

The Influence of Socioeconomic, Cultural and School Based Factors on Access to Primary Education Among Girls in Bali LGA, Taraba State Nigeria.

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Abstract

The best practice for developing any society lies in investing in human capital, especially, through education. Nigeria has set out policy for free basic education. However, despite heavy investment in the sector, access to basic education for the girl child remains a challenge. The study sought to establish factors influencing low access of the girl child to free primary education in Nigeria with a focus on Bali Local Government Area (LGA). Quantitative data collected were analyzed using content analysis and the Statistical Package for Social Sciences respectively. Data were presented using inferential statistics. The study established that socioeconomic, cultural, school based factors impeded girl child access to free primary education. (Under socio-economic factors, income levels, significantly influenced access at (p=.002**), educational level was associated with access at (p=.002**), family size and child labour, impacted on access at (p=.033* and p=.043*). Under cultural factors, religious belief significantly influenced access at (p=.002), early marriage was related to access at (p=.024*), patriarchal ideology influenced access at (p=.003**) (already discussed in the other paper). Under school based factors, only distance to school was associated to access at (p=.004**). The study recommended that the Ministry of Education should collaborate with Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) such as UNICEF and USAID to organize school feeding programmes among communities.

Keywords: Girl child, Education access, Influence, Socioeconomic, Cultural, and School based Factors.

Introduction

Education is a critical aspect of human resource development and one of the most promising pathways for individuals to realize better and more productive lives. It is also one of the primary drivers of economic development of every nation in the world (Glennerster *et al*, 2011). This is reiterated in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that education is not only an end in itself, but also a means to achieving a broader global development agenda, (United Nations Development Program (UNDP), 2014).

The foregoing explains why the international community has singled out education as a basic human right and a catalyst for development. In this regard, education has been given a central focus in most international treaties, conventions and agreements. This recognition is exemplified in the international goals, strategies and targets that were set during the past years (UNDP, 2015). Similarly, the Education for All goals were established at Jomtien (Thailand) in 1990 and reaffirmed at the 2000 World Education Forum in Dakar, Senegal (United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF), 2016). With the Millennium Development Goals, established in 2000, the world's government's commitment to achieving universal access to free, quality and compulsory primary education by 2015, especially for the girl-child was particularly emphasized (UNICEF, 2011).

While the role of education may generally be applauded, it is also true that women and girls, the world over, have generally been disadvantaged in their bid to access educational opportunities. This happens in disregard to the fact that education has the potential to allow women and girls to participate optimally in national development. Similar observations are made by Simbine *et al*, (2015) who observed that girls all over the world have suffered from sex engendered denial and discrimination in most aspects of national development. Arguably, one of the most serious kind of denials and discrimination has been that of access to education as a basic human right.

Indeed, there exist wide disparities in girl-child access to educational opportunities in the world today, (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural organization (UNESCO), 2015). Over 130 million children in the world are not in school and two thirds of these children are girls. More precisely around the world, close to 45 million more girls than boys are not receiving primary education (Johannes, 2010). The girl child should be given equal educational opportunities like her male counterpart, so that she can impact positively to the community and national development.

However, the right of the girl-child to have equal access to educational opportunity is not a new subject in educational discourse. In its emphatic and resounding declaration, Article 26 of the United Nations (UN) Universal Declaration on Human Rights of 1948 had identified access to education as a basic human right. While emphasizing on the same declaration in 1990, the World Conference on Education for All (EFA) declared that improving access to education for girls and women should be "the most urgent priority" (Kyari and Ayodele, 2014). Evidently, more than one hundred countries re-affirmed this position at the April, 2000, Dakar World Education Forum by urging all states in the world to ensure that by 2015 all children, with special emphasis on girls, to have had access to and completed primary education of good quality (Ibid). The problem with such global declarations, however, is that they often leave the discretion of implementation to state parties who do not always translate them into tangible actions. Evidently, there exists significant discrimination in girl-child education in many societies currently. In Afghanistan, for instance, girls are barred from school under the Taliban regime, (Alabi

and Alabi, 2014). In Northern Nigeria, Boko Haram means “western education is forbidden, (Ruquyyatu, 2013). The insurgency had brought a vital blow on access to education of pupils and students, especially girls in Northeast Nigeria. In fact, parents and pupils/students live in perpetual fear of attacks, which has grievous consequences on girls’ education (Medugu, 2017). The group has carried mass abductions, including the kidnapping of 276 school girls from Chibok in April 2014, children, especially girls and educators in Northeast Nigeria are out of school (Medugu, 2017). The constant threat posed by Boko Haram in Northeast Nigeria, which started 2009 and other extremists’ religious sects, like the Jama’atu Anbarul Mmuslima, FinBadilas Sudan, undermines effort at improving education in Northeast Nigeria (Ruquyyatu, 2013).

Traditionally, the role of the female has been linked mainly to reproductive activities, together with matters related to beauty and homemaking (Akinbi and Akinbi, 2015). Further, it has always been assumed that the female gender can find happiness and fulfillment only as mothers and wives. Indeed, the obstacles women and girls face in their bid to access education in Africa has always been there and they continue to persist. The result of this has been to render women and girls as weak actors in national development.

However, the centrality of women’s contribution to national development cannot be underestimated (UNICEF, 2016). Evidence from several studies has shown that an investment in girls’ education is an investment in the family, community and nation as it improves the overall quality of life of the population (Adetunde & Akenisan, 2008; Offorma, 2009; Makama, 2013). Ogundipe (2007) reported that with adequate education, a girl child has a chance to be enlightened on health and national issues, better ways of bringing up her own children and an informed decision making about her future. In fact, the education of women and girls is particularly associated with many benefits such as a significant reduction in infant and child mortality and morbidity, improvement in family health and nutrition, lowering of fertility rates, improved chances of children’s education, and increased opportunities for income earning in both wage and non-wages sectors (Nkosha *et al*, 2013).

Some of the ways in which girls generally find themselves excluded in accessing education in Africa are evident in family allocation of resources for education (Ogundipe, 2007). More specifically, if a family has to make a choice about who should get first priority to be allocated limited finances to go to school, obviously the boy carries the day (UNICEF, 2016). In this regard, girl child education has become an issue of concern in most developing countries, especially in sub-Saharan Africa, where there are large numbers of young girls who have limited access to school. For example, the number of out-of-school girls had risen from 20 million in 1990 to 24 million in 2002 in sub-Saharan Africa (Offorma, 2009).

Accordingly, UNICEF (2016) further confirmed the fact that Nigeria has 9 million out-of-school children, and this has been referred to as the highest in the whole of Africa.

Girls and women constitute 50% of Nigerian population; ironically, less than 39% of the female populations are literate against 63% literate male population (Nwakego, 2014). Agana and Miller (2015) observed that socio-cultural practices such as early marriages (development, the use of charms), traditional gender roles and teenage pregnancies are some of the barriers accounting for the poor access, of girls to primary education thereby, making girl-child education an elusive dream. In Ethiopia, for example, under eight years old girls are sometimes abducted for marriage (Offorma, 2009). In South Africa, a report by Human Rights Report (2008) warned that sexual violence and abuse hampered girls' access to education. In most West African countries, girls are recruited from poor and rural families to work as domestic servants in the coastal cities or even neighboring countries (Offorma, 2009).

In the work of Alabi and Alabi (2012), it was described that girl-child education in Nigeria is a forgotten resource. In spite of this progress made in the area of children for, particularly in primary education one of the shortcomings related to access to education in Nigeria is gender disparity. Nigeria has the lowest human development index in sub-Saharan Africa and has a wide national disparity in the ratio of male and female enrollment in schools (UNDP, 2015). Statistics indicate that the national primary school enrollment ratio for the boys and girls is 3:2. Murkhtar (2011) identified religious misinterpretation, cultural practice, poverty, early marriage, illiteracy, and inadequate school infrastructure as some of the factors hindering girl-child education. This is because formal, female education in the Northern States is accorded less value. It is recorded that Nigeria is, indeed, among those West African countries which have the highest number of children who are out of school; more than 75percent of those reported to be out of school are girls (UNICEF, 2016).

Taraba State, like any other state in Northeast Nigeria, grapples with low girl-child access in primary schools. The rate in the state stands at 42.06% of the national figures (National Bureau of Statistics, 2016). Such a high percentage has become a major concern and is a worrying trend to the Taraba state government, Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and other stakeholders in the education sector. This low access of girls to free primary education has, over the years, continued to widen the gap in educational and economic inequalities between the girl and the boy child (Tyoakaa *et al*, 2014).

The scenario above seems to mirror the study area (Bali) which is one of the Local Government Areas (LGA) in Taraba State, Nigeria. The site of the study was chosen because it has the lowest girl-child access rate to free primary education (Taraba State Annual School Census Report 2014/2015). The figures of Bali LGA in Taraba State stood at 42% in 2014/2015. These statistics depict that there is a huge gap between the girl-child and their male counterparts in terms of access to free primary education. Indeed, the 42% access rate for girls means that 58% have limited access to basic education (Taraba State Annual School Census Report 2014/2015). It is against this background that the present

study was mooted to find out the factors that influence low access among girls to the FPE in Bali Local Government area, Taraba State, Nigeria.

Statement of the problem

Though the Federal Government of Nigeria has set out policy for free primary education with heavy investment in the sector and produced the blue print on girl child education, nevertheless, access to basic education by the girls in Nigeria remains problematic (Makama, 2013). According to UNICEF (2016), Nigeria has 9 million (37%) out-of-school children, which is more than one-third of its primary school age children and this is the highest in Africa. More precisely, 7.3 million children have limited access to primary education in Nigeria; 62% of which are girls (UNICEF, 2011).

Despite the policy considerations by the national government of Nigeria, the problem of girl child access to free primary education remains bleak. There is much to be done to enable the girl child to have access to free primary education, particularly in Bali LGA. The critical questions to this end are therefore what factors contribute to low access of girl children to basic education and why were the responses of the educational practices to the demands of the principles of gender equality of access to free primary education not being realized in Bali LGA? Accordingly, what and why of low access to free primary education for the girl child in Bali LGA guided the execution of this study.

Objectives of the study

This study was guided by the following objectives:

1. To establish the influence of socioeconomic, cultural, and school based factors on low access of the girl-child to FPE in Bali LGA.
2. To examine the extent to which socioeconomic, cultural, and school based factors influence girls' access to FPE in Bali LGA.

Theoretical framework

The study adopted Ruth Pearson's gender relations theory (1995), to interpret the results. According to this theory, society views all social activities, social roles and social relations as taking place on the basis of gender roles generally assigned by society to men and women. Gender roles, according to Pearson, have a strong ideological content which has a powerful effect on how men and women finally view themselves and practice their social relations and social roles. This ideology, so to speak, portrays society as having the ultimate say in determining the content of gender socialization processes which are often used to apportion social roles, and construct social relations.

Pearson's gender relations framework advances the view that the formation and distribution of gender roles in any given society are deeply rooted in ideologies which

define the divide between patriarchy and matriarchy. Gender roles, in this respect, are assumed to be bedrock activities and experiences of men and women, on the basis of which gender socialization processes are defined, constructed and affirmed. In turn, the content and processes of gender socialization are used to define, develop and distribute social activities, social relations and social roles.

Pearson's gender relations theory is found to be appropriate for this study because it provides an interpretation framework on the basis of which various social relations, patriarchal and matriarchal ideology, cultural and economic norms and standards may be used to assign women opportunities of access to social activities such as in education and social economic practices. Arguably, the cultural, patriarchal and socioeconomic norms described in the theory tend to suggest how some of the fundamental factors which hinder girl-child access to FPE in Nigeria may be identified and isolated. Further, the theory is found relevant for this study because it captured correctly the interpretation of how patriarchal ideology, socioeconomic and social cultural factors have influenced access of the girl-child to FPE in Nigeria. The theory views that women and girls have been relegated to performing reproductive and undervalued roles within the households.

The theory asserts that gender roles are dictated by society through patriarchal ideology, cultural norms, and socioeconomic standards. It attempts to explain how the traditional set-up, for example, the head of the family was always assigned to the male parent role. In support of Pearson's theory, Igube (2004) and Walby (1990) viewed that the patriarchal ideology is to some extent dominant in Africa. These patriarchal structures, so to speak, have always put restrictions on girl-child access to educational opportunities.

Indeed, Walby (1990) and Igube (2004) identified two distinctive forms of patriarchy, namely private and public. Private patriarchy is often the kind where the domination of women and the girl-child occurred within the household. Here, the girls are often socialized to belief that they cannot take independent decisions on their own. Whereas public patriarchy is a more inclusive type and captures many aspects in the society where girls are excluded more compared to their male counterparts. The strength of this theory is its ability to portray gender roles as being dictated by the society through structures such as patriarchal ideology, cultural norms, and socioeconomic structures, which marginalize, relegate and trivialize girls and women to performing under-valued roles within the households which impede their educational opportunities in the society.

This theory further depicts the imbalance of gender role in the society that tends to prioritize patriarchal ideology which hinders the girl child the rightful access to basic education. Accordingly, looking at the Nigerian case through the lenses of this Theory; it was instructive to note that Nigerian education systems, state policies and priorities always tended to be biased toward patriarchal interests. The weakness of this theory is its inability to view that society has deep rooted perception and socialization that are hard to eliminate, there are roles in the society that are female oriented naturally and unchangeable. The role

of childbearing for example, may not change gender practical roles which have some societal perceptions.

Research Methodology

Research design

The study employed a cross-sectional survey research design in the collection of data. A survey design entails data collection on more than one case and at a single point in time in order to collect both quantitative and qualitative data in connection with two or more variables which are often examined to detect patterns of association (Bryman, 2012). Survey design was selected for the study because it allowed not only the collection of both quantitative and qualitative data at the same time, but also is the most commonly used and appropriate design for sociological and educational research (Brannen, 2005). It also enabled the collection of large quantities of data from the study population in the most economical way based on its efficiency with regard to such studies.

Sample size

The sample size determination for this study was based on Kothari (2004) study, who suggested that a minimum of 30 to a maximum of 200 subjects is considered acceptable as a sample size in social survey research. Accordingly, thirty (30) head teachers were sampled from the 93 schools within Bali LGA. Second, two hundred (200) parents of girls out of school were sampled from household units within Bali LGA. The study selected 30 head teachers and 200 parents of girls out of school, which fall between the minimum and maximum limits of social sciences sample size. Given the response rate of 90%. out of the total number of 200 respondents, ten (10%) or 20 respondents did not give their feedback.

Research instruments

The study utilized a combination of a questionnaire and an interview schedule for collecting data from the respondents. Interviews were conducted among parents with girls out of school, while questionnaires were administered to the head teachers because of the differential literacy levels. The rationale behind a combined tool approach (questionnaires and interview schedules) was to allow participation of both literate and non-literate respondents in the study. The idea was to deepen the understanding of the problem under study and to capture the salient information relevant in achieving the objectives of the study. The questionnaire and interview schedule were constructed guided by the variables and specific objectives of the study.

Result of the Findings

Influence of socioeconomic factors on Access to FPE

One of the study objectives was to establish the influence of socioeconomic factors on access to FPE for the girl child in Bali LGA. During the field work, socioeconomic factors were found to affect access of the girl child in Bali LGA. Income level of parents, educational level, family size and child labor were unearthed to vary with access in Bali LGA, as observed in the earlier findings. The summary of the findings is presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Socio- economic factors influencing low access to FPE

Note: p values: * $p \leq 0.05$ ** $p \leq 0.001$

	Enrollment			Transition			Completion			Retention		
	χ^2	P	Df	χ^2	P	df	χ^2	P	df	χ^2	P	df
Income Level	.062	.803	1	10.572	.002*	1	11.360	.004**	1	10.753	.001**	1
Level of Education	.049	.824	1	2.848	.091	1	6.682	.002**	1	7.579	.003**	1
Family Size	.160	.689	1	3.341	.068	1	4.522	.033*	1	.537	.464	1
Child Labor	.562	.454	1	3.545	.043*	1	2.481	.115	1	1.833	.170	1

Table 1 presents results of analysis on the influence of socioeconomic factors on girl child access to FPE as measured by indicators of access namely; enrollment, transition, completion and retention. In fact, the income level of the parents has a likelihood of affecting the ability of the household's in provision of access to education for their children, including the girl-child. Indeed, it was clearly observed that the transition, completion and retention rates of the girl child in accessing FPE was greatly hampered by income, as shown in earlier findings on child labor and early marriages for the girl to complement family income. This finding supports that of Undiyaundeye and Igiri (2015), who posit that the economic factors, especially household poverty and hunger, are probably the most influential in adversely affecting the girl child access to FPE particularly in rural areas. Indeed, parental investment behavior concerning the irrelevance of girls' education influences access rates of the female pupils in schools (Ibid). Alagoa (2015), also viewed

that poor parents tended to give priority to essential needs such as food, shelter and clothing and the girl-child education was not prioritized.

However, parental education was observed to play a significant role, as far as access to primary education for the girl child in Bali LGA is concerned. Importantly, this study unearthed the fact that the level of parental education plays a pivotal role in accessing FPE by the girl child. In fact, the association between parental level of education and access was found to be significant in completion and retention rates at ($\chi^2 = 6.682$, $df = 1$, $P = 0.002^{**}$), and ($\chi^2 = 7.579$, $df = 1$, $P = 0.003^{**}$). These findings mean that the level of education has significant influence on access to FPE for the girl child at 98% and 97% confidence level respectively in Bali LGA. The findings support those of Alam (2015), who reported that parents with no or low levels of education cannot provide the support and often do not appreciate the benefits of schooling. Parental level of education was significant for 2 indicators only.

Moreover, family size was equally found to have a profound effect on access to education for the girls in the study area. In this study, family size refers to the number of people who share the same roof and live together within the same household. It can be deduced from the findings of the study that family size significantly influence access to FPE at ($\chi^2 = 4.522$ $df = 1$ $p = .033^*$). More precisely, the relationship was found to be significant at 96.7% confidence level. Important to note is that, the variable family size is very significant in determining adequacy of resources to be shared among members of the households, especially in the provision of access to education for the girl child. Family size was only significant with completion

Finally, Table 1 presents the finding on the influence of child labour on access to FPE. Child labour was found to influence access to education for the girl child. Moreover, child labour in this study means the use of the girl child as a means of generating income to support family needs and wants. Child labour was found to have profound effect on access to girl-child education in the study area. It was evident from the findings that there was 95.7% confidence that child labour has an influence on access to primary education. Child labour as a factor was found to be significantly associated with transition at ($\chi^2 = 3.545$, $df = 1$, $p = .043^*$).

Influence of cultural factors on access to FPE

One of the objectives of the study was to establish the influence of cultural factors on access to FPE for the girl child in Bali LGA. Culture, especially patriarchal ideology, was observed to be strongly practiced in Bali during the study. Issues of child preference and early marriages dictated by culture were rampant as reported in the earlier univariate findings of this study. Next is the exploration of the nexus between cultural factors and access to FPE for the girl child in the Bali LGA as captured in Table 2

Table 2: Cultural factors influencing girl child access to FPE

	Enrollment			Transition			Completion			Retention		
	χ^2	P	df	χ^2	p	df	χ^2	P	Df	χ^2	p	Df
Religious affiliation	1.14 3	.285	1	16.84 8	.001 *	1	3.79 0	.002*	1	6.54 6	.347	1
Early marriage	.014	.906	1	5.126	.570	1	6.65 0	.024*	1	2.27 7	.131	1
Patriarchal ideology	1.49 5	.221	1	5.298	.002 *	1	4.09 3	.003*	1	1.36 6	.242	1
Girl-child neglect	.232	.630	1	3.096	.078	1	.660	.417	1	1.39 3	.238	1
Teenage pregnancy	414	.520	1	.635	.425	1	3.46 5	.131	1	2.28 0	.046 *	1

Note: p values: * $p \leq 0.05$ ** $p \leq 0.001$

Table 3 : Cultural factors influencing girl child access to FPE

The variable religious affiliation was defined to mean membership of an institution of parents of the girl child that promotes spiritual aspects of a particular faith or set of beliefs and practices that members of a group in a society adhere to. Of importance in this study is that, religious belief was considered to have influence on decisions with regard to access to FPE in Bali LGA. Analysis in Table 2 shows that religious beliefs have a significant impact on access to FPE in Bali LGA. Precisely, the variable religious beliefs were found to be significantly associated with transition and completion rates to FPE for the girls in Bali LGA at ($\chi^2 = 16.848$ df=1, P=**.001****) and ($\chi^2 = .790$, df=1, P=**.002****) respectively. This finding was in line with that of Alhassan (2010), who observed that within Islamic religious belief, certain attitudes and perceptions inhibit girl child transition and completion rates in primary school education. Religious belief was therefore found to be significantly associated with only transition and completion rates.

Further, Table 2 unearthed that early marriages was significantly associated with completion rates for FPE in Bali LGA. This variable, early marriage in this study, was envisioned to mean marital union entered for daughters without them reaching the age of maturity (18 years), where they can freely and fully consent in marital unions. The variable, early marriages, was conceived to have an influence on access to FPE for the girl child in Bali LGA. Indeed, it was found that early marriage significantly influences completion to FPE at ($\chi^2 = 6.650$ df = 1, P = **.024***). This depicts that early marriage impacts on access at 97.6% confidence level. Thus, there is a significant relationship between early marriage

and access to education for the girl child in Bali LGA. This finding is consistent with that of (Nkosha et al, 2013), who posited that the girl child was discriminated against in terms of access to basic education and was married early in life thereby denying a girl child the required competencies for community and national development.

At another level, the analysis also focused on patriarchal ideology on access to education. Patriarchal ideology, was found to have greatly impacted on girl child access to FPE. The variable, patriarchal ideology was conceived to refer to who among the children, boys and girls, are given the first opportunity when it comes to accessing education. The variable was intended to measure the attitude of parents, especially household heads, with regard to the belief that girls are a weaker sex and of lesser value than boys, which is a common belief in patriarchal societies like those in Bali LGA. Patriarchal ideology on access to education as a factor was found to be significantly associated with completion and transition rates ($\chi^2 = 5.298$ df= 1 P= **.002****), and ($\chi^2 = 4.093$ df= 1, P = **.003****), meaning that patriarchal ideology has a significant influence on access to education for girls at 98% and 97% respectively.

Moreover, neglect of the girl child was tested against the four dimensions of access as measured by indicators of enrollment, transition, completion and retention, and was found not to be significantly associated with all the indicators of access to FPE. Hence, the researcher concluded that girl child neglect has no significant relationship with access to FPE for girls in Bali LGA.

Finally, teenage pregnancy as a factor was also found to be significant in this analysis. Teenage pregnancy in this study was defined as an unintended or intended pregnancy during adolescence among school going girls. Importantly, this study unearthed the fact that teenage pregnancy plays a significant role in affecting retention rate in primary education. Evidently, teenage pregnancy was shown to have 95.4% ($\chi^2 = 2.280$ df = 1, p=**.046***) confidence in influencing access to primary education. This study is consistent with that of WHO (2012) which viewed that in many parts of the world, girls who are pregnant, regardless of their circumstances will be excluded from school, many do not return after giving birth due to rules, fees, lack of childcare and unavailability of flexible school programs.

Influence of School Based Factors on Access to FPE

The study further sought to establish the influence of school based factors on access to FPE for the girl child in Bali LGA. Table 3 presents the results of the analysis based on school based factors vis a vis indicator of access enrollment, transition, completion and retention rates in primary school.

Table 3: School based factors influencing girls’ low access to FPE

	Enrollment			Transition			Completion			Retention		
	χ^2	P	df	χ^2	p	df	χ^2	p	Df	χ^2	P	df
Distance	1.421	.233	1	3.712	.054	1	5.413	.004**	1	194		1
Sexual Harassment	2.597	.107	1	.974	.324	1	209	.648	1	1.703	192	1

Note: p values: * $p \leq 0.05$ ** $p \leq 0.001$

From Table 3, distance to school was observed to have significant influence on completion rates of the girl child to FPE in Bali LGA. It was clear that distance from home to school has an impact on access of the girl child to FPE. Indeed, it was found out that distance to school had a 96% ($\chi^2 = 5.413$, $df = 1$, $p = .004^{**}$) confidence level. This finding is in line with that of Akamagune *et al* (2017) who observed that the distance between school and home affects girls’ education more than it does for boys because parents are afraid to let their girls walk alone except when they are accompanied by the older person.

Finally, it was also evident that sexual harassment had no significant relationship with access to FPE in Bali LGA. Sexual harassment, therefore tested non-significant for enrollment, transition, retention and completion rates in Bali LGA. This finding is not in tandem with that by Human Rights Report (2008), which posited that sexual harassment and violence affect girl child school access and performance, resulting in decreased attendance, participation, and completion of primary education.

Conclusion

Socioeconomic factors, namely; income level of parents, educational level, family size and child labor were found to have significant influenced low access to FPE. Income significantly influenced low access at transition, completion and retention rates, while family size and child labour significantly influenced low access at the completion and transition rates respectively. Cultural factors were established to significantly influence low access to FPE. Religious belief significantly influenced low access at the transition and completion rates, while early marriage significantly influenced access at completion rate. Patriarchal ideology had significant influence on low access at the transition and completion rates. Teenage pregnancy significantly influenced access at the retention rates. Lastly, school based factors explored also revealed to have established significant influence on low access. Distance from home to school tends to significantly influence low access at the completion rate. Thus, despite the fact that early marriages continue to occur in the study area, it is a form of human rights abuse. According to the Nigerian Child’s Rights Acts 2003, section 21, it is stipulated that the age of consent is at 18 years. The study,

therefore that the provisions of the Nigerian Child's Rights Act (2003) is not complied with in Bali LGA.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made;

- i. That the Federal Government should come up with a new policy in collaboration with Ministries of Health and Education that would educate the parents on the implication of early marriages and teenage pregnancy in the community. This can be done through creating awareness and staging drama to educate the parents within this community.
- ii. Girl-child victims should be used as part of the educating process so that they, the parents of girl out of school, can see, listen and be sensitized.
- iii. Deliberate policies should be formulated by the Federal Government of Nigeria in collaboration with the Federal Ministry of Education with regard to distance to school.
- iv. Schools should be located as much as possible close to the homesteads, so that girls can access primary education within short distances. Thus, availability of school in this community should not only be the priority of the Federal and State Governments, but other barriers to accessing primary education should also be identified and addressed.

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