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**Factors Affecting Girl-Child Education among the Kambari of Niger
State, Nigeria: A Sociological Perspective**

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Abstract

This study examined factors that adversely affect girl-child education among the Kambari. Marx Weber's social action theory, patriarchy and sex role theories provided the theoretical framework. Empirical data were drawn from a household survey among 1,598 respondents, comprising a pair of adult males (385) and their sons (385) and adult females (414) and their daughters (414). A multi-staged sampling technic was employed to select sample units. Two structured questionnaires were employed for the household survey. Twelve case-studies of girl-children, fourteen in-depth interviews and fifteen FGDs were also conducted among different groups. The data were subjected to descriptive, logistic regression and content analyses. The burden of domestic work, unintended teenage pregnancy, poor academic performance, parental ignorance, child-betrothal and early marriage, son preference adversely affected the girl-child's access to education. The logistic regression shows that the odds of exhibiting discriminatory practice towards girl-child education are about 6 times higher among adult males compared to the females, 4.2 times higher among participants with no formal education, 4 times higher among adherents of traditional religion and 3 times among Muslims. Further, respondents with rigid conception of gender role are more likely to exhibit discriminatory gender practices as well as those with negative childhood experience, those from homes where men dominate in decision-making and those from homes with non-valuation of women's participation in decision-making. A holistic approach should be adopted at all levels of government, religious and traditional institutions to address the marginalization of Kambari girl-children in accessing formal education.

Keywords: Girl-child, child betrothal, gender disparity, girl-child education, Kambari

Introduction

The plight of the girl-child has gained the attention of the global community since the 1990s. The girl-child phenomenon became visible at the Fourth World Conference on Women held at Beijing in 1995, when it was identified as a critical area of concern. The Beijing Platform for Action (BPFA) laid out nine strategic objectives aimed at the elimination of discriminatory and harmful practices against the girl-child. Some of the strategic objectives were the elimination of discrimination against the girl-child with respect to education, health, nutrition, economic exploitation as well as all forms of negative cultural attitudes and practices. These objectives were framed with the view of holding national governments accountable for the promotion of the rights of the girl-child. The United Nations General Assembly in 2005 adopted a resolution on the girl-child whereby member states expressed a deep concern over discrimination and violation of the rights of the girl-child, especially less access for girls to education, nutrition, physical and mental health care as well as fewer opportunities and benefits of childhood (UN, 1996; UN, 1997). An earlier appraisal of BPFA 15⁺ (1995-2009) in Africa noted that discriminatory practices still persist against the girl-child (UNCEA, 2010). It is also disheartening that a more recent review of the Post-Beijing Platform of Action (BPFA) 20⁺ revealed that the girl-child is yet to be free from all forms of discriminations and other forms of harmful cultural practices (UNWOMEN, 2020; UNICEF *et al.*, 2020).

Perhaps the most critical area the girl-child faces discrimination is with respect to access to education. The Convention against Discrimination in Education adopted by the General Conference of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization on 14th December, 1960 conceived of the term “discrimination” in Article (1) (UNESCO, 2005: 13) to include any distinction, exclusion, limitation or preference which, being based on race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, economic condition or birth, has the purpose or effect of nullifying or impairing equality in education and in particular:

- (a) Of depriving any person or group of persons of access to education of any type or at any level.
- (b) Of limiting any person or group of persons to education of an inferior standard.

The Convention against Discrimination in Education upholds the principles of non-discrimination, universal access to education and equality of opportunity and treatment irrespective of gender. In addition, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in Article 26(1) affirmed the right of all to education irrespective of gender (UN, 1948). Furthermore, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women and the

Conventions on the Rights of the Child emphatically entrenched the rights to education and also the promotion of gender equality (UN, 1979; UN, 1989). Also, the Jomtiem Declaration (UNESCO, 1990), the Dakar Framework for Action (UNESCO, 2000), the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and currently the Incheon Declaration for Education 2030 all affirmed the right of the girl-child to education (UNESCO, 2016). Therefore, discrimination against the girl-child is a violation of her right to access qualitative education.

One of the key tools for accelerating sustainable development in any country and globally is making education accessible to all. It is the bedrock for achieving economic, social, and technological breakthroughs. Attaining the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in 2030 would be a mirage without concerted efforts by national governments to improve access, participation, completion and quality of education for all and the girl-child in particular. Educating the girl-child is a critical factor that would accelerate the process of sustainable development in Nigeria. Globally, evidence has shown that the education of the girl-child increases and boosts economic growth, empowers and improves the status of girls and women. This will, in the long-run, have the ability to reduce and close the gender gap in the labour force. Also, it reduces the incidences of infant and maternal mortality and child and early marriage among girl-children. Educating the girl-child empowers her to participate in community and national life (UNICEF, 2010; UNESCO, 2014; King and Winthrop, 2015; Sperling *et al.*, 2016).

Educating the girl-child has a multiplier effect on many social and demographic indicators. From the analysis conducted by the Global Partnership for Education, 2016, each additional school year can increase a woman's earnings by up to 20%. Also, girls with 12 years of education are five times less likely to marry as children compared to girls who have little or no education. Maternal death is more likely to decline by two-thirds if all mothers finished primary school. With respect to infant and child mortality, a child of a mother who can read is 50% more likely to live past 5 years of age; it has also been established that investing in girls' education in sub-Saharan Africa can boost agricultural output by 25% (Global Partnership for Education, 2016).

Unfortunately, despite the significant benefits of educating the girl-child to national development and the series of interventions of diverse kinds in scaling-up the girl-child's participation in education, she continues to lag behind in all education indicators vis a vis the boy-child. The critical issues with respect to girl-child education are: access, enrolment, retention and drop-out, equity, quality and achievement. The situation in Sub-Saharan Africa, and Nigeria in particular, is quite overwhelming because gender inequality in education will still remain a mirage by 2030 if the factors affecting her participation are not adequately addressed. It is against this background that this study is carried out. The study seeks to highlight some of the factors that encourage discrimination against the girl-child with respect to providing access to qualitative education among the Kambari in Niger State of North-Central Nigeria.

The Kambari is an ethnic minority group found mainly in Niger State, Nigeria. Their population in the 2006 census was 3,905,249, comprising 2,032,725 males and 1,917,524 females, representing a proportional share of 51.5% males and 48.8% females. The state population stood at an annual growth rate of 3.4% (Niger State, 2008; National Population Commission, 2006). According to ethnographic data, the Kambari are among the indigenous groups of Nigeria and are found particularly in the former Kontagora, Sokoto and Nassarawa Provinces. However, in Niger State, which is the focal area of the study, they are found in six Local Government Areas namely: Agwara, Borgu, Magama, Rijau, Mariga, and Mashegu (Temple, 1965; Otite, 1990; Ragada, 1992). Farming has been the main stay of the economy of the Kambari; they practice ‘communal farming’ known as “gaya” in Hausa and also called “gulmo” among the Kambari. Their religious affiliations include traditionalists who worshipped the “maigiro”, Christians and Moslems. The Kambari are strongly patrilineal by descent, and the homestead is patriarchal; a son succeeds the father as the head of the family. Marriage among the Kambari is for the most part patrilocal. They practise “child betrothal”, known as “kame” among the Kambari, which is arranged during infancy by parents of the bride’s family. The Kambari practice bridal services which is rendered by the prospective suitors before the marriage ceremony proper for a period of years until the girl-child is mature for marriage.

Looking at the trajectory of sustainable development in most developing countries, particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa, ethnic minorities usually lag behind in infrastructural development. More often than not they are also marginalised in other spheres of endeavour, and the pervasiveness of adherence to traditional values, norms and practices is very rife. This implies that under this prevailing environment, the girl-child is more vulnerable to discrimination. Therefore, this study will bring to fore the peculiarities of her plight and proffer solution to remedy the situation. This study is significant in view of the fact that there is dearth of studies on the Kambari.

Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

Girl-Child Educational Outcomes

According to UNESCO data, in 2014 there are about 263 million children worldwide who are not in school, out of which 61 million children are of primary school age, 60 million are of lower secondary school age and about 142 million are of upper secondary school age. Unfortunately, Sub-Saharan Africa is the region with the most children who are out of school, the majority of whom are girls. It has about 31 million children and 24 million adolescents who are out-of-school representing 50% and 39% respectively of the overall total who are out-of-school (UNESCO, 2016). Current trends in primary education, reveals that only 70% of children in low income countries will complete primary school in 2030, which is a goal that should have been achieved in 2015 (UNESCO, 2016). Unfortunately, universal secondary education seems unattainable by 2030. According to available data (2008-

2014), upper secondary completion rate was 84% in high income, about 43% for upper middle, 38% in lower middle and only 14% in low income countries (UNESCO, 2016).

Evidence from Nigeria reveals that there are about 10.5 million out-of-school children, out of which about 8 million are located in the northern parts of the country (UNICEF, 2020). The National Personnel Audit of Public and Private Schools conducted by the Federal Ministry of Education, estimated 10.2 million of out-of-school children aged 5-14 years (Aluko, 2019). It is significant to note that the overwhelming majority of these are girls. Also, other educational indicators revealed that discrimination against the girl-child has been an age long practice in Nigeria. The 2013 National Demographic Health Survey (NDHS) affirmed that 40.4% of females as against 29.5% males have never attended school. In addition, huge regional disparities exist, with about two-thirds of females in the North-East and North-West as against one-eighth of females in the South-West and South-South who have never attended school (NPC/RTI, 2014).

The situation has not improved tremendously despite efforts to enhance girls' education over the years. A number of studies have shown that the girl-child faces discrimination with respect to education in Nigeria especially in the northern states where boy-children continue to receive preference with respect to access to education. Even when the girl-child is given the rare privilege and opportunity, she is more likely to drop out of school and is not likely to complete 12 years of schooling. The persistence of discriminatory and harmful practices against the girl-child has been attributed to deep-rooted socio-cultural practices (Anyanwu, 1995; Ogidi, 1997; Aderinto, 1999; Ogidi, 2015; Offorma, 2019; UNESCO, 2016).

The 2018 NDHS revealed that about 36% of females and 27% of males had no education; the North-West and the North East had the highest percent of females without education, at 55% and 57% respectively (NPC and ICF, 2019). In addition, the 2018 NDHS revealed that gender disparities persist with respect to primary school Net Attendance Ratio (NAR) for children aged 6-12. The overall average is 61%, whereas the average for girls is at 59% and boys had 62%. At the secondary school level, the Net Attendance Ratio (NAR) dropped drastically among girls to 47% and 52% for boys. However, regional disparities indicated that the South-East had the highest NARs for both primary and secondary schools at 80% and 70% respectively. On the other hand, the North-East had the lowest at 46% and 31% respectively (NPC/ICF, 2019). The study area is among the least educationally advanced zone within the state. Data from the state on enrolment by gender (Niger State, 2013) indicate that girl-children are disadvantaged relative to boy-children in all levels of schooling.

Factors Affecting Girl-Child Education

A broad range of explanations have been adduced on why girl-children's school participation outcomes are poor, some of which are: socio-cultural,

socio-economic, school-based and institutional factors (Rufai and Ogidi, 2006; Plan, 2007; Zimmermann, 2011; Chitrakar, 2009). Some studies have categorized these factors into “supply” and “demand” barriers. The supply barriers refer to factors within institutions and the educational systems that tend to push away the girl-child from schooling. On the other hand, the demand factors are challenges experienced by parents which tend to pull the girl-child away from schooling (British Council, 2014; FHI 360, 2013 Kipkulei *et al.*, 2012). Others have categorized these factors into three major groups: household and community, school and system levels barriers (Gordon *et al.*, 2019). However, within the context of Northern Nigeria, it has been revealed that the most dominant categories of the supply and demand side of barriers are: educational, socio-economic and socio-cultural barriers (British Council, 2014). It is worthy of note that “these barriers are often linked and also mutually reinforcing across these levels” (Gordon *et al.*, 2019: 2).

On educational barriers, accessibility in terms of distance to school, poor infrastructure, safety and security, bullying and harassment, lack of female teachers and psychosocial support, attitudes of teachers, lack of gender sensitive curriculum are some of the factors identified (FHI 360, 2013, British Council, 2014; Para-Mallam, 2012; Gordon *et al.*, 2019). Other studies also identified factors such as lack of political will, non-enforcement of legal commitments and inadequate implementation plans (Gordon *et al.*, 2019; British Council, 2014, UNESCO, 2014). With respect to socio-economic barriers, the following factors are critical in affecting girls’ educational outcomes: poverty, cost of schooling and employment expectations (British Council, 2014; Para-Mallam, 2012; UNESCO, 2014).

The socio-cultural practices associated with a particular issue or phenomenon refer to the man-made factors which are acquired as members of a given society that usually affect the perception, awareness, motivation, attitude and behaviour of a people (Isiugo-Abanihe, 1994). On socio-cultural barriers, the factors identified are early marriage, teenage pregnancy, religion, lack of women’s participation in decision-making, gender norms and stereotypes (Action Aid International, 2011; Para-Mallam 2012; Ogidi, 1997; Adenrinto, 1999; British Council, 2014). Furthermore, some of the identified reasons for not investing in girl’s education are: being a girl, large family size, siblings to care for, burden of domestic work, peak of agricultural cycle, early marriage and poverty among others (Plan, 2007; Zimmermann, 2011). Despite efforts being made to improve the girl-child’s participation outcomes through legal, economic and institutional interventions she still faces discrimination when compared to the boy-child with respect to education. The persistence of discrimination with respect to access to education is associated with deep rooted socio-cultural practices. This study aims to explore those factors associated with the poor educational outcomes of the Kambari girl-child in Niger State.

Theoretical Framework

A triangulation of Weber's social action theory, the feminist theory on patriarchy and the sex role theory provided a comprehensive framework that highlighted the links between the variables being investigated. The social action theory of Weber was employed to describe the motives of individual actor towards the girl-child. It noted that discriminatory practices towards the girl-child were driven by motives that were situated within a given socio-cultural milieu and individual actors attach cultural significance to their actions towards the girl-child (Swingewood, 1991; Ritzer, 1996). Also, it noted that discriminatory practices are intentional actions of individual actors at the household level which involved rationalization of the value of the girl-child vis-à-vis the boy-child. On the other hand, the feminist theory on patriarchy sought for casual explanation on the perpetuation of discriminatory practices against the girl-child. In contemporary times in feminist scholarship it had been used to analyse the principles underlying women's domination and by extension the girl-child. It referred to the totality of structures of domination and exploitation that affected women's position and by extension, the girl-child's position in society (Walby, 1990; Coetzee, 2001; Giddens *et al.*, 2005; Ray, 2011).

Traditionally, the Kambari society is patriarchal; their kinship system is largely based on patrilineal descent. The kinship system is the foundation of a pervasive patriarchal ideology that leads to the rationalization of differential access to men and boy-children; women and girl-children to the material and symbolic resources of the society. Women and girl-children are seen as outsiders in view of the fact that once they got married, their contributions would rather benefit their husband's household than their natal family. This explains why parents would prefer to educate a boy-child than a girl-child. In addition, the patriarchal nature of the society accounts for the privilege given to the boy-child and the subjugation, devaluation of the role and the status of the girl-child. The girl-child faces discriminatory practices because she is a girl, and the gender hierarchy in most patriarchal societies accords her a lower status. Furthermore, the norms, values, beliefs and practices reinforce discriminatory practices against the girl-child. Therefore, the attitude and actions of individual actors towards the girl-child are based on societal conception of masculinity and femininity (Bradley and Moore, 1996; Ember, 1996; Schaefer, 2008).

Methodology

Isiugo-Abanihe (2002) posited that descriptive studies were specifically designed to depict precisely the attributes of a particular situation, community or group. A triangulation of both qualitative and quantitative methods generated the data for this study. The quantitative method involved a household survey while the qualitative methods included Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), In-Depth Interviews (IDIs) and Case Studies (CSs). To Babbie (2007), triangulation is a valuable research strategy bearing in mind

that each method had its peculiar strengths and weaknesses. The FGDs provided the groundwork and preliminary framework in the development of the structured questionnaires that were used for the research. This was quite significant in view of the dearth of similar studies particularly among the Kambari on the focus of this study.

As regards the quantitative data, two structured questionnaires targeted on married adult males (20-65 years) and females (15-49 years), and boy and girl-children (10-17 years) for a household survey. A total of 1,598 respondents formed the sample population for the survey, comprising a pair of adult males (385) and their sons (385) as well as adult females (414) and their daughters (414). A four-stage sampling technique was used to select respondents from 63 Enumeration Areas in the six Kambari-dominated Local Government Areas (LGAs) of Niger State. Cochran's (1977) sample size formula was adopted to determine the sample size of the social survey as indicated below:

$$\text{Thus: } n = \frac{Z^2 P(1-P)}{d^2}$$

Where: n=the sample size; Z=Z statistics for level of confidence; p =expected proportion or prevalence; d= precision

$$n = \frac{(1.96)^2(0.05)(1-0.05)}{(0.05)^2} = 385 \quad n = 385$$

The study adopted 385 as the sample size for the pair of father/sons each and since the focus of the study was on the girl-child an additional 7.5% was added to derive sample size of 414.

$$\text{Thus: } 385 \times \frac{7.5}{100} = 29 \quad \text{Where the pair of mother/daughter } 385 + 29 = 414.$$

Thus, the pair of mother/daughter sample size was 414 each due to the unique methodology adopted in the selection of the sample population. The sample sizes for each of the Local Government Areas were based on the size of the total population of each. Firstly, the Local Government Areas were purposively sampled. Secondly, 26 political wards out of a total of 63 listed wards, in the selected six Local Government Areas were purposively selected because these were the wards where the Kambari predominate. Thirdly, a complete list of the enumeration areas (EAs) demarcated for the 2006 Census by the National Population Commission was obtained. There were a total of 7,160 EAs out of which 63 EAs were randomly selected using simple random technique; this represented 1.0 percent of the total EAs of the selected LGAs for the study. Fourthly, 63 EAs were further sub-divided into clusters ranging from an average of 2 to 7 out of which a total of 799 Households (HHs) were randomly selected from the six selected LGAs. With the aid of the enumeration areas, a sampling frame was created for the randomly selected thirty-three (33) research

locations in the six LGAs. A systematic sampling technique was used in the selection of households, that is, every second household was chosen after the random selection of the first household. An eligible respondent was randomly selected among adults who had either boy- or girl-children between 10-17 years, using a selection grid provided for each of the questionnaire. The qualitative data included 12 case-studies of girl-children, 14 in-depth interviews conducted among various categories of leaders at the community level, and 15 FGDs among different socio-demographic groups.

Data Management and Analysis

The qualitative data, that is, the FGDs and the IDIs were recorded and later transcribed. Guided by the research questions, hypotheses, key issues and concepts raised in the study, the transcribed data were coded into various categories and themes with value labels. Furthermore, patterns and explanations were drawn through constant comparative methods, concept mapping of the transcribed data (Babbie, 2007). On the other hand, for the quantitative data, it was edited to eliminate inconsistencies that can undermine content validity. The analysis was undertaken at the univariate and multivariate levels. Logistic regression models were used to know the net effect(s) of the independent variables on the dependent variable(s). Based on the logistic models probability indices, it was possible to predict the likelihood effect of exhibiting discriminatory attitude towards the girl-child and also the predictors that determined her exposure to discrimination.

Results

Socio-Demographic characteristics of Respondents

Table 1 presents respondents' characteristics by gender, language-dialect, religious affiliation and residence. The gender grouping of the respondents indicates that adult males and their boy-children represent 24.0 percent each, respectively, while adult females and their girl-children represent 26.0 percent of the total sample. By design, the data comprised pairs of fathers/boy-children and mothers/girl-children, hence the equality of the pairs of data. The sample indicated that the four major language dialect groups from which respondents were drawn are: Ashingini (49.9%) Avadi (17.3%), Aposhi (11.3%) and Agadi (10.8%). About 46 percent of the respondents were Muslims; while 30.6 percent were Protestant Christians and 16.9 percent practised traditional religion and only 5.5 percent were Roman Catholics. As regards the residence of the respondents, 8 out of every 10 were rural dwellers, while nearly 2 out of every 10 respondents were urban dwellers.

Table 1: Percentage Distribution of Respondents by Gender, Language-Dialect, Religious Affiliation and Residence

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Men</i>	<i>Boy</i>	<i>Women</i>	<i>Girl</i>	<i>All Respondents</i>
Gender Sub-group	24.0 (385)	24.0 (385)	26.0 (414)	26.0 (414)	100.0 (1598)
<i>Language Dialect</i>					
Ashingini	52.5 (202)	55.1 (212)	46.9 (194)	45.9 (190)	49.9 (798)
Agadi	6.2 (24)	6.2 (24)	15.5 (64)	14.5 (60)	10.8 (172)
Avadi	17.1 (66)	16.1 (62)	18.8 (78)	17.1 (71)	17.3 (277)
Akimba	2.3 (9)	2.3 (9)	4.3 (18)	5.1 (21)	3.6 (57)
Asawuni	7.0 (27)	6.0 (23)	6.5 (27)	7.0 (29)	6.6 (106)
Aposhi	14.0 (54)	13.8 (53)	8.0 (33)	9.9 (41)	11.3 (181)
Others	0.8 (3)	0.5 (2)	-	0.5 (2)	0.4 (7)
Total	100.0 (385)	100.0 (385)	100.0 (414)	100.0 (414)	100.0 (1598)
<i>Religious Affiliation</i>					
Protestant	34.8 (134)	36.4 (140)	24.4 (101)	27.5 (114)	30.6 (489)
Catholic	1.0 (4)	3.1 (12)	10.1 (42)	7.2 (30)	5.5 (88)
Muslim	46.0 (177)	45.5 (175)	47.1 (195)	45.7 (189)	46.1 (736)
Traditional	15.8 (61)	14.5 (56)	17.9 (74)	19.1 (79)	16.9 (270)
No Religion	2.3 (9)	0.5 (2)	0.5 (2)	0.5 (2)	0.9 (15)
Total	100.0 (385)	100.0 (385)	100.0 (414)	100.0 (414)	100.0 (1598)
<i>Residence</i>					
Rural	81.0 (312)	81.0 (312)	82.9 (343)	82.9 (343)	82.0 (1310)
Urban	19.0 (73)	19.0 (73)	17.1 (71)	17.1 (71)	18.0 (288)
Total	100.0 (385)	100.0 (385)	100.0 (414)	100.0 (414)	100.0 (1598)

Educational Attainment of Adult Respondents and their Spouses

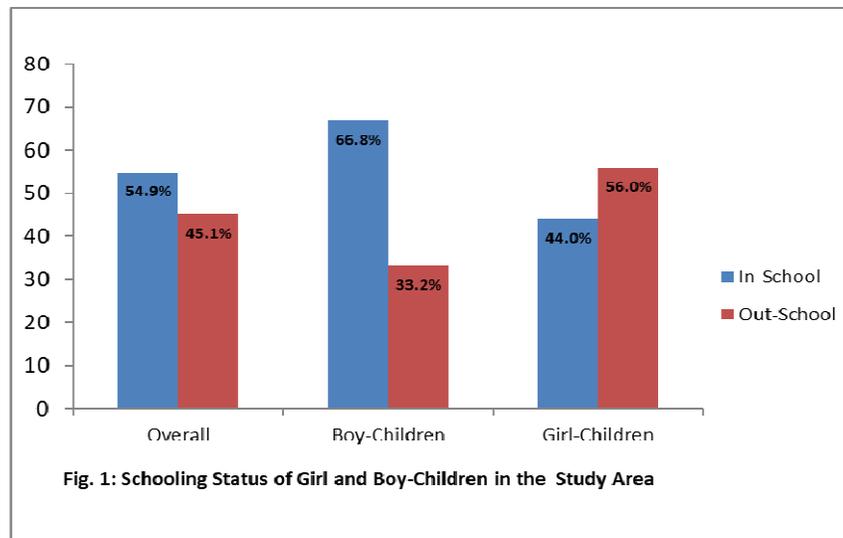
Table 2 presents the percentage distribution of adult respondents and their spouses by educational attainment. About 20.5 percent of adult males against 5.8 percent of adult females had ever been to school. On the whole, only about 12.9 percent of respondents had ever been to school. The wide educational disparity between male and female Kambari is evident from this results. An overwhelming majority of both adult males and females have never attended any form of formal schooling which gave an indication of low literacy rate among the Kambari, more especially among females. The Table also indicates that about 40 percent of those who had some schooling attended adult literacy classes; 45.0 percent of adult males and 25.0 percent of adult females. Also, 19.2 percent apiece of adult males attended primary and tertiary institutions, respectively. On the other hand, among 24 adult females who had any form of formal schooling 6 of them attended literacy classes, 7 went to primary school and 8 claimed to have tertiary education.

Table 2: Percentage Distribution of Adult Respondents and their Spouses by their Educational Attainment

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Men</i>	<i>Women</i>	<i>All Respondents</i>
<i>Ever Schooled</i>			
Yes	20.5 (79)	5.8 (24)	12.9 (103)
No	79.5 (306)	94.2 (390)	87.1 (696)
Total	100.0 (385)	100.0 (414)	100.0 (799)
<i>Spouse Ever Schooled?</i>			
Yes	9.6 (37)	11.8 (49)	10.8 (88)
No	90.4 (348)	88.2 (365)	89.2 (713)
Total	100.0 (385)	100.0 (414)	100.0 (799)
<i>Highest level of schooling</i>			
Adult Literacy	44.9 (35)	25.0 (6)	40.2 (41)
Primary	19.2 (15)	29.2 (7)	21.6 (22)
Secondary	15.4 (12)	12.5 (3)	14.7 (15)
Tertiary	19.2 (15)	33.3 (8)	22.5 (23)
Don't Know	1.3 (1)	-	1.0 (1)
Total	100.0 (78)	100.0 (24)	100.0 (102)

Educational Outcomes of the Kambari Girl-Child and the Boy-Child

Fig 1 shows the percentage distribution of girl-children and boy-children by their educational background. It is clear from the figure that there are more girl-children out of school relative to boy-children. About 67 percent of boy-children were in school compared to only 44 percent of girl-children in school. This result reveals a preference to boys' education over girls, which has been established by other studies in North-Central Nigeria (Ogidi, 1997; Rufai and Ogidi, 2006; British Council, 2014; NPC/ICF, 2019).



Reasons for not attending or dropping out of school by Kambari Girl- and Boy-Children

Table 3 presents percentage distribution of reasons provided by those who never attended or dropped out of school. The three main reasons mentioned by girl-children for dropping out of school are: dislike schooling; poor performance; preference for farming. On the other hand, the three main reasons mentioned by boy-children are: preference for farming, dislike schooling, and financial burden. Other reasons for dropping out of school mentioned by girl-children include: pregnancy, domestic assistance and preparing for marriage.

The three most significant reasons for not attending school among girl-children are: parents do not have value for education (32.4%), preference for farming (25.5%) and no interest in schooling (21.1%). The most significant reasons for boy-children are preference for farming (69.6%) and parents do not value education (14.4%). It is rather disheartening to note that in contemporary Nigeria, there are parents who do not value western education, and therefore, do not see the need to send their children to school. The future of girl-children, and even boy-children, would be jeopardized if parents have such negative mind-sets. Breaking the vicious cycle of poverty would be achieved if parents embrace education of their children as a means of advancement.

Table 3: Percentage Distribution of Girl-and Boy-Children who dropped out of School and Never Attended School by Associated Reasons

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Girl-Children</i>	<i>Boy-Children</i>	<i>All Respondents</i>
<i>Reasons for Dropping out of School</i>			
Dislike Schooling	28.0 (7)	40.0 (4)	31.4(11)
Poor Performance	16.0 (4)	-	11.4 (4)
Prefer-Farming	16.0 (4)	50.0 (5)	25.7 (9)
Got Pregnant	12.0 (3)	-	8.0 (3)
Rendering Domestic Assistance	12.0 (3)	-	8.6 (3)
Preparing for Marriage	8.0 (2)	-	5.7 (2)
Financial Burden	8.0 (2)	10.0 (1)	8.6 (3)
Total	100.0(25)	100.0(10)	100.0(35)
<i>Reasons Never Attend School</i>			
Financial Burden	9.8 (20)	5.6 (7)	8.2 (27)
Prefer Farming	25.5 (52)	69.6 (87)	42.2(139)
No interest in Schooling	21.1 (43)	5.6 (7)	15.2 (50)
Parents don't value Education	32.4 (66)	14.4 (18)	25.5 (84)
School Distant from Home	8.8 (18)	4.8 (6)	7.3 (24)
Others	2.5 (5)	-	1.5 (5)
Total	100.0(204)	100.0(125)	100.0(329)

Some other Related Factors Affecting the Educational Outcomes of the Kambari Girl-Child: Evidence from Qualitative data

The qualitative data corroborated the findings of the household survey on the reasons for discrimination against girl-children on schooling. Some case studies are provided below based on the narratives of some girls.

1. Burden of Domestic Work: Case Study 2 – Hauwa, unrealized personal ambition

Hauwa, who was 11 years old, was an out-of-school girl-child. She was the first of 5 children in a family comprising 3 females and 2 males. She was the first daughter and first child of her parents. She belonged to the “Aposhi” dialect, one of the most conservative language dialect groups among the Kambari. Her parents were farmers and Muslims by religious affiliation. She hailed from Gallah, a fairly big village with a primary school established by the Local Government Council. Hauwa had keen interest to acquire formal education; she always admired other girls dressed in their uniforms going to school in her neighbourhood and desired to be like them. Eventually, on her own she enrolled in the primary school. Unfortunately; she had just 2 more years to the completion of her primary education (Class IV) when she dropped out of school. She narrated her experience with deep sadness in her own words, viz:

I dropped-out of school because of the burden of domestic work, farm work and petty-trading. More so, I am the first daughter and first child in the family. My father had interest in formal education but my mother disapproved of it. Eventually, I dropped out of school, with the consent of my father. I am now engaged in petty trading and farming. I am attending Koranic school but I would want to complete my primary education. *(Case Study2/Girl-Child/Gallah)*

Although Hawa dropped out of school, her younger brother was enrolled into the primary school with the strong support of their parents. This preference for boy-child education among the Kambari, a younger adult male FGD participant noted:

It is girls not boys that should assist their mothers cooking meals, wash the plates, fetch water, firewood and any other work at home. It is unheard of for boys to help out with domestic work. Boys are expected to follow their fathers to the farm. *(FGD 10/ Res 7/ Younger Rural Adult Male/Azavoku)*

Similarly, a younger female FGD participant further confirmed the earlier expressed views with respect to the burden of domestic work on first-born daughters in this manner:

Traditionally, a first-born daughter is like the “second mother” in the family. She is expected to be actively involved in every aspect of household chores. Mothers rely on them so much even when they are not around to take care of members of the household, food, entertaining guests and caring for her younger

ones in the family. (FGD 13/Res 10/ Illiterate Younger Rural Woman/Papirin-Gajere)

2. Poor Academic Performance: Case Study 3 – Mairo, frustrated out of school

Mairo, aged 15 years, belonged to a polygamous family. Her mother was the first wife of the father. Both parents were Muslims and belonged to the language dialect group known as “Cshingini” or “Ashingini”. The parents had no formal education. Her father engaged in farming while the mother was a petty-trader. Mairo was the fifth of 8 children of her mother, comprising 3 boys and 5 girls. She dropped out of Class IV in the primary school due to poor performance and took to petty-trading like the mother. Her parents encouraged her to continue but she refused and felt that petty-trading was the best option for her. On the average she usually spent 7 hours daily on domestic chores at home which adversely affected her performance in school. She narrated as follows:

In our household, boys are not allowed to engage in any assignment that is meant for girls. My father has other wives. However, only girls are allowed to do most of the domestic work. It was not easy for me. I wasn't doing well in school and I also had household chores to be carried out even when it was not my mother's turn to cook for the household. I dropped out of school while in Class IV. I was not doing well in school. Some of the subjects are difficult to understand. (Case Study 3/Girl-Child/Gallah)

In Mairo's view, her perpetual poor performance in subjects such as Mathematics, Primary Science, and Quantitative Reasoning dampened her morale whenever she was handed her homework or report card by her class teacher. She said sometimes she used to cry and her parents would encourage her. An educated community youth corroborated that poor academic performance was one of the major reasons why girl children drop-out of school:

Girls in our community, who are given the rare opportunity of going to school sometimes drop-out of school due to poor academic performance which could be attributed to lateness to school, burden of domestic work or continuous absence from school. Girls faced with such problems cannot do well in school and may therefore drop out. (IDI, 14, 35 years/Community Youth Leader/Bakon Mission)

Indeed, this is a major set-back for girls' education, their future aspirations and ultimate empowerment. A female community influential also noted:

That most girls drop-out of school due to poor academic performance does not necessarily mean that they are not intelligent but rather it is due to the situation they find themselves. It is unheard of for boys to be involved in domestic work. (*IDI 8, 50 years/Female Community Influential/Wando*)

3. Unintended Teenage Pregnancy: Case Study 8 – Beatrice, a truncated hopeful future

Beatrice was 15 years old and the second child of a family of 5 children comprising 3 girls and 2 boys. She belonged to the “Cshingini” also known as the “Ashingini” language dialect group. The parents were Christians of the Protestant denomination. They were farmers. Her mother sold farm products such as bambara nuts, groundnuts and millet on market days. Beatrice was in Class II in Senior Secondary School (SSS) at Salka. She also had two sisters, aged 12 and 10 years, who were in JSS 1 and Class V in the primary school, respectively. The first child in the family, a boy, was in SSS 3. The last son in their family was about 4 years old and therefore had not been enrolled in the primary school yet. She noted with regret:

I was in SS 2, when I had to drop out of school because I got pregnant when I was 14 years old. That was as a result of my first sexual experience with my boyfriend. I had a son and whenever he is old enough I would allow my grandmother take care of him, so that I can go back and complete secondary school. (*Case study 10/Girl-Child/Salka*)

In this case, her parents valued western education and had given each child, irrespective gender, an opportunity to be educated. The parents’ aspiration for all their children is that they acquire higher education in any field of their choice. Unfortunately, she dropped out of school while she was in SSS II because she got pregnant. At the time of the study, her son was 4 months old. Her future aspiration was truncated and her desire to return to school was fraught with series of problems as a teenage mother. She became a reference point in the community particularly for parents who are not literate that girls should not be sent to school because of the fear of unintended pregnancy and the shame it brings. An FGD participant among older adult females from a rural community known as Papirin-Gajere noted:

When a girl-child lost her chastity before marriage and gets pregnant, it brings shame to her entire family and the mother is seen as not being able to give her proper training. She cannot have a say among women in her community. (*FGD 15/Res 3/Older Illiterate Rural Woman/Papirin Gajere*)

A Local Government Official further commented on unintended teenage pregnancy among school girls in this manner:

We are concerned about girls who drop-out of school as a result of unintended teenage pregnancy. It is even difficult for us to convince parents particularly those who are not literate to send their daughters to school. It is a problem that we need to address in our communities. (*IDI 4, 45 years/Local Government Official/Agwara*)

4. Dislike for Schooling: Case Study 9 – Halima: I Dislike Schooling

Halima was 7 years old and was the first child out of a family of 2 girls. She belonged to the “Akimba” dialect group of the Kambari. Her parents were Muslims and farmers. She dropped out of school because, according to her, “I disliked schooling, so I dropped out when I was in Class II at the primary school”. Her dislike for schooling was associated with the long distance from her home to school and the attitude of some teachers who felt that girls could not perform as much as boys. She further said that she I prefer hawking to going to school.

According to a traditional ruler corroborated the Halima’s concern:

When schools are to be built by the Local Government we encourage them to build such schools closer to communities. Parents are usually concerned about the safety of their children and girls in particular. In some cases, parents get discouraged when their daughters have to trek long distances to get to school. They would be afraid to send them to school. (*IDI 1, 55 years/Traditional Ruler/Salka*)

Dislike for schooling is a major reason why girls drop out or are discouraged from going to school. Associated reasons include difficult teachers, difficult subjects, long-distance from home among others (Rufai and Ogidi, 2006, Indabawa, 2004; Obanya 2004). With respect to Case Study 9, it was an ordeal for her trekking to school in the morning and back home after school. Such long trekking was not very demanding for a 7-year old girl, and this eventually led to her drop-out of school while in Class II in the primary school.

5. Parental Ignorance: Case Study 5 – Asabe, a victim of parental ignorance

Asabe, aged 11 years, belonged to the language dialect group known as “Ashingini”. She was the fifth child in a family of 7 comprising 4 girls and 3 boys. Her father was a traditional herbalist and also a farmer while the mother was a farm labourer who assisted others in their farms in exchange for money. Although Asabe had interest in formal education, her parents had no value for western education which they felt would corrupt their daughter. Rather, she

was enrolled in a Koranic school. She said “my father told me that going to the white man’s school would make me to lose our traditions”. Parents who had low value for western education were less likely to send their girl-children to school. The situation of Asabe exemplified the plight of a large proportion of girl-children in the Northern part of the country who were out of school for similar reasons.

6. Misconception of Education: Case Study 12 – Talatu, a victim of misconception of Western Education

Talatu, an out-of-school 15-year-old girl-child was the third child in a family of 8, comprising 2 boys and 6 girls. Eventually, the mother lost a girl leaving 5 girls and 2 boys as at the time of the study. She belonged to the Aposhi dialect group of the Kambari. They were traditional religious adherents. The parents were farmers and she was involved in hawking at least once a week. She started hawking when she was 7 years old. Her parents have no value for western education because they believed it has a corrupting influence and will make them to abandon farming. This girl-child was denied the right to education due to wrong misconceptions about western education, ignorance and lack of value for the significance of western education. A community leader from Auna submitted:

Our people have no value for western education. We are predominantly farmers and some are afraid that their children would forsake farming. Also, a female child does not need western education to know how to cook, wash plates and carry out other responsibilities expected of a woman. (*IDI 13, 55 years/Traditional Ruler/Auna*)

Also, a female community influential highlighted other reasons as follows:

I was lucky my parents embraced Christianity through the missionaries who came to our village. A girl must maintain her chastity before marriage and many believed that western education corrupts the morals of a girl and she would eventually abandon the customs and traditions of her people. (*IDI 8, 50 years/female Community Influential /Wando*)

Lending support on the issue, a traditional religious cleric from Utula stated:

A girl’s major responsibility is to learn how to be a good wife and mother. What does she need education for? Once her eyes are open, she would reject the traditions of our fathers, the practice of child betrothal and the bridal service of “gulmo” which we rely on as farmers would fail. (*IDI 11, 60 years/Traditional Religious Cleric/Utula*)

7. Son Preference: Case Study 11 – Nabila, the worth of a girl-child

Nabila, aged 10 years old, was the third child of a family comprising 4 boys and 4 girls. The father had two wives and her mother was the first. She belonged to the Aposhi language dialect group of the Kambari. The father was a farmer and the mother sold locally brewed beer known as “burukutu” every market day. They were traditional religious adherents. Nabila and her sisters had never attended any formal school. She explained:

My sisters and I are not in school, but the boys are. The boys are seen as the pillars of every household; without them the family would be forgotten in the community. Therefore, it is important to send them to school. Girls are only second to the boy-child in everything. That is our culture and people live by it.

Lending support to this view, an educated younger female FGD participant in age-sub-group 20-44years stated:

When a male child is in a family, it is seen as having a complete house. When he eventually gets married the household would continually increase. However, when the girls in that household get married, they would rather help to increase the household of the husband not their fathers'. This accounts for why we value male children more. (*FGD 11/Res 7/Educated Younger Urban Female/Salka*)

Many studies (Orubuloye, 1987; Caldwell *et al.*, 1992; Isiugo-Abanihe, 1994a, 1994b) have indicated that son-preference was very strong and pervasive in Africa and Nigeria in particular. Son preference which has been one of the major determinants of high fertility in Nigeria is attributed to economic, socio-cultural beliefs and practices (Isiugo-Abanihe, 2003; Wusu and Isiugo-Abanihe, 2006; Isiugo-Abanihe and Nwokocha, 2008). These include old-age security assurance for parents, inheritance, continuity of family name and being readily available farm labour. The pervasiveness of son-preference is an indication of a socio-cultural environment that could engender discriminatory practices against the girl-child in Nigeria.

8. Gender Stereotyping

Gender stereotyping was also found to influence the mind-sets and individual actions of the respondents towards discriminatory practices for the girl-child. A number of gender stereotypes with respect to the notions of femininity, prescribed roles and valuation of the girl-child among some of the sub-groups of the sample were identified as follows:

“A man with only female children has no say in the community”. (*FGD7/Res8/Illiterate Rural Man/Bunsuru*)

“Boys are more superior to girls”. (FGD 4/Res 5/ In-School/Boy-Child/Salka)

“A girl is of less value when compared to a boy”. (FGD 7/Res 4/Younger Illiterate Rural Male/Bunsuru)

"A boy is more intelligent than a girl". (FGD5/Res 5/Out-of-School/Boy-Child Rural/Bunsuru)

These gender stereotypes influenced the actions of adult men and women towards their children. The resultant effect was that privileges and a higher status were accorded the boy-child over the girl-child, including providing more access to educational opportunities to them. Corroborating these views, a male community influential noted:

The underlying motives that influenced the actions of parents towards the girl-child are linked to deep-rooted beliefs, stereotypes about girls which may not necessarily be true. For instance, there is this belief that boys are more intelligent than girls as a result of this some parents may not see the need to educate girls. (IDI 8, 50 years /Male Community Influential 50 years/Wando)

9. Child betrothal and early Marriage: Nabila, *Schooling erodes our traditions*

Nabila was aged 10 years old, the third child of a family comprising 4 boys and 4 girls. The father had two wives and her mother was the first wife. She belonged to the Aposhi language dialect group of the Kambari. Nabila and her sisters had never attended any formal school. She was betrothed from an early age and she said she would eventually marry her betrothed partner. She further explained:

This is the tradition of our people, we cannot reject it and we cannot say no to wishes of our parents and elders. Education has a way of eroding our traditions. Schooling will lead to the failure of the betrothal arrangement.

Interestingly, a rural out-of-school boy-child expressed a similar opinion:

Child betrothal arrangement is a practice of our forefathers. As a farming community the yearly “gulmo” as part of the bridal services rendered over time is very important. Most girls in town do not want to practice this form of marriage because their eyes are now open to the white man’s education and they are forsaking the traditions of their forefathers, that is why there are

now cases of failed betrothal arrangement. (*FGD/ Res 6/ Out-of-School/Boy-Child/Bunsuru*)

In sum, early marriage and child betrothal, unintended pregnancy, the fear of forsaking traditions and other misconceptions about female education, and heavy domestic burden are some of the major reasons why parents deny the girl-child access to education. In particular, child marriage features prominently among the reasons the girl-child is discriminated against in education. This practice is largely a function of gender stereotyping deeply rooted in the cultural traditions, religious beliefs and practices of the Kambari.

Multivariate Analysis

This section presents the multivariate analysis, involving binary logistic regression analysis to predict the effects of the independent and ideational variables on the outcome variable, which is the likelihood of exhibiting discrimination against the girl-child. Discrimination in educational opportunities towards the girl-child was employed due to its importance in determining the life chances and status of the girl-child. The outcome binary measure (dependent variable) whether or not adult respondents are likely to exhibit discrimination towards the girl-child with “Yes” coded as 1 and “No” coded 0. Two sets of independent variables were considered in the two regression models presented in Table 5 and 6, namely personal characteristics of individuals and ideational variables respectively, as discussed below.

Logistic Regression of Adult Respondents’ Likelihood of Exhibiting Discrimination towards the Girl-Child in Educational Opportunities by Selected Background Characteristics

Table 5 presents the fitted model which regressed the outcome binary dependent variable, whether or not adult respondents are likely to exhibit discriminatory practices in educational opportunities towards the girl-child, with 6 explanatory measures (independent variables) or predictors. These are gender, residence and education, type of marital union, religious affiliation and occupation. Five of the explanatory variables namely gender, residence, education, type of marital union and religious affiliation are statistically significant in predicting discriminatory practices. The results indicate that males, those with no formal education, rural dwellers, those in polygynous homes, and Muslims and traditional worshippers are more likely to exhibit educational discriminatory practices against the girl-child compared to their respective reference categories.

Table 5: Logistic Regression Coefficients of Adult Respondents' Likelihood of Exhibiting Discrimination towards the Girl-Child in Educational Opportunities by their Selected Background Characteristics

	B	Odds	p-value
Gender			0.000
Male	1.691	5.426***	
Female (ref)	0.000	1.000	
Literacy Status			
Non-literate	1.422	4.156***	0.000
Literate (ref)	0.000	1.000	
Residence			
Rural	0.549	1.732*	0.000
Urban (ref)	0.000	1.000	
Type of Marital Union			
Polygamous	0.090	1.095	0.017
Monogamous (ref)	0.000	1.000	
Religious Affiliation			
Traditional	1.358	3.888***	0.000
Islam	0.004	2.703 ***	0.000
Christian (ref)	0.000	1.000	
Occupation			
Farming	0.004	1.004	0.991
Others	0.052	1.054	0.907
Civil Servant (ref)	0.000	0.062	0.000
Overall Model Evaluation			
Likelihood ratio	191.263 (0.000)		
Wald test	26.021 (0.000)		
Goodness of Fit			
Hosmer & Lemeshow	18.208		
% classified correctly	70.6%		

N=799, * p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001; ref = reference category

According to the model in Table 5 after controlling for other variables, gender has the highest odds ratio (5.426). This implies that the odds of exhibiting discriminatory practice towards the girl-child in educational opportunities are about 6 times higher among adult males compared to the females. Furthermore, non-literate respondents, after controlling for other variables in the model, are 4.2 times more likely to exhibit discriminatory practices towards the girl-child compared with literate respondents. With regard to religious affiliation, the

logistic model indicated that adherents of traditional religion are 4 times more likely while adherents of Islam are 3 times more likely to exhibit discriminatory practices in educational opportunities towards the girl-child relative to Christians. Place of residence indicates that respondents from rural settings are about 2 times more likely to exhibit discriminatory practices towards the girl-child in educational opportunities when compared with those from urban settings.

Logistic Regression of Adult Respondents' Likelihood of Exhibiting Discriminatory Practices towards the Girl-Child in Educational Opportunities by Ideational variables

In Table 6, the outcome binary measure (dependent variable) is whether or not adult respondents are likely to exhibit discriminatory practices towards the girl-child (with "Yes" coded as 1 and "No" coded 0) regressed with 4 explanatory ideational variables. These are conceptions of gender roles, childhood experiences, patterns of decision-making and non-participation of women in decision-making. The model is premised on the fact that deep-rooted socio-cultural values, beliefs and practices tend to engender discriminatory practices towards the girl-child. The logistic coefficients of these ideational variables indicate that all are statistically significant. The table shows that respondents with rigid conception of gender role are more likely to exhibit discriminatory gender practices; those with rigid conception of gender roles are 1.4 times more likely to exhibit discriminatory practices towards the girl-child when compared with those with liberal conception of gender roles. By the same token, respondents who had negative childhood experience, those from homes where men dominate in decision-making and those from homes with non-valuation of women's participation in decision-making are more likely to discriminate against the girl-child.

Table 6: Logistic Regression Coefficients of Adult Respondents' Likelihood of Exhibiting Discrimination towards the Girl-Child by Ideational Characteristics

	B	Odds	p-value
Conception of Gender Roles			
Rigid	0.276	1.317***	0.000
Liberal (ref)	0.000	1.000	
Childhood Experience			
Negative	1.481	4.395**	0.004
Positive (ref)	0.000	1.000	
Pattern of Decision Making			
Jointly (ref)	0.000	1.000	
Wife	1.106	3.023	0.094
Husband	1.742	5.707***	0.000
Valuation of Women's Participation in Decision-making			
Non-valuation	0.429	1.535*	0.032
Valuation (ref)	0.000	1.000	
Constant	-0.409	0.664	0.000
Overall Model Evaluation			
Likelihood ratio	177.862 (0.000)		
Wald test	26.021 (0.000)		
Goodness of Fit			
Hosmer & Lemeshow	5.532		
% classified correctly	73.5%		
% classified correctly	73.5%		

N=799, * p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001; ref = reference category

Discussion

The purpose of this study is to gain a better understanding of the factors affecting girl-child education among the Kambari. The results of this research provide supporting evidence that the girl-child among the Kambari face discrimination with respect to access to education. The study found that religion, gender, place of residence, education, pattern of decision-making, conception of gender roles, son preference, gender stereotypes among others are significant factors affecting girl-child education among the Kambari. Other factors such as domestic work burden, low value for western education, loss of chastity and unintended teenage pregnancy, child betrothal and early marriage, misconception of western education, parental ignorance, preference for farming, poor academic performance, attitudes of teachers and dislike for schooling and distance to school are critical factors affecting the girl-child's educational participation among the Kambari. This corroborates a number of

studies in Asia (Anyanwu, 1995; Agrawal and Unisa, 2007; Chitrakar, 2009; Zimmermann, 2011) and Sub-Saharan Africa which have found that the girl-child face discrimination in access to education and assignment of domestic work (Ogidi, 1997; Aderinto, 1999; Kipkulei *et al.*, 2012, British Council, 2014). The study identified links between individual and socio-cultural variables and schooling discrimination against the girl-child among the Kambari and brought to fore the societal and individual values, attitudes, behaviours and mind-sets that engender discriminatory practices against the girl-child. It affirmed that discriminatory behaviour towards the girl-child is embedded within specific social relations and cultural contexts. These have also been underlined by other studies (Action Aid International, 2011; Para-Mallam, 2012; UNICEF, 2012; Ogidi, 1997; Aderinto, 1999; British Council, 2014)

Males play dominant roles in decision-making at the household and community levels due to the patriarchal nature of the Kambari society. The issue of who should be sent to school is largely determined by men. Also, non-literate parents and those in rural settings are less likely to value formal education and are therefore more likely to exhibit household discriminatory practices towards the girl-child. Adherents of the traditional religion and Islam tend to be more conservative and abhor female education more than Christians. The characteristic apprehension is that formal education corrupts girls and renders them unsuitable for wives and domestic work.

The rationalization of individual actors' actions towards the girl-child which engenders discrimination towards the girl-child is through the prismatic lens of patriarchal institutions, beliefs, values, genders stereotypes of femininity and masculinity within the Kambari ethnic group. Attitudinal change would require the transformation of the mind-sets of individuals towards the girl-child. This would require the concerted efforts of relevant stakeholders at various levels in order to address gender discrimination against the girl child. Also, the patriarchal nature of the Kambari society underscores the need to engage men and boys in developing positive images for girls and supporting gender equity at the household and societal levels. The status of girl-children would continue to be low, unless the issue of unequal access to education is drastically addressed, thereby empowering girls economically and socially. Access to education provides the window of opportunity for enhancing the status of girl-children, who constitute a large marginalized group in the Kambari social world.

Recommendations

The efforts of government and other relevant stakeholders towards enhancing the wellbeing of the girl-child and empowering her for active participation on issues that affect her and the community would be unsuccessful and ineffective if the deep-rooted socio-cultural practices are not addressed. Also, changing attitudinal behaviour towards the girl-child would require changing the mind-sets and negative images about her. More so, uprooting patriarchal values,

beliefs and practices against the girl-child would involve a concerted, multi-sectoral and holistic approach in dealing with the critical issues that have limited her capacity development and empowerment. Consequently, mass-media campaigns, community mobilization and sensitization should be embarked upon by the State, LGAS, and NGOs with the support of traditional and religious leaders to address the socio-cultural barriers and harmful traditional practices that limit the empowerment of the girl-child. A holistic approach should be adopted at all levels of government to address the problems of accessing education by providing girl-friendly schools and ensuring that pregnant adolescent girl-children and adolescent mothers continue and complete their education. Finally, female role models could be employed in a programme targeted at women and girls to boost the positive image of girls and provide them with the needed self-esteem to desire to complete school and actively participate in family, community and national life.

The study has elucidated the factors hindering girl-child education among the Kambari, of Niger State in North-Central Nigeria. It further re-affirmed the need for context-specific studies with a view to avoiding over-generalization of issues with regard to gender discrimination in developing countries as enunciated by earlier studies. Finally, scaling up programmes, interventions and policies in girl-child's education are critical in enhancing her active participation in family, community and national life.

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