



MANAGING THE CHALLENGES OF GENDER MARGINALIZATION FOR SUSTAINABLE EDUCATIONAL GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT IN THE SUB-SAHARAN REGION: IMPLICATION FOR MANAGEMENT AND COUNSELLING

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Abstract

This paper focused on managing the challenges of gender marginalization for sustainable growth and development: implication for management and counselling. This investigation was carried out in secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State. Survey research design was used for the study, this design helped the researchers to sample representatives from the large population (Nakpodia, 2010). The population of the study

was 24 secondary schools and 24 principals in Uyo senatorial district of Akwa-Ibom State. The sample of the study was 24 secondary schools

KEYWORDS:

*Challenges, Gender
Marginalization,
Sustainable
Educational
Growth and
Development, Sub-
Saharan Region*

and 24 principals considered through purposive sampling technique. The questionnaire was validated by experts in the Department of Educational Administration and Foundation, University of Uyo, Akwa Ibom State. The reliability of the instrument was

obtained through split-half using Pearson Product Moment Correlation coefficient statistics to analyze the data collected. Frequency and mean statistics were used to analyze the research question. The finding of the study revealed that: secondary school principals did not apply management strategies to manage gender marginalization in education in Uyo Senatorial district, Akwa Ibom State. Due to the finding of the study, the researchers recommended that: management of secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State should by a matter of necessity learn, imbibe and apply appropriate strategies to alleviate gender marginalization which hampers educational sustainable growth and development; the Federal Government should expedite action on implementing the objectives of the policy on the elimination of gender discrimination in education, the school should intimate the state government on the plight of gender marginalization on the educational growth and development of girls and encourage her to help the school to alleviate such misdemeanor.

Introduction

Disparity against boys and girls in educational sector is glaring, the girls have been the victims to this, therefore, it is incumbent for the management of schools to ensure that they have developed measures to alleviate girls' disparity in education. Managing gender marginalization from the educational sector should be the effort of the educators, administrators, all stakeholders and the significant persons that cherish improvement in the educational sector, for the enhancement of educational development. There are challenges which need to be well addressed for proper development to set into the educational sector. One of these challenges is that of girls being marginalized in education in most parts of the nation's educational system. In the Northern parts of Nigeria, despite the fact that campaigns for equality are being carried out in education, gender discrimination is still prevalent. This has negatively affected the initiatives propagated by

the government and non-governmental agencies towards propagating equity and equality in boys and girls education. Gender disparity in education is still an issue yet to be done with hence management of secondary schools has to take the bull by the horns to trace the sources of this discrimination in order to nip it on the bud so that girls and boys will have equal access to education into secondary schools in Nigeria. The Secondary School management should therefore incorporate all possible measures to make sure that every marginalization against girls in schools is alleviated.

Challenges of Gender Marginalization in Education and Other Spheres of life

Gender marginalization in education has led to poverty and backwardness. In today's world economic progress is only possible when men and women work side by side in unity to achieve it. Women constitute a large population in any society, by denying them education determine the possibility of progress in all sphere of life being reduced drastically. Some women are not allowed to make use of their talents that is why some countries have not been able to progress as compared to others. A study conducted by Kakeopoto (2005) on discrimination faced by the women in rural Sindh province in Pakistan revealed that the birth of a boy was celebrated more than that of the girl, that 78% of the people considered daughter as a burden. The study finding of Kakeopoto (2005) also proved that men were considered superior in the Sindhi society; this was also the view shared by 82.50% of the respondents in Kakeopoto (2005)'s study showing that men were more superior than women, that women were subject to men. Education of the girls in a family relied upon the exposure of the guardian or the family head, it became imperative that the head determined the gender education. In a situation whereby they do not accept girls education, these female folk were therefore deprived from receiving any form of education thereby rendering the girls very backward. Akram and Shurgeel (2005) in their

research on education of women in rural area of Pakistan found a wide gap in access to education between males and females.

The researchers specifically gave the example of Baluchistan province in Pakistan where illiteracy rate of women was found to be as worst as 90%. The researchers therefore pointed out that gender differences is the major hurdle for low literacy rate not only in Baluchistan but in many societies of the world. Alam (2011) also noticed that in Pakistan the traditional division between the role assigned to men and women was that women were mostly expected to become housekeepers, the deprivation of opportunities due to gender discrimination to Alam was the primary reason behind poverty in Pakistan. Alam (2011) decried that these women were not employed in any other spheres of lucrative work to generate funds to cater for their family.

The limited role of women in decision making in family matters was pointed out by Zafar et al (2018) who found out that in the Pakistan society male dominated the family with the women having a very little or no say in family matters and their advice generally was not sought for nor accepted in the family. The authors observed that women were allowed to participate in taking decisions in matters related to housekeeping in areas such as: cooking meals and decorating the house etc. They according to Zafar et al. (2018) were not included in decision making and in matters outside the home. According to the authors this happened because women were regarded as the property of men hence inferior to men. Women activities in social and economic domains were also restricted, hence they could not make any reasonable contribution that can help the home nor the society at large. This means that all important matters such as education of children, their healthcare and marriage were solely decided by the men of the family. Ali (2008) noted that in the patriarchal societies, decisions were usually carried out by men, such decision as whether the child receives medical attention or not was determined by the elders usually the male members of the house thus depriving the women of their right as mothers. Ali (2008) found that

religious misconceptions related to women also contributed towards their being marginalized, this made these women not to have a say nor contribute to issues which they can handle better than men. Ali et al (2001) posited that discrimination on the basis of religion was more common in the lower socio-economic group and low educational background where women were subjected to believe traditionally that they must submit to the will of the men that this has rendered these women timid and backward

Zara et al (2017) maintained that giving more importance to the boys than the girls and making men superior than women have made the females to feel inferior and to have low self-esteem in life issues. The researcher added that some families gave preference to boys than girls in basic things like food that this has made the boys to eat better food than girls which has resulted to girls getting lean and malnourished. This condition made Zara et al (2017) to emphasize that boys and girls need approximately the same amount of nutrition that both should be given balance diet. Sule (2016) maintained that gender discrimination even in school as well as female sexual harassment have caused the girls to abandon school prematurely. The researcher further posited that preference given to boy's education has resulted to girls being subjected by their parents to be like home servants to engage in house chores such as; washing dishes, clearing the kitchen, cooking, hawking etc. According to Sule (2016) too much of work at home has resulted to girls who are allowed to participate in schooling not to have time to read nor work on their home assignment this has led to their failure in school.

Sule (2016) also submitted that these girls will wake up very early to engage in home activities (after they might have slept late the previous night), this made them to be so fatigue, hence they sleep in the class when teaching is going on, that this result to the brilliant females becoming dull and unintelligent. Sule (2016) decried that the culture/traditional beliefs that females are not meant to be highly educated has deprived the female children from being lucrative to the

family nor being able to help their husbands, nor act as models to their children or becoming a developer of life and a builder of the nation. Bakare (2015) posited that in a Mathematics class, the teacher was observed paying more attention, giving acceptance to the boys than girls because she acknowledged that the boys responded positively showing that they understood the rudiment of mathematics than girls, this made the girls to feel neglected, rejected and to show non-challant attitude to Mathematics lesson.

Managing the Challenges of Gender Marginalization for Sustainable Growth and Development in Schools

Nigeria recognizes education as a fundamental human right and she is a signatory to some major conventions for the protection of the rights of children and women. The Convention of the Rights of the Child (CRC) and the Convention of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) are platforms which government use to protect girls and women against any form of marginalization. The world presently is fostering on how to alleviate gender marginalization and foster balance education among gender (Sule, 2016). This is why some individuals and organizations deliberated seriously on issues causing gender disparity. Lake (2010) noticed that girls from impoverished homes are deprived access to education, this warrant Lake (2010) to emphasize on compulsory education for the “forgotten children” in which girls from poverty stricken homes were the main focus.

The Federal Government herself in trying to ensure girls’ right to education, and to exterminate educational bias from the educational system has authentically established and promulgated the Child Right Act of 2003 to protect children to secure their basic rights and their right to education. The Federal Government has also provided legislative framework to support gender right to education and other services. Derele (2008) averred that gender equity in education has been one of the main goals targeted by the Nigerian Government since the 1990

World Conference on Education for All (EFA) in Jomtien, Thailand. Habu (2008) maintained that since there is existing gender disparity in basic education as in enrolment, retention and completion of girls education, that the Nigeria government should develop strategies to accelerate girls' education. The researcher posited that the Federal Government should emphasized more on achieving the major objectives of the Girls Education Project (GEP). These objectives include:

1. Raising national awareness for girl-child education and increasing political and financial commitment through advocacy and sensitization of policy makers at all levels, including parents, school authorities, other leaders and girls themselves.
2. Developing technical capacity of schools and teachers pedagogical skills to create girl-friendly school environments that will enhance the participation of girls in education and improvement of learning outcomes. Establishing girl child, friendly school principals as minimum benchmarks for effective schools, linked to community empowerment and development
3. Creating school management committee with community involvement and participation
4. Building institutional capacity for promoting girls' education and the capacity of stakeholders on gender sensitivity and sexuality
5. Collaborating with government and other stakeholders in reviewing existing curricula and teaching materials for gender sensitivity
6. Promoting the employment of more female teachers in the rural areas, where they are most needed to serve as role models and to assist in the mentoring of out-of school girls
7. Monitoring and evaluating of girls' educational programmes and mobilizing and strengthening the inspectorate's role in this area.

8. Promoting synergy between girls' education and poverty alleviation
9. Improving service delivery with stakeholders providing more girls' only schools where appropriate, and improved facilities such as: safety, facility, water and separate toilets for girls and also providing instructional materials for the promotion of quality education (Habu, 2008).

Management of schools should incorporate some strategies formulated by organizations and significant individuals to alleviate marginalization to promote equity in gender education. Attoe, 2000 cited in Opara (2010) posited that the State and Federal Government should ensure that female children are not removed from schools before completion of their education and that the government should stop early marriages which doesn't allow the girl-child to complete her education. International Labour Organization (ILO) (2000) maintained that the government and the schools management should ensure that:

- the school curricula should be made to be relevant to labour market as far as gender equity in education is concerned.
- the school management, government, employers, society, unions, private internal and international organizations and non-governmental organizations are involved in sponsoring education at all levels for both gender.
- economy should be diversified to create jobs for both gender
- organizations and unions should facilitate more regularly, gender based educational programmes to build and enhance children developmental and educational capacity

The Calvert Women 2004 cited in Opara (2010) emphasized on empowering women and maintained that the government should:

- formulate policies educationally and at other levels of life to support gender equality and human rights;

- ensure equal access to all type of education including information technology training and science;
- provide equal opportunities for gender formal and informal education
- make sure that schools work with the community stakeholders and officials to eliminate sex discrimination in the society and in education.

United Nations Girls Education Initiatives (UNGEI), 2010) included in their Dakar declaration for accelerating girls' education and gender equality that:

- gender equity should be at the center or should be a paramount thing to achieve transformative quality education
- attention should be given to physical, social and academic aspects of multiple learning environment in order to enhance opportunities for both adolescent girls and boys to be advanced beyond basic education.
- education policies, strategies, plans, budgets must be gender positive.
- schools management should ensure that protective and innovative learning opportunities is created to cater for both boys and girls.
- school management should make sure that religion should not prevent or deprive both sex of children from receiving quality education
- religions should be used to teach children good religious ethics and moral values.
- ethnic traditional rites and values should not be allowed to deprive girls right to education nor the completion of it.

Many researchers have spoken whole heartedly against gender disparity in educational setting, in organizations and in the society revealing its

devastating consequence not only to individual families but to the nation as a whole.

Statement of the Problem

There has been gender marginalization against the girl-child education. Government, organizations and individuals have proffered measures for alleviation of the marginalization existing between boys and girls education. The researchers in this present study want to ascertain whether management of secondary schools has applied any strategies to alleviate gender discrimination in order to enhance educational growth and development of both male and female children.

Purpose of the Study

The researchers specifically want to examine whether secondary schools management have employed some strategies to alleviate gender marginalization which can impede educational development.

Research Question

Do secondary schools principals apply management strategies to alleviate gender marginalization in secondary education in Akwa-Ibom State?

Research Hypothesis

There is no significant difference between secondary school management application of management strategies and the alleviation of gender marginalization in education in Secondary schools in Akwa-Ibom State.

Methodology

The researchers used survey research design for the study. The design has enabled the researchers to sample representatives from the whole population (Nakpodia, 2010). The sampled representatives gave

information to generate data for the present study analysis. The population of the study was 24 secondary schools in Uyo senatorial district of Akwa-Ibom State (<https://ubeconline.com/pre/2010%2520Basic%2520education>), this provided 24 principals. The sample of the study was 24 secondary schools and 24 principals got through purposive sampling technique. Questionnaire on “Management Strategies to Alleviate Gender Marginalization for Sustainable Educational Growth and Development among students in Secondary Schools (MSAGMSEGD) was used to obtain data for analysis. The questionnaire was validated by experts in the Department of Educational Administration and Foundation, University of Uyo, Akwa Ibom State. The reliability of the instrument was gotten by conducting a pilot study. The researchers used split-half method to divide the questionnaire into two sets. Data was retrieved from each set of the instrument ‘Pearson Product Moment Correlation coefficient was used to analyze the data. The correlation coefficient index obtained was 0.77, this proved that the instrument was reliable to be used for the study. The statistics to analyze the research question was frequency and mean. The decision rule was that if the mean score is 2.50 and above the analyzed item will be agreed but 2.49 and below is termed disagreed. The sectional mean score of 2.50 and above was regarded as accepted whereas 2.49 and below was termed rejected.

Data Analysis

Research Question: Do secondary school principals apply management strategies to alleviate gender marginalization in secondary schools Akwa-Ibom State?

Table 1: Principals’ Application of Management Strategies to Alleviate Gender Marginalization

S/N	Items on Principals’ Application of Management Strategies to Alleviate Gender Marginalization	SA	A	D	SD	X	Decision
	To alleviate gender marginalization, the principals have:						

1	Encouraged the Federal Government to stop parents from withdrawing their female children from secondary schools for early marriage without their completing their schooling	2	3	12	7	2.00	Disagreed
2	ensured that government facilitates gender based educational programmes without bias	4	3	9	8	2.13	Disagreed
3	made sure that they engineered the government, non- governmental organizations and international organizations to sponsor education at all levels for both gender	10	7	5	2	3.04	Agreed
4	advised the government to provide equal opportunities in formal and informal education for both gender	11	9	1	3	3.17	Agreed
5	encouraged the government to diversify the economy to create jobs for both gender on completion of secondary school	13	6	3	2	3.25	Agreed
6	enlightened and involved community stakeholders and other significant officials to support the school management in eliminating sex discrimination in education	2	4	8	10	1.97	Disagreed
7	encouraged the government to make policy that will support gender equality at all levels of education	3	3	9	9	2.00	Disagreed
8	ensured that both State and Federal Governments have made female and male children to have equal access to education.	1	3	12	8	1.88	Disagreed
9	ensured that the government has provided protective, innovative and entrepreneurial training opportunities for both gender	3	1	11	9	1.92	Disagreed
10	made sure that government has restrained parents from allowing religious or ethnic traditional rites and values to deprive their wards from completing their schooling	1	4	14	5	2.04	Disagreed
Sectional Mean						2.33	Rejected

Some of the respondents in the table above disagreed with mean scores of 2.00, 2.13, 1.97, 2.00, 1.88, 1.92 and 2.04 respectively that to alleviate

gender marginalization, the principals have encouraged the Federal Government to stop parents from withdrawing their female children from school for early marriage without their completing their schooling; ensured that government facilitate gender based educational programmes without bias; made sure that the government has enlightened and involved community stakeholders and other significant officials to support the school management in eliminating sex discrimination in education; encouraged the government to make policy that support gender equality at all levels of education; ensured that both State and Federal Governments made female and male children to have equal access to education, ensured that the government has provided protective, innovative and entrepreneurial training opportunities for both gender and make sure that government has restrained parents from allowing religious or ethnic traditional rites and values to deprive their wards from completing their schooling. Some of the respondents agreed with the mean scores of 3.04, 3.17 and 3.25 respectively that to alleviate gender marginalization, the principals have: made sure that they engineered the government, non- governmental organizations and international organizations to sponsor education at all levels for both gender; advised the government to provide equal opportunities for formal and informal education for both gender and encouraged the government to diversify the economy to create jobs for both gender on completion of school. All the respondents rejected that secondary school principals do apply management strategies to alleviate gender marginalization in education in Akwa-Ibom State with the sectional mean score of 2.33

Discussion

The finding of the present study proved that secondary schools principals in Akwa Ibom State did not apply management strategies to alleviate gender marginalization in secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State. Habu (2008) in his study discovered that there is disparity in enrolment,

retention and completion of female and male students in secondary schools. The school management according to Habu (2008) admitted and retained more boys than girls and that they do not stop parents from withdrawing their female wards from completing their schooling. Atte 2000 cited in Opara (2010) noticed that schools cannot restrain parents from withdrawing their female children from school to stop their non-completion of their schooling. The researcher opined that the state and federal governments should make it as a matter of policy that parents should not, no matter whatever reason withdraw their wards from the school without completion. Lake (2010) realizing the marginalization rate between boys and girls in school which was detrimental to the female, folk advocated that compulsory education should be made for the girls from their starting of school to their completion of it. The International Labour Organization (ILO, 2000) emphasized that the school management and the government should ensure that suitable educational programmes are provided to enhance girls and boys developmental and educational capacity.

Conclusion

The researcher concluded from the study finding that principals did not apply management strategies to alleviate gender marginalization in secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State

Recommendations

Due to the finding of the study, the researchers recommended that:

1. Management of secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State should learn, imbibe and apply appropriate strategies to alleviate gender marginalization which hampers sustainable growth and development in girls education.
2. The Federal government should ensure that they expedite action to implement the objectives of the policy on the elimination of gender marginalization in education

3. Secondary school management should make sure that they intimate the state government on the danger of gender disparity on students especially the girls in the society and the country at large, therefore encourage her to do something tangible to alleviate it.
4. The school management should make regular report concerning the marginalization of girls in schools to the state government and should encourage both the state and the Federal government to cooperate with the school management to eradicate gender disparity in the school and the society at large.
5. Parents should be informed through Parent Teacher Association (PTA) forum on how detrimental it is for the family to deprive girls from schooling and for the girls also to be withdrawn from schools without completing their education.
6. The secondary school management, non-governmental organizations and the stakeholders in education should contribute their ideas and other necessary exigencies to revamp gender marginalization in secondary schools.

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