

ABSTRACT

CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES OF SCHOOL DROPOUT AND ITS GENDER IMPACT: A STUDY OF SIX COMMUNITIES IN AWGU LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA of ENUGU STATE

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In Nigeria, the issue of school dropouts is a well-documented social problem. The study therefore sought to investigate the causes and consequences of school dropouts and their gender impact. Six communities in Awgu Local Government Area, Enugu State, were used as our area of study. The findings indicate that major causes of school dropout include poverty, gender discrimination, culture, peer group pressure, early marriage, unwanted pregnancy, etc. The consequences are very devastating to the individual, the family, and society at large. The girl child was the greater victim as she became the sacrificial lamb when the need arose and due to cultural evaluation of the girl child. However, it amounts to gross error to continue the policies and practices that have saffjugated the girl child over the years. The girl child has continually been left behind. Finally, it is recommended as a matter of priority that for Nigeria to come out of the shackles of underdevelopment, it must urgently address the problems of marginalization, abuse and exploitation of women. All forms of violence and discrimination against them must be outlawed and equal opportunity for access to education must be guaranteed by legal sanction.

Keywords: Gender Marginalization, Violence oppression De-humanization, Social Injustice, Discrimination

INTRODUCTION

According to a United Nations report on the world social situation in 1997, education was said to be fundamental to enhancing the quality of human life and ensuring social and economic progress.

Also, the World Bank's 1998/99 World Development Report observed that education is the key to creating, adopting and spreading knowledge, but the gains in access to education have been unevenly distributed, with the poor seldom getting their fair share. World Bank report (1989-1999).

The Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary 6th edition defines "drop out" as a person who leaves school or college before they have finished their studies. A person who opposes an idea or a way of behaving that is acceptable to the rest of society.

Kudrete B.R. and Saxenon (2004:30) defines drop out as a student who for any reason other than death leaves school before graduation.

Most economists contend that a nation's human resources, rather than its physical resources, are intimately linked.

To determine the character and pace of economic growth and development, Heberson (1999:331)

Princeton University states that "human" resources constitute the ultimate basis for the wealth of nations, while capital and natural resources are passive factors of production.

Human beings are the active agents who accumulate capital, exploit natural resources, build social, economic, and political organizations and carry forward national development. Clearly, a country which is unable to develop the skills and knowledge of its people will be unable to develop Haberson (1999).

The principal mechanism for developing human skills and knowledge is the formal education setting.

At the turn of the century, the French sociologist Emile Durkheim saw the major function of education as the transmission of norms and values.

Without these norms and values, co-operation and social solidarity, social life itself would be impossible. Durkheim further stated that a vital task for all societies is the wielding of a mass of individuals into a united whole; in other words, the creation of social solidarity. This involves a commitment to society that is a sense of belonging and a feeling that the social unit is more than the individual.

Haralambos and Heal (1983:17), Durkheim.

From the above, we can discern that human beings remain the greatest resource of a nation. to become attached to the nation. Durkheim argues that the child must feel something that is real, alive and

powerful and which dominates the child. This invariably implies that society must invest.

Substantial emphasis is placed on the child, not only to instill a sense of belonging and commitment in him, but also to make him a valuable resource to himself and society.

Society must protect and provide for the individual so as to elicit his commitment to the values of society.

Haralambos and Heil (1983), Durkheim.

Durkheim further posits that in advanced nations' societies, education is provided by the state as a matter of right for all citizens.

It is upheld by legal sanctions. Attendance at school is compulsory as education is provided free of charge.

Durkheim in Harabalabos & Heald (1983).

Nigeria, realizing the importance of education to her citizens and the success recorded by these advanced nations, may have fashioned her own educational system after theirs.

However, the problem now lies in the sincere and proper implementation of her educational policy. Clearly, dropping out of school is a well documented social problem.

The National policy on education was revised in 2004 and Section 18 of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria sets out the national education objectives, which state that the government should direct its policy towards ensuring that there are equal educational opportunities at all levels.

There should be free, compulsory, and universal primary education. Free primary and secondary education University education is completely free. Free Adult Literacy Osokoya (1989)

The question now is why, despite the above government policy, is there still an incidence of school dropouts? What are the likely consequences of school dropout on individuals, families, and society?

STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

The study examines the causes and consequences of school dropouts in the Awgu Local Government Area of Enugu State.

The issue of school dropouts is a problematic one.

This is because it affects not only the individual, but also the family and society as a whole. The potential of such an individual can hardly be developed.

As earlier noted by Haberson (1999), a country that is unable to develop its human resources can hardly progress.

This is buttressed by the fact that such dropouts may even turn out to be anti-social. The problem of school dropout may be a multiphased one arising from poverty, inequality, gender discrimination, marginalization, etc.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

We highlight below our research design, sample, sample procedure, data collection technique, and technique of data analysis.

In Awgu Local, we are concerned about the causes and consequences of school dropouts.

Government Area of Enugu State. Six communities were selected, which include Ogbaku, Ogugu, Amoli, Owelli, and Ituku. It is a descriptive survey type of research.

Sampling procedure The sampling design employed is the probability sampling technique.

The data for the study was gathered through a questionnaire and an oral interview.

The administration of the questionnaire was preceded by a pilot study. Our data collection was subjected to an Alpha co-efficient at 0.86 to ensure its validity.

It is a test of the relationship or correlation between variables; chi square (χ^2), which is a statistical technique that deals with correlations was used.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature is reviewed under the following sub themes:

Poverty and inequality. Gender Discrimination a plethora of restrictions imposed on women
Other factors
Characteristics of students who drop out of school

POVERTY AND INEQUALITY...

The educational system, especially in third world countries, more often than not reflects the essential nature of the society. For example, if the society is egalitarian in economic and social structure, the educational system will reflect that bias in terms of not being able to proceed through the system. Todaro MP (200X) Educational Economist John Sermon gives the following example of how the poor are beginning to regard educational schooling. The poor quickly learn in most societies to escape from poverty, but only a few.

The poor are the first to drop out because they need to work; the first to be pushed out of class because they fall asleep as a result of malnutrition; and the first to fail English and French tests because upper-income children have had better opportunities at home and in school. Todaro (2000)

The hope brought to the village parents by the construction of a primary school soon fades. Enough schooling to secure a steady, even menial job for their son, let alone for their daughter, seems just beyond their grasp.

Previously, any school would have done anything to achieve their goal. A primary school is needed now when students with secondary and tertiary certificates cannot get a steady job. This does not encourage parents to send their children to school (Todaro 2000).

The author further posits that because of the inherent egalitarian economic system, poor students have less chance of completing any given educational cycle than more affluent students. Todaro (200). (X Duh The private cost of primary education, especially in view of the opportunity cost of a child's labour to poor families, is higher for poor students than for more affluent students. Also, the expected benefit from primary education means that a poor family's rate of return from investment in a child's education is lower than it is for other families. The poor are therefore more likely to drop out during the early years of schooling. Udofot, Mbong (2006)

The higher opportunity cost of labour to poor families means that even if the first few years of education are free, they are not without cost to the families. Children of primary school age are typically needed to work on family farms or hawk, often at the same time they are required to be in school. If a child cannot work because he or she is at school, the family will either suffer a loss or hire paid labor to replace the absent child, Mbong (2006).

In either case, there is a real cost to a poor family of having an able-bodied child attend school when there is productive work to be done on the farm.

A cost not related to tuition and of much less significance to higher-income families, many of whom may live in urban areas where child work is not needed. Mbong (2006)

However, it is pertinent to state that the fact that farm labour does not exist in the city does not mean that there is no child labour. Some children drop out of school to hawk or in order to help supplement the family income (Mbong, 2006) because of what they call "sundry charges" instead of school fees.

GENDER DISCRIMINATION

The economic crisis in the family as the source of dropout rates for girls is higher than for boys. These problems affect rural areas more than urban areas. It has been estimated that 99.7% of Nigerian illiterates in 1965 were women, and that Nigeria had 20% more men than women literates in the 1970s. M.O. Ijire (1991:9)

Kureti and Saxena state that parents' attitudes towards education have a major effect on education. In their study, they discovered that the dropout rates were higher for girls than for boys. They attribute this to the fact that girls are needed for other activities such as looking after their siblings, doing domestic work and helping with farm work. Kureti and M. Saxena (2004)

According to them, parents play a crucial role in keeping young people in school. The degree and nature of family support are determined by a number of factors: socio-economic status, single parenthood, and the poor education of parents. Kureti and Saxena (2-004).

Even though education in public schools is made free or supposed to be free, many children are still at home. Horn contends that parental and social attitudes in most Indian cultural contexts tend to perpetuate the type of girls being transit members of the family on their way to marriage and boys being the mainstay of support for their aging parents. The way an adult woman is treated in the house is similar to how a child is treated, how the child is socialized, and how she is later socialized into the role she will play as an adult. The fact that these children are treated differently makes it more likely that they won't have as many choices and opportunities, both now and in the future. Horn (1992).

Amatya's son said it best: "If the goal of development is freedom, then not letting girls go to school will severely limit their abilities."

It will be substantially restricted by the fact that illiterate girls will become illiterate women. One way to empower women would be to bring them out of their limiting boundaries, out of the home, and into a wider world of social and political relations. Horn (1992).

M.O. Ijere (1991:2) expressed the view that in Nigeria, women's education has faced considerable handicaps right from the inception of modern formal education. As a result of the prevailing social set-up, girls were discriminated against in favour of boys. There was a traditional preference for boys over girls, and this accounted for the reason that, in times of economic crisis, girls were the first to drop out of school. The traditional roles of the girls were limited to the kitchen, child bearing, helping in farm work, and hawking, Ijere (1991).

Women Face a plethora of Obstacles

Like women in other societies, especially those in developing countries, Nigerian women have been taken advantage of in some ways.

These include social, political, economic, and legal restrictions. For instance, until a law reform committee was set up in 1989, a Nigerian woman could not stand a sure for an accused person on bail. Though the anomaly has been corrected by the said committee, there are other numerous problems. For instance, until a law reform committee was set up in 1989, a Nigerian woman could not stand as a surety for an accused person in a hail. Though the anomaly has been corrected by the said committee, there are other numerous problems. For instance, the personal rights of women in marriage negotiations, personal rights in marriage, as well as property rights of the spouse still work to the disadvantage of women. This stems from women's limited rights (see Daily Time Feb 18, 1993 P11).

These problems were part of the focus of a three-day seminar held at the Marina Babangida centre in Abuja between the 16th and 18th of February 1993 by the National Council of Women Societies (NCWS). The seminar addressed various aspects of women's development. These include politics, law, economics, and the workplace.

The papers presented were unanimous that Nigerian women as a gender face some socio-economic and political problems. (From the Daily Champion, February 25, 1993, p. 16)

In many parts of the world, the position of women is not better. Women are subordinated and suffer some inequalities vis-à-vis men. Attempts to find reasons and solutions to such lingering inequalities have led to various theorized explanations that are rooted in theology, natural, biological, and cultural factors, among others. For example, theological explanations hold that the subordination of women to men is predetermined by divine power and thus unchangeable. According to nature and biological theory, such differences are caused by physiological and genetic characteristics, which are also responsible for the basic division of labor between sexes. George Murdock (1983).

Cultural theory insists that gender roles are culturally determined and inequality between the sexes is socially constructed. Margaree Mead states that many so-called masculine and feminine characteristics are not based on set differences but reflect the cultural conditioning of different societies. Hardembos, Mead (1983). In support of her theory, Mead cites an example of three primitive tribes of New Guinea. They include Arapesh, Mundugumor, and Tchambu. According to her, in the first place, both men and women act as they are expected to act.

That is in a mild, parental, responsive way. In the second place, they both act as we expect men to act. That is in fierce, imitating fashion. In the third, men act like stereotypical women. They were catty, wore curls, and went shopping. The women were energetic, managerial, and unadorned. Mead says that this shows how culture can completely force a pattern on one or both sexes that is right for only one part of the human race. It therefore directs attention to innate individual endowments irrespective of sex rather than on sex differences. -Mead in Hardbanbos (1983).

An Oakley, in her own contribution, sees culture as the determination of gender roles and argues that not only is the division of labour by sex not universal, but there is no reason why it should be. She maintains that

culture is diverse and endlessly variable and owes its creation to human ingenuity rather than invariable biological forces. Oakley (1974).

The Marxian school of thought, in its own contribution, further argues that gender inequality, rather than being a natural condition of human existence, is indeed in direct correspondence with the emergence of private property and the evolution of laws that regulate property relations. JASA, Uniport (1988, P 82) Furthermore, women suffer double exploitation because they belong to the class that does not own the means of production and are also subordinated to men by virtue of their assumed inferior sex. JASA, Uniport (1988). Though few women hold positions of power in society, the majority of them find themselves on top by the end of the day.

The grace of men is such that they constitute a minute figure of the female gender. For instance, wives of presidents, governors, and other leaders who, because of their husbands' position, become elevated automatically to first ladyship and direct affairs among their women folk.

What affects these men as political leaders and other appointees also affects their wives. In other words, these women rode to elevated positions on the backs of their husbands. JASA Uniport (1988).

Also, women face tough times from men when considered for higher appointments. A good example was the appointment of the first female vice chancellor, Prof. Alele Williams, the ex-vice chancellor of the University of Benin, which was highly resented by male dons of the university. From the ideological standpoint, men and women have been socialized into a male world in which they believe that men claim the right to guard women's morals while themselves perpetuating immorality. Also, the weight of moral pressures, often backed by law, is exerted on women in order to reverse or hinder possible changes in the power and authority relations between both sexes. This explains why sexual immorality on the part of the man/husband could be ignored or punished lightly while that of the woman/wife could attract heavier sanctions. This ideological manipulation makes it difficult for women to realize that they are being exploited by Marx and Lud (in Marx/Engels Vol. 55 [955 P. 583]).

There is still the notion that a woman's place is in the kitchen. But the performances of a few women, such as Prof. (Mr.) Alele Williams and the like, show that women could compete favorably with men.

When given the opportunity, which includes proper education within society, a configuration of forces has aided the subjugation of women. They include the family, illiteracy, negative religious practices, culture, politics, etc. For instance, within the family, women are exploited.

Benston noted that the amount of unpaid labor performed by women is very large and very profitable to those who own the means of production. She went on to add that their labor is cheapened as they receive no pay. Margaret Benson in Havalambos and Heald (1983).

According to Prof. Alele Williams at a national workshop, the number of illiterate women in Nigeria rose by 44% from 68 million in 1960 to 98 million in 1988. May National Concord (1992: P5)Shaukat Ali sees illiteracy as a discrepancy in the lives of women, particularly rural women. She adds that any attempt at their emancipation must begin with positive steps for the education of women. Daraveen Shauket Ali (1975 P: 196) In an apparent bid to curtail and/or eliminate these socio-cultural educational or other practices that had kept women marginalized, subservient, and virtually alienated in society, the United Nation General Assembly in 1975 came up with resolutions 3320 and 3520 calling for the full integration of women into national

development. That singular gesture opened up the floodgates of world focus on women, resulting in the formation of several women's organizations.

For instance, here in Nigeria, there are the National Council of Women's societies (NCWS), Women in Nigeria (WIN), Association of Nigeria Women in Business (ANWB), and the National Commission for Women

The Nigeria Association of University Women, Army officers' cover. The Federation of Women Lawyers, etc. In with resolutions 3320 and 3523 (1975), over the years, what has become more evident is the primary consciousness of these women's groups is their vehement advocacy for equality and same authority with men in virtually all ramifications of life, insinuating that what men can do, women can do better. In 1980, for instance, a conference was held in Copenhagen, Denmark to mark the United Nations decade for women.

What was remarkable about the conference was the continuous demand for women's liberation and equality with men, an idea that has been reiterated at subsequent conferences (Sec Vanguard June 19, 1995 P.5). Between April and May 1983, the first National Seminar on Women in Nigeria (WIN) was held at Ahmadu Bello University Zaria, drawing women representatives from several countries of the world.

During the seminar, it was proposed by the NCWS, one of the organizers, that a body be set up to engage in research and policy making with a view to improving the status of women. Mrs. B Ekwueme was the patron of the Vanguard on June 19, 1995.

It was in the furtherance of the quest for the improvement of women's status that more women's organizations, such as the Better Life Programme for Women, were established in the 1980s and 90s. The Better Life Programme was formed in September 1987, by Mrs. Mariam Babangida, wife of former president Ibrahim Babangida.

Among others, the BLP's prime objective is to raise the social concision of women about their social, political, and economic responsibilities. It also included mobilizing women for various actions, including seeking leadership roles in all spheres of national life. and also to motivate and stimulate women in rural areas towards achieving a better and higher standard of life (International Women's Day, March 7th, 1992 PH).

TEST OF HYPOTHESIS

Our three hypothesis are tested here with the use of chi square (χ^2), Chi square is a technique of analysis Used out if there is any significant relationship between school dropout and the various variables as indicated.

Out of the 600 questionnaires distributed to six communities in Awgu Local Government Area namely Ogbaku, Ogugu, Amoli, Owelli, Itutku, Isu - Awa, 525 were retrieved and found valid for analysis.

The three hypotheses includes

1. There is no significant relationship between poverty and school dropout,
2. There is no significant relationship between woman drop out from school and economic development and social inequality.
3. There is no significant relationship between school dropout and marginalization abuse and exploitation of the girl-child.

Contingency table for the test of hypotheses 1

Problems of poverty

Poverty	Express Agreement		Not Express Agreement	
Contribute to school drop out	a	290 (265)	b	110 (1340)
Total	c	325 (349)	d	925

Note) means the expected values

Degree of freedom)df (df) = 1

Level of significance = : 0.05

Table value of X^2 = 3.841

X^2 calculated = 11.5

Table value of X^2 = 3.841

X^2 Cal > X^2 exp

Therefore we reject the null hypotheses which states that there is no significant relationship between poverty and school dropout and accept the alternative hypotheses which says that there is significant relationship between poverty and school dropout. Poverty contributes to school dropout.

Contingency table for the test of hypothesis

Problems of discrimination

Poverty	Express Agreement		Not Express Agreement		
Hinder	A	340 (322)	b	150 (168)	490
Not Hinder	c	325 (349)	d	925	415
Total		595		310	905

Degree of Freedom (df) = 1

Level of Significance = 0.05

Table value of x^2 = 3.841

Calculated = 9.0

X^2 cal > table value of x^2

Therefore we reject the null hypotheses which state that there is no significance relationship between educational discrimination among women and hindrance of economic development as well as reinforce of social inequality. Contingency table for the test of hypothesis III

Problem of Marginalization & Exploitation

Poverty	Express Agreement		Not Express Agreement		
Marginalization & exploitation					
Marginalized Exploited	a	280 (320)	b	160 (80)	500
Not Marginalized and Exploited		280 (300)	d	190 (170)	470
Total		620		350	970

Not () means expected values

Degree of freedom df = 1

Level of significance = 0.05
 X^2 Cal = 5.95
Table value of X^2 = 3.841
 X Cal > X expected.

Therefore we rejected the null hypothesis which state that there no significant relationship between exploitation and drop out of school in favour of the alternative hypothesis which states that there is significant relationship between marginalization exploitation and drop out of school

DISCUSSION OF THE HYPOTHESIS

The first hypothesis states that there is no significant relationship between poverty and school dropout. The test of the hypothesis shows that the reverse is the case. In other words, there is a significant relationship between poverty and school dropouts, i.e., poor parental background and school dropouts.

Poverty in their hours of work forces children to combine schooling with selling or hawking of wares. Some attend school once a while and can hardly catch up with what is going on in the classroom.

This leads to poor performance, frustration, and drop-out. Some girls who hawk are also tricked into having sex with men they shouldn't and get pregnant, which forces them to quit school.

In addition, some parents who cannot afford to keep their children in school hire them as house helpers in exchange for monetary rewards in order to support the rest of the family. These claims on the effect of poverty are further attested by a former United States ambassador to Nigeria, Robea Renne, who observed that poverty has for the umpteenth time been identified with Nigeria. The national poverty rate is 54:40% and 75% of Nigerians are poor.

The second idea is that there is no strong link between dropping out of school and economic growth or social inequality.

Our findings indicate that being a school dropout has deleterious consequences not only for the individual concerned and his family but also for society as a whole. It places limitations on the development and use of human resources for the benefit of the individual, his family, and society. A nation that is unable to develop its human resources through education cannot progress. Such a society is prone to being poor, and poverty breeds crime and violence.

The third hypothesis says that there is no significant relationship between school dropout and marginalization and exploitation. Nigeria joined the rest of the world in celebrating 2021 Girl-child Day on the 11th of October 2021. Child rights advocates in Nigeria lament that Nigeria has nothing to celebrate as our girls have been left behind.

They asserted that Nigeria ranks in the bottom six globally in child welfare and in the bottom ten for girls' flourishing. They warned that the country may remain underdeveloped if it fails to address the problems of marginalization, abuse, and exploitation of girls. They also argued that girls should have the right to a future free of violence and discrimination, as well as equal access to education and health care, so that they can be prepared to be leaders in the future (see the Guardian, October 11, 2021).

The complications of the finding

If you don't try to stop kids from dropping out of school, especially girls, it's like going back to the dark ages. You're inviting darkness and shutting out light. Keeping girls down is the same as keeping society down, because their exclusion, abuse, and exploitation will continue to hurt the country's plans for growth. A society that is unable to develop the skills and knowledge of its people will not progress. Education is the key to adapting and spreading knowledge. Nigerian society will suffer and remain underdeveloped, possibly deteriorating further. Nigeria is currently being taunted by various media as the world's headquarters of poverty and that over one hundred million Nigerians are living in extreme poverty. A society that is dominated by the poor is a haven for violence and crime.

CONCLUSION

In Nigeria, the issue of school dropouts is a recognized social problem. The study set out to find the causes and consequences of school dropouts. A number of communities were selected for our study, and questionnaires were distributed to gather the findings. indicates that the factors responsible for school dropouts include poverty. Gender discrimination We also talked about being left out and abused, getting pregnant without wanting to, getting married too young, the influence of peers, and what the results mean.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings, the study recommends the following:

That a national education policy be made that makes sure all citizens have the same access to education.

implemented with vigorous and faithful implementation.

Education at all levels should be free and mandatory. This is to be upheld by legal sanctions. As a result, poor-friendly economic policies should be emulated, resulting in income redistribution. This is important if the poor are to be encouraged to leave their children, especially girls, in school.

Vigorous public education canvassing the dangers and implications of early pregnancy should be mounted. Education that will equip the recipients with knowledge and skills for survival after leaving The attempt to help the girl child should begin with a posture attempt at their education. Attention should henceforth be given to innate endowments irrespective of sex differences. Women should be encouraged to tear down the limiting boundaries of the home and enter into the wider world of social and political relations. Everything that leads to marginalization, abuse, and exploitation should be legislated against. Women should not have to deal with violence or discrimination, and they should have the same rights and access to education as men so they can be ready to lead in the future.

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