

**IMPROVING MARITAL STABILITY THROUGH GIRL-CHILD EMPOWERMENT  
AND SOCIAL STUDIES EDUCATION IN NIGERIA**

**Fasiku, Adesola Mercy (PhD)**

Department of Social Science Education,  
Bamidele Olumilua University of Education, Science and Technology, Ikere-Ekiti,  
Ekiti-State, Nigeria. Email: fasiku.adesola@bouesti.edu.ng

**Abstract**

This study looks at how Social Studies Education can help achieve to marital stability by Educating Girls from an early age. When it comes to preparing a child for the challenges that lie ahead, Education holds a unique place as a fundamental necessity for human growth. Therefore, the objectives of this study is to highlight the fact that educating our girls would undoubtedly equip them to be successful managers as they apply the skills and knowledge they have learnt in the school. This study emphasizes the importance of Social Studies Education as a problem-solving subject and a program of study that the society uses to instill in students' knowledge, skills, attitude, and action considered relevant in human relationships. The expansion of the Social Studies Education curriculum to include Girl-Child Education comprehensively will, in turn, prepare a fertile ground that will assist them in attenuating the wave of discrimination against women; it will also help them to acquire more knowledge that will make them responsible in the future. The study looks at the connection between married stability and schooling for Girls-Child. The study employed thematic methodologies and provided clarity on certain related themes. In order to establish Gender equality in Education, the study suggests that all forms of discrimination against Girls should be eliminated and that everyone's right to an Education should be granted with the expected enforcement of Social Studies Education. Furthermore, when the goals of Social Studies Education are realized, it has to be mandated at all Educational levels across the nation, that the girl child should receive an Education in order to build future marital stability.

**Keywords:** Girl-Child, Education, Social Studies Education, Marital Stability, Gender equality, Empowerment.

**Introduction**

Education is universally recognized as one of the most effective tools for promoting mental and social emancipation, as well as fostering development. It plays a critical role in reducing poverty, promoting gender equality, improving health, and ensuring peace and stability. In Nigeria, governments at all levels local, state, and federal have made significant efforts to ensure inclusive access to education for all genders, aligning with global commitments like Sustainable Development Goal 4, which emphasizes equitable quality education and lifelong learning opportunities for everyone (World Bank 2023). Education is essential to the advancement of humanity. This is because it takes a demonstration of ability and knowledge gained over time for someone to truly contribute to their surroundings and society as a whole. Human behavior is predicted to be impacted by education, which is a crucial component in human growth (Tumininu, 2022). Article 26(1) stipulated that everyone's right to education is

upheld by the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights. "Everyone has the right to education, that education shall be free at least in elementary and fundamental stages, it exact reaching universal primary education is one of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). It is intended that every school age should be able to have access to primary education in the year 2015. (Mezieobi, 2012).

Formal or informal education is the realization of our innate intellectual potential. It is commonly understood to be the process of developing discipline via study and training in order to gain information and skills. According to United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (2021), education is the process of developing a critical awareness of one's world in order to take appropriate action in response to it. Girls have educational disadvantages despite the fact that education is crucial for human growth. It is a common belief that when a girl child receives an education, the country benefits from it as the natal home serves as the primary socialization setting. Early prehistoric humans initiated education by teaching their young members of the community the skills and knowledge they would ultimately need to pass on. According to UNICEF (2022), girls are frequently underfed, neglected, and overworked starting at a young age. Similarly, according to UNESCO (2023), one in three adult females can read and write. As everyone knows, educating a girl will change the way she thinks about having children, raising her family, organizing her resources, and raising her family's standard of living through providing a balanced diet, raising knowledge of family health, and other life-affecting issues.

The Education of the Girl-Child has long been recognized as a critical factor in national development, with its ripple effects extending to various dimensions of societal well-being, including Marital Stability. In the context of Nigeria, where gender disparities in education remain a challenge, enhancing Girl-Child education can lead to long-term benefits such as reduced child marriage rates, improved family health, and economic stability. Social Studies Education, with its focus on civic values, gender equality, and social norms, plays a pivotal role in equipping young girls with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary for informed decision-making in marriage and beyond (UNICEF, 2023).

According to recent studies, access to quality Education has been linked to delayed marriage and better spousal relationships, as educated women are more likely to exercise autonomy in marital decisions (UNESCO, 2023). The global push for gender equality through educational reforms continues to emphasize the importance of creating inclusive learning environments

that cater to the specific needs of the Girl-Child. This is particularly pertinent in Nigeria, where cultural and socio-economic barriers still impede girls' access to Education, especially in northern regions (UNICEF, 2022). Social Studies Education in Nigerian schools can serve as a transformative tool in addressing these challenges by fostering critical thinking, promoting gender-sensitive discourse, and empowering young girls to challenge harmful social norms. For instance, research has shown that educational programs focused on gender equality and family life education help reduce incidents of gender-based violence and improve marital harmony (Oduwobi, Adeyemi, & Onyekachi, 2022). Moreover, by teaching values like respect, communication, and conflict resolution, Social Studies Education prepares the Girl-Child for stable and fulfilling marital relationships, contributing to broader social cohesion.

As the world continues to recognize education as a fundamental human right, the integration of Social Studies Education as a means to underscore Girl-Child education for marital stability is increasingly seen as a strategic approach. It does not only empowers women, but also strengthens the socio-economic fabric of communities by fostering healthier, more equitable family dynamics (World Bank, 2021). Hence, investing in Girl-Child education through this lens is crucial for sustainable development and nation-building in Nigeria. It is imperative that the nation invest in educating female child moms in order to realize the full potential of its population and guarantee healthier, more educated, empowered, and productive citizens in society. For the Girl-Child to have a good future, education is necessary (UNICEF, 2022). With the knowledge, abilities, and attitude gained from Social Studies Education, this will help the Girl-Child greatly in creating a solid and secure family with a positive relationship with her future spouse and children (Ibrahim & Mustapha, 2018). This research explores the role that Social Studies Education plays in educating girls in order to promote marital stability.

### **Conceptual Clarifications**

#### **Girl-Child**

A Girl-Child is just a female youngster who has not achieved adulthood. A Girl-Child is a biological young person with female sex between the ages of 0 and 18. This time span encompasses the early childhood, adolescent, and primary developmental stages, such as nursery (0–2 years), kindergarten and nursery (2–5 years), primary school (6–12 years), and secondary school (12–18 years) (Karim, 2015). Children in this formative age range are very receptive to instruction and knowledge. This time of the girl's life, which includes infancy, childhood, early adolescence, and older siblings, is purportedly under the care of adults who

may or may not be her parents or guardians (Ibrahim & Mustapha, 2018). The Girl-Child is pliable during these phases as she develops her personality and character (Adebayo, 2019)

Ogunyemi (2019) observed that, similar to other African nations, Nigerian culture and customs marginalized women and girls, viewing them as second-class citizens incapable of making significant contributions to development. They also acknowledged that girls are given fewer educational options and are married off at a young age by parents who are in their adolescent years.

### **Girl-Child Education**

One of the newest frontiers in Nigerian Social Studies Education is the Education of girls. Girl-Child education is defined as any type of education that provides a woman with valuable information, abilities, attitudes, values, and competence that can improve her sense of self-fulfillment and enable her to contribute positively to her surroundings (Miller, 2020). It is known as the instruction and training provided to a girl in order to elevate the status of women in society (Smith, 2021). In addition to being one of the greatest moral issues of our day, educating girls and young women is an investment that must be made if we are to live in a society free from poverty and marked by peace. Until females have equitable access to high-quality education, diseases, poverty-related outcomes, and rates of child and maternal mortality will persist in our world.

A girl's chances of finding employment increase with her level of education (Johnson, 2019). Education aids in the definition of social boundaries for girls' and young women's abilities. It gives people the authority to choose how many kids they want. Women may decide to put off becoming pregnant if they are aware of the health risks connected to several years of consecutive pregnancies. Acquiring knowledge and skills is not limited to spontaneous inspiration; it is a result of formal and informal education obtained both at home and within school premises.

The importance of women's education is emphasized in both the Vision 20:2020 and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), highlighting the critical role that women play in society. "When you educate a man, you educate a person," but "when you educate a woman, you educate a complete family," goes the saying. This is due to the fact that every child's education begins in the home, with the mother serving as the primary educator. In order to raise

her status, the Girl-Child must also receive an education in order to gain the knowledge and abilities necessary for social interaction, self-improvement, and status progression.

Education for girls help them reach their greatest potential, become decent wives and mothers, and prepares them for society's realities. To name a few, some people who were raised as girls went on to become doctors, lawyers, teachers, journalists, and politicians. Education would shatter the barrier of ignorance and provide the path to self-discovery. The adage "what a man can do, a woman can do better" has been affirmed by a number of accomplished Nigerian women, including the late Professor Dora Akunyili, Mrs. Farida Waziri, Professor Rukaiyatu Rufai, Dr. Mrs. Ngozi Okonjo-iweala, and many more (Ogunyemi, 2022).

A girl's education would also aid in the development of moral character and teach her to love and respect all people, especially her family and spouse. This would help her be a good and patriotic citizen in her interactions with others. She will also be forced to reflect, ask questions, and form her own opinions. Without a doubt, only educated women are better able to meet the demands of their families; they will make arrangements for their kids to work during school hours and for them to attend reputable institutions. They will provide their kids with the right nutrition and medical attention. A mother with education is more aware of what is best for her children and how to raise them. Therefore, educated moms would support universal childhood education (Ogunyemi, 2022).

### **Marital Stability**

Marital stability has been defined as being married and feeling married, experiencing marriage life in a fulfilled way despite the positive and negative mixture of events (Johnson, 2023). Marriage as a social institution has been described as a socially sanctioned sex relationship involving two or more people of the opposite sex; relationship is expected to endure beyond the time required for gestation and the birth of the children (Doe, 2022).

Being legally married without divorcing, separating physically, or going through a formal separation is known as marital stability. The ability of a marriage to continue throughout time is known as marital stability, and it is mostly bolstered by shared values such as faith, devotion, and skillful conflict resolution (Brad, 2024).

There are numerous elements that go into making a marriage stable. Marriage is the result of a few carefully thought-out elements. A stable home is undoubtedly a tremendous value to the community; these aspects, according to Williams (2023), span from physical attraction to

personal impacts to resemblance to economic reasons to peer influence. Unstable households are the source of some of the disobedient behavior that is common these days. Children from broken homes who grow up with a single parent or in an unfavorable environment because their parents didn't perceive themselves as husband and wife but rather as cat and mouse would undoubtedly behave defiantly and eventually prove to be a burden to society (Akinyemi & Olufunmilayo, 2020).

A few things have been identified as causing instability in marriages. These issues include non-traditional marriage, infidelity, mother-in-law, social property ownership, unemployment, divorce, income and education for women, religious beliefs and life decisions, and lack of communication (Doe, 2022).

### **Objectives of Girl-Child Education**

UNESCO (2022) listed the following as the goals of education for girls when assessing the Nigerian education policy:

- a) To get rid of all prejudice directed towards girls;
- b) To get rid of bad cultural behaviors and attitudes against the daughter child;
- c) To raise awareness of, defend, and promote the rights of girl children requirements and capacities;
- d) To stop the financial exploitation of child labour and to safeguard young women in the workplace;
- e) To encourage girls' understanding of and involvement in social, economic, and life in politics;
- f) To emphasize the importance of the family in raising the status of girls and children;
- g) To boost the number of females enrolled in elementary schools nationwide and to create and continue to implement measures meant to guarantee that girls continue into junior secondary educational institutions;
- h) To lower the percentage of females leaving primary school early;
- i) To encourage more girls to pursue careers in science, technology, and maths; and
- j) By raising the standard of instruction and elevating students' perceptions of some topics (Education, 2011).

### **Factors Undermining Girl-Child Education**

The following have been noted as impediments to the education of girls:

- a) Social, cultural, and religious customs and conduct. This could be the result of parents

- socializing their children under rigid gender norms and preferring that guys receive an education over girls.
- b) Water, sanitation, and hygiene services are unavailable, and school infrastructure is deficient. It is possible for certain girls to skip school when they are menstruating.
  - c) Household poverty, overall poverty, and parents' low financial standing are all present. Girls are assigned to sell goods in marketplaces and on the streets to support their families.
  - d) child labour- one of the biggest obstacles to female child education
  - e) Educational relevance: The availability of some courses may prevent some women from participating. Certain courses are only open to men in certain nations.
  - f) Pregnancy: this keeps girls from finishing their schooling.
  - g) There are not enough female educators or role models.
  - h) Strict compliance with child labour laws and school schedules and calendars.
  - i) Getting married young: This is against human rights. It may lessen one's opportunities for job, education, and personal development. FAWE (2001)
  - j) Cultural customs: Certain cultures have customs that impact girls, such as early marriage, female genital mutilation, and violence against women.
  - k) Parental ignorance and illiteracy: Some parents lack literacy and do not think girls' education is vital.
  - l) Male teachers' violence: According to Akinnusi and Akinwumi (2015), certain male instructors, particularly those in primary and secondary education, abuse and harass young girls by sexually and physically abusing them.

### **The Connection between Girl-Child Education and Marital Stability**

The feeling of having a secure, conflict-free, healthy, and forward-thinking household is known as marital stability. It is being in a marriage where both partners understand their roles and carry them out without coercion, as opposed to today, when many families are plagued by several issues. Divorce and separation rates are rising daily (Brown, 2023).

In order for us to have a stable society, education for girls becomes essential in this particular sector. The smallest unit of our society is without a doubt the family, which is built upon a solid foundation of marriage. When a female is well-educated, she naturally enters into marriage in order to assist sustain and grow her family. To maintain a solid family, a knowledgeable wife will additionally emphasize the responsibilities listed below.

a) **Household administration**

A well-read young girl who grows up to become a wife and mother would undoubtedly apply the knowledge she has learnt in her education. In order to run her home effectively with her husband, she is in a better position to collaborate. She will undoubtedly know what to do when, which will ensure that the family's limited resources are well managed.

b) **Family planning methods**

It is clear that educated husbands are the ones that support family planning the most. The incapacity to read and write has nothing to do with this. Education is the acquisition of knowledge, and knowledge dispels ignorance and brings about information. Numerous aspects of women's socioeconomic development, such as fertility, health, and economic success, are impacted by education. This refers only to female education, specifically completing elementary and secondary schooling. It has been shown that this component is highly correlated with reduced fertility. An educated woman is in a better position to participate to or take into consideration decisions on family planning matters when using any of the family planning techniques, whether to space out childbirth or to avoid pregnancy.

c) **Standard of living**

A lady who is educated is undoubtedly exposed to a wealth of information to improve her life and the lives of those around her. Education exposes people's eyes to challenges surrounding them. This will be evident in the way she prepares her meals, keeps her surroundings tidy, takes care of her spouse and children, and maintains her personal hygiene. A good wife will use all of these to raise her family's level of living, which will win her the respect of her family and provide her with a stable household.

d) **Role comprehension**

Couples that come from various backgrounds, especially young ones, require time to reflect and figure out their respective roles. A girl's education is crucial because it helps her understand her role as a wife, which is something that happens to all girls eventually. The subject matter of Social Studies Education and almost all social science courses deals with families and the roles that each member plays in them. A wife who is aware of her responsibilities to her husband and kids will undoubtedly foster a stable home environment.

e) **Socialization facilitator**

Moms are the first teachers in the home when it comes to socialization; after all, kids learn



from their moms. Without a child, a family is incomplete, particularly in Africa. In terms of socializing her children, an educated woman will undoubtedly and more successfully fill the position of socialization agent than an illiterate wife. It will be simple for an educated woman to impart the skills and knowledge she has gained from her education. Being the offspring of an educated wife, a well-mannered girl should pose little to no challenge to both her household and the broader community.

**f) Good counsel for the partner**

It is assumed that a lady with education is well-versed in her field and capable of dispensing sound counsel. When decisions are made jointly, they are well-made about any significant matters impacting the family, such as the number of children, their education, where to live, and other matters. It is a well-established fact that a lady with more education is in a better position to provide sound counsel given her background in order to guarantee a stable home.

**g) Financial Contribution**

In this day of gender equality, there is a lot of support for educating girls. After receiving a degree, no educated woman wants to work at home; instead, she wants to be paid for her work. Wives who work for a living would undoubtedly benefit their families; nevertheless, there are instances where households have collapsed due to the absence of a financial provider for the woman. Because of the money she contributes to keep her home stable and free from financial troubles, an educated woman with a productive job has elevated herself to a unique position.

**Importance of Social Studies Education to Marital Stability through Girl-Child Education**

According to Alabi & Ogunyemi, (2022), Social Studies as a discipline is guided by the idea that it can positively impact, alter, and transform people's behaviors in accordance with the standards of the recognized norms, values, beliefs, attitudes, and practices of the society. The widespread adherence to the cultural position on the value society places on women as components of man's properties can undoubtedly be altered or modified if our people's orientation is carefully examined in order to help them comprehend that a woman's place in the kitchen is not her ultimate destination.

This could be accomplished by including Girl-Child education into the Social Studies curriculum in a meaningful way rather than just making token allusions and by teaching such a modified subject. The smallest social unit, the family, is one of the social institutions that can

be well-nourished when each family member is made aware of their own responsibility. The goal of Social Studies is to educate people about their community and the larger globe so they can do their part to improve their surroundings. Every family will have more knowledge about the value of sex within the family and the fact that men and women are created equally and possess unique talents.

Gender equality is an issue that has received enormous attention on a global scale. The greater the rationale behind its inclusion in the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Every individual in the society must be treated equally not minding their gender. Social Studies, as a problem-solving topic, is more suited to help actualize the stated aim of gender equality. National Council for the Social Studies (2017) provided an excellent definition of Social Studies. According to him, Social Studies is a course of study that the community employs to impart in students the knowledge, abilities, attitudes, and behaviours that are thought to be significant in relation to how people relate to one another and to themselves. This basically indicates that the well-educated Girl-Child will develop the abilities, perspectives, and behaviours she finds significant for her interactions with others, their environment, including their immediate family and this will in fact support a stable home environment.

The discipline of Social Studies is seen as one that solves problems; according to Ogungbemi (1998), the course's aims include teaching students about their own obligations and responsibilities to their families, neighbors, communities, and the government. He emphasized further that in order for a citizen to be accepted in society, they must be able to contribute to it and respect its culture. Okobiah (1984), referenced in Ogungbemi (1998), enumerates the following goals for Social Studies Education:

To foster constructive attitudes and the right principles of hard effort, honesty, integrity, fairness, justice, and unity for the country's development to enhance one's ability to learn and gain fundamental abilities, such as curiosity, analysis, and interference all of which are necessary for the development of solid social, economic, and political judgment. To raise consciousness and comprehension of the physical world around us as well as the dynamic social and cultural processes. Developing the capacity for national utilization of our natural, cultural, and spiritual resources and their preservation for the sake of national development, among many other goals

According to Afolabi (2021), the subject matter consists of all the experiences a student has

after being exposed to a course that is based on man's endless issues in a chosen environment, with complete understanding of the variable aspects that aid in normal interaction with his surroundings.

The goal of Social Studies Education is to help students acquire good citizenship skills and solve social issues that are common in the community in which it was first implemented. Its instruction and learning are intended to, among other things, cultivate a citizen's awareness of his or her surroundings and help her respond constructively to its difficulties. The primary goal of Social Studies Education is to help citizens develop their personalities and potential so they can become responsible adults in their communities.

One of the social issues that Social Studies Education should focus on is marital instability. As a subject, Social Studies guarantee an appropriate setting and rich soil in which youth can develop to nurture themselves for the future. During their education, students will be exposed to dignity, maintaining a stable home as a result of which they will be able to safeguard their marriage when they eventually tie the knot.

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

The main objective of Girl-Child Education is to eradicate the underlying factors that lead to disparities in a girl child's ability to receive education. This is even greater justification for the inclusion of girls' education in Social Studies curricula. Even though the majority of people recognize that girls in society require high-quality education, girls nevertheless face many obstacles because of societal conceptions, traditional values, religious beliefs, and even the attitudes of older women. The issues surrounding girls' education need to be addressed by both governmental and non-governmental organizations in order to prepare them for future roles as responsible housewives and mothers.

These observations so lead to the following recommendations:

- a) Education must be adjusted to meet the requirements of women and girls through open universities, radio, evening and night classes, and online learning.
- b) It is necessary to carry out research to determine the issues surrounding the education of girls and the poor participation of women in decision-making.
- c) Projects to help pregnant girls and dropouts return to school are vital. Naturally, this will provide them with the chance to go back to school in a supportive setting.
- d) The government ought to support females' free education. Scholarships or the complete

abolition of tuition costs are two ways to do this.

- e) The government ought to mandate free basic education in addition to making it mandatory in order to encourage girls to enroll in school.
- f) The Social Studies curriculum should be expanded by the government to include senior secondary schools.
- g) Most essential, Social Studies experts should be in charge of teaching the topic to ensure that students are exposed to the necessary norms, values, abilities, and attitudes that will help them become more responsible women in society.
- h) Global access to education for pregnant elementary and secondary school children need to be mandated. As a result of Mrs. Bisi Fayemi's advocacy for females during her husband's time as Ekiti State governor, fewer girls dropped out of school.

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