

## THE IMPACT OF SOCIO-CULTURAL VALUES ON GENDER EDUCATION IN AGATU LAND, EKYE DEVELOPMENT AREA OF NASARAWA STATE.

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### ABSTRACT

The study examined the impact of socio-cultural values on gender education in Agatu Land, Ekye Development Area of Nasarawa State with special attention given to the period of (2001-2010). Questionnaires were used to collect data from notable 50 heads of families from selected villages. The questionnaires gathered the opinions of the 50 respondents on the impact of socio-cultural values on gender education. Secondary data were also collected from Doma Zonal Inspectorate office, Ministry of Education and Planning and Statistics Department of Ekye Local Education Authority. The data were analysed using percentage. The results showed that cultural values influence gender education in the areas suggestions were made which include revisiting our societal cultural values with view to encouraging female education.

### INTRODUCTION

It is clearly evident to casual observer that culturally, the male gender is usually favoured to the detriment of his female counterpart in a typical Africa setting Okereke (2009). Cultural values as being expressed by the parents in their desire for a particular gender education, instead of female education be appreciated in our cultural values and encouraged, rather most of our societal cultural values only appreciate that of men. World Bank (as cited in Okereke 2009). This is easily seen in the wide gap existing between men and female in right access to education, control of resources, political offices, economic power and property ownership. According to Olurode (1990), there are different roles, opportunities, rewards and legal protection for women and men and this give rise to various forms of gender difference in practically all aspect of life e.g. education, family, politics economy all to the detriment of women.

The existing gap can be seen in the data collected from the Planning and Statistics Department, Ekye Development Area and Doma Zonal Inspectorate of Education office.

**TABLE 1: Primary Schools Enrolment by Gender (2001- 2010) Of Selected Schools Agbashi, Okpatta, Rukubi, Ojiwo Olegokpa and Akpanaja.**

YEAR	SCHOOLS	MALE	%	FEMALE	%	TOTAL
2001		800	73	300	27	1,100
2002		876	64	476	36	1,372
2003		944	65	509	35	1,453
2004		1,045	64	599	36	1,644
2005		1,124	63	658	37	1,782
2006		1,206	66	610	34	1,816
2007		1,342	66	700	34	2,042
2008		1,467	63	851	37	2,318
2009		1,530	62	930	38	2,460
2010		1,623	62	1,001	38	2,624

**SOURCE:** Planning and Statistics Department, Ekye Development Area, Local Education Authority.

Table 1 shows that there is inequality gap in the female and male enrolment from 2001-2010. The table also shows that there is low enrolment for the female gender in 2001. However, there was gradual improvement from 2001-2010. Looking at the percentage all year round, the female enrolment is relatively high in 2008-2010. While the male counterparts had the highest enrolment in 2001.

**TABLE 2: Secondary Schools Enrolment by Gender (2001-2010) of Selected Schools (G.S.S. Agbashi, G.S.S. Rukubi okopatta, G.S.S. Idadu, G.S.S. Akpanaja, G.S.S. Agyema).**

YEAR	SCHOOLS	MALE	%	FEMALE	%	TOTAL
2001		793	75	265	25	1,058
2002		808	77	242	23	1,050
2003		702	78	201	22	903
2004		608	75	203	25	811
2005		815	80	203	20	1,018
2006		1,357	91	134	09	1,491
2007		1,138	76	368	24	1,506
2008		1,250	73	462	27	1,712
2009		1,202	75	391	25	1,593
2010		997	64	565	36	1,562

**Source: Doma Zonal Inspectorate Office, Ministry of Education, Nasarawa State.**

Table 2 Depicts the existing inequality between the female and male gender enrolment in secondary schools from 2001-2010. The inequality gap is highest in 2006 where the female enrolment was 9% while their male counterpart stood at 91%. The table also showed that there was general poor enrolment for the both gender in 2005 and 2006. It further revealed the fluctuation in the enrolment as it was fair in 2001 and falls in 2002-2003, then rise 2004 and fall in 2005-2007. While 2008 witnessed rise and dropped in 2009 and rise in 2010.

### **RESEARCH PROBLEM**

Agatu cultural values like most of the socio-cultural values in our societies ignored the importance of female education to the detriment of the development of societies. Even where it is not totally ignored in Agatu land, it is given less attention. Does this not have negative effect on development of our society? Does this imbalance not having implication on principle of equality of all men irrespective of their gender?

### **AIM AND OBJECTIVES**

The aim of this research is to assess the impact of socio-cultural values on gender education in Agatu land, Ekye Development Area of Nasarawa State.

### **SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES**

- a. To ascertain the number of both female and male in primary and secondary schools in the area.
- b. To find out the cultural beliefs on gender education.
- c. Ascertain whether there are cultural discrimination against female education.
- d. To find out whether religion has influence on the gender education.
- e. Determine whether there are other factor (s) besides cultural values that influences gender education

- f. Whether the culture has influence on girl child early marriage.
- g. To recommend possible suggestions to overcome those cultural values that hinder particular sex education.

## **SIGNIFICANCE**

The result of the research findings will not only benefit the affected communities but entire state and general public. It will also help to expose those cultural values that are detrimental to the progress of education in the area. It will further assist the government to formulate policies or make laws that will improve educational development of the area.

## **CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATIONS**

### **SOCIO-CULTURAL**

Clement (2002) culture denotes the unique way by which people resolve their material and non-material needs.

Tylor (as cited in Thio,1986) defined culture as a complex whole which includes knowledge, beliefs, art, moral law, custom and any other capabilities and habits acquired by human being as member of society. William (1895:57) argued that the term culture can be described as particular way of life which expresses certain meaning and values not only in art and learning but also in institutions and ordinary behaviour. Culture therefore refers to the totality ways of life of people in a given society at a particular given time.

Social value is an idea (i.e abstract thing) which a society deems important for her survival among such cherished ideas in the modern society are freedom of expression, equality, democracy, and progress. The social values of society, therefore, constituted the yardstick by which the people assess the desirability of events concerning them such as leadership, education or economic enterprises. Social values are evolved endogenously or exogenously in response to certain needs of the people (MC Gee 1980).

Nkpe (2004:22) defines values as the highest ethical parameters, standards and criteria through which individuals, groups and societies order their goals and determine their choices and judge their social life. Values, therefore is widely air belief of sentiment that something is important to the community well-being.

## **GENDER**

Gender is a global issue that has continued to generate a lot of concern because of it is the basic differences between men and woman. Despite its profile, the concept is not always understood by many, even among the learned ones. Thus, it has different meaning to different people. To some, it is another word for sex or woman. To others, it means cultural ideals and stereotype of masculine and femininity. However, none of these labels adequately give the correct meaning of term, gender. The word "gender" was coined by an American psychoanalyst, Robert Stroller (1968) cited in stark (1987). Gender is a term that has psychological or cultural, rather than biological connotations. If the proper term for gender is 'masculine' and feminine's this latter may be quite independent of biological sex. Oakley (1972) cited in Haralambo and Halbon (2000), defines gender as the socially unequal division of people into masculine and feminine. Assielumuba (1995), the word gender has to do with male and female classes. It is an analytical concept uses

to assess the various forms of social inequality between male and female population in a society. Gender, therefore, is the amount of masculinity or femininity found in a person.

## **EDUCATION**

A major primary concern of all societies, whether literate or illiterate, civilised or uncivilised is providing the necessary and appropriate orientation for their young members not only to fit into the life of the society but also to ensure that they can grapple with the problems of life when they grow into adult members of the society. This orientation is often given through process of education.

Ogbole (1995) education broadly defined refers to acquisition of worthwhile values, knowledge skills. Education therefore, refers to systematic training of acquisition of knowledge and skills. It could be at the formal or informal level.

## **Gender Education**

Gender education is defined as a type of sex preference education.

## **METHODOLOGY**

Five major villages were randomly sampled out of the ten villages in the **area of study**. They include Agbashi, Rukubi, Idadu, Akpanaja and Olegokpa. Ten notable families heads were randomly sampled in each of the villages making a total of fifty respondents. Questionnaires were administered to elicit information from the respondents.

Secondary data were also collected from Doma Zonal Inspectorate Office of the Ministry of Education and Planning and Statistics Department of the Local Education Authority in Ekye Development Area. The data were analysed using simple descriptive statistical tool such as percentage.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

Table 1. can be argued that majority of the respondent 25, falls between the ages of 21-50, representing 50%, 15 respondents representing 30% of ages between 51 - 70. While the minority, 10 respondents representing 20% is between the ages of 71-80 years.

These findings show that in all categories of age groups, majority of their members' belief in male gender education than the female education. The reason might not be unconnected with their cultural values give preference to male gender education.

Table 2 shows that 40% respondents representing 80% of the sample size have had one form of formal education or other. Out of these, 10 respondents (20%) have had primary education, another 10 respondents representing 20%, have had secondary education, while 20 respondents representing 40% have had tertiary education. The 20% respondents (10) are illiterate people.

The finding revealed that the illiterate respondents have high cultural beliefs that modern education is for the male gender and not for the female gender. It is not amazing because this category of respondents also believe that the modern education exposes the female to prostitution.

Table 3 focused on religion belief of respondents. It depicts that 30 of the respondents were Christians, out of which 15 of them representing 50% belief in the female education while the remaining 15 respondents (50%) beliefs in male child education. The reasons for the first group of respondents to belief in female education may be in line with their religion belief (Christianity) which gives room for equal participation of all gender. The second group of 15 respondents (50%) belief in male gender education. Their reason may be because of their cultural milieu. Out of the 20 respondents, 10 practiced Islam and another 10 belief in paganism. Out of the 10 respondents, 7 of them from Islam and paganism religion belief in male education, while the remaining 6 respondents, 3 each from the Islam and paganism religious beliefs in female education. Their reason is because female education is only beneficiary to their husbands.

**CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION**

Socio-cultural values has great setbacks on female gender education which in turn affects female contribution to the development of our societies. Therefore, the following suggestions are made to reduce the negative impacts. That male gender education is another form of sexual discrimination against females in the society. The two are in fact, two sides of the same coin. To suggest any remedy against male preference of education, therefore, is to deal with sexism at its roots. Any effective intervention policy and programme invariably has to start with intensification of formal education for the female population in particular in the area. Some of these programmes require complementary legislative actions in the following areas:-

- i) Affirmative action to reduce discriminatory practices in the distribution of social amenities e.g. use of sex-based quota system, and gender character in such distributions.
- ii) Discouraging withdrawal of female children from school, regardless of the ages of the children, for the purpose of giving them out for marriage. Beside, the legislative actions, there is the need to revisit our societal cultural values with view to encouraging female education.

**Table 1: Age Distribution of Respondents on Cultural Belief on Gender Education**

Age range	No. of respondents	Beliefs on female education	%	Beliefs on male education	%	Total
21 – 50	25	5	20	20	80	100
51 – 70	15	3	20	12	80	100
71 – 80	10	2	20	8	80	100
Total	50	10	60	40	220	300

**Table 2: Educational Attainment of Respondents on Cultural Beliefs on Gender Education**

Educational level	No. of respondents	Beliefs on female education	%	Beliefs on male education	%	Total
No formal education	10	2	20	8	80	100
Primary	10	4	40	6	60	100
Secondary	10	5	50	5	50	100
Tertiary	20	10	50	10	50	100

Total	50	21	160	29	240	400
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**Table 3: Religion Beliefs of the Respondents on Gender Education**

Religion	No. of respondents	Beliefs on female education	%	Beliefs on male education	%	Total
Christianity	30	15	50	15	50	100
Islam	10	3	30	7	70	100
Paganism	10	3	30	7	70	100
Total	50	21	110	29	190	300

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**QUESTIONNAIRE USED IN THE STUDY OF THE IMPACT OF SOCIO-CULTURAL VALUES ON GENDER EDUCATION**

- 1) Age [    ]
- 2) Name of you village\_\_\_\_\_
- 3) State your level of educational attainment below  
Primary [ ] Secondary [ ] Tertiary [ ]
- 4) Religion: Christianity [ ] Islam [ ] Paganism [ ]
- 5) How many children do you have? [    ]
- 6) Number of male and female in primary school F[ ] M[ ]
- 7) Number of male and female in secondary school F[ ] M[ ]
- 8) Does your culture have any belief on female and male education?  
Yes [ ] or No [ ] If yes, state reason(s)\_\_\_\_\_
- 9) Does your culture encourage early marriage? Yes [ ] No [ ]  
If yes, give reason(s)\_\_\_\_\_