Parents' Perspective on Female Students' Dropouts in Nigeria

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ABSTRACT— *The high rate of female students' dropouts in Nigeria is a cause for concern and it means that social and public policies have to be realigned to tackle this important issue. Although there are many reasons for female students dropping out of school as given in various studies on the subject, this paper tries to explore the reasons from the parents' perspective. The findings in this paper are drawn from a research study on dropouts in Nigeria based on data collected from junior secondary schools of Shinkafi Local government Zamfara state.* Quantitative research design was adopted for this study *and data were collected from the parents of female students' dropouts and non-dropouts through questionnaires. T-Test was used to examine the significant difference between parents' socio-economic support, parents' cultural traditions and practice and parent's religious belief on female students' dropouts from parents' perspective. In the course of discussion, the paper reviews literature on how socio-economic status, cultural traditions and practice and religious belief from the parents' perspectives affects the education of their female children; in addition, studies and researches from the previous works of scholars relating to the parents' perspectives on female students' dropout were also analyzed and discussed throughout the paper. The results of the study reveals that though the enrollment rate of female students increased from time to time there is a serious problem of dropouts more especially in junior secondary schools. The study has also discovered that the dropout rate of female students is still very high and still remains worrisome particularly in rural areas. This is further worsened by traditional system and belief pattern of gender disparity, and high incidence of early marriage of very young girls based on value system. The major reasons behind drop outs were mentioned in the findings of the paper with some little explanations on each reason. The paper concluded that there is significant difference between parents' socio-economic support, parents' cultural traditions and practice and parent's religious belief on female students' dropouts from the parent's perspectives.*

Keywords— Parents' perspective, female students' dropouts, socio-economic status, cultural traditions and practice, religious belief

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1. INTRODUCTION

The benefits of education more especially that of female children remains enormous and unquantifiable. Education brings about sound knowledge, well- informed habits, sound ideas, skills and enhancement of positive attitudes. It is therefore essential, for it is still regarded as an important bridge of social, economic and political mobility (Amutabi & Oketch, 2003 cited in Onyeike, Victoria & Angela, 2011). One aspect, however, that has been neglected in investigating the problems of female education is the parent's perspectives on female student's dropout in the area of study. It is true that a number of significant studies have recently been done on girl-child education some of which are; Parent's Factors towards Schooling and Education, (Samal, 2012), An Analytical Evaluation of the Trend of primary school Enrolment in Ebonyi state: The case of the challenges Facing Female Children, (Onyeike, Victoria and Angela, 2011), School dropout among Nigerian children: some proactive strategies and solutions (Abraham, Nathaniel, 2011), Economic and socio-cultural impediments to Girl-child Education in Sokoto, Implication for Universal Basic Education (Yusuf, 2008), Rural Household poverty School Attendance and Educational attainment. Evidence from Sokoto state Nigeria (Sanda and Garba, 2007), Factors of Parents towards Girls Education and its implication for enrolment of Girls in Primary Schools in Niger Republic (Warou, 2006), Girl Education: The soro Girls centre, Ganjuwa L.G. A. Bauci Nigeria (Semenitari, 1997) etc. But the question of how these parental factors influence female students' dropout and there significant relationship and significant differences has rarely been considered. This area of research is not well explored and it is vital that suggestions are forwarded to the Nigerian Ministry of Education especially in Zamfara state for the betterment and sustainability of female child education. Consequently, the researcher found it very important to conduct a research on

this aspect within junior secondary schools of the study area which are seriously affected with the problem of withdrawing female students for marriage and other domestic works in order to bridge this research gap.

Similarly, less enrollment and dropping out of female students in Nigeria demands to investigate different factors from the parents' perspectives which are affecting overall situation of female children's education. Parental factors and behaviors reflect the cultural and social picture of this segment of society (Yusuf, 2008). According to Some parents education and school could be a corrupting influence; therefore, they became reluctant to allow their daughters to continue going to school. Some parents also are of the view that in co-educational schools, as most junior secondary schools are, female children morals would be corrupted because of the amount of time they would spend with boys. Some parents believed that due to cases of physical and sexual harassment and abuse from peers and teachers, there was also fear for the physical and sexual safety of girls in school (Warou, 2006). To those who have this belief therefore, dropping out of their daughters is better than completing their education. Major purpose of this study is to examine the significant differences of parent's socio-economic support, parent's cultural traditions and practice and parent's religious belief on female students' dropout from parent's perspective, in Nigeria. The study therefore, contributed to the body of knowledge by educating the school administrators and teachers in order to better understand that the management of the school and decision-making about school should not be their exclusive responsibility. Parents must be fully associated in all aspect of their children's' education.

2. BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Nigeria was one of the one hundred and eighty-nine (189) countries which embraced the eight millennium development goals aimed at eradicating poverty and improving the welfare of their people by 2015. Another on the list is "Achieving Universal Primary Education by the year 2015, which implies that children all over the globe boys and girls alike would be able to complete a full course of primary schooling (Youssef, 2005). Nigeria under the former regime of Olusegun Obasanjo initiated the Universal Primary Education in 2001 by launching the Universal Basic Education (UBE). It was legally backed by the UBE Act of 2004. This arrangement is aimed at providing basic education for 9 years. The first six years of Primary, and 3 years of Junior Secondary school this, should be free and compulsory(Onyeike, Victoria & Angela, 2011).

This means that every child irrespective of gender is expected by this act to be enrolled in school and finish at list junior secondary school particularly in Nigeria where the literacy rate of female children is very low. Adewole (1997),cited in Gusau (2001), was right when he said " a society that accumulates illiterate women stands half risk of having a crop of over half of its adults population incapable of participating effectively in the political social and cultural life of its community or even of being effectively mothers and wives." Therefore, in order to exonerate society from falling into the risk female children education becomes inevitable and necessary in Nigeria.

Moreover, in the case of female children, the problem of dropping out is the topic of discussion more especially in junior secondary schools of the study area and this may be related to some parental factors which are characterized by parent's occupation, socio-economic support, educational background, cultural traditions and religious beliefs with regards to female education. While some female students are dropping out of schools, others are seriously facing their studies in the same study area. The analysis of access to basic education in Nigeria builds on the education policy of "free, compulsory and universal basic education policy" (F G N, 1999) and on the World Bank (2000) sector studies. While it is now acknowledged that access to education has improved, it has also been observed that female access to education is seriously slow. It has not grown fast enough to achieve the universal level of participation in primary and junior secondary schools.

3. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The parental impact on their children's educational aspirations and occupational success has long occupied centre stage in the sociological literature. Researches by sociologists and economist indicate that parents' involvement towards education have a significant effect on their children's educational aspirations and strongly raises student's achievement and minimizes dropout level. Parents may therefore have significant relationship on female student's dropouts in the world and Nigeria in particular (Houtenville & Conway 2008; Canon, 2011).

According to Akyeampong (2009), Socio-economic support and interest from the parents' perspective have a great deal of influence on female children participation and level of success attained in education. Female students' education from the parents' perspective is mainly influenced by traditional beliefs regarding the ideal roles of female students in society. The value attached to education from the parents' perspective was a major factor that influenced children's enrollment, retention and completion, it has close link with the issue of dropouts in schools. Writing about the Maasai Kilian (1996 cited in Anastasia et al 2011).) noted parental ignorance does not allow pastoralist communities to

understand why a child should go to school instead of looking after livestock. This is due to misperception of the meaning and value of education from the parents' perspective.

Traditionally, the only roles available to female children according to some parents were those of wives and mothers. The perceived ideal roles and characteristics of female children influence how female children are socialized in the home from the parents' perspective. Female children in general are considered traditionally weaker. Sichinga (2005 cit**ed in** Anastasia et al 2011). conducted a research on Yao girls' schools in Malawi and came up with his findings indicating early marriages, domestic chores, poverty, lack of exposure, community's (such as Muslim culture), negative parental attitude towards female education and lack of educated women serving as role models in society as the major causes of low enrolment and school dropout. Female children were thus seen as nurturers and mainly as providing support for men who worked to provide for the family. Being traditionally weaker, female children were therefore also perceived by some parents as being less capable and requiring the protection and guidance of men. These traditional perception have prevailed even in present times from the parents' perspective when socio-economic changes have resulted in changes to role female children are now expected to undertake. These changes have made education necessary, not just for the purposes of providing income earning opportunities, but also for the potential to contribute to the improvement in the standards of living of individuals, families capable than male children, they are often overtly protected and supervised by the parents to keep them from what is considered threatening to their safety i.e. physical, sexual, mental and emotional safety.

4. PROBLEM STATEMENT

Education, which is the right of every child, is a mirage in the lives of some Nigeria female children because some of them are forced into early marriage as from age 12 (Ocholi 2002). Ocholi further observed that the regression in basic education is reflected in the fact that the net enrolment rate for female children is very low, with a high dropout rate. Difference of some parental factors on female students' dropout which have to do with socio-economic support, cultural traditions and religious beliefs of the parents had been known to force most parents to withdraw their female children from school. UNICEF (2004) report indicates that some 121 million children are out of school for various reasons and 65 million of them are girls. With the educational rights of 65 million girls unmet, something should be done to ensure that they complete their education. The same report indicates that Nigeria is one of the 25 developing countries of the world with low enrolment rates for female children, gender gap of more than 10% in primary and junior secondary education and with more than 1 million female children out of school. This is a problem that requires emergency action if the nation is to advance technologically, considering the multiplier and intergenerational benefits derivable in the education of the female children. It is the aim of this paper, therefore, to find out reasons why some female children dropout of school from the parents' perspectives and, consequently, based on the findings proffer counseling strategies could be adopted in order to check the incidence of dropouts and also examine the significant differences of parent's socio-economic support, parent's cultural traditions and practice and parent's religious belief on female students' dropout from parent's perspective in Nigeria.

5. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To examine the significant differences of parent's socio-economic support on female students' dropouts from parent's perspective, in Nigeria

2. To examine the significant differences of parent's cultural traditions and practice on female students' dropouts from parent's perspective, in Nigeria.

3. To examine the significant differences of parent's religious belief on female students' dropouts from parent's perspective in Nigeria.

6. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. Is there any significant difference between parent's socio-economic supports on female students' dropouts from parent's perspective, in Nigeria?

2. Is there any significant difference between parent's cultural traditions and practice on female students' dropouts from parent's perspective, in Nigeria?

3. Is there any significant difference of parent's religious belief on female students' dropouts from parent's perspective, in Nigeria?

7. RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS

Ho.1. There is no significant difference between parent's socio-economic supports on female students' dropouts from parent's perspective in Nigeria.

. Ho.2. There is no significant difference between parent's cultural traditions and practice on female students' dropouts from parent's perspective in Nigeria.

Ho .3. There is no significant difference between parent's religious beliefs on female students' dropouts from parent's perspective in Nigeria.

8. METHODOLOGY

The quantitative research design was adopted for this study. The study sought to determine the reasons for dropping out from school among female students in Nigeria from the parents' perspective. The main population of this study consisted of all parents of female students' dropouts in junior secondary schools, whereby parents of non dropouts, were also used in supporting the collected data from the actual population. The findings in this paper are drawn from a research study on dropouts in Nigeria based on data collected from junior secondary schools of Shinkafi Local government Zamfara state. Data were collected from the parents of female students' dropouts and non dropouts through questionnaires. A stratified random sampling procedure was adopted in selecting the junior secondary schools, on the basis of their status i.e. all girls' schools and all co-educational schools. The estimated number of the main population stands at 1,112 parents. The sample size for this study was 278 for each category of the respondents (parents of female dropouts and parents of non-dropouts) The choice of 278 samples, out of the estimated population is based on the table of Israel, (1992), Krejcie & Morgan, (1970) cited in Yusuf (2008), which stated that the best sample for a total of 1000 should be 278. Table 1 below show the breakdown:

Table 1: Selected Sample Size.

S/N	Research area	Number of parents of female students' dropout	Selected sample size for parents of dropout
1.	Shinkafi local government	1,112	278
	Shinkafi local government	Number of parents of female student's non-dropout	Selected sample size for parents of non-dropout
		2,358	278

Source: Table of Israel, (1992), Krejcie & Morgan, (1970). Cited in Yusuf, (2008),

9. FINDINGS

9.1 Causes of Drop out as Perceived by Parents

The discontinuation of the education of female students is a threatening signal to our educational system. To find out the plausible reasons, questionnaires were administered to the parents of female students' dropouts and non-dropouts. The result of quantitative data of the study shows the reasons for female students leaving schools before the completion of their education. The hypothesis were also tested and the result indicated that there are significant differences between parent's socio-economic support parent's cultural traditions and practice and parent's religious beliefs on female students' dropouts from parent's perspective in Shinkafi local government Zamfara state**.** These can be seen in table 2, table 4, table 5 and table 6 respectively as shown   below. It is quite evident that poverty is the dominant reason for female students' dropping out of school. 41.7% of the parents agreed that poor economic conditions of the parents often force them to remove female children from school and engage them in either domestic activities or make them work. 40.2% of the parents also hold this view. As mentioned above it is a perception shared by many parents (40.0%) especially in rural areas that investments on boys' education benefit parents and the family at large unlike an investment on female children's education which would not benefit parents. Another major reason is intrinsically linked with the cultural perceptions of society as parents do not want to send their female children to schools in the absence of proper security. This culture and other cultures are entrenched in the parents' perception and of 39.2% hem believed that female students leave schools due to lack of security and many other cultural reasons.

Table 2: Causes of Dropout: Parents Response

No.	Causes of Dropout	Views (In Percent)
Seems1	Poverty	41.7%
2	Involvement in household activities	40.2%
3	Investments on boys' education,	40.0%
4	early marriage	39.5%
5	Absence of proper security	39.2%
6	Lack of child Interest	34.4%
7	Parents death	11.8%
8	School at distance	11.2%
9	Disrespect and stubbornness	10.5%
10	Western education is against Islamic Religion	10.0%

34.4% of the parents believe that their female children are not interested in studies. One or both parents' death is also a factor that compels female students to leave school due to financial and/or Psychological reasons and this was represented by 11.8% of the parents who maintained this view. More than forty percent of the parents (40.2%) believed that involvement in household activities force female children to leave schools before completion of their education. They also felt that female children always preferred to attend schools close to home due to security reasons as discussed earlier. Almost eleven and percent (11.2%) of parents' stated that schools were located at very long distances from their homes and female children were forced to stay at home, rather than continue their studies. The question of 'disrespect' and 'stubbornness' was raised a number of times by some Muslim parents who were represented by 10.5%. As a result, many parents prefer to send their daughters to Quranic schools. The findings of this study show that, some parent belief that western education teaches Christian ethics. Other parents argued that, female enrolment to western education is against Islamic Religion as mentioned by 10.0% of the parents. According to the findings of this study some parents also agreed that western education time is conflicting with religious education time. Some parents believe that teaching of female students by the male teachers is against religion. Some parents also believed that mix education is against the teaching of Islam. Some parents said that socio-cultural beliefs, customs, early marriage, pregnancy, insecurity, harassment, employment in domestic markets, personal engagement, parental services and other traditions practiced by the parents; and also the female students' own decisions to drop-out of schools were also the contributing factors towards female students' dropping out of school. However it should be mentioned that only five percent were of the view that lack of free education was a hindrance to female education.

Table3. Tool for Hypotheses Testing

S/N	Ho/Number	Hypotheses	Tool
	Ho1.	There are no significant differences between parent's socio-economic supports on female students' dropouts from parent's perspective in Shinkafi local government Zamfara state.	t-test
	Ho2.	There are no significant differences between parent's cultural traditions and practice on female students' dropouts from parent's perspective in Shinkafi local government Zamfara state.	t-test
	Ho3.	There are no significant differences between parent's religious beliefs on female students' dropouts from student's perspective in Shinkafi local government Zamfara state.	t-test

10. HYPOTHESES TESTING

Research Question 1: Is there any significant difference between parent's socio-economic supports on female students' dropouts from parent's perspective, in Shinkafi local government Zamfara state?

Ho.1. There is no significant difference between parents' socio-economic support on female students' dropouts from parent's perspective in Shinkafi local government Zamfara state.

Table 4: T-Test for Significant Difference between Parents' Socio-Economic Supports on Female Students' Dropouts from Parents' Perspective, in Shinkafi Local Government Zamfara State.

	Group of Respondents	N	Mean	Mean difference	Std. Deviation	t	df	Sig.(p value)
Total Socio economic Status of Parents	Parents of Dropouts	278	28.5719	10.10791	3.99912	32.881	554	.000
	Parents of Non Dropouts	278	18.4640	10.10791	3.20601	32.881	528.972	.000

Table 4: shows that the t value of 32.881 is significant at .000 p value, which is less than 0.05 significant levels. Therefore, it means that there is significant difference between parent's socio-economic supports on female students' dropouts from parent's perspective in Shinkafi local government Zamfara state**.**

Research Question 2: Is there any significant difference between parent's cultural traditions and practice on female students' dropouts from parent's perspective, in Shinkafi local government Zamfara state?

Ho.2. There is no significant difference between parent's cultural traditions and practice on female students' dropouts from parent's perspective in Shinkafi local government Zamfara state.

Table 5: T-Test for Significant Difference between Parents' Cultural Traditions and Practice, on Female Students' Dropouts from Parents' Perspective, in Shinkafi Local Government Zamfara State.

	Group of Respondents	N	Mean	Mean difference	Std. Deviation	t	df	Sig.(p value)
Total Cultural Tradition and Practice	Parents of Dropouts	278	31.3129	12.60072 12.60072	3.38598	45.911	544	.000
	Parents of Non Dropouts	278	18..7122		3.07839	45.911	549.050	.000

Table 5: shows that the t value of 45.911 is significant at .000 p value, which is less than 0.05 significant levels. Therefore, it means that there is significant difference between parent's cultural traditions and practice on female students' dropouts from parent's perspective in Shinkafi local government Zamfara state**.**

Research Question 3: Is there any significant difference of parent's religious belief on female students' dropouts from parent's perspective, in Shinkafi local government Zamfara State?

Ho.3. There is no significant difference between parent's religious beliefs on female students' dropout from parent's perspective in Shinkafi local government Zamfara state.

Table 6: T-Test for Significant Difference between Parent's Religious Belief on Female Students' Dropout from Parent's Perspective in Shinkafi Local Government Zamfara State.

	Group of Respondents	N	Mean	Mean difference	Std. Deviation	t	df	Sig.(p value)
Total Religious Belief	Parents of Dropouts	278	31.4101	12.87050 12.87050	4.20300	41.290	544	.000
	Parents of Non Dropouts	278	18.5396		3.05725	41.290	506.013	.000

Table 6: shows that the t value of 41.290 is significant at .000 p value, which is less than 0.05 significant levels. Therefore, it means there is significant difference between parent's religious beliefs on female students' dropout from parent's perspective in Shinkafi local government Zamfara state.

11. DISCUSSION

The study revealed that, majority of the parents who are the respondents and mostly from lower socio-economic backgrounds recognized that poverty and lack of socio-economic support prevent parents from sending their female children to school. In most communities, particularly in rural areas, female children were introduced to household duties and minor income generating task from a very early age. In fact, the incidence of poverty in Nigeria is very high, which affects children's education in general, and in particular that of female children. Female children were usually discriminated against by parents in Nigeria when a choice has to be made as to who would go to school.

The findings of this study coincided with Marks (2011), Galobardes; Shaw, Lawlor, Lynch & Smith, (2006) who affirmed that parent's socio-economic support has greater influence on female students' enrolment, retention and completion despite all the research and policy making. The relativity between those of high and low status from among the parents in relation to their female children is widening rather than narrowing across educational achievement in terms of enrolment and dropping out of schools (Galindo-Rueda, Marcenaro-Gutierrez & Vignoles, 2004), and wealth (Conger & Donnellan, 2007). Similarly, studies from Kenya, Mali, Malawi, Democratic Republic of Congo and Uganda matched the findings of this study where it was found that female children from poor households were less likely to be enrolled and stay in schools because of school fees, text books, school uniforms etc. (UNESCO's EDI, 2006; UNESCO Global Monitor, 2006).

Rivkin & Bjorkman, (2005) depicted the correlation of female and boy's children enrolment between district incomes and found that for low levels of income very few female children attended education and there is a large gap between boys and female children enrolment and increase number of low attendance and dropout. Alisa (2010) in his work on poorest and richest background of children found that the gap in attainment between children from the poorest and richest backgrounds grew particularly fast during the primary school years. Akanle (2007) also mentioned parental income in his work which may be related to parent's socio-economic support to be a strong factor upon which the academic and vocational successes of secondary and junior secondary school students lie. According to his investigation, parental income cannot be sufficient to sustain the academic and personal social life of the student in sub rural school areas. This is consistent with Bugembe (2005) who explained that In urban areas, most poor families can hardly afford the cost of water talk less of education of their daughters; and this can no dough lead to a high dropout rate of female students.

Cultural factors are reflected in the patterns of behavior, beliefs, preferences, customs and traditions, which account for gender-based differences within a society. Therefore, the socio-cultural environment in which female students as members of society operate is an important factor in determining the extent to which they can attain their full potential. In Nigeria this fact is also reflected in the level of female students' educational participation in the different areas (Ukeje

quoted Sule 2003).   It was discovered in the course of this study that most of the parents opt for marriage for their daughters in place of schooling. In fact, many studies have shown that cultural factors largely determine female children participation to education. The question of early marriage is very common in Nigeria and usually hinders female children education. Some female children are only in the school in order to get good and better husband, the moment their aim is achieved they withdraw and get marriage. This is in line with one study from Kenya which found that, compared with boys, more girls are made to repeat so that they are at least educated enough to find a husband (Kiruri, 1982). A survey of parents of dropouts in India indicates that they withdraw daughters from school when they see education as conflicting with marriage (Nayana, 1985). Similar practices have been reported in Papua New Guinea: In the province of West Sepik, some girls as young as 9 or 10 are promised in marriage and then taken out of school to "insure their protection and to prepare for the event; Others leave their families to live with the family of their betrothed, until they are of marriageable age" (Yeoman, 1985,).

The study also investigates that traditionally, patriarchal attitudes lead to preference by parents for boy's education where by 40.0% of the respondents prefer to invest their resources on boy's education than female children education. Parent's perception of women's roles, that is marital and maternal obligations make them believe that female education do not require formal education. In Nigeria, many girls are married off at young ages to husbands who are often much older than themselves. It is also a very common practice that earlier daughters are often kept at home to care for younger siblings. The findings was supported by UNESCO (2002) which says that, withdrawal and dropping out of female children's from school is attributed to many parental factors towards the education of their daughters, prominent among these factors are: socio-cultural beliefs, customs, early marriage, pregnancy, insecurity, harassment, employment in domestic markets, personal engagement, parental services and other traditions practiced by the parents; and also the female students' own decisions to drop-out of schools.

Another contributing factor influencing female student's dropout from the parents' perspectives according UNESCO and also in line with this study is the initiation ceremonies which still mark the transition from childhood to adulthood among communities in Sub-Saharan Africa Nigeria inclusive. Fear of sexual harassment and pregnancy are the other factors for parents to remove their children from schools more especially in rural areas where the schools happen to be far away from the reach of female students. This is in concurrence with a study in Cameroon where Christian parents were found to marry off their daughters at puberty even if they have not finished primary school for fear of pregnancy. The study also is in concurrence with Odaga and Heneveld study of (1995) and UNESCO (2002) where they indicated that in some rural areas of Mozambique families keep daughters out of schools after their first menstruation and initiation of rituals. In some of the countries also, distance from home to school gives rise to issues of special concern for security. Adolescent girls may be victims not only of sexual harassment but also of abduction, after which they are forced to marry their abductors (Njau and Wamahiu, 1998). A study in Kenya showed that female students from secondary school who had been pregnant were twice as likely to report poor health as those with no pregnancy history (Youri, 1994).

Religious beliefs play a significant part in sculpting social behavior. The influence of religious beliefs on individual and social behavior is well Documented (see Greeley, 1977; Hirschman, 2004; LaBarbera, 1987; Uppal, 1986; Anand and Kumar, 1982; Luqmani, 1987; Michell and Al-Mossawi, 1999; LaBarbera, 1987; McDaniel and Burnett, 1990; Waller and Fam, 2000; Birch et al., 2001).

The research result indicated that religious factors largely determine female children participation to education, in terms of performance, retention and dropping out. The study therefore, revealed that many parents prefer to send their daughters to Quranic schools. Some Muslim believed that western education breeds immoralities through the inculcation of western culture to children. Also, leaving girls to attain maturity age without marriage involves fear of teenage pregnancy which is un-Islamic and will also bring shame on the family. The findings is very similar to Myntii, (1994) statement where he stated that faith in God; trust in the moral authority of the mar about, and a sense of duty lead parents to send their children to Qur'anic schools in Nigeria. Likewise, the religious and value differences also have a bearing on the attitudes of various groups towards female children's' education. For example the   Muslims exhibit more conservative attitudes towards women in general and (western) education in particular and consequently their women have made the least development with respect to (western) education. In this regard, the World Bank (2006) suggests that some tenets of the Islamic religion could easily be misinterpreted and used to prevent female participation in education such as the restriction of girls from appearing in public places or to mix up with the opposite sex for religious reasons which make sending girls to school a problem. Consequently, rural girls drop out at a much higher rate, which drop out is more for social and family than for education-related reasons (World Bank 2006).

Base on what have been discussed with regards to parent's perspectives on female student's dropouts, the reasons given by the parents as the causes of dropping out from their own views, and base on the result of the findings and hypothesis testing, one can freely assert that that there are significant differences of parent's socio-economic support, parent's cultural traditions and practice and parent's religious belief on female students' dropouts from parent's perspective, in Nigeria

12. CONCLUSION

Contrary to the previous studies which either took the prevalence of female dropouts for granted or generalized evidences from enrolment data on the basis of questionable assumptions, this study confirms that there is a problem of female dropouts in Nigeria. There is no doubt that the existence of this problem significantly reflects not only the wastage in the educational systems but also the benefits missed from educating females. When compared to the world statistics, this wastage seems more significant in Nigeria than in other countries. In the latter, experiences indicate that stronger mechanisms of controlling the problem of dropouts have been employed at the community level than in the former.

The findings of this study reaffirm some of the known factors which contribute to school dropout which have been reported across a number of views given by the parents. Mainly they are factors associated with poverty, involvement in household activities, Investments on boys' education, early marriage, absence of proper security, lack of child Interest, parents death, School at distance, disrespect and stubbornness expected from female students and the belief that western education is against Islamic religion. Often, as this study shows, a combination of these factors creates a more potent force that increases the risk of dropping out than each factor on its own.

However, it is quite evident that poverty is the dominant reason for female students' dropping out of school with highest percentage; where by 41.7% of the parents agreed that poor economic conditions of the parents often force them to remove female children from school and engage them in either domestic activities or make them work. By implication 41.7% of female students can drop out of school due to poverty and poor economic condition of their parents. One of the personal characteristics of female dropouts is that they enter school late in life, above the official starting age defined in the National Policy of Education. The problem of over age enrolment is that female children reach puberty while still at school. This in turn increases the risk of sexual abuse that may influence female children to drop out of schooling. The marital status of dropouts may provide an important explanation for drop outs in Nigeria, but appears to be much less relevant in other areas. The fact that the absolute majority of female dropouts come from Muslim families shows that religion in general, and Islam in this particular case, could play a role in influencing female education.

The majority of female dropouts come from households headed by females, uneducated and low income families. Findings about parental occupation and income also ascertain the above truth since most parents of female dropouts are engaged in low income generating occupations in the informal sector and earn or possess an insignificant amount of property. In other words, the school in Nigeria is for those who can afford it, in contrast to the aims of the national education policy, which envisages serving the underprivileged parts of society by introducing Universal Free Basic Education (UBE). The dropping out of female students in this study has generally been related to the low socio-economic support of parents. This is particularly true for villages and less so in towns. Although direct school costs are highly related to female dropouts, the single most influential factor for female dropouts in Nigeria are the costs of instructional materials. The reasons why other factors were less influential may partially be explained in terms of the reforms already instituted by UBE.

Overall, domestic work represents the single most important area for which parents need the labor of their daughters. Dropout from school is particularly high during harvest time and on market days. In Nigeria domestic work of female dropouts has been rated as low. This seems so only because there is an abundance of labor on the labor market. Otherwise, this demand affects female education. Cultural practices and institutions including early marriage, home parental services, pregnancy, harassment, religious beliefs and employment in domestic market, significantly contribute to female dropouts in Nigeria. Immediate action is needed on many of these issues. Schools also play their own part in the drop out of female students. In Nigeria, the shortage of instructional materials and textbooks were found to be the crucial ones. This implies that any innovation, which promotes female children education, require meeting these needs for success. Finally, base on the fore going discussions and the result of the findings of this study, the paper concluded that there is significant difference between parents' socio-economic support, parents' cultural traditions and practice and parent's religious belief on female students' dropouts from the parent's perspectives.

13. REFERENCES

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