

Gender-Based Violence and Educational Development of Children in Northern Nigeria

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ABSTRACT: Despite the overarching significance of education in the world today, numerous children in Northern Nigeria have been denied education due to socio-cultural practices. There is a reasonable need to emphasize the importance of educating children for societal development. This study explores the culturally influenced gender-based violence practices and their effects on the educational development of children in Northern Nigeria. The study employed qualitative method and conducted 62 semi-structured interviews, comprising of twenty-eight (28) teachers and thirty-four (34) parents of primary and secondary school children in gathering data. The study discovered that there are high practices of early child marriage on the girlchild and child labor on the boychild as two forms of gender-based violence perpetuated on children, which affects the children's educational development in the region. The study suggests the need for more societal sensitization about child marriage and child labor. Also, more efforts should be directed toward educating people about the importance of education and placing a high value on it.

KEYWORDS: Education, Gender-based violence, Socio-cultural practices, Development, Nigeria

Introduction

In today's contemporary world, education stands as the determinant for the growth and development of any country. It is a significant aspect of human resource development. There is a reasonable need to emphasize the importance of educating children who are to become the leadership of the future. Education is designed to improve the social life and other institutions that comprise society. As rightly asserted by Uba and Ngozi (2017), education today must have the effect of providing a country with a consistent supply of highly creative citizens who can help enhance the general citizenry's living conditions and solve the existential problems that arise. Despite this, it also serves the interests of other sectors of the economy, making it a powerful tool for change and growth as well as a powerful tool for resolving societal issues. This is due to the fact that education, in all of its forms, attempts to instil consciousness in the minds of those who receive it, as well as to provide them with the tools necessary to solve problems (Carpenter et al. 2020). Carpenter and other co-authors (2020) argued in this regard that people and nations are what they are as a result of the nature and forms of education they have received. The level of growth of any nation is heavily influenced by the quality and level of education it has obtained. It is an undeniable reality that serenity is an antidote to successful teaching and learning in any educational system.

There is a reasonable need to emphasize the importance of child education especially educating a girl-child. In many religions of the world, education has been denied to children, especially girls, due to cultural and social norms and practices that cause harmful stereotypes of suitable women's roles and emphasize the idea that education is a waste on girls. Gender-related violence and other types of discrimination

within schools have contributed to children's high rate of school abandonment. Aside from the socio-cultural factors that give rights to the violation of human rights, other political, legal, and economic factors obstruct the full implementation of rights to education for children especially female children. One of the countries where access to education among children is hindered is Nigeria.

The online database shows the demographic of Nigeria according to Populationof.Net indicates that Nigeria has a current population of over 222 million people, making it the most populous countries in Africa and among the top ten most populous country in the world. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF 2018) asserts that 40 percent of Nigerian children aged 6 to 11 do not attend primary school, with the North having the lowest school attendance, notably for girls. Also, young individuals under the age of 15 make up 40% of the population. If the Nigerian population is 173 million and 45 percent are under the age of 15, it means that approximately 77.9 million Nigerians are under the age of 15; and if approximately 40 percent of that number are not attending primary schools, it means that approximately 31 million Nigerian children may end up illiterate. This is a disturbing fact to educational development in Nigeria. The main goal of this study is to explore the problem of gender-based violence in relation to children educational development in northern Nigeria. The study will examine the influence of traditional beliefs on children's educational development in Northern Nigeria.

Importance of Education for Societal Development

Education can be seen as a process that starts at birth and continues until death. The first few years of life are extremely important since they have an impact on subsequent events. Emil Durkheim argued that education is the influence exercised by adult generations on those who are not yet ready for social life. The goal of education is to shape the social being and this goal and major function of education is to prepare students for their duties as workers and members of a broader society (as cited in Davies 1994, 5). In other words, the main goal of education is to support children's intellectual growth and physical development. Education is society's commitment to producing the right kind of people and upholding the right values. According to Russell (1926), education should give children a roadmap so they can develop their talents and capacities. A child should have access to the best education possible through an educational system, regardless of whether they are male or female. In addition, the growth and development of every society sit on the level of how intellectually equipped the younger generation is. No society should have a huge population of uneducated children to ensure nation building and development.

Historical Background and Contemporary Situation of Education in Nigeria

In Nigeria, several communities participated in informal educational processes prior to the arrival of Western education. In the northern part of the country, Islam was the religion and the people's traditional educational orientation. Each ethnic group had its own unique educational system based on its own culture and tradition in the Southern regions. In the early half of the sixteenth century, Christian missionaries established the Western Educational system in Nigeria. Western education was brought by Christian missionaries in order to open up trade and teach the populace how to read the Bible in both the native tongue and English. The missionaries' efforts included teaching local schoolteachers, catechumens, and clergymen as well as gardening and agriculture. The primary goal of spreading Western education through the construction of missionary schools was essentially to propagate Christianity (Fafunwa 1974). This goal was successfully achieved as many children were

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converted into Christianity through the school system. The propagation of Christianity alongside Western education serves as an antagonist to the already established educational system of the northern region and the religion of Islam, which is practiced by the majority of people in the region. Although the Nigerian system has separated Western education from Christianity over the years, the perception of Western education as Christianity is still rooted in the mind of people in northern Nigeria. In other words, an average northern Muslim sees Western education as Christianity and rather prefers to take their children to the traditional/Quranic schools, which has now become the Almajiri system due to the lack of propagation of the traditional system of education by the government.

Functionalism Approach to Gender and Education

The functionalism theory views society as a collection of interconnected parts that make up the whole. As a result, gender is positioned in this approach in a very functional manner that was formed at the beginning of history. In ancient times, men and women had a very efficient division of labor in hunter-gatherer societies, men were hunters and outsiders, and women were mothers, nurses, and housekeepers (Lindsey 2011). This division of labor, according to functionalists, stems from biological differences between men and women; however, sexual division of labor exists in every culture and is not a result of biological "programming," but rather a logical basis for organizing society (Giddens 2009). In summary, according to functionalist theorists, certain roles for men and women in preindustrial societies are derived from biological differences; however, in contemporary societies, those distinct roles will be less distinct. Gender is a useful tool for moving society forward in the right direction by assigning male and female roles. Gender also contributes to social unity by bringing men and women together to form a family (Macionis 2010).

The theory of functionalism also views society as a collection of social institutions such as the family, culture, religion, education, economy, politics, health, and law. Everyone has a responsibility or part to play in keeping society alive and well. This active participation results in vivid contributions to the system's long-term growth and development. It also promotes division of labor, allowing each social institution to make a meaningful contribution to the advancement and upkeep of the entire society. This will help to alleviate societal issues including poverty, unemployment, insecurity, and inequality (Okeke 2002). This theory is applicable and important for this study because education is one of the structures that comprise society.

Culture, Gender Inequality and the Religion of Islam

Gender, in general, is perceived as psychological, social, and cultural differences between males and females; it is primarily about masculinity and femininity, rather than biological sex. While some studies have concentrated on the role of economic power in achieving gender equality (Blumberg; 1987; Boserup; 1970; Nash et al. 1983), others have emphasized the role of culture (Rosaldo 1974). For the sake of this study, culture is defined as "religious, political, or other highly valued commitments that distinguish one group of ethnic from another, most notably through the determination of appropriate gender-role behaviour" (Clark, Ramsbey, and Adler 1991). Women's lesser position, or, conversely, women's equality with males, can be justified ideologically through culture. This study is interested in two overlapping aspects of culture: religion, and ethnicity/region. The hierarchical aspect of religion makes it more difficult to recognize the patriarchal system as unjust. Patriarchy in politics, the family, and gender relations are all influenced by hierarchical religion. Thus, patriarchy and Gender inequality are developed and nurtured through the cultural belief system of a society. In the case of most Muslim societies, religion is upheld in society as

guidance and the total way of life. In other words, the misinterpretation of the principle of Islam by most Muslim societies encourages inequality and male dominance over the female gender in both public and private sphere, which is perceived as the norm in such societies. Thus, the relationship between cultural beliefs and gender inequality is prevalent in Northern Nigeria. Northern Nigeria is a Muslim-dominated region in Nigeria that mostly strictly adheres themselves to the religion of Islam.

Gender-based Violence in Nigeria

Gender-based violence is a central human rights problem involving all school ages and sexes (Oladebo et al. 2011). Gender-based violence (GBV) is any harmful act targeted at any individual or group based on their gender (Strachan & Haider 2015). Gender-based violence includes sexual harassment, domestic violence, forced prostitution and early forced marriages, human trafficking, female genital mutilation and cutting, honor killing, rape, and many more (Almugahed, Pertek; & Fida 2017). Gender-based violence (GBV) is a heinous violation of human rights that has negative consequences for victims, survivors, families, communities, and civilizations. Sexual violence, physical violence, emotional and psychological abuse, child marriage, femicide, trafficking, female genital mutilation (FGM), domestic violence, and rape are all examples of Gender-based violence. According to Nedegaard et al. (2014), Gender-Based Violence (GBV) against women and girls is a global phenomenon and a problem that unfortunately plagues all societies. There is different Gender-based violence across cultures, and GBV is perceived and addressed by various communities.

According to the United Nation Report (2020) 30% of girls and women aged between 15 to 49 years old said they had sexually been abused in Nigeria. According to the report, harmful practices like child marriage are common, with 43% of girls marrying before the age of 18, and 20% of women aged 15 to 49 having female genital mutilation.

Methods

The research employed a qualitative method analytical approach. For a comprehensive grasp of the issues under investigation, this study employed an exploratory approach in gathering its data. The review of the past literature examined the antecedents of gender-based violence; however, this failed to fully explore the various forms of gender-based violence affecting the educational development of children in Northern Nigeria. Given the concept's obscurity, qualitative methods are well suited to eliciting deeper insights. The study employed semi-structured interviews in collecting data. The rationale for using semi-structured interviews is that they allow for detailed answers and clarifications about a topic, as opposed to respondents answering predefined questions as in surveys.

Sixty-two (62) participants were interviewed for the research comprising of twenty-eight (28) teachers and thirty-four (34) parents of primary and secondary school children. The age of the respondents ranged from 30 to 64 years. The bulk of the participants were married and having children, while the rest were single. Most significantly, the respondents came from a variety of ethnic backgrounds to ensure that the sample mirrored the diversity of the population.

Due to the sensitivity of the research topic and for security measures, the researchers employed snowball technique in obtaining their sample. The participants are asked to suggest other participants who might be interested in participating in the study. The researchers chose parents and teachers as the primary source of data due to ethical reasons and the sensitivity of the topic of gender-based violence on children. The researchers believe that the data needed for the discussion on gender-based violence and

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the educational development of children will be sourced from the parents and teachers of the children in northern Nigeria in achieving the study. The respondents identified themselves as either Muslims or Christians.

The interviews yielded interpretations of the meanings linked with society's attitudes toward education, which were coupled with perspectives from the literature to develop significant themes (i.e., connecting emergent themes and ideas with the theoretical concepts from the literature). This study used Braun and Clarke (2006)'s suggested systematic methodology to analyze the interviews. The methodology Braun and Clarke suggested is popularly known as the thematic analysis. Thematic analysis is a qualitative data analysis technique that entails reading over a data collection (such transcripts from in-depth interviews or focus groups) and looking for patterns in meaning to extract themes.

Findings and Discussions

Table 1: Socio-demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Socio-demographic data	Frequency	Percentage %
Role		
Teachers	28	45.1%
Parents	34	54.8%
Gender		
Male	23	37.0%
Female	39	62.9%
Age		
30-40	41	66.1%
41-50	12	19.3%
51-60	9	14.5%
Marital status		
Single	10	16.1%
Married	43	69.3%
Divorce	9	14.5%
Ethnic group		
Hausa	22	35.4%
Gbayi	4	6.4%
Adara	8	12.9%
Ham	7	11.2%
Bajjuu	6	9.6%
Yoruba	11	17.7%
Igbo	4	6.4%
Religion		
Islam	43	69.3%
Christianity	19	30.6%

From Table 1, it is visible that the majority of the respondents (54.8%) are parents while the remaining (45.1%) are teachers. The majority of the respondents (62.9%) are female, while the remaining (37.0%) are male. Also, the highest number of respondents (66.1%) are

between ages 30-40 years, while (19.3%) are between ages 41-50 years, and the remaining (14.5%) are between ages 51-60 years respectively. Most of the respondents are married (69.3%) while (16.1%) are single and the remaining (14.5%) are divorced. With regards to the ethnic group, most of the respondents (35.4%) are from the Hausa ethnic groups, while (17.7%) Yoruba, (12.9%) Adara, (6.4%) Gbayi, (11.2%) Ham, (9.6%) Bajju and (6.4%) are the Igbo ethnic group. Finally, the religion of the majority of respondents is Islam (69.3%) and (30.6%) Christians.

Societal Attitude towards Western Education

The findings present two different societal attitudes toward Western education. The first group, which can be regarded as a group of Western education apologists who uphold the belief that education, is one of the essential variables that can ascertain prosperity-filled future for their children. It can be argued that this perspective emerges from the colonialist-impacted ideologies which attach prosperity to their form of education. Boyd (1997), explains that some of the problem militating against education, especially female education has been negative due to its bore relevance of religious, cultural, traditional, political and gender issues. He explained that the brand of education during the colonial era was against the opinion of the Emirs, District head, Village age and the people. Furthermore, James (1998) in his study on parental attitudes towards education in Northern Nigeria, addressed issues with the education of both boys and girls. He made an effort to gauge several aspects of Kano parents' attitudes. There seems to be a preference among some parents for their kids to read and write Arabic due to their religious leaning towards Western education. Dahiru (1991) explained along economic lines that parents prefer to train their children towards experts in their occupation over Western education. In other words, farmers didn't want to give up their children to go to school because they wanted them to be successful farmers like themselves. (Ngwandang 2001). On the other hand, the Western educational antagonistic school of thought argues that there should be nothing as important as God and the religious knowledge. The upholders of such belief system fall under the spectrum of the traditional and religious education grouping.

When the respondents were asked about their perception towards Western education, the majority of the parent respondents believed sending their children to school was the best way of securing a better future for their children. A 43-year-old respondent who is a parent to three children from the Hausa ethnic group narrated that:

Western education is good for the future of the children so that they can have something to hold on to in future.

Another 52-year-old parent respondent with 5 children from the Adara ethnic group also explained:

It is very important to send children to acquire Western education. A certificate is important to become something in our society.

However, some of the respondents went ahead to explain that many people in their communities prefer their children to attend the traditional religious schools (Almajiri schools) and are yet to embrace the Western form of education. A 38-year-old parent respondent with two children from the Hausa ethnic groups stated that:

It is a common practice here, most of them don't like this Western education, they prefer going to the religious schools. I mean the Almajiri schools. They will go the Mallams (teacher) place to learn the Quran.

Another 38-year-old parent respondent of 2 children from the Yoruba ethnic group explained that people are gradually giving value and know the importance of Western education in the society she stated that:

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It was before they looked down at Western education as not important, but now even in rural area, some of them now know it is important to send their children to school because they see political office holders and they want to be like them.

In addition, when the respondents who were teachers were asked about the attitude of parents towards educating their children, some of the respondents explained that most of the parents of children who attended public schools show nonchalant attitudes towards the education of their children. A 50-year-old teacher from the Hausa ethnic group explains:

Most of the parents are not learned, so they don't place value on education like that. You will find out that a child will be coming to school late at 9:30am while we have gone through with the first and second period already. They come to school so late and in this community, we have this market that they usually have a market day like every Tuesday. So, on the day of the market, you find out that children will not be coming to school on the day of the market because they will send them to the market to go and hawk for them to make money than sending them to school. The attendance on Tuesday in my school is very poor. And during farming period, they are not punctual in school. They come to school anytime they like especially in harvest period.

Furthermore, the respondent further explained that the number of children in schools has increased in recent times as a result of some measures implemented by the state government, such as the feeding programs introduced in schools. However, this full attendance is for a limited time. A 39-year-old teacher respondent from Ham ethnic group narrated:

The state government introduced feeding. They are giving them free food. Maybe it is because of the feeding. They have timetable for the food. So, because of that, it makes them come to school because they know that they will have what to eat in the school, so when the feeding is going on, you find out that the number of the pupils in class will be high than when food is not shared. So anytime there is no feeding, when the federal govt does not release funds, the presence of the children will be low at that period.

Also, the government employs the use of the Joint Task Force (JTF) to pick up any children found on the street during school hours. A 34-year-old teacher of the Adara ethnic group explains:

What the government does now is that they have this local police, Joint Task Force (JTF), that they use to pick up any children found on the street during school hours and keep them somewhere. So, their parents will have to use money to bail their children. This is a way of preventing children from hawking and forcing the parent to take their children to school.

It can be deduced from the individual stances of these two groups that education is important as it immensely contributes to prosperity-filled future. However, their point of divergence is grounded in the style of education. Historically, the northern region of Nigeria had a single defined style of education, which was mainly the traditional and religious education now resulting into the Almajiri system before the Western incursion in the country which spurred the emergence of Western education in the country. However, the incursion saw the degradation of the former style of education and prioritization of the later. The degradation of the former has affected the development of the traditional and religious style of education and denied it the resources to meet up with the contemporary society.

The respondents' responses provided the researchers the lens to read the attitudes towards the two pronounced educational styles in the region. The strong adherence to the cultural values of traditional and religious education makes it almost impossible for this concentrated ambience of study to shift and accept Western education. Despite the resources such as free feeding for the school children put in place by the government of the state to entice the general public and draw them towards Western education, the

society is seen to prefer to enrol their wards in the Almajiri system of education (traditional and religious school) which has turned the children into street beggars rather than impacting knowledge. It can, as well, be deduced that it is only a few sets of people in the society that genuinely desire Western education for their children, while others use their children for hawking and farming.

Gender-based Violence Affecting Children Educational Development

The study examines the societal attitudes towards male and female education. The respondents who were parents were asked if the society allows both male and female children to seek Western education. The majority of the respondents who were parents narrated that people in their locality do allow their children to get Western education. However, there is a difference between the male and female advancement in education. Most of the respondent are of the opinion that parents do allow their boy child to attend school, but the female children are prevented from furthering their education beyond secondary school level. The respondent further explain that it is a common practice within the northern region to give their female child out in marriage once she attains puberty. A 44-year-old teacher from the Hausa tribe explained that:

Some of the natives send their children to school but they are few of them. And some of them that send their female children to school, once they are done with secondary school, they send them to their husband's house. They believe that once a female child has started her first menstruation, she is supposed to be in her husband's house. The moment a female child start menses, they must get her married.

Also, most of the teacher respondents also attest to the above claim that parents allow their sons to complete their education while their daughters are more likely to drop out of school once they reach ages 13 and above. The respondents further explains that it is a Hausa cultural practice to marry off their female children once they reach puberty.

Furthermore, some respondents explained that parents support their male children more than their female children to further their education because they believe the male child will end up becoming the family breadwinner in the future, whereas the female child will leave the family to join her husband in another family, and thus the female child is perceived as not adding any value to her family. This is in accordance with Majasan (1975) explained that the traditional man believes that the goal of Western education is to create "Goodmen". Although different parents have different motivations for sending their children to school, the ultimate goal is for each person to become self-sufficient and able to play their part in the development of the country. However, Hammajam, and other co-authors (2015) in their findings on attitude of parents towards Western education in Borno state highlighted some of the reasons why parents refuse their girl-children to school. Some of the major reasons are; Parents believe that education interferes with females getting married at the appropriate age; they believed that after receiving a Western education, girls started acting lethargic. They also hold that girls should remain at home and that once they have an education, they become disinterested in household administration.

On the contrary, according to some other respondents, some female children are allowed to continue their education after marriage if their husband allows it. And these cases are more likely to occur when the girl's husband is educated. A primary school 31-year-old teacher respondent from Hausa tribe explained:

..In my class, I have a girl that got married last month in primary 6, the girl is 14 years. What they belief in that community where I teach is that any child from the ages 13, 14 should not be in the parents' house again. They will just do bikin aure (wedding). But there are some after getting married they go to secondary school

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if the husband is educated. So, they usually use hijab to differentiate them. The students with very long hijab are the once's that are married.

Also, a 37-year-old secondary school teacher narrated that:

..they care more for the boys than the girlchild, they shown concern because they feel that one day they will settle down as a man to be the head of a family. So, they will prefer them going to school so that they will have education and have a better job doing while the female once they feel that they will get married to another family, so they don't care about educating them. They send them to hawk so that they can gather money that will be used to buy their 'aure' wedding properties.

In addition, the teacher respondents were asked if there is a difference between the male and female student attendance in their school. In response to the question, some of the participants claim that there are more male students than the female students in their schools. They further explained that the female children are usually seen on the street hawking during school hours. Also, some of the respondents explained that there is reduction in the attendance of male students during farming season.

On the contrary, some of the respondents reported that there are more female students than male students in their schools. However, within the focus group interviewed for this research, the researchers observe that those respondents who reported more female population in their schools are teachers of primary schools while those teachers who reported more male students in their school are teachers of secondary schools. Interpretation of data can suggest that there are more male than female students in secondary schools because of the cultural practice of early marriage of female children.

A 31-year-old primary school teacher from the Hausa community narrated that:

The male population are more than the female population because their parents normally send their female children to go for hawking to get money for them. But during farming season, they go along with their male children to farm.

In the same vein, another 40-years-old secondary school teacher from Adara tribe stated:

There is a difference. There are more male children because when the female children are in school, most especially secondary schools, you will find out that they are unable to finish their secondary school to get their certificate because their parents got them married.

Furthermore, it was discovered that the majority of the children enrolled at the traditional educational school system now known as the Almajiri are usually male children. The parents of the male children hold the perspective in sending their male children to the traditional school system so that they can in future become religious preachers and clerics. However, this traditional school institutions in the past before the introduction of Western education by the colonial masters used to get funding from traditional rulers and the wealthy of the community. While the traditional schools still maintain its tuition free system as it was in the past, they do not get support from the government of the day to run the institutions. This has caused the teachers' knowns as mallams to send the children out to the street to beg for funds to take care of the students and the institutions. Thus, creating the Almajiri system of children begging for alms on the streets. Some of the respondents reported some of the events surrounding the Almajiri children. A 57-year-old parent narrated the attitude of many parents in her community:

The parents take their boys to the Mallams (teacher) place to learn with no provision and the Mallam will then send the students out to the street to seek for food and funds...

...there was a time the governor packed the children of the Almajiri schools begging on the street.

Another 48-years-old parent respondent further explained:

..any time from 9am to 12;30pm, the local police are on the street patrolling to make arrest of any child found rooming about. So even if a parent does not want their children to be in school, the children will hide them at home.

The afore-given excerpts of the interview foreground that gender-based violence is a product of every patriarchal culture which produces gender spectrum and gender orientation and these in turn, propagates gender inequality and gender-based violence. Thus, this assertion explains that gender-based violence is grounded in cultural beliefs and values that give importance to masculinity above femininity.

The adherence to the traditional ways of life is evidential in the way gender is being seen in the area of study. It can be deduced from the respondents' responses that the occupants of the state often permit male and female gender the access to Western education. Although, this accessibility to Western education is not proportionate equal amidst the two genders as the respondents' responses illuminate on the fact that the male children are more permitted by their parents to benefit from the Western education than the other gender.

It is pivotal to mention that the gender-based violence in the concentrated ambience is often seen in the aspect of the proliferated culture of child marriage. The embedded cultural belief system often propagates the ideology that a female child's value is tied to their early marriage while a male child's value is tied to the acquisition of proper education. As mentioned by the respondents, the culture is to marry them off at any sign of puberty which often denies them the opportunity to complete their secondary school education or further their studies to tertiary education. Majority of the people in this ambience of study are of the opinion that female children are only meant to be trained and prepared for "*aure*" which means marriage and not to be enrolled into any Western form of education. It is the few fortunate of married teenagers that are often seen completing their secondary education.

The effect of cultural practices of early child marriage is salient in northern Nigeria. The value of the girlchild is weighed on a scale on how early she can secure a husband to her name. This study interprets these practices as detrimental to the growth and development of the girlchild in the sense that the education of a girlchild is not prioritized in the society. This practiced mindset doesn't allow the push for growth, for the girlchild to follow through to the end, in achieving the required education needed for them to be relevant and be able to contribute to nations building and the development of their society.

Therefore, this practice can be seen to further empower the global pandemic of gender-based violence which Javed and Chattu (2021) argued to have affected one out of three female children in their lifetime. It is not only that the child marriage deprives them access to Western education, but as well rob them of their childhood experience as the few fortunate ones who are permitted to complete their education by their elite husbands are often segregated from their mates who are not yet married through their dress code. The findings conform with Nedegaard et al. (2014) asserts that Gender-based violence is compounded with traditional practices, social constructs, and religious fundamentalism.

This paper also deducts that the boychild experiences violence of forced child labor as a result of the Almajiri system which subjects the boychild to street beggars and exposes them to societal vices such as stealing, cultism, terrorism among others. It is important to mention that the survival of the Boko-Haram terrorist group over the years in the recruitment of their members may be linked to the flood of children on the streets begging for their daily bread for survival in northern Nigeria. Consequently, the study argues that it has been easy for terrorist group like the Boko-Haram to survive in northern Nigeria because children could be easily picked from the street and lured to join the Boko-Haram terrorist group which makes their recruitment processes much easier (United Nations 2017). Furthermore, these practices have become a virtues circle that promotes

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poverty in northern Nigeria. The majority of the girlchild are prevented from acquiring or furthering their education; resulting in the lack of ability to be able to add value in moving the society forward away from poverty and in the shaping of their society. In addition, the majority of the boychild of this region are subjected to a form of education that lack the resources to prepare children into solving contemporary societal issues but rather contributes to the advancement of poverty in Nigeria. This study views the menace of early child marriage and child labor as gender-based because it is predominantly experienced by the girlchild boychild in northern Nigeria respectively. All these various forms of violence are detrimental to the children, and they affect the educational development of children in Nigeria.

Conclusion

The study shows that sociocultural norms and religious beliefs influence and play a significant role in societal attitudes toward Western education and children's educational development in Northern Nigeria. Also, the relationship between cultural beliefs, values and gender inequality, is prevalent, and it is evident in the attitude of the society in this study, which places more value on their male child over the female child in northern Nigeria. More so, gender-based violence affecting the educational development of children is embedded in the form of early marriage practices that most girl-child from the northern part had experienced for many years and by implication, it prevents the girl-child from acquiring or furthering their education. In addition, another form of gender-based violence against the boy-child is seen as well in the form of child labor through the Almajiri system of street begging which is harmful to the development of not only the children's education but affects the society at large.

The research suggests that there is a need for the government to collaborate with traditional and religious leaders in the north to raise awareness and change societal perceptions regarding child marriage and child labor. Also, the government should invest in formalizing and standardizing traditional and religious education to modern standards. In addition, more efforts should be directed at educating people about the importance of education and placing a high value on it.

While the current study offers several meaningful contributions, future researchers could expand its scope even further. Firstly, researchers may wish to investigate other forms of gender-based violence that impact the educational development of children in Nigeria, which were not covered in this study. Also, in order to be able to generalize the findings to other states and regions in Nigeria, additional research is necessary. Therefore, it would be useful to conduct representative quantitative studies.

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