

EFFECTS OF SOCIO-CULTURAL FACTORS ON GIRL-CHILD EDUCATION IN NORTHERN NIGERIA: AN EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS

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Abstract

This study examined the social and cultural factors that impact the educational experiences of women in Northern Nigeria. Recent declarations and resolutions have heightened the focus on promoting greater female involvement in education. The region is experiencing a significant decrease in the quality of education, along with difficulties in getting girls to enrol, stay in school, and successfully complete senior secondary education. The main aim of the study was to assess the socio-cultural elements that impact the education of girls in Northern Nigeria. The functionalist theory was utilized as the selected theoretical framework, presenting a systematic technique to examine and comprehend the societal factors that influence the educational environment for young girls. It also provided valuable perspectives on possible avenues for enhancement. The study used a survey research methodology and employed structured questionnaires as the main technique to collect data from chosen participants. Multiple regression analysis was used to examine the hypotheses in the study. Research results emphasised that early marriage greatly hinders the education of girls in Northern Nigeria. The study suggests implementing steps to dissuade early marriages based on its findings. One suggested method is to have the child rights bill approved in all 36 states of the federation, as well as in the Federal Capital Territory. It is recommended that the government utilise legal measures to bring charges against those who promote gender discrimination in girls' education, regardless of their social standing or power.

Keywords: Girl-child, socio-cultural factors, Northern Nigeria, school enrolment, education.

I. INTRODUCTION

The resolutions from international conferences and workshops worldwide have strengthened the recognition of the significance of promoting women's education. The Harare Conference of African Ministers of Education emphasised the importance of prioritising women's education in African educational programmes (Allison, Victor, & Nasigba, 2022). Governments are creating policies to support communities and parents in promoting investments in girls' education.

Some declarations relating to human rights and education have been approved by Nigeria. Several global declarations have been influential in influencing educational programmes, such as the Education for All (EFA) initiative by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation, the 1980 Convention on the

Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the 1990 Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) (United Nations, 1981; UNESCO, 2000; United Nations 2000; United Nations, 2015). The Nigerian government has adopted many declarations such as the MDGs and EFA by incorporating them into domestic policies in line with international agreements (Bakwai, Yisa, and Jega, 2014). The United Nations introduced the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in 2016 as a continuation of the progress achieved via the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) announcement in 2015. This program signifies a continuous endeavour to enhance the achievements of the MDGs, with the goal of tackling a wide array of global concerns

associated with sustainable development. The SDGs, which encompass poverty reduction, environmental preservation, gender parity, and social fairness, serve as a roadmap for global endeavours aimed at establishing a fairer, more inclusive, and ecologically conscious world by 2030. These goals represent a joint dedication to tackling urgent global problems and striving towards a common vision for an improved future. Nigeria still experiences substantial regional and gender discrepancies in basic education enrolment, retention, and completion, despite current efforts. Efforts have been undertaken to achieve gender equity in education through multisectoral programmes (GEARN, 2018).

Ozigi and Ocho (1981), cited in Okafor (2010), observed that certain parents are not acquainted with the principles and beliefs of Western education. Some parents hold the notion that Western education mostly focuses on the economic progress of society, while overlooking its potential impact on spiritual and moral development, which they may consider more important. Cultural expectations and the prioritization of girls' future responsibilities as mothers and homemakers severely impede their formal education. The obstacles in the education of girls have endured since the inception of British governance in Nigeria (Amadi, 2013). Parents, who have been affected by a traditional educational system that limited girls to household duties, demonstrate a significant hesitancy to enrol their daughters in school. This hesitation is driven by the traditional belief that a girl's primary role is to be confined to the house.

Amadi posits that the opposition to providing education to girls originates from the belief that they are not as proficient as boys in preserving the family name. As a result, certain parents opt to confine their daughters to their homes, assigning them domestic duties, while giving priority to the education of their sons. This prejudiced approach not only hinders girls from accessing educational opportunities but also reinforces the notion that guys are more suitable for inheriting domestic obligations. To liberate oneself from these

limitations, it is crucial to question and oppose laws, cultural conventions, religious doctrines, and societal frameworks that systematically restrict the ability of girls to pursue advanced education. It is essential to overcome these challenges to empower girls and guarantee equal education opportunities, therefore promoting a society that is more inclusive and fair.

The Gender Parity Index (GPI) constantly indicates a troubling trend: a decrease in female enrolment in schools, with a majority of children who are not attending school being female, as reported by the Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC) in 2011. Regional disparities worsen gender inequities in access to basic education, particularly with the South West region having a 14% higher enrolment rate of females in primary schools compared to the North West region. The Southern regions exhibit gender parity or even exceed it in terms of net enrolments, while the North West and North East regions enrol slightly more girls than boys. Since the establishment of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the Education for All (EFA) project in 2000, there has been a heightened emphasis on promoting girls' education in Nigeria. Experts from diverse disciplines, such as academia and other industries, have thoroughly examined various initiatives aimed at educating girls. They have investigated the factors that impact girls' education and put forth policies and strategies to improve girls' education in Northern Nigeria (Bakwai et al., 2014; Okorie, 2017; World Bank, 2017). The objective of this study is to assess the sociocultural influences that affect the ability of girls in Northern Nigeria to obtain an education. It acknowledges the crucial role of education in enabling girls to overcome poverty and promoting their individual growth for the advancement of the country.

Statement of the Research Problem

The noticeable deterioration in the standard of education in Northern Nigeria has resulted in a decrease in the number of girls enrolling, staying in school, and successfully completing senior secondary education. Acknowledging education as

an essential entitlement for females is crucial, as it acts as a pathway for them to get and use their wider legal entitlements. Research shows that the social and cultural environment in which girls grow up may not support them in reaching their greatest potential ((Bakwai et al., 2014; Okorie, 2017). Girls face problems in claiming their rights due to societal structure, values, conventions, institutions, and gender-based treatment (Adedigba et al, 2021). Traditionally, women are generally limited to the kitchen, seen as subordinate to men, and exposed to different cultural customs.

Many females in Northern Nigeria are prevented from receiving an education by barriers including teenage pregnancy and early marriage (Adedigba et al, 2021). Girls are usually married or engaged between the ages of 12 and 13, which is shortly after puberty and the time when girls are anticipated to begin secondary school (Mangvwat, 2005). These cultural and religious prejudices probably contribute to Northern Nigeria's low rate of female education. In addition to depriving children of the knowledge they require to understand their powers and potential, they put their lives in peril.

The Nigerian government's UBE programme aims to include both secondary and primary schools, but it has challenges in reducing the enrolment gap between boys and girls in Northern Nigeria. In 2011, according to figures from the Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC), the Gender Parity Index (GPI) for the North West, North East, and North Central areas were 0.71, 0.75, and 0.89, respectively. The GPI for the South-South, South East, and South West regions was 1.01, 1.00, and 1.03, respectively. UNESCO (2014) reported a 42% rise in the number of Nigerian children not attending school between 1999 and 2010. The North East and North West regions experienced a tenfold increase in girls dropping out of primary or junior secondary school compared to the South. According to the British Council (2015), girls in Northern Nigeria have primary education completion rates that are lower than the national average. There is a prevailing inclination to give priority to males over girls when it comes to

school attendance within households, resulting in girls being given a secondary preference.

In Northern Nigeria, it has become commonplace to see females hawking during class hours in parking lots, markets, and on the streets. This inequality seems to pose a challenge to the government, particularly in the context of the Millennium Development Goals, which aim to reduce gender imbalance at all educational levels by the year 2015 and in elementary and secondary education by 2005. This study aims to thoroughly examine how socio-cultural elements impact the educational environment for girls in Northern Nigeria. The main goal is to evaluate how socio-cultural factors influence many aspects of educating girls, including enrolment, retention, and academic performance. The research seeks to offer detailed insights into the intricate relationship among cultural norms, societal expectations, and educational possibilities for females in the Northern part of Nigeria.

Objectives of the Study

This study aims to evaluate the influence of sociocultural influences on the education of girls in Northern Nigeria. To accomplish this broad purpose, particular study aims have been outlined as follows:

- i. Examine the impact of early marriage on the education of girls in the Northern region of Nigeria.
- ii. Assess the efficacy of governmental policies and initiatives in fostering the educational advancement of girls in the Northern region of Nigeria.

Hypotheses of the Study

- i. Early marriage does not have a significant impact on the educational attainment of girls in the Northern region of Nigeria
- ii. Government policies do not have a significant impact on the educational development of girl-child in the Northern part of Nigeria.

1. LITERATURE REVIEW

1.1 Conceptual Review/Discourse

1.1.1 Concept of Girl-Child Education

Girls' education extends beyond traditional academic instruction and includes cultural, behavioural, and attitudinal teachings that parents provide in the home. According to Chidebelu (2009), these teachings are essential for developing responsible, resourceful, and respectful citizens of the country. A significant number of women actively participate in practical training, earning proficiency in various fields such as sewing, computer literacy, weaving, fashion design, catering, and interior design. This allows them to expand their knowledge beyond what is often taught in universities and other higher education institutions. An all-encompassing viewpoint emphasizes the significance of providing early childhood education to girls. Ejikeme (2000) argues that the lack of this type of education makes girls more vulnerable to social marginalization and raises the chances of future illiteracy. This vulnerability hinders their appropriateness for adult education, programs aimed at empowering women, and other supportive initiatives that are essential for societal progress. The denial of girls' access to adequate education results in a multitude of drawbacks, including those stemming from long-standing cultural practices, as highlighted by Mangvwat (2005), who recognizes the enduring prevalence of harassment and prejudice towards women and girls in many societies.

According to Nwobodo (2018), education has a significant impact on reducing mortality rates, enhancing child nutrition and health, lowering fertility rates, empowering women in households, promoting their political participation, increasing economic productivity and growth, and safeguarding girls from exploitation, abuse, and diseases like HIV/AIDS. According to Idoko (2009), investing in girls' education is expected to result in substantial benefits for individuals, families, communities, and society as a whole. Girls' education has numerous benefits, including increased economic production, social advancement, intergenerational knowledge transmission, the promotion of societal equality, and the sustainable effectiveness of development

initiatives.

1.1.2 Socio-Cultural Barriers to Girl Child Education

Areas marked by a strong commitment to traditional customs and a significant number of adults who cannot read tend to show more noticeable differences between genders in terms of schooling. Parents with literacy and formal education are more likely to enrol their daughters in school than those who are illiterate and follow traditional educational customs. Further investigation conducted in Uganda confirms this pattern, indicating that 16% of children have moms who possess educational qualifications, while 36% have mothers who lack formal education (Atayi, 2008). In numerous developing countries, girls commonly marry before the age of fifteen, and demographic surveys regularly show that marriage often signifies the end of education for young females, with limited exceptions (Chimombo 2005). As a result, the probability of daughters attending college decreases, which continues a harmful cycle of maternal illiteracy. Additional research highlights that the lack of education in mothers has a more negative effect on the attendance of girls in school when compared to the lack of education in fathers (Chimombo 2005; UNESCO 2005).

Traditional and cultural customs have a substantial impact on the enrolment of girls in schools in many nations. Due to the perception that boys will become future home leaders, limited family resources generally prioritize their schooling. Girls can face greater challenges in acquiring knowledge compared to boys in different educational environments. Oniye (2010) emphasizes that even if girls receive education, they are often regarded as less important and less inclined to follow the desires of male relatives. Several nations implement stringent social norms that not only discourage but also formally prohibit early marriage and childbearing. However, although fathers of these children may not face similar consequences, several countries have regulations that prohibit unmarried pregnant women from continuing their education. These constraints present substantial obstacles for girls to

obtain education, particularly considering that 20% of pregnancies in Africa are experienced by teenagers aged 13 to 19, and over 50% of females are married before reaching the age of 18 (Oniye (2010).

Initiation ceremonies, which are still observed by certain tribes in Sub-Saharan Africa to symbolize the passage from infancy to adulthood, serve as an additional factor that impacts cultural and traditional parenting practices related to the education of girls. Participation in such ceremonies frequently poses challenges for female children, resulting in high rates of non-attendance and school dropout, especially when the dates of the events clash with the academic calendar. Teachers and schools may still view females as minors, whereas communities acknowledge them as adults. Penalties may be infrequently enforced for refusing to participate in adult activities. Traditionally, women who started their education experienced difficulties in continuing it once they became adults, as getting married was seen as the expected next stage (UNESCO, 2002).

Female circumcision presents cultural barriers to girls' education, similar to the challenges encountered by women engaging in initiation rituals. Njau and Wamahu (1998) observe that early marriage, the prioritization of female virginity prior to marriage, and the practice of bride price are seen as offering economic advantages for families through dowries. Circumcision is utilized to enhance the social standing of adolescent girls and regulate female sexuality in order to mitigate the occurrence of premarital pregnancies. A link has been documented in several nations between delayed enrolment, frequent absenteeism, and eventual dropout rates among female students. Adolescent girls who do not have older siblings may commence their education at the age of 10 as a result of the considerable distance to educational institutions. Girls leaving school prematurely at ages 11 or 12 due to fears of sexual assault and abduction have been identified as a significant concern (UNESCO, 2002).

There is a clear connection in Africa between the prevalence of teenage pregnancies and the rates at which students leave school (Njau & Wamahu, 1998). Njau and Wamahu (1998) contend that the reason girls drop out of school is not the pregnancy themselves, but rather the societal response, which restricts their chances for educational and career progress. In numerous African nations, school regulations erroneously assign primary responsibility for premarital teenage pregnancies to the girls themselves, with a secondary level of blame placed on their parents. Low-income and rural families often diminish the importance of girls' education after they become eligible for marriage. Education is essential in emancipating females from the limitations of child labour, the vulnerabilities of HIV/AIDS, and other socioeconomic challenges that impact girls. Girls are disproportionately vulnerable to diseases such as AIDS, child labour, early marriage, and rights violations as a result of cultural practices that impede their access to education.

In 2011, UN Secretary-General, Ban Ki-moon (2011) stressed the importance of International Literacy Day by highlighting that illiteracy obstructs attempts to tackle societal issues like poverty and disease, thereby endangering the fundamental stability of nations. He noted that the lack of literacy worsens the vicious cycles of poverty, illness, and unhappiness by excluding and marginalizing individuals, weakening communities, and endangering democratic processes. According to the Global Campaign for Education (UNAIDS 2010), universal education has the capacity to decrease HIV incidence by seven million cases during a ten-year period. The 53rd session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) acknowledged the significance of enhancing education to advance gender equality, empower women, and guarantee their entitlement to education across various domains, such as physical and mental health, sexual and reproductive health, and age-appropriate sex education for girls. The limited access, minimal participation, lack of interest, and high rates of discontinuation among female children are linked to the cultural and traditional customs of parents,

such as early marriage and adherence to other traditions. Expanding educational opportunities for females is of utmost importance. This may be achieved by granting them access to top-notch technical vocational, literacy, and skills education and training. This will benefit the significant number of girls who are currently not enrolled in school or have never had any formal education.

Review of Empirical Studies

In a study conducted by Ningi (2012), the researcher examined the challenges related to girl-child education in Northern Nigeria with the aim of promoting sustainable development. The study utilized data from several primary and secondary sources. The study examined many factors that impede girls' education in the region, uncovering a heightened vulnerability to exploitation and abuses of their rights, primarily as a result of poverty and illiteracy. Significant barriers to girls' education in Northern Nigeria have been recognized as socio-cultural difficulties, lack of awareness among Northerners, and economic stagnation caused by pervasive poverty. The research highlighted the deficient and insufficient execution of education programs by national and state governments as a significant obstacle.

Duze and Yar'zever (2013) examined the elements that affect the viewpoints of Hausa male parents in Kano, Nigeria, on the education of girls. The study sought to ascertain the factors contributing to the unfavourable attitudes of parents in Kano State towards girls' education. The research emphasized the traditional patriarchal nature and attitude towards females' education within the Hausa ethnic group, which is the majority in Northern Nigeria. The study revealed that parental resistance to girls' education is influenced by cultural values and location, with urban participants displaying a greater tendency (64%) to support female education compared to their rural counterparts (33.6%). The study emphasized the significance of taking into account additional variables in future research on the rates of girls dropping out of school, beyond just early marriage.

Usman, (2007) and Daiyabu, (2008), who were referenced in Eweniyi and Usman, (2013), have raised worry regarding the education of girls as a severe issue in Nigeria, particularly in the country's north. They therefore looked at how parents in the Northern region of Nigeria perceived socio-cultural, religious, and economic issues that affected the education of girls. The study found that cultural resistance to coeducation, the belief that women are best suited for domestic tasks, and the lack of girls' rights were identified as socio-cultural variables affecting girls' education.

Adebola, Anyachebelu, and Madu (2012) studied methods to empower women in Nigeria and analysed the socio-cultural influences on girls. The study sample consisted of 228 female load carriers from three important markets in Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria. Data was gathered using a pre-designed questionnaire, and the analysis included using frequency counts and mean statistics. The study's findings emphasised that socioeconomic challenges were a key factor affecting females' decisions to not pursue education.

Adedigba, Edungbola, and Ene (2021) thoroughly investigated the obstacles hindering female education in Northern Nigeria. They conducted a thorough investigation to discover empirical studies that address the challenges girls face in accessing school in this location. The search covered the period from 2010 to 2020 and made use of different bibliographic databases. Furthermore, additional searches were conducted using the Google browser to find pertinent non-academic and non-peer-reviewed publications. The study constantly highlighted obstacles to female education in Northern Nigeria, including early marriage/teenage pregnancy, cultural limitations, and negative socioeconomic circumstances, especially those related to poverty. Although valuable, it is essential to note that the study lacks empirical evidence. More empirical study is urgently needed to explore the intricacies of girls' education in Northern Nigeria, specifically focusing on addressing various difficulties and suggesting alternative solutions.

At Wukari LGA, parents' and cultural influences on girls' educational opportunities were evaluated by Allison, Victor, and Nasigba in 2022. The objective is to ascertain the impact of parental attitudes toward girls' education. To gather information for the study's conclusions, a sample size of one hundred (100) members of the general public was used. For ease of understanding, the data were further transformed into frequencies and percentages after being computed, tabulated, analyzed, and presented. Notwithstanding the provisions provided by the national policy on education, the study found that parents' attitudes are not supportive enough to ensure that girls attend school on an equal footing. Hence, it was advised that parents should not be hesitant to give their kids an equal education regardless of their gender or sexual orientation.

Theoretical Framework

Emile Durkheim (1858–1917) Functionalist Theory was adopted as theoretical framework for the study. His studies concentrated on the growth and governance of both conventional and contemporary communities. The concept of social facts - the social structures, norms, and values - forms the basis of Durkheim's theories. Durkheim stated that each organ is necessary to the body's life in his comparison of society to a living thing. The interconnection of all of society's basic pieces was essential, in accordance with Durkheim's functionalist theory of society. He held the view that society was more than the sum of its components. He said that because individual conduct and collective behaviour are not the same, investigating collective behaviour is considerably different from examining an individual's activities (Nwobodo, 2018). He added that a functioning society depends on a shared sense of purpose, shared values, and shared standards.

Functionalist theorists contend that social institutions and people are mutually supportive organic organisms that coexist. They hold that each component of society has a function that protects and strengthens one and another. One performance failure leads to the collapse of the entire civilisation. This implies that if the survival and unity of the whole are desired, every

component, no matter how small, has a crucial duty to complete. Therefore, low or inadequate enrolment of girls is a result of a lack of adequate socialization, education, incentives, responsiveness to human problems, equality of access to resources and opportunities, infrastructure, as well as the necessities and provisions needed for a respectable standard of living. Low or insufficient enrolment of girls is a result of society's poor functioning. Additionally, they contend that for these low-income households, the sociocultural problems associated with girls' schooling developed naturally and as a way of life (Nwobodo, 2018). They think parents should encourage girls to pursue well-paying careers to provide for their families. As they see school as a non-profit endeavor and the cost of tuition as a hardship, girls typically engage in activities that could benefit their families financially. In conclusion, females will be able to contribute to the overall growth of their society while also advancing personally if they are given the same educational chances as boys. As a result, social vices and the level of poverty among women in her culture will be greatly reduced.

III. METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

Research Design and Instrument of data collection

The survey research method was employed to achieve the goals of this study. This approach is appropriate because the study's objective was to survey a sizable population and learn about their perceptions of the sociocultural elements influencing girl-child education in the Zaria LGA. The research questions in the study's questionnaire were designed to give participants enough accurate, pertinent information to support thoughtful responses. The ordinal level was evaluated using a five-point Likert scale. The collecting of data was aided by the hiring of research assistants. Due to the fact that each research assistant was a local Hausa, they were all familiar with the customs and values of the respondents.

Population and sample size, sampling technique
Girls who are not in school, parents, principals,

and community leaders are among the study's population of female pupils in Kaduna State's Zaria Local Government Areas. Dakace and Tudun/Jukun districts in the Zaria Local Government Region were specifically chosen by the researcher for this study's focus. The purpose

of the purposive selection was to permit the inclusion of regions where socio-cultural influences on girl-child education predominate. The study's sample size from the districts listed above that are part of Zaria Local Government Area is displayed in the table below:

Table 1 Population of the study

S/N	Population	ZARIA		Total
		Dakace district	Tudun-Jukun	
1	Mixed population	435	395	830
2	Girls out of school	12	12	24
3	Principal	1	1	2
4	Community leaders	6	6	12
5	Parents	35	35	70
	Total	469	469	938

Source: Ministry of Education Report (2022).

As a result, the study's overall sample size is 938. Large populations are not the best choice for research; hence the concept of sampling is used, in which a subset of the entire population is chosen to represent the full population. The study used Yamane's method to determine the sample size required to be representative for the study's entire population:

$N =$ sample size; $e = 0.05$

$$N = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

$$N = \frac{938}{3.345}$$

Test of Hypotheses

Summary of regression result

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	8.426	1.151		7.320	.000
	EM	-.424	.035	-.320	-12.148	.000
	GPP	.119	.082	.122	1.443	.151
	R				.745	
	R ²				.645	
	F-stat				363.370	
	P-value f-stat					.000 ^b

a. Dependent Variable: GCE

Decision rule

The test is based on the criterion that if the calculated p-value is less than the 0.05 significance level, we reject the null hypothesis, but if not, we will fail to reject the null hypothesis

$N = 280$

Technique of Data Analysis

The data acquired for the study were subjected to an inferential statistical analysis using quantitative methods of data analysis. To test the two null hypotheses, multiple regression is the inferential statistics used in the study. Regression assesses the degree of relationship between variables, often dependent and independent variables. Education of girls is the dependent variable employed in this study, and early marriage and government policy are the predictors of girls' education.

stated.

IV. DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

After standard errors are taken into account, the regression result's standardized coefficients reflect the individual impact of the exogenous groups on

the endogenous variable at a standardized level. The asymptotic p-value of 0.00, which is statistically significant at both the 1% and 5% significance levels, demonstrates that the finding suggests that early marriage significantly affects girl child schooling. When all other variables are held constant, the related t-value and coefficient of -12.148 and -.424 show that early marriage accounts for a 42.4% change in girl child schooling. That is, a little shift in the decision to marry young would have a negative and considerable impact on the education of girls. The results of this study are in line with those of the Federal Government of Nigeria (2006), the World Bank (2001), and UNESCO (2001), which found that there is a great deal of ignorance and disinterest in girls' education and that girls suffer from society's neglect of their education due to early marriage to avoid the fear of pregnancy. Additionally, the study's findings are consistent with those of (Eweniyi & Usman, 2013; Ningi, 2012; Duze & Yar'zever, 2013; Adedigba, et al., 2021; Allison et al., 2022), whose findings revealed that socio-cultural, religious and economic factors affect girl-child education in the Northern part of Nigeria. As a result, girls are committed to early marriage to protect against premarital sex, harassment by opposite sex, and the prevention of abortion tendencies. This goes a long way to negatively affect the girl child as evidenced by the analysis earlier conducted.

A high asymptotic p-value of .151 and a low t-value of 1.443 demonstrate that government policies and programs do favourably influence girl child education, although not significantly. This suggests that at a particular level, government policies and programs have a favourable but little impact on female children's education, however a larger association may be found in a long-term examination. Governmental support for educational advancement has a significant impact on the general populace. A good impact will undoubtedly be seen and felt to a great extent when monies are appropriately distributed to reach the masses at the grassroots. The variables in the study were correctly chosen and combined to explain the changes in the dependent variable,

according to the fitness statistic value of 363.370 significant at 5% significance level. The R-squared value of .645, which represents the coefficient of multiple determination, indicates that, when taken as a whole, the predictor proxies influence girl child schooling by 64.5%, assuming that all other variables remain constant. From the analysis, the research conclude that early marriage has a negative and large impact on girls' education, whereas government policies and programs have a positive but insignificant effect on girls' education.

V. IMPLICATION OF FINDINGS

The outcomes of the study have both theoretical and practical ramifications. Findings theoretically demonstrate the degree to which some extreme conditions, such as early marriage, have an impact on the education of girl children in Kaduna state's Zaria Local Government Area. The research has shown that the suggested sociocultural determinants have a significant influence on the educational prospects of girls. In direct proportion to how highly they regard these things, the risk that the parents' female wards will endure ignorance rises. Misinformed parents send their female daughters off to marriage too soon, the prospects of them going to school are significantly harmed. This is due to the possibility that the husband is not an educated individual who values education highly and does not see a reason why his wife should be sent to school when the ideal goal of marriage is procreation. This survey concluded that there is still a problem with gender disparity in schooling. Particularly at the senior secondary level, there are less female secondary school students than there are males. This indicates that girls drop out at a higher rate than boys.

Education for girl children is greatly influenced by government policies and programs aimed at revitalizing education. Girl children are greatly positively induced and educated when policies and programs that demand the education of female children are implemented against the will of the parents and the appropriate facilities are made available. In order to achieve sustainable development, the government must perceive a

cause to require the education of girl children. The results of this study demonstrate theoretically to academics how certain sociocultural elements, such as early marriage ideology and government programs and regulations, interact favourably and negatively with the education of girls. As a result, this helps scholars develop their arguments by serving as a reference point.

VI. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Studies show that early marriage has a negative and considerable impact on a girl's ability to receive an education. This suggests that gender-based variations in local governments are a result of socio-cultural elements, which are represented in the pattern of behaviours, attitudes, preferences, customs, and traditions. As a result, it has been found that the sociocultural contexts in which girl children function do not inspire them to realize their full potential. In light of these findings, the study draws the conclusion that socio-cultural factors significantly influence female students' educational opportunities in the study locations. In light of the research findings, the study recommended the following;

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- i. The child rights bill should be passed in all 36 states of the federation and the Federal Capital Territory in order to discourage the issue of young marriage between 13-16 years. Regardless of their positions and status in society, the federal government should implement the appropriate legal measures that have been approved by the legislative branch of the government to punish individuals who promote gender bias in the education of girls.
- ii. To address the needs and future of girl-child education, individuals, communication networks, and non-governmental organizations could finance educational campaigns through rallies, seminars, workshops, and conferences. In order to improve spiritual fulfilment and long-term national growth, religious leaders and organizations should advocate for more formal education.
- iii. Scholarships and bursaries should be provided to women by the federal government in order to motivate them to advance in their educational goals. Girls' education should also be improved, with a focus on keeping girls in school and giving marginalized women options through alternative education.
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