 10% and 5.5%. Tondo has 11 male and 4 female teachers representing 5.5% and 2.2%. Kare Jantullu has 15 male teachers representing 7.5% with no female. Kaurar Sani has 13 males representing 6.5% and no female while Lailaba has 19 male and one female teachers representing 9.5% and 5.5%. Tungan Nufe has 13 teachers with no female teachers representing 6.5%. Besse has 18 males with one female teacher representing 9% and 5.5%. Jandutsi has 10 males and one female teachers representing 5% and 5.5%

while in Kambaza there were 10 teachers with not a single female teacher representing 5%. However, of the 18 female teachers only two (2) are resident in two of the communities under study while the remaining 16 are resident in nearby urban areas.

In the thirteen (13) schools and communities studied the role models who are basically teachers and health workers are said to come from the city or neighboring communities. Most parents find it hard to allow girls to complete secondary school education or even further to higher institutions of learning as not many people around them practice such. This is not because parents do not appreciate the very few role models they see around; *in fact many would wish their daughters to become doctors and nurses*. Most schools claimed that not a single female teacher had ever been posted to the schools and in Gebbe (Kebbi South) for instance, the school administrator pointed out that *not even female Corp members (NYSC) had*

ever been posted to that school since thirty two years of inception. This he added could be as a result of the difficult route (on shore) to the Gebbe community.

The seemingly persisting inadequate role models nonetheless, influence the girls to think that may be women do not exceed secondary education. The in-depth interview (IDI) respondents are of the opinion that lack of adequate female role models in

the various communities could be seen as one of the major reasons the education of the girl-child is not taken seriously in rural areas. Some respondents claimed never to have seen a female role model and the experience remains the same among the participants stating that educated and working class women are found only in the cities. A respondent in Kambaza (Kebbi Central) observed:

No girl has ever graduated from school here nor is there anyone who is resident or a working class. The models found are the “*unguwan zoma's*” (local midwives) who help with home delivery/child birth. These women are usually elderly. So the girls see local midwifery as a job for the elderly and which does not require any formal training (Adult, Male, Businessman, Rural, 47 Years)

An FGD participant in Gebbe observed the contributions made by the two role models she knows around her community. One of them is a primary school teacher in Shabanda a neighboring community and the other one is a health worker in Gebbe (the community the girl is resident). The respondents

maintained that it is obvious there is the need for female teachers and nurses in the various communities because a woman's problem is best understood by a fellow woman. A respondent in Kaurar Sani (Kebbi North) stated:

We cite as an example to the girls and their parents the help rendered to the people of this community by a female nurse, who is an indigene of this community but is resident and works in one of the government hospitals in the city. This has served as an encouragement to the female students and parents on the need for girl-child education. I have a great feeling that parents will allow their girls further especially as there is a role model whom they could emulate. (Adult, Male, school Administrator, Rural, 45 Years)

The issue of female role models is relevant to the rural populace and most especially as the issue of girl-child education is involved. More so, in most rural communities and as this study has shown actions

tend to speak louder than words. Many respondents who intend to enroll their girls in school will have a sense of belonging when there are a lot of people to emulate around them. Thus, a respondent in Kambaza (Kebbi Central) stated:

There are two women who are indigenes of this community that are resident in Jega and Sokoto and are working as health personnels. There are three female teachers at the primary school that are resident and indigenes of Kambaza. This helps complement parents influence on girl-child education (Adult, Male, Civil Servant, Rural, 45Years)

### **Quantitative Analysis**

**HO<sub>1</sub>** There is no significant difference on how educated and non-educated parents influence girl-child enrolment



Using t-test analysis the table presented below was produced based on the educational status of parents

as educated and non-educated using their attendance at formal schools.

**Table 1:** T-test Result of Significant Influence of Educated and non- Educated Parents on Girl-Child Enrolment

Educational Status	N	Mean	Std Deviation	df	t-cal	P- value	Remark
Non educated parents	122	34.13	3.392	445	-2.122	0.009	Rejected
Educated parents	325	34.86	2.684				

Significance level 0.05

Table 1 indicated that non-educated parents had a mean score of 34.13 and an SD of 3.39 while educated parents had a mean score of 34.86 and an SD of 2.684. The p value is 0.009 and which is less than the alpha level of 0.05. This implies that, there is a significant difference on how educated and non-educated parents influence girl-child enrolment in education. The H0 is therefore rejected.

**DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

The research question indicated that there is a significant difference on how educated and non-educated parents influence girl-child enrolment in education. In UNESCO (2003) the qualitative findings revealed that there are not too many educated people. The study reveals that there are many non-educated people in the rural areas. In that regards it reveals that the negative influence of parents to the education of the girl-child was dependant on the present situation and locality (cultural setting) in which the girl-child finds herself. This coincides with Haralambos and Holborn (2007) assertions that to a large extent culture determines how members of society think and feel. It directs their action and defines their outlook on life. King and Hill (1993) observed that, several indicators including measures of literacy, enrolment and years in school reveal important patterns and trends in women’s education in developing countries. Also, Khan, Iqbal and Tasneem (2015), observed that, parents’ education is such a crucial factor for a child for his/her future. It

has been shown that the children of educated parents are more confident, resourceful and experienced than the children whose parents are with no formal education.

This study revealed that non educated parents are influenced by community interference, fear of immorality, inadequate role models and inadequate sensitization. These are among the reasons parents do not enroll girls in school and when enrolled the girls are not retained till completion. Kessler (1985) in Yusuf (2006) stated that parent’s economic status, educational level or awareness, interest and methods of encouragement determine largely the rate at which a female child acquires education and her aspiration to further her education. Some families where parents are educated always tend to favour the participation of women in their educational pursuit. It also coincides with Tsauri (2010) assertions that in the far North, some parents isolate many girls from being enrolled in school and those that are allowed were removed after primary school or junior secondary education. Hari (2012) stated that low enrolment and dropout is as a result of the negative attitude of parents towards the education of girls... traditional views of women’s ideal gender roles and the perceptions of their abilities have a negative effect on parent’s attitudes towards educating the girls.

**CONCLUSION**

Improving enrolment, participation and retention rate of the girl-child in education in Kebbi State

requires the contributions of not just parents but educationists' in tackling the socio-cultural issues that influence parents' decisions as it relates to parents educational status especially. The factors found to be of influence to girl-child education are community interference, fear of immorality, inadequate sensitization and inadequate role models which emanate from parents educational status. This influenced individual or household differences which either discouraged or encouraged enrolment, participation and retention rates of young girls in school.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The study recommends that parent's educational status could be enhanced through adult literacy programmes to be conducted by the Ministries of Education and through educationally oriented agencies, Non-Governmental Organizations, religious institutions (mosques, churches).
2. Constant awareness, chats and sensitization visits to rural areas (with women and girls being fully involved) could enhance girl-child education.
3. The stakeholders in charge of staff posting should bear it in mind that more women are needed to serve as role models in the rural communities not just in the hospitals or classrooms, but all aspects of life as this will help widen parents' horizon on the urgent need for girl-child enrolment in education in our respective communities.

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