

## Perception of nomads on girl-child education for sustainable pastoralism development in Ogbomosho agricultural zones, Oyo state, Nigeria

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**Abstract:** Education plays an important role in socioeconomic development and it is particularly an issue among marginalized cultures. This study investigated the perception of nomads on girl-child education in Ogbomosho, Nigeria. Snowball technique was used to select 50 respondents based on availability. Data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistical tools. The study found that 98.0% of the respondents were married with children. The majority (88.0%) were not educated beyond primary school while 82.0% relied solely on pastoralism as a source of livelihood. All the nomads sampled believe in girl-child education. Majority (98.0%) were aware of the benefit in educating a girl-child and that girl-child education is a necessity while 60.0% of them agreed that it is good for a girl-child to be in school. Results further show that educational background and religion both have significant influence on their level of awareness of the benefits of girl-child education. The study concludes that nomads have a positive perception to girl-child education and this is a reason for allowing their female children to attend schools. The study therefore recommended that the government through the National Commission for Nomadic Education (NCNE) should provide a forum to sensitize the nomads to allow their girls complete their education.

**Keywords:** Girl-child education, Nomadic children, Nomads livelihood

### INTRODUCTION

Educational development in Sub-Saharan Africa is faced with serious challenges. One major challenge is ensuring that every child, irrespective of his or her socio-cultural and economic background, has access to and completes quality basic education. This entails utilizing appropriate strategies and making adequate provisions for all children within school age to attend school and receive relevant and functional education. Education is a factor for bringing changes in individuals regardless of gender. Hence, girl-child education increases economic productivity, improves health, nutrition and environmental management, reduces poverty and infertility rates, and lowers infant and maternal mortality. It is imperative to say that education plays a particularly important role as a foundation for girls' development towards adult life. According to the U.S. Agency for International Development and the World Bank, 57 percent of the 72 million primary school age children who do not attend school are females (Gender Statistics, 2010). Additionally, girls are four percent less likely than boys to complete primary schools.

Whilst many gains have been recorded with regards to overall level of education worldwide and more children than ever are now attending primary school (King, 2013), there is still not world-wide gender parity in education. In every income bracket, there are more female children than male children who are not attending school. Generally, girls in the poorest household have the lowest chance of getting an education (Jensen, 2010). This inequality does not necessarily change in adulthood. Gender inequality in education is extreme. Girls are less likely to access school, to remain in school or to achieve in

education. Nomads are seen by many as those without access to good food, clean water, health care, clothes, or even shelter. Aderinoye, Ojokheta and Olojede (2007) are of the view that nomads are "those who do not have access to education; who do not understand their socio-cultural predicament and lack the basic literacy skills". These challenges made it difficult for nomads to contribute to national development despite the fact that they have the potentials to provide the country with food and meat in the event of food crisis.

The National Commission for Nomadic Education (NCNE) was established to among other things, create wider opportunities for an estimated 9.3 million nomads (6.6 per cent of Nigerians) to acquire literacy skills. Specifically, Decree 41 of 1989 mandated NCNE to formulate policy and issue guidelines in all matters relating to nomadic education in Nigeria; implement guidelines and ensure geographical spread of nomadic education activities and target for the nomadic people who cross state boundaries; establish schools in the settlements carved out for nomadic people (FGN, 1989; Mohammed, 2010). Government then realized that unless a special educational provision was made for the nomads, they would have no access to formal and non-formal education. The obvious fact that they also participate in national activities such as census and elections were equally ignored (Muhammad & Abbo, 2010). One of the Commission's basic responsibilities is the provision of primary education to the children of pastoralists and migrant fishermen. This responsibility is carried out in close collaboration with states and local governments and the local communities. As at March 2001, there were

1,574 nomadic primary schools located in all (36) states of the Federation. Out of this number, 1102 are schools for nomadic pastoralists, while 472 are schools for migrant fishermen. The total pupil enrolment in these schools was 203,844 made up of 118,905 males and 84,939 females. The total number of teachers as at 2001 was 4,907. Since the inception of the programme, about 15,833 pupils have successfully graduated from the nomadic school system. This is made up of 10,290 boys and 5,543 girls, which represents 65.0% and 35.0% respectively. Formal education is often positively associated (even by nomadic groups themselves (Dyer, 2008) with increased social capital, yet it remains very difficult for migrating groups to take advantage of it.

A girl is a female human from birth through childhood and adolescence to the attainment of adulthood when she becomes a woman. The focus on poverty reduction enables the right to education to be a powerful tool in making a change in the lives of girls and women. Educating girls and women is an important step in overcoming poverty and ensuring economic growth and development. An educated woman is an empowered woman and more marketable in terms of employment. The lack of education denies a girl child the knowledge and skills needed to advance her status. If education must contribute to development, then it must be equally made available to all citizens regardless of gender and an array of socio-cultural barriers (CEDAW, 1979). This is because the greatest investment that any nation can make for the quick development of its economic, political, sociological and human resources is education.

This study therefore sought to examine the level of awareness of benefits of girl-child education and determine the level of participation of girl-child in education among nomads. It also investigated the perceived constraints to girl-child education by nomads and identified the socio-cultural effects of girl-child education on nomads.

## METHODOLOGY

The study was carried out in Ogbomoso agricultural zones, Ogbomoso in Oyo State, Nigeria. Ogbomoso has a total population of 657,417 inhabitants (NPC, 2006) with a mean annual rainfall of 1,247mm and a relative humidity of 75% and 95%. Situated in the northern part of Oyo State, Ogbomoso is mainly known for marketing of agricultural products as well as white collar jobs and various handiworks such as trading, carpentry, tailoring among others.

The population of the study are the nomads in Ogbomoso agricultural zone of Oyo State. The study

area was purposively selected based on the large number of settled nomads in the area. All the local government areas in the zone were selected for this study. In selecting the sample, ten households were randomly selected from each agricultural zone making a total of 50 household heads that form the sample size for this study. A head per hut was used to represent the household. Data for this study was obtained from primary and secondary sources. The independent variables measured included the socio economic characteristics of the nomads (such as age, religion, marital and education status), the level of awareness of benefits and participation and perceived constraints while the dependent variable was the perception of nomads on girl child education in the study area. The descriptive statistics such as frequency counts and percentages was used to analyze the socioeconomic characteristics of the respondents and their level of awareness of girl-child education.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Socioeconomic characteristics of nomads in the study area

The larger percentage of the households in the sample (60.0%) were male-headed (Table 1). This implies that some households, as observed in the study, were represented by women whose husbands have gone in search of pasture for their livestock while there could be other reasons such as divorce for heading the household. Majority (98.0%) of the sample were also married. The results further show that household heads were in their productive age, as 74.0% are less than 40years. The nomads in this study generally had only primary school education. This is evident in about 88.0% who had no secondary education (Table 1). It therefore means that the few who have diversified their economic engagement, away from livestock and related chores, do so with their primary school leaving certificate. The attainment of primary school certificate may be as a result of their constant movement from one place to another and such movements could have been the basis for the implementation of the National Nomadic Education Programme (Ardo, 2007). The nomads in this study, like many others around sub-Saharan Africa, are largely Muslims as 96.0% of the sample from this study practice Islamic religion. About 82.0% of the sample does not engage in any other occupation except livestock related activities. The majority (88.0%) earned a low income of less than N20, 000. This implies that they earn much less than a thousand Naira on daily basis and this may be due to lack of access to opportunities such as education and low social status in communities (Maryam, 2015; Oniye, 2010). It is assumed that education can help

people including nomads to maximize their potentials to the full capacity.

**Table 1: Distribution of the sampled nomads based on their socioeconomic characteristics (n=50)**

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	30	60
Female	20	40
<b>Marital status</b>		
Married	49	98
Divorced	1	2.0
<b>Marriage type</b>		
Monogamy	26	52
Polygamy	24	48
<b>Age (years)</b>		
20-29	16	32
30-39	21	42
40-49	10	20
50-59	2	4
60-69	1	2
<b>Educational background</b>		
No formal education	34	68
Primary education	10	20
Secondary education	5	10
Higher education	1	2
<b>Religion</b>		
Christianity	2	4
Islam	48	96
<b>Primary occupation</b>		
No work	15	30
Cheese making	4	8
Pastoralist	29	58
Tailoring	1	2
Veterinary doctor	1	2
<b>Number of children</b>		
<5	34	68
5-9	15	30
10-19	1	2

Source: Field Survey, 2015

**Level of involvement in girl-child education and their awareness of the benefits**

Table 2 shows that all the households (100.0%) had their female children attending school. This shows that nomads have been allowing their girl-child to be educated. It could be because they have begun to see the benefits in girl-child education as 60.0% of the nomads agreed that it is good for a girl-child to be in school. A few (8.0%) were of the opinion that education does not exclude anyone while 18.0% of them agreed that their girl-child attends

school to attain socioeconomic status and 14.0% believe that girl-child education is due to civilization. Subsequently, 98.0% of the sampled households were aware that girl-child education is a necessity. The availability of nomadic schools could also have influenced the rate of nomads' children education. By this, we may say that the government policy through National Commission for Nomadic Education (NCNE) has positively influenced the education of nomads' children particularly the girl-child.

**Table 2: Distribution of the nomads based on their level of involvement in girl-child education (n=50)**

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
<b>Involvement</b>		
Yes	50	100
<b>Why?</b>		
It is good to be educated	30	60
Everyone goes to school	4	8
For position (Socioeconomic status)	9	18
Civilization	7	14

Source: Field Survey, 2015

**Awareness of girl-child education**

Table 3 shows that 64.0% agreed that girl-child education lead to civilization and majority (94.0%) believed it is a source of income generation. All the

households sampled (100.0%) believed that girl-child education is a means to successful productive future with 98.0% claiming that it gives a level of independence.

**Table 3: Distribution of the household heads based on the awareness of girl-child education (n=50)**

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Is it a necessity?		
Yes	49	98
No	1	2
Does it lead to civilization/ modernization?		
Yes	32	64
No	18	36
Is it a source of income generation?		
Yes	47	94
No	3	6
Does it give a level of independence?		
Yes	49	98
No	1	2
Is it a means to successful productive future?		
Yes	50	100
Is it a means to end poverty?		
Yes	49	98
No	1	2

Source: Field Survey, 2015

**Perception of nomads on the socio- cultural effects of girl-child education**

Results in Table 4 show that out of the sampled households, 96.0% were aware that girl-child education is not a waste of money. All the nomads (100.0%) agreed that girl-child education does not lead to loss of culture while majority (78.0%) said it does not lead to late marriage. Moreover, all of them (100.0%) agreed that it leads to increase in their

wellbeing while majority (90.0%) said it create opportunities. This resonated with Shao's (2010) findings that some parents in Monduli district had realized the value of educating their daughters although they were still confronted with a number of challenges when it came to sending girls to school. This is also similar to Oniye's (2010) position on women education.

**Table 4: Distribution of the sample based on the socio-cultural effects of girl-child education (n=50)**

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Is it a waste of money?		
Yes	2	4
No	48	96
Does it lead to civilization/modernization?		
Yes	31	62
No	19	38
Does it lead to loss of culture?		
Yes	0	0.0
No	50	100
Does it lead to late marriages?		
Yes	11	22
No	39	78
Does it increase well-being?		
Yes	50	100
No	0	0.0
Does it create opportunities?		
Yes	45	90
No	5	10

Source: Field Survey, 2015

**Constraints limiting nomads from educating their girl-child**

The results in Table 5 show poverty and excess work pose serious concern to the nomads as 64.0% were of the opinion that poverty prevents them from educating their girl-child. For most (84.0%) of the sample, excess workload in the home is a source of great concern such that girls are prevented from going to school so they can help their mothers in

some household chores. However, certain factors do not pose serious concerns over girl-child education as 96.0% of the household heads said peer pressure does not affect the education of a girl-child. Majority (94.0%) also agreed that poor educational background of parents does not affect a girl-child from being educated. Moreover, 92.0% of the heads in this study believed religion does not affect the education of a girl-child.

**Table 5: Distribution of nomads based on the constraints faced in educating their girl-child (n=50)**

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
<b>Poverty</b>		
Yes	32	64
No	18	36
<b>Too much workload</b>		
Yes	42	84
No	8	16
<b>Peer pressure</b>		
Yes	2	4
No	48	96
<b>Poor educational background</b>		
Yes	3	6
No	47	94
<b>Culture</b>		
Yes	4	8
No	46	92
<b>Religion</b>		
Yes	4	8
No	46	92

Source: Field survey, 2015

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This paper explains the pastoral community's perspectives on girls' education, based on their perception, parents' and girls' educational aspirations and impediments to girls realizing their aspirations. The study found that majority of parents are well disposed to girl-child education, few held negative stance concerning the value of educating girls. This shows that girl-child education awareness is on the increase and successful policy is possible, and progress can be made only when both the conceptual and the practical aspects of educational provision for nomads are considered at the same time. The need for the girl-child education among the nomadic pastoralists is not only imperative but it is indispensable for the socioeconomic development of Nigeria. To achieve this, emphasis must be given to the provision of sustainable education to the girl-child while the NCNE should ensure sensitization programmes to increase the awareness of girl-child education among nomads.

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