

**SOCIO-CULTURAL FACTORS ON THE GIRL-CHILD EDUCATION IN
SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN IHIALA LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF ANAMBRA
STATE, NIGERIA.**

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ABSTRACT: *This research examines the effect of socio-cultural factors on the Girl-Child education in secondary schools in Ihiala Local Government Area of Anambra State. It is a survey study. The research also took note of some key factors, which among other things; include the great attitude of parents towards girl-child education effect of early marriage. Influence of the family background and size and the socio-economic situation in the community. The findings showed that almost all the above mentioned factors are responsible for limited access of the girl-child education. To limit or reduce the effect of the factors, therefore, the researcher recommends and suggests more awareness campaign, not only for girls but also for parents to take seriously the education of their girl-child. Just as they do for their boy-child. The researcher also suggests ways for improving on girl-child in Ihiala community and all other communities that share similar cultural and socio-economic similarities with Ihiala community.*

KEYWORDS: Socio-Cultural Factors Girl-Child Education, Ihiala Local Government Area,

INTRODUCTION

The blueprint on women education (1998) stated that “The belief persist that the place of a woman is in the home. Sons are sent to school while daughters are made to remain at home to help their mothers with house-hold chores and even in business”.

The traditional education of the people as will see later in this study prepares the girl-child for early marriage. The girl-child also through some harmful traditional practices such as Female Genital Mutilation (F.G.M) according to World Health Organization (WHO), two million girls go through this practice every year. The reason advanced for this in human treatment is that it is carried out in order to preserve a girl’s virginity and ensure her marriage ability which consequently endangers her physical and emotional health throughout her life. In some cases, these few privileged girls in school become pregnant as a result of absent at that time. When this happens, parents, parents regret ever sending their girl-child to school. Increasing however things are changing because of the advent of mass media and it’s pervading influence and consequently because of the change in attitude of our people.

When primary schools were established in Nigeria there were very few girls- enrollments because of culture reasons, which we are going to find out in this study. Boys therefore, naturally dominated the population of the schools. Only a few parents who did not want to conform to the culture dictates sent their girl-child to school after keeping aside the cultural dictates of the people. But what has culture got to do with sending girl-child to school. Culture is the way of life of a people; it is the traditions, the customs and the behaviour and routine that serves as a guide for daily living of a people. Educating the girl-child therefore means training her to be acceptable to the defined culture of the people. Ihiala is one of the local governments in Anambra State. As we proceed in this study, we will discover how the culture of the people hindered the general education of the young girls in the local government area.

Research Questions: Cultural practice hinders women education in my community?

1. Traditional role of women as wife and mother prevents them from acquiring formal education?

Research Question 1: Cultural practice hinders women education in my community?

Table 1: Responses on how Cultural practice hinders women Education.

S/No	RESPONDENTS	A	%	D	%
1	Illiterate	20	40	30	60
2	Literate	160	84.2	30	15.7
	Total	180	75	60	25

From table 1 above, it is clear that family size is a hindrance to girl-child education for both literate and illiterate family.

2. **Research Question 2:** Traditional role of women as wife and mother prevents them from acquiring formal education?

Table 2: Responses on how Traditional role of women as wife prevent formal Education

S/No	RESPONDENTS	A	%	D	%
1	Illiterate	49	18	1	2
2	Literate	0	0	190	100
	Total	49	20.4	191	79.5

Table 2 above states that almost all the illiterate respondents (49 out of 50) agreed that cultural value is a hindrance to girl-child education. But all the literate respondents (190) are of the view that cultural values are not a hindrance to girl-child education

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

It was also found that cultural and traditional beliefs have a significant effect on the education of their girl child because they say that the girl-child will marry out of her father's house to her husband's house and will not continue to bear her father's name. They did not see their female education as profitable and therefore did not encourage them to go to school before marriage.

It was also discovered that there are other factors that also militate against the education of girl-child. These includes unwanted pregnancy, socio-economic factors like finance are large families

and breeding of many children. From the results, we can also conclude that modernization is creeping into the culture attitude and as the global culture takes firm control of the lives of the youths, the culture of the people will gradual become un-influential.

CONCLUSION

Finding from the respondents however, show that the child is gradually changing because of modernization, which has introduced global culture for parents and their children. Parents are less rigid about not sending their girl-child to school, thus relaxing culture values. In spite of modernization, the culture of the people still believes that the place of the girl-child is in the home front, specifically to help in domestic chores. . This is bad, but increasingly, the girl gets motivation from other girls who reside in urban areas and come home for holidays with their parents. Apart from that, the mass media has helped the people because of the exposure to what happens in other parts of the country where girls are seen in colleges and universities. The girl-child though still assists parents in the home front, but they also take their studies seriously and prove that the boys are not superior to them in academic. Some girls come tops in their classes even from primary school to the universities. In JAMB and other public examinations, girls face just like their male counterparts.

The result of the finding shows that culturally, the people of Ihiala community still believe that girls are not as intelligent as boys. But the situation has greatly changed from what it used to be as women now hold positions of authority in society because their high academic achievement.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Scholarship should be awarded more to female students, particular those from poor families. Parents should be encouraged not to abandon teenage girls who become pregnant while in school and allow them to return to school after childbirth. This is to educate parents on the need to send the girl-child to school and to educate them also of the problems of large families, especially in this time and age where monogamy is practiced worldwide. With the global culture, crime prostitution and peer group influences make teenage girls not to take their academic seriously and except families have fewer children, parental control over their children becomes a major problem.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This study was limited to three towns in Ihiala Local Government Area of Anambra State. The major reason to conduct this research in only three towns in Ihiala was due to time and financial constraints which were not enough to cover all the towns and villages in the local government.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDIES

Due to the inclusive character of research, we will suggest that students look up to bringing more researches on this topic. Particularly we are suggesting that more researches should focus on:

- Educationists should encourage more research into gender study particularly on women education.
- Research into the performance of adult education centres in the local government area may become necessary.
- It may also be necessary to give grant to students who are interested in post-graduate studies in gender or in specialized areas of result education.

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