

# Assessing the Influence of Parents and Culture on Girl Child Education in Wukari LGA

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**Abstract:** *This study had its focus on The Influence of Parents and Culture on girl child education in Wukari LGA of Taraba State On this basis, it is worthy to note that the national Policy on Education does not discriminate between sexes; rather it emphasizes freedom, equality and justice. With a clear objective such as; to determine influence of parental attitude towards girl-child education, to determine the influence of school activities on girl-child education, to determine the influence of culture, tradition and religion on Girl-child Education. The culture and traditional settings of Wukari LGA and the general society and the provisions of National Policy on Education on girl-child education, the theoretical frame work and the sample size of one hundred (100) of the population was used to get data through the use of questionnaire to draw conclusions of the study. The data were computed tabulated, analyzed and presented and further converted to frequencies and percentages for easy understanding. It has been revealed in this study that the attitudes of parents is not positive enough to guarantee equal participation of girl-child in school despite the provision made by national policy on education. Therefore, it was recommended that parents should not hesitate in providing equal education to their children irrespective of sex or gender.*

**Keywords:** *Assessing, Cultural, Parental, Child Education*

## INTRODUCTION

It is worthy to note that the National Policy on Education (2013) does not discriminate between sexes; rather it emphasizes freedom, equality and justice (Science Teachers Association of Nigeria (STAN, 2019). Every citizen, irrespective of sex is guaranteed equality of rights, obligations and opportunities before the law and education. Despite the progress of the past years notable concerning laws that indicate the equality of the sexes in education and employment, much remains to be done. Culture and economic obstacles, values and cultural stereotype discourage girl-child from attending school.

The increased awareness about the need to mobilize more females to embrace education has been informed by several declarations and resolutions in recent times of a number of international conferences and workshops held in different parts of the world. These include Harare Conference of African Ministers of Education which recommended that education policies in Africa should give priority to women education. Similarly the level conference of 2016 recommended that barriers

to women education should be removed and the education of girls encouraged. Policies are being formulated by government that helps parents and communities to invest in girl's education. As more women complete their education and hold paying jobs, the perception of women's potential have definitely changed helping to break the vicious cycle that held women back. It has been revealed that the girl-child education has suffered alot in the society as cited by Mohammed (2008). This has been the case since independence in 1960. However, in the sixties, the situation was really break because out of 10 school children that went to school beyond primary 4, only one as a girl. Missionary activities started in certain parts of northern Nigeria before the turn of the century. In 1860s, Dr.Baikie of Christian Missionary Society founded a settlement at Lokoja. A school was opened the same year and instruction was given in Hausa and Nupe languages right from the beginning.

The girl-child education in Wukari Local government Area of Taraba State has been lagging

behind all this while in terms of education one can wonder why the situation should persist like this in respects of the light of the clear provisions in National Policy on Education that education is a right for every Nigerian Child. The National Policy on Education (2004) also has as its 5th objective as the building of a bright land full opportunities for all individual. Thus, The National Philosophy of Education of Nigeria is based on "the integration of the individual into a sound and effective citizen and to provide equal educational opportunities for all citizens of the Nation at primary, secondary and tertiary levels, both inside and outside the formal system. The Population Reports (2006) observed that attempts are made to improve the position of girls in the society. Increasing economic opportunities for women and raising the value of women's labour increase the likelihood that parents will see daughters as economic assets and not as liabilities.

The enrolment of children to primary, secondary, technical and tertiary institutions as upheld by Oleribe (2002) also discriminate against female gender. Male enrolment is more than girls in all levels of education. In fact, in all parts of the state girls lag behind boys in access to education. It is important to note that despite the progress made towards girl-child education in the developed and some parts of the world, years of neglect have left very high illiteracy rates for girl-child in many developing countries of the world. Girls which are to remain in school up to higher institutions have not yet been able to and the situation arises because parents are not encouraging girl to be educated. Most of the girls in Wukari LGA Taraba State who were of school age and have completed primary education parades the street hawking items in other to prepare for early marriage. Even though there are educated girls in Wukari LGA recently, the number can be much higher if adequate attention is given to eradicate the problem.

### Benefits of Girl-Child Education

Education is desirable for women as it is for men. Without education a woman can be deprived of learning about the rights, privileges, duties and will have nothing to protect and support her from injustice and to support her against oppressors. Beside these girl-child Education help in alleviating poverty in all sorts and thus have the following advantages as upheld by Mango (2002).

- i. As Home Makers: A woman can enhance the level of living in her home by using the knowledge, skills and training she received in school. Maintaining the cleanliness and amenities of the house and can facilitate the healthy living of the family with respect to education for the children. She can be equipped enough to handle many home challenges. In fact, an educated woman would be excellent in home management. Mango (2002).
- ii. For Up-Bringing of Children: It is the sole responsibility of woman to raise up children with good moral disposition,

intellectual and cultural socialization. Reproductive activities relating to children could be done effectively by an educated woman. Mango (2002).

- iii. For Economic Empowerment: Economy is an area where the knowledge acquired by a woman would enable her to make contributions. In agriculture, women can do better and grow various crops in domestic gardens and livestock rearing. In art and craft, they partake in weaving, knitting, lace making, industrial science and could do substantially better when they are educated. Women employed in the labour force will participate in raising the family income. Mango (2002).
  - iv. Girl-Child education improves the health of the family: They can participate more effectively in development programmes involving health, nutrition, water, sanitation and environment in the community. An educated woman has power over her sexual reproductive life and can be able to protect herself and others from diseases. Mango (2002).
  - v. Mental empowerment: Today's girls are future wives and mothers. When a woman is trained therefore, the whole family is positively imparted, the mental. Empowerment by education destroys foolishness and positively helping to impart the right kind of virtues and skills in the family. Until a woman is mentally empowered, she will remain a burden on her family and friends.
  - vi. Physical empowerment: when young girls are educated and allowed acquiring good certificates, marriage is delayed and child birth is postponed allowing enough time for physical development. This ensures full development of girl's proper pelvic bone, maturity as well as mental maturity before the task of becoming a wife and mother. Thus, according to Mango (2002), better educated women have fewer and healthier children.
  - vii. Financial empowerment: Poverty can be seen everywhere; it's seen within all age strata and in all social groups. To eradicate poverty, girl- children must be properly empowered educationally to contribute to family wellbeing. Better educated women postpone marriage and childbirth and have better access to employment, and are less vulnerable to economic discrimination Mango (2002).
- The problem of girl-child education is not a regional, state, National or continent but a global issue of concern. Education is the most viable instrument by man to conquer his environment and charted his destiny. Girl-child education has been a burning and continuous issue in the developing countries of the world in which Nigeria is one. Its existing problem in Nigeria more especially in the Northern part of the country in which the problem as pointed out by Mohammed (2008) ranges from either girls of school ages hawk goods on the street as parents' exploit them, at times girls were engaged in early marriages, a times as a result of poverty and financial problem where some parents cannot afford to pay school fees for their children. In other cases, the problems emancipate from the fact that some parents consider educating girl-child as waste of time for the sake of

gender disparity or inferiority complex.

### School System and The Female Education

This conviction is one of the basis of the convention of the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women (CEDAW), of which Nigeria signed and ratified in 1985. The subsequent declaration of education for all by the year 2015 resulting from the world conference on education sponsored by UNESCO, UNICEF, the World Bank and the UNDP, held in Jomtien Thailand 1990 finally prepared the stage for the commencement of the crusade for girl-child education programmes Worldwide. Article 1 of the Jomtien declaration state. "The most urgent priority is the access to, improving the quality of education for girls and women. This means eliminating all obstacles to their active participation especially all gender stereotyping in education should be eliminated". UNICEF(2005) It is a serious challenge to the society since in places like Wukari Local Government Area of Taraba State there is fear that there is high level of immorality which is associated with the system of learning. Morality and ethnics are thrown to the dogs in the institutions of learning. With reference to high level of moral decadence in our educational institutions which has reached an elastic limit, that does not mean these problems are insurmountable as the school administrators and policy makers involve in providing a series of solution to the problems.

The importance of the girl-child education cannot be over looked as if girls are given the opportunity to education can have a voice in charting their own destinies, they can improve their lives and lives of their children when they become mothers. They will not be at the risk of early marriage; pregnancy and poverty since

they can perpetuate their own life. The society should give the girl-child a chance to have a life and education. Forced child marriage and economic dependence of women should stop. According to Albert (2006) the age of the girl could serve as a major hindrance for her to have any solid economic base and resource of her own in the homes. Achieving gender equity (2005) girls' education project stated that: "There should be no barrier whatsoever to educating girls in the society. Only when girls and women have access to quality education can their potentials be fully developed and society made better by their contributions. All religions including Islam, recognized and encourage girls education.

### Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework adopted for the study is derived from the 'Needs Hierarchy Theory' developed by Abraham Maslow, an American psychologist in 1954. This theory relates to human growth and personal development and is also referred to as Theories of motivation. Maslow came up with five ladders of needs which are arranged in hierarchical form as follows: Physical needs: hunger, thirst, shelter, sexual drive and sleep Safety needs: security and protection from physical and emotional harms Social needs: affiliation, belonging, acceptance and companionship.

Esteem needs: Internal esteem factors such as self-respect, autonomy and achievement; and external esteem factors such as status, recognition and attention.

Self-actualization: growth, achieving ones potential and fulfillment: The drive to become what one is capable of becoming. As each need is substantially satisfied the next need becomes dominant. As shown in the figure below, the individual needs to move up the hierarchy.

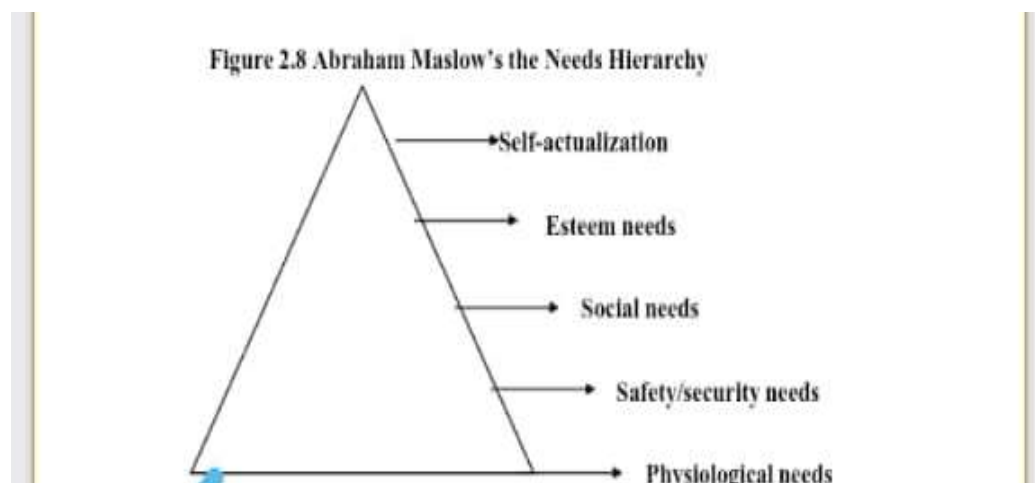


Figure 1: Abraham Maslow's; the Needs Hierarchy.

At the base level of need hierarchy are the physiological needs essential for the survival of human life. These are supposed to be socio-economic set up or rural areas tend to deprive children of these basic needs and in such a situation the girlchild is more disadvantaged than the boychild (GCN, 2004). This is because of the preferences accorded to the boy child.

Maslows theory is therefore relevant in this study because its emphasis and considerations are on the provisions of the basic needs for one to achieve the higher needs. The theory is concerned with achievement of self-actualization at the top of the pyramid which can only be attained through education. Unfortunately, the girl-child is not always motivated at home and at school. They are often deprived of these basic needs by the society. The schools and the entire environment settings should endeavour to provide all the learners with these physiological needs or else the individual may end up in disillusionment. In school setting teachers should be careful to guide girls to divert their sexual libido at adolescence to some vigorous school activities and games like soccer, rugby or basketball rather than the indoor games and stereotype daily routines that the girl child is permanently engage in at home; such vigorous activities should be extended also at home. This could be reducing the problem of early pregnancy which happens to be one of the causes of school dropout for girls. When girls feel that they are not secure at school home proper learning may not take place. The buildings, toilets and other physical structures and even the distance to school should be secure and adequate. According to Maslow safety needs come, after hunger has been satisfied and clothing provided.

Another level of needs that the girl-child seems to lack is the love and affiliation need. The girl-child is often given names and made to feel that they are worthless. They are often grouped separately from boys and made to compete with them in activities that are likely to favour boys to win making the girls a laughing stalk. Teachers should therefore facilitate and encourage fair groupings and group activities that favour on the learners and award the good effort made by them towards their education. Such negative comments common at home that sound negative to girls motivation should be avoided in order to encourage the girls to work hard in academics for attainment of self-actualization. The teachers and parents should show acceptance to the girl child so that she can feel recognized, have a sense of self-worth and belongingness. The overall implication of Maslow's Theory is that education may be considered to be the key to self-actualization. If the girls are denied the basic needs and opportunity of participation in formal and western education then their self-actualization is consequently hampered. It further advocates that the physiological, security and social needs to be met in the first place in order for the girl-child to transcend self-esteem and self-actualization.

However, in adopting Maslow's theory the researcher is aware of its limitations that the hierarchy of human needs are not always fixed and the consequence in which needs arise may differ from one person to another person but the parents and teachers should try the much they can to put the conditions necessary for the girls to participate actively in schools.

### **Influence of Parent to Girl-Child Education**

Over the years the years, the girl-child has been grossly neglected (Oleribe 2002). She is left out in decision making, utilized at homes without due remunerations kept as home keeper and never allowed to earn a living for herself, used by men as a wife, by children as a mother, by other women as house girl and by men as bed mate (Oleribe, Sarwar and Sheikh 2004). She's never being given a chance to make her own choices. In Wukari LGA of Taraba state, majority of girls were given out in marriage long before they become women, forced to marry men they do not love and who are sometimes old enough to be their fathers, denied education in favour of their brothers, given out and denied a chance to maximize their potentials and lately made to enter into an unholy competition of child birth with their husband's wives (Oleribe 2002). Girl-Child education is a sine quinone to the realization of total women empowerment and emancipation across the globe, and involves the formal training of a girl child knowledge and skills of daily living (Oleribe 2002).

Denial of girl-child education is the most common habit of male parents which is the manifestation of neglect of girl-child education and thus, the most retrogressive of all forms of child neglect (Oleribe 2002). It refers to the inability or refusal for qualitative and timely education and is perpetrated by government. However, there are various efforts to improve girl child education. The issue is so alarming perennial problems associated with the institution had been the major concern of traditional rulers, educationist, and managers of education in the academic cycle. A lot of researches had been conducted on girl child education and its consequences in our society as well as deliberate attempts were made where various programmes had been set up by the previous administrations to determine the parents' attitudes towards girl-child education in which their neglect cause menace in the society.

Poverty have made it impossible for female children not to be sent to schools. They are sent to hawk and thus exposed to sexual harassment. Some exposed to forced prostitution and baby sitting or house maid when they are supposed to be in school. They are scarified to improve the family's economic situation and their labour is exploited without allowing them to participate in the control of the economy. The practice of divorce, wife battering, widowhood and violence have reduced them to

emotional wreck. They are financially handicapped; social inequality and gender discrimination have eaten deep in the mind of most Nigerians and the world as a whole even though the Nigerian government expressly states in section 6.1.3. of the 1999 constitution that: "For (the) Nigerian women to enjoy the full benefits of contemporary living, they require basic education to contribute to the development of the country. Government shall in this regard increase girls and women participation in education irrespective of their location or circumstances" (FRN 2001).

### **Cultural Inhibition on Female Education**

Although Wukari LGA of Taraba state has few wonderful and enviable cultures, there are some cultural practices that militates against girl-child education. These include girl-child marriages, which over the year have denied several girl-children the opportunity to acquire formal education or to drop out half way in some cultures a girl child is given to another family for upkeeps and training, in some Sadakar where girls (usually under-aged) are freely given to people as wives (Oleribe 2002), etc. Previous reports have shown that early marriages, teenage pregnancies, gender inequalities in society contribute to poor scholastic performance and force girls to drop out of school. Eweniyi and Usman (2013). Similarly, there is a belief that girls do not need formal education and are deprived of the opportunity for skilled work.

- i. Fear of sexual harassment and molestation: Parents and guardians deny their girchildren access to education because of their fear of sexual molestation of all kinds. Also their lack of trust on these innocent children makes them prevent them from attending school since they are not sure what evils they will get involved in. The fact that majority of teachers are males have not helped issues at all.
- ii. Child exploitation: This is the most common cause for denial of girl education in the community. Child labour keeps girls out of school, whether in the home as houseworkers, caretakers of younger siblings, or in the workforce (Mango 2002). It is not common to see girls, who ought to be in schools hawking several wares and consumable goods during school hours along the roads and streets in Wukari Local Government Area of Taraba State.
- iii. Cultural indoctrination: Many children were culturally indoctrinated and made to believe that western type of education is not needed and thus advised to run their lives without it. Girls were made to believe that their place of fulfilment is in their husband's home and since education (to them) is not needed they only need to marry and make babies, and thus they should focus just on getting the right man, accepting the parent's choice and making such a man happy. This level of indoctrination has made all girl children focus on marrying rather than studying.

### **Objectives**

- i. To determine influence of parental attitude towards girl-child education in Wukari LGA of Taraba State;
- ii. To determine the influence of school activities on girl-child education in Wukari LGA of Taraba State;
- iii. To determine the influence of culture, tradition and religion on Girl-child Education in Wukari LGA of Taraba State.

### **Significance of the Study**

It is important since it is hoped that the outcome of the research will help educational planners, school administrators, teachers, policy makers, parents or guardians and all stakeholders to have a clear understanding of some fundamental issues related to girl-child education in Wukari Local Government Area of Taraba State. Through the findings and recommendations of this research, parents may be more enlightened on their responsibilities towards girls'-child education in Wukari LGA of Taraba State.

### **Scope of Study**

The study will cover some selected secondary school in Wukari Local Government Area of Taraba State and the educational units. Samples of five (5) secondary schools will be randomly selected for this study and the enrolment between 2015/2018 Academic sessions. And the study will centre on Assessing the Influence of Parents and Culture on girl-child education in Wukari LGA of Taraba State

### **Methodology**

#### **Research Design**

The research design adopted in any research study to an extent is dependent on the nature and objectives of the study. Since this research is studying "Assessing the Influence of Parents and Culture on Girls'-child Education" the survey research study will include questionnaires, the questionnaires will be structured and the selection of respondents will be based on the sampling method whereby a representative part of the population will be Selected and studied with a view to making references and generalization about the population.

#### **Study population**

A research population is generally a large collection focus of scientific query. The entire individuals or objects to which the researcher wishes to generalize the study findings. The population of the study area is

241,546, while the population of the study is 100 which consist of all the principals, the teachers in the secondary schools in Wukari LGA of Taraba State. But due to large number of teachers and school principals in the LGA as statistically analysed by the Taraba State Ministry of Education Research and Statistics Department, the population is too large for the purpose of this research work, and thus covered the population of five (5) secondary schools, school principals and a total number of the teachers in those schools. Each secondary school with 20 population each giving a total of 100 population.

### **Sample size**

The sample size of this study will be one hundred (100) students derived from five (5) secondary schools within the study area and the enrolment between 2018/2021 Academic sessions.

The sampling techniques will be non-probability sampling due to the sample and will be stratified random sampling for selection of respondents from the various schools of the study area. A sampling technique is the name or other identification of the specific process by which the entities of the sample have been selected.

### **Sources of Data Collection**

#### **Primary Sources**

The primary sources of data collection were based on information gathered directly from management and employees through questionnaires, another primary source, is the interview held with some of the management and employees in the organization.

#### **Secondary Sources**

The secondary sources of data were collected from already written works, journals, both published and unpublished that have relevance to the subject matter, these include textbooks, magazines, newspapers and various journals.

### **Methods of Data Analysis**

The data on girl-child Education in Wukari LGA of Taraba State would be collected from the secondary school teachers and school principals in the study area. The data therefore, would be computed, tabulated, analyzed and presented and further converted to frequencies and percentage for easy understanding. The conversion will be due to using descriptive statistics.

## Analysis of Data

### Attitudes of parents towards Girl-Child Education

**Table 1:** Showing the Attitude of parents towards Girl-Child Education

S/N	Item Statement	Strongly Agree		Agree		Strongly Disagree		Disagree		TOTAL
		Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	
1	It does not matter whether a girl enter school or not	20	21.3	3	3.2	44	46.8	27	28.7	94 100%
2	In education girls perform or achieve more than the boys	18	19.1	23	24.5	33	35.1	20	21.3	94 100%
3	There should be no limit to education of a Girl-child	29	30.9	33	35.1	27	28.7	5	5.3	94 100%
4	Educated girls are important as well as educated boys.	27	28.7	35	37.2	28	29.8	4	4.3	94 100%
5	Girls have intellectual capability than boys	13	13.8	11	11.7	58	61.7	12	12.8	94 100%
6	If Girl-child completed her education she has no employment opportunities	22	23.4	21	22.3	34	36.2	17	18.1	94 100
7	Girl-child requires Basic Education to continue to the development of the country	71	75.5	14	14.9	9	9.6	-	-	94 100%

**Source:** Field Survey 2022

The table above shows vividly the presentation of responses from the various respondents with respect to the hypothesis stated as the attitudes of parents towards Girl-child education.

### The cultural factors affecting Girl-Child education

**Table 3:** The cultural factors affecting Girl-Child education

S/N	Item Statement	Strongly Agree		Agree		Strongly Disagree		Disagree		TOTAL
		Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	
1	Early Marriage affects Girl-child education	59	62.8	23	24.5	11	11.7	1	1.0	94 100%
2	Engagement affects Girl-child education	23	24.5	53	56.4	17	18.1	1	1.0	94 100%
3	Pregnancy affects Girl-child education	76	80.9	13	13.8	3	3.2	2	2.1	94 100%

**Source:** Field Survey 2022

### The school environment and teachers as factors restricting parent to educate their Girl-Child.

**Table 4:** The school environment and teachers as factors restricting parent to educate their Girl-Child

S/N	Item Statement	Strongly Agree		Agree		Strongly Disagree		Disagree		TOTAL
		Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	
1	Inadequacy of school library affects Girl-child education	23	24.5	29	30.9	25	26.6	17	18.0	94 100%
2	School distance affects Girl-child education	27	28.7	34	36.2	19	20.2	14	14.9	94 100%
3	Sexual harassment by school boys and male teachers affects girl-child education	34	36.2	22	23.4	21	22.3	17	18.1	94 100%
4	Lack of guidance and counselling affects Girl-child education	52	55.3	28	29.8	9	9.6	5	5.3	94 100%

**Source:** Field Survey 2022

The table also depicts the various responses as regard to the school environment and teachers as factors restricting parent to educate their Girl-Child.

#### Findings

Inadequacy of school library affect Girl child education: The level of significance is 0.05 while from the |Independence Sample Test significance result is 0.04. Therefore, the Null hypothesis between the group which says that, the mean score between the groups (Male and Female) is not significantly different is rejected. That is equal variances not assumed.

There should not be limit to education of girl child. Poverty undermines girl child education and preference of male than girl child education is common in the society. Hawking of goods and early marriage hinders girl child education and should be discouraged in the society. Parents should provide equal access to education for their children irrespective of sex. The study revealed that punctuality and enrollment of girl child to School is very necessary for girl child education as well as for transition

from one level of education to another. Girl child performance is highly encouraging as they can compete favorable with boys and can even excel in both Arts and science. Girl child is more exposed to immoral acts in schools than boys and drop out from school is common among Girl child which necessitates special attention to be given to girl child.

The study revealed that culture and tradition hinders girl child education and have assisted in engaging girl child to early marriage and thus terminates the education of girl child. However, on the other side religion encourages knowledge acquisition to individuals irrespective of sex and thus encourages girl child education. The study revealed that Government often supports and encourages girl child education in Wukari LGA of Taraba State. International organizations like UNICEF in collaboration with government were contributing to improve girl child education even though government have ignored or have not seen the imbalance ratio that existed for a very long time. Governments do not provide sufficient learning facilities and materials to education of girl-child.



## Conclusions

From the findings of this study, conclusions were drawn that the societal strata neglect the value of girl child education in Wukari LGA of Taraba State. That the preference of male over female child was so common among parents which is so challenging in Wukari LGA of Taraba State.

The Social exclusion and gender discriminations against females is so common in the society more especially among the Hausa community and hinders effective participation in all sectors of the economy in Wukari LGA of Taraba State. That early marriage of the girl child prevents their equal rights to education as provisioned in the national policy on education as well as the use of girl child as domestic source of labour is child abuse and is against the human rights acts.

That poverty is a grass root challenge to girl child education in Wukari LGA of Taraba State and that the use of girl child for hawking of goods in the streets instead of going to school is common in Wukari LGA of Taraba State. That drop out from schools of girl child is common in Wukari LGA of Taraba State due to financial problems or hawking of goods and in some cases due to moral decadence among girl child in Wukari LGA of Taraba State.

## Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study which clearly shows that parent attitude towards girl child in Wukari LGA of Taraba State is challenging as parents mostly refer to train the boys than girls. Government also on the other side have not participated fully specifically for necessary instructions on girl child education in Wukari LGA of Taraba State. The study comes up with the following recommendations:

- i. Parents should realize that education of girl child is important and girl child education should not terminate at primary level of education.
- ii. The role of woman or girl child is more than marrying and household keeping or engaging in exploitive activities like hawking of good in the streets and so parents should not hesitate in training girl children.
- iii. Teachers and school principals should engage in enlightening the parents need for girl child education for community and societal development. They should do that through PTA meetings or conducting a voluntary mobilization of the community members.

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