

Educational Needs of Married Women for Sustainable Development in Sokoto State

¹Nasiru Abubakar Katami & ²Maryam Khalid

^{1&2}*Department of Educational Foundations*
Faculty of Education, Sokoto State University

Abstract

This paper analyses empirically the educational needs of married women for sustainable development in Sokoto state of Nigeria. A case study of Sokoto state women centre for continuing education. The objectives of the study were to identify the major educational needs of married women in Sokoto state and the difference between married and unmarried women. To achieve this, the research uses primary data collected from 100 out of the 340 married women students of Sokoto state women centre for continuing education using stratified sampling technique. Questionnaires were administered to the respondents and data collected was analyzed using t-test statistical tool. The result shows that women can contribute immensely to the sustainable development of their family and society economically, socially and morally. The research recommends that, the society should encourage the education of women, since they are partners in progress to men and should be given favorable chance to compete with them by using their talent in the economic development of the society.

Keywords: *Educational, Needs, Married women, Sustainable Development*

Corresponding Author: Nasiru Abubakar Katami

Background to the Study

Marriage is one of the social institutions and it is as old as the history of mankind. It is a universal institution that all societies recognize traditionally in some forms. Marriage can traditionally be described as the legal, voluntary union of a man and a woman. This Union is usually performed under a public ritual so as to have social recognition. Marriage may be contracted in civil form or according to religious ritual. Marriage as a social institution serves a number of social functions. First it serves as a basis for family formation, as basis for human procreation and child socialization. It is a unit of economic cooperation as well as sources of intimate relationship which assign status and social roles to individuals. It is however, pertinent to note that marriage in Nigeria is often associated with some social problems such as denial to the fundamental needs and right to education for the girl child. It is also associated with series of responsibilities for a wife in the home, which include child bearing and rearing as well as the general home maintenance and up keep. Thus a married woman wanting to undergo a course of study may often have to combine these marital obligations with her study which may consequently have some devastating affects on her study. This is so because such a woman may have to use part of time she will otherwise devote to her study to carry out such obligations.

It is however worth nothing that marriage gives woman a social autonomy to act independent at the direct traditional control of the parent, elder, brothers, sisters and other elder relations. It serves as a means of grooming a woman for social life and maturity. It may positively influence a woman social behaviour towards a study. Husbands often see their wives as permanent partners in progress and therefore they will offer necessary support to their educational pursuit. Education is not only limited to the art of reading and write but it is a useful change in behaviour which distinguish one from the other. It is also a very strong instrument used in the overall development of societies the world over.

Education can be thought of as the transmission of the values and accumulated knowledge of a society. In this sense, it is equivalent to what social scientists term socialization or enculturation. Education is only one thing that can remove corruption, unemployment, and environmental problems. Education helps to become good students, parents, entrepreneurs, doctors, siblings and honest citizens. Being in contact with an educated person and having an intelligent conversation with him expands knowledge and introduces a certain creativity and joy in the mind. Education makes the national development process fast. Education develops good political ideology. The standard of living of its citizens is largely dependent on the level of education the citizens are able to acquire. Everyone deserves to be educated. Education is the first early investment for child development. Similar, for governments and nations, to make their country developed, their first budget allocation has to be on the education infrastructure in schools and colleges. Education is not limited to academics and schooling. It's more than an expansion. For example, in any nation people need education (common sense) on various things:

1. Driving rules
2. Water consumption and savings
3. Environment Development
4. Organic farming

The value of education and its significance can be understood from the fact that as soon as we are born, our parents start educating us about an essential thing in life. A toddler starts learning new words and develops a vocabulary based on what his parents teach him. They educate him who is his father, mother, brother, sister, etc. and how to behave with each person giving them due respect. They also impart him priceless knowledge about ethics and morals right from the beginning when he has a tender mind so that these qualities stay with him for his entire life in the form of conditioning.

Education therefore, from pan Africans' congress would eliminate ignorance through teaching and learning which by and large will produce manpower needs of the nation. The UNESCO report card on education for all (EFA) is stressing the need for the equality of provision of education. In Nigeria, in order to bring about educational equality, the Federal Military Government under the leadership of general Obasanjo (1976) inaugurated the Universal Primary Education (UPE). The programme was designed to provide equal opportunities in education for Nigerian citizens and also another programme Universal Basic education(UBE) was inaugurated by the same Olusegun Obasanjo in the year(1999) with almost the same objectives.

Educational opportunities should equally be given to the citizenship irrespective of religion, creed, sect, ideology place of living etc. Islam also explains the importance attached to woman education; it was reported that prophet Muhammad (SAW) said "seek for knowledge even if it takes you to China". In another Hadith he was also reported saying "knowledge is obligatory to Muslims both Male and Female "(salawu, 1996). But women have always been considered inferior to men (Aderlagbe. 1972:136). Academic achievement or performance is a reflective outcome of effective learning and thus it provides information about the academic worth of the learner. It is thus logical to state that for the women folk to be able to carry out social functions that would help in nation building; they must be academically sound and fit. Unfortunately, however women education in Nigeria and in Sokoto State in particular is surrounded by a number of social problems such as culture, misconception of religion, economic background, status of women and parental attitudes toward women education. Women generally represent more than half of the entire world population and that makes their education almost obligatory if the different societies they belong to are to develop. Shehu Usmanu Danfodiyo sets an example by educating his daughters such as Asma'u, Khadijat and Maryam to the extent that they become scholars of outstanding abilities.

Sustainable development can be seen as human capacity building. It can also be defined as economic development without polluting the environment or economic development maintained within acceptable levels of global resource depletion and environmental

pollution (Microsoft Encarta, 2007). According to Meena (1994) Sustainable development is a development process which enhances people to create and consume wealth on a lasting basis. She further opined that such development requires among others, economic, political and cultural environment which enables people to engage in and sustain the process.

This research therefore sought to re-examine the educational need of married women for sustainable development in Sokoto State, by identifying some of their problems as well as providing suggestion that can give short and long terms solution s to the problems.

Review of Related Literature

The review of the related literature includes the following areas: They are the need for change in the socio-cultural perception of the status and social roles of women in the society, concept of women education, women education in Islamic perspective, women education in Nigeria, development of women education in Sokoto State, education of married women in Sokoto State and role of married women in ensuring sustainable development.

The Need for Change in the Socio-Cultural perception of the Status and social Roles of Women in The Society

The social co-existence and relationships of men and women have been variously described and explained, According to castle(1966) women are one half of mankind. The United Nations (1995)described women as homemakers and centers of the family. In the words of Deborah. (1969) women constitute one half of the human population. All these shows the strength of the social factor of women in the society and this explains why they are often described as partners in progress to men. However, through some socio-cultural manipulation women are relegated to a status similar to that of master-servant relationship. They are denied access to many social privileges including education.

Concept of Women Education

Many contemporary analysts examine the process of education itself by considering the characteristics of an educated person. Thus the education process has been described as the international transmission of something worthwhile or desirable in a morally acceptable manner. (Oche, 1988 and peters 1987). Petersgoes further to argue that education is the all around development of a person physically, intellectually, education as the aggregate of all the process in which a child or young adult develops the abilities, attitudes, and other forms of behavior which are of positive value to the society in which he lives.

Coming to the education of women. It is clear from the above discussion that a good education aims at physical, intellectual and moral development of the individual. Let it be maintained that education is the best legacy any parent can bequeath to the child. Omolu (1972) has clearly pointed out four different but related purposes which women education ought to foster. They are social status: educated woman can her own in any

class or society expresser opinion freely and contribute her quota to the development of social life in the community. An educated woman is a cultural woman who knows how to behave in a proper manner; she is gentle, polite, and respectful. An educated woman can get good paid job which will enable her to contribute in the up keep and education of her children and can realize the importance of her children education which makes her to be more aware of her responsibilities to her children and her children are in a better position to learn quickly.

Women in Islamic Prospective

A woman in Islam is regarded as an independent perfect member of the society and its places no difference between women and men as far as human virtues are concerned. The prophet(PBUH) was reported saying "If three daughters are born to a person and he bring them up, give them good education and train them in the art of life, I shall myself stand between him and Hell fire". Education as conceived by Islam is not preserve only for one sex. All Human beings without exception have been given the opportunity to learn, understand and utilize all kinds of knowledge. In this context therefore man and woman should be regarded as equal in the field of education economics and politics.

Women Education in Nigeria

According to Praeger (1977:55) Education is considered a fundamental tool, great equalizer of opportunity and perhaps the single most effective upliftment in the modernizing process. It is generally believed that social, economic, political and technological advancement of a nation is to a large extent dependent upon the development of its citizens educationally. Therefore, to build a better future for all citizens one must ensure that every girl-child/ woman has not only given the right to be educated but also given the means to be educated (Castle, 1966). Also in the words of Pickhal (1961:44) women are the centers of family, main custodian of cultural, social and fundamental values of the society. No society or community can develop fully without their cooperation, understanding and effective participation. Specifically, women have contributed immensely in nation building in education, agriculture, health care, language politics, tradition and culture.

Women also play prominent roles in the development of states in pre-colonial Nigeria. For Instance during the period of Hausa States and after the Sokoto jihad mention were made of women scholars particularly Shehu Dan Fodiyo,s daughters, namely Asma'u, Khadijat, Maryam etc among women political advisers there was Uwar Kanoand Inna of Gobir. These prominent personalities could not have contributed what they did without some kind of education either formal or non-formal. The importance of women education can not be over emphasized, education provides them with additional opportunity to contribute meaningful in the social, economic, political and educational spares of the nation's development.

Development of Women Education in Sokoto State

According to Fafunwa (1974), "Western education was introduced in Nigeria by Christian missionaries as far back as 1842. The activities of the missionaries then were restricted in

the coastal areas. However they gradually spread to the hinter land. "They are aimed at teaching children and adult convert how to read the Bible and Prayer Books. Western education was introduced in Sokoto as early as 1903. However it met a well established Islamic system of education, as such the missionaries encounter problems in relation to the acceptance of their system of education except in the pagan areas of Kotoroshi, Tsafe, which are now in Zamfara State.

The first school was open in Sokoto Town in 1905; the school was elementary primary and secondary school for sons of emirs". The school started with four pupils and Muslim teacher who was later send to England to broaden his experience" (Taiwo 1980). Later the Emir of Gwandu and Tambuwal send their son's, in the year 1907 the pupils population rose to 30 which are all from the ruling families of Sokoto. Gwandu and Argungu emirates.

"Only three schools existed between 1906 and 1936 and by 1939, girl's Western education started at the present Nagarta College Sokoto. The curricular includes reading and writing Vernacular arithmetic, needle work and craft (Badamassi 1967; Fafunwa 1974, Taiwo 1980, Adensina 1985)".

The year 1964-65 was characterized by political tension to educate women, this period witness a great concern for women education of both Islamic and Western because of government encouragement and participation. In Sokoto the First Female post primary school was established in 1964, when former senior Girls Primary School was changed to government Girls College (GGC) Sokoto established with the Primary objectives of absorbing girls who completed their primary education from all over Sokoto province (Present Sokoto, Kebbi and Zamfara States). Similarly co-education in Primary school commenced at the present work department near NEPA office Sokoto (As an elementary school) later a separate girls boarding Primary school was established at Rabah in 1963 with 47 Girls. Girls with good performance were selected and send to Teachers Training College (TTC) at Katsina which was more equipped with teaching and learning materials (Nduka 1965).

Education of Married Women in Sokoto State

Education is the right of every child, but in most of northern Nigeria, it is more of a privilege, especially for the girls if they are lucky enough to go to school at all, many northern girls are withdrawn permanently from school because of the phenomenon of early marriage after which they soon become mothers. Their low level of education blocks off opportunities for economic, social, cultural and political advancement, trapping millions of women in a cycle of poverty and ignorance. It was to help break this cycle that the Sokoto State government took the innovative step of establishing the women centre for continuing education in November 1997. The aims of the centre is to offer formal education up to secondary school level to women who have either dropped out of formal school or never previously been to school in order words, the center is established to give these two categories of women a second chance. Also many female

Arabic secondary schools were established so that the parents will feel safe since the schools are more of Islamic oriented. Among the schools are Hafsatu Ahmadu Bello Secondary School, Yar Akiya Girls Arabic Secondary School, and Government Girls Arabic Secondary School Sabon Birni etc.

In conclusion the educational disadvantage experienced by women particularly in Northern Nigeria, makes it important to address the factors responsible for unequal opportunity of education. Early age of girls' marriage is one of the fundamental reasons why so many girls drop out of school permanently. There is also the factors of religious misconception, cultural norms etc.

Role of Married Women in Ensuring Sustainable Development

Married women in Nigeria play an important role in ensuring sustainable development of the nation. They possessed some special qualities that are of benefit to the nation if given the opportunity to be educated. Some of the benefits that can be derived from married women education towards a sustainable development are:

Building a Healthy Family: The health condition of the family is one of the factors that determine the lifespan of the society. Also the lifespan of the society determines the level of development of that society. Orji (2011) noted that girl education vis-à-vis women education stands one of the potent tools for eradicating girls' vulnerability. A healthy society has also being linked to a wealthy nation. Similarly Kingdon (2002) noted that doubling the female secondary school enrolment ratio from 19% to 38% in 1975 help to reduce infant death in 1985 by 64%. The education of married women is therefore closely related to raising a healthy generation that would be empowered to contribute significantly to national development. Married women in the society are usually known for their cleanliness and have the capacity of building a healthy nation.

Management of Resources: All over the world, women are recognized for their ability to manage the little resources available. Their prudent management of resources helps to reduce wastage and increase economic benefits from available resources, if married women are properly educated, it helps them to put their managerial skills into use and help their husband's in managing the national economic resources for the benefit of the society. (There is a saying that behind every successful man there is a woman). It is therefore advisable that married women should be empowered through formal education on how they can harness their management abilities for the long-term benefit of all citizens of the country.

Reduced Dependency Rate: The education of married women will help in reducing the level of dependency on their husbands in particular which will in turn reduce it on the nation in general. The empowerment of married women through education will assist in reducing the pressure on economic resources in the country. This will help to sustain the economic resources in the country towards the path of development. Similarly empowering women through education will also enable them to become self reliant

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Table 1: The difference between the educational needs of women in school who are married and those that is not married.

VARIABLE	GROUP OF RESPONDENT	N	MEAN	T-VALUE	SIG T
Needs to know factors that foster marriage stability	Unmarried	28	1.2857	18.354	0.00
	Married	59	1.1017		
Needs for financial support Towards the study	Unmarried	27	1.3929	4.429	0.038
	Married	60	1.6949		
Need on how to cope with old age in study	Unmarried	28	1.3214	3.297	0,073
	Married	60	1.2000		

Finding

The social roles of women in the society are socio culturally perceived mainly in terms of norms of domesticity. It reflected the way and manner women are treated by the society. The above observation on the socio cultural perception of the status and social roles of women visa- a- vie the educational implication this perception has posed on women clearly demonstrate the need for women education. Some of the major findings of this work are;

1. There is need for the married woman to be convince that they are not late or too old to study
2. That other domestic work in the home can be well executed if the person doing them is educated. For example, child bearing and rearing, children education support as well as healthcare.
3. That majority of women that are drop out or did not attend school at all due to early marriage and misinterpretation of religious stands on education of both sexes
4. That women can contribute immensely to the development of their family and society economically, socially and morally
5. That education makes women understand more about religious obligations.

Conclusion

The significant of women education has severally been demonstrated by different scholars. Women have contributed immensely in nation building, education, agriculture, healthcare, language, politics, tradition and culture. They are the center of the family, main custodian of culture, social and fundamental values of the society pickhal (1961:p144). Based on the research, the researcher conclude the following as attained by an educated woman.

1. Economic Development: An educated woman with good paid Job will be in a better position to contribute towards the up keep and education of her children thereby rising their standards. This she can contribute immensely towards the economic development of the country.

2. Realization of the important of children education makes mothers to be more aware of their responsibility to their children.
3. Social status: An educated woman can express her opinion freely and contribute her quote to the development of the social life in the community

Recommendation

The following are recommendations based on the findings of the work. They are:

1. Parents should realize the importance of their female children's education as it helps them in their later lives when they become widow or divorced, they can get good paid job which will make it possible for them to take care of themselves and train their children educationally and in return the children become useful members of the society.
2. The society should encourage the education of women, since they are partners in progress to men and should be given favorable chance to compete with them. By using their talents in the economic development of the society.
3. Husbands also should realize that a woman who is educated is in a better position to cater for the children by making them clean and healthy as well as encouraging them in their schooling by giving them support and helping them to do their homework since she is the one who is always with them.
4. School should also play part, in encouraging the female students, by making them study those subjects with better and higher job opportunities.
5. Government should also encourage women education by providing free scholarship to women education at all level as well as enacting laws that protect women in their educational pursuit.

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