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POST-GRADUATE STUDENTS' PERCEPTION ON THE NEED TO REVITALIZE GIRL-CHILD EDUCATION: PATHWAY TO SOCIAL-ENGINEERING AND DEVELOPMENT IN ILORIN METROPOLIS

By

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Abstract

This research is an extract from the presentation titled "paradox of child-marriage and girl-child education in the move for sustainable development" However, this study inquired the perception of postgraduate students on the need for girl child education as a pathway to social engineering and development in Ilorin, Nigeria. The population of this study was all the postgraduate students, University of Ilorin, Ilorin Nigeria. A total number of one hundred respondents were purposively sampled for the study. However, the instrument used for data collection was a researcher designed questionnaire. The instrument was validated by experts and the reliability was dully calculated having 0.87 reliability coefficient. The study was guided with one research question. Furthermore, the research question was answered using descriptive statistical tool. Findings from this study revealed that, the promotion of girl-child education is instrumental for social engineering and development in Ilorin metropolis Nigeria. Also, findings on this study showed that there is a relationship between the revitalization of girl-child education and social engineering and development in Ilorin, Nigeria. It is however recommended that all stakeholders in the field of education should put hands on desk for the restructuring and the promotion of girl-child education. Also it was recommended that girl-child education should be promoted to encourage social engineering and development in Ilorin, Nigeria.

Key words: Girl Child Education, Social Engineering, Development

Introduction

Education is regarded a cardinal step in the shift towards social development and engineering. Giving equal educational opportunity to all individual irrespective of gender and class in the society is highly needful in attaining any form of development. Thus, educating female child (girl-child education) is equally essential in the journey towards social engineering, re-engineering and development. It implies that the contributions of girl-child education in promoting social advancement, well-being and civilization in any society cannot be over emphasized.

Sociologically, social development and engineering are two sides of a coin. It is however pertinent to note that social engineering is a conscious and planned move towards attaining social change and development. It is equally an attempt to shape the society positively (Scott and Marshall, 2005). Thus, an attempt to shape the society should entail improving the quality of life of citizens, which is an evidence of social development. Social development and engineering are integral subsets of general advancement. It involves improving the well-being of individuals in any society to ensure their full potentials in order to be fulfilled and self-sufficient. Therefore, the drive towards social engineering and development should be focused on the betterment of the citizenry including females' population (Brunswick, 2014; Ojo, Shoyemi & Ayinla, 2016). Brunswick (2014) further opined that social development and engineering are the ability to mobilize people or citizenry towards the actualization of their dreams by eradicating every likely barriers and difficulties.

According to Paula (1997); Ojo, Shoyemi & Ayinla (2016) the indicators of social development and engineering entails poverty alleviation, improving accessibility to health care and education, conservation and family distribution of resources and strengthened participation in the process of decision making. Conceivably, social development and engineering are the ability to invest in people (including females) which is possible through educational institutions to promote social confidence, empowerment, participation, and dignity of the citizen. Therefore, the availability of education for every individual irrespective of gender cannot be taken for granted in any society willing to empower its citizenry as an evidence of social engineering and development. However, equal educational opportunity for all involves investing in the education of females through effective provision of girl-child education.

Girl-child education is the transmission of relevant skills, knowledge and attitude into the female gender to empower them in their pathway of womanhood (Kate, 2005; UNICEF, 2007). It is that education aimed at activating necessary economic and social potentials in females to contribute significantly to the drive for development (UNICEF, 2007). Also, The Department For International Development (DFID, 2005) opined that one of the surest ways of investing in the wellbeing of citizens is to invest greatly in educating a girl child. Thus, social engineering and development is possible through girl child education, as it would help attain the dreams of the citizenry and reduce deaths, improve mental health and prevent alarming spread of diseases, which are evidence of social development (DFID, 2005; UNICEF, 2007; Chishimba, Musonda & Peggy, 2013).

Furthermore, countries that promote the education of female children are those guaranteed of social development for social engineering. Such countries invest in female children and in return experience human capital development, lower mortality rate, improved standard of education, reduction in poverty level and improved standard of living among others (DFID, 2005; UNICEF, 2007; Abdulkarim &Mamman, 2014; Collins, 2014; Omede & Agahiu, 2016).

Statement of the Problem

Nigeria like other third world and developing countries has lost track in the race towards the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and now striving to be part of global achievers of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) because of multifaceted factors. Among the many factors that caused the failure of MDGs is still the poor quality of education. The poor quality of education is manifested in a high level of discrimination against the girl-child education with the erroneous beliefs that girls-child education ends in the kitchen.

Despite lots of commitments and campaigns from the federal government of Nigeria in the past to promote girl-child education, imbalance in gender education remains unresolved assignment. Girls are still victims of no enrolment or drop out of school in certain part of the country. UNICEF, (2002); Tyoakaa et al, (2014); Collins, (2014) observed that Nigeria is among countries in West Africa with the highest number of girls out of school or not enrolled at all especially in the Northern part of the country. United Nations Education Social and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) (2014) also reported that, over 5.5 million girls dropped out of school in Nigeria and that reoccurring trends of disparity in gender education may not make girl-child education a realistic. Also, because of poor enrollment in schools the level of national literacy of females is significantly low as against the male counterparts with a record of 48% to 73%. However, National Population Commission (2009) observed that girl-child education is a pedestal for good economy and investment which capable of promoting desirable effect on socio-economic transformation for future generation. These scenarios about imbalance of gender education motivates the researchers' interest towards investigation of post-graduate students' perception of the needs to revitalize girl-child education in a way to realize social-Engineering and development in Ilorin Metropolis and Nigeria at large.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to examine the perception of postgraduate students on the implication of revitalizing girl-child education for social engineering and development in Nigeria

Research Question

i. What are the perceptions of postgraduate students on the needs to revitalize girl-child education for social engineering and development in Ilorin metropolis?

Methodology

This study employed a survey research design. Osuala (2013) opined that, the survey design is most suitable for any study that attempts to investigate the nature of relationship between multiple sociological phenomena. The population for this study includes postgraduate students from the Faculty of Education, University of Ilorin. Hence, hundred questionnaires were purposively administered, while ninety-three were returned. The instrument used for this study is a researcher designed questionnaire consisted titled Need for Revitalizing girl-child education (NRGE). The instrument is structured after the improved likert-Scale four-response options of Strongly Agreed (SA), Agreed (A), Disagreed (D), and Strongly Disagreed (SD). Experts were duly consulted for judgment on the validity of the instrument. The Spearman rank reliability coefficient of 0.87 was obtained. Percentage and Chi-square were used to analyze data obtained from respondents.

Analysis of Responses / Results

Research Question: What are the perceptions of postgraduate students on the needs to revitalize girl-child education for social engineering and development in Ilorin metropolis?

Table 1: Analysis of Responses on the views of post-graduate students on the implications of revitalizing girl-child education for social development and engineering in Ilorin metropolis.

		Frequency & Percentage				
S/N	STATEMENTS	SA (%)	A (%)	D (%)	SD (%)	Total (%)
1	Girl child education is instrumental for human capital development for social engineering	49 (52.7)	40 (43.0)	4 (4.3)	-	93 (100)
2	Girl child education will help build the national income of any country for social development and engineering	33 (35.5)	47 (50.5)	12 (12.9)	1 (1.1)	93 (100)
3	Girl child education will reduce national death rate for social development and engineering	34 (36.6)	38 (40.9)	14 (15.1)	7 (7.5)	93 (100)
4	Girl-child education will promote general qualitative education for social development and engineering	62 (66.7)	30 (32.3)	1 (1.1)	-	93 (100)
5	Through girl child education poverty rate could be reduced for social development and engineering	32 (34.4)	51 (54.8)	9 (9.7)	1 (1.1)	93 (100)

Source: Field Survey, 2016

Table 1 shows that 49 (52.7%) strongly agreed and 40 (43.0%) of respondents agreed that girl child education is instrumental to human capital development, while 4 respondents representing 4.3% disagreed to the item. Also 33 (35.5%) strongly agreed and 47 (50.5%) agreed that girl child education will help boost national income of any country while 12 (12.9%) disagreed, while 1 (1.1%) strongly disagreed that girl child education will help build national income. On the next item, 34 (36.6%) and 38 (40.9%)

strongly agreed and agreed respectively that girl child education will help reduce general death rate in the country, while 14(15.1%) and 7 (7.5%) disagreed and strongly disagreed that girl child education will help reduce national death rate. Furthermore, 62(66.7%) and 30(32.3%) strongly agreed and agreed that educated women will most likely encourage general quality of education, while 1 (1%) disagreed with the statement. Item 5 in the table revealed that 32(34.4%) and 51(54.8%) of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed that with girl child education poverty rate will be reduced, while 9(9.7%) and 1 (1.1%) strongly disagreed and disagreed respectively to the item.

Discussion

The result revealed that girl child education is as important as the education for males. This is evidenced in table one above which made it clear that the education of females could be instrumental in attracting advanced human capital development, increasing national income of any country, reduce the national death rate, promotion of quality education and drastically reduce poverty. However, the findings in this study supports the views of DFID (2005); UNICEF (2007); Abdulkarim & Mamman (2014); Collins (2014); Omede and Agahiu (2016) which unanimously opined that with the promotion of girl-child education could be instrumental in attaining social engineering through social development.

Conclusion

In conclusion, it is discovered that one of the surest ways Nigeria may catch up with the other countries world over in attainment of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is to promote education to its fullest because education is the bedrock of any form of development. Therefore, special attention is required in implementation of educational policy for all in which no individuals would be left behind irrespective of gender differences. This implies that, given the needs for social engineering and development of any society both girls and boys education should be paramount.

Recommendations

Based on the finding of this study the following recommendations were made in considering the role of stakeholders such as family, immediate community, federal government and the international community that are all connected with girl-child education.

To the family

- The education of males should not be regarded as more important than girls.
- Girls should not be seen as product that will end up in the kitchen.

To the immediate community

- The campaign for girl-child education should be regarded as the responsibility for all.
- Girls who desire to attain education to its climax should be encouraged.
- Employers of labour should encourage females by providing job opportunities for qualified females.

To the Federal Government

- The government should encourage the girl-child education by making provision for automatic scholarships.
- The government should promote and enforce laws against gender discrimination in education.
- The government should further encourage free and quality education for girls of school age.
- The government should also encourage females' adult education for those that dropped out, married and willing to be educated.
- The benefits of girl-child education should be made known through conferences and workshops.

To the International Community

- International community/NGOs should have more focus and concentration on programmes and funding of girl-child education and especially one designed for school dropout girls willing to continue schooling.

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