

GIRLS' EDUCATION POLICY IN SUDAN: CHALLENGES AND PROSPECTS

Saifaldin Idris Onia*

University of Khartoum, Faculty of Education, Sudan

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.52627/ijeam.v3i3.173>

Article History:

Received: July 2021

Accepted: December 2021

Published: December 2021

Keywords:

Girls' education; Gender equality;
Sudanese general education;
Challenges; Prospects.

*Correspondence Address:

saifonia89@gmail.com

Abstract :

Girls' education in the 21st Century, is not only a women's issue it is a development issue. Girls' education is positively correlated with increased economic productivity, more robust labour markets, higher earnings, and improved societal health and well-being. Therefore, this study aimed to assess girls' education policy in Sudan. In doing so, this study followed a descriptive qualitative approach to the type of library research in which the data collection technique was carried out based on literature data. The study confirmed that there are several barriers to girls' education in Sudan including economic factors (i.e. poverty, cost of educational materials, girls are needed at home to contribute to the household economy), cultural factors (early marriages, tradition, and customs), and school factors (motivation as the lack of female role models). The researcher suggests that the authorities should enforce laws against the marriage of young girls. In addition, schools should be built in such a way that they are close to villages, allowing girls to attend. Furthermore, the nomads should be given lectures to be aware of the necessity of girls' education.

Abstrak :

Pendidikan bagi anak perempuan di abad 21, bukan hanya masalah perempuan, tetapi juga masalah pembangunan. Pendidikan anak perempuan berkorelasi positif dengan peningkatan produktivitas ekonomi, pasar tenaga kerja yang lebih kuat, pendapatan yang lebih tinggi, dan peningkatan kesehatan dan kesejahteraan masyarakat. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji kebijakan pendidikan anak perempuan di Sudan. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif deskriptif jenis penelitian kepustakaan di mana teknik pengumpulan data dilakukan berdasarkan data kepustakaan. Studi tersebut menegaskan bahwa ada beberapa hambatan untuk pendidikan anak perempuan di Sudan termasuk faktor ekonomi (yaitu kemiskinan, biaya bahan pendidikan, anak perempuan diperlukan di rumah untuk berkontribusi pada ekonomi rumah tangga), faktor budaya (pernikahan dini, tradisi, dan adat istiadat), dan faktor sekolah (motivasi karena kurangnya suri tauladan perempuan). Peneliti menyarankan bahwa pihak berwenang harus menegakkan hukum terhadap pernikahan gadis-gadis muda. Selain itu, sekolah harus dibangun sedemikian rupa sehingga dekat dengan desa, memungkinkan anak perempuan untuk bersekolah. Selanjutnya, para perantau harus diberikan kuliah untuk menyadari perlunya pendidikan anak perempuan.

INTRODUCTION

Access to a high-quality basic education was designated a fundamental human right in the United Nations' Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) (Nations, 1948). The UDHR set the principles for a global acknowledgement of the significance of education for all in general and gender equality more specifically, and was followed by a number of global declarations, documents and conferences all of which endorsed the accepted notion of gender equality in education, e.g. Education for All (EFA) and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) (Nomlomo, Farag and Holmarsdottir, 2012). Although the international community has created successive normative tools to ensure that everyone has access to this right, significant obstacles remain in the way of girls receiving universal primary education and workforce preparation (Lasonen et al., 2015). Over the past few years, recognition of women's education has grown both in various international fora and on the national agenda, with increasing commitments to investment in women's education (Jejeebhoy, 1995).

Education is a fundamental right, according to the World Declaration on Education for All, signed in Jomtien, Thailand in 1990. Education for All has emphasized the attainment of a basic education for all boys and girls, as assessed by exam scores and school years, and compared across countries, regions, and the globe (Subrahmanian, 2005). The 2010 conference 'Engendering Equality: Education and Empowerment' held in Dakar on 10-12 May by the UN Girls' Education Initiative (UNGEI) afforded an opportunity to debate priorities and to gain a better grasp of gender equity, girls' education, and the strategic steps required to support it. The objective of UNGEI, which was founded in 2000, is to "increase the quality and access of girls' education in support of gender-related EFA goals" (UNGEI, 2007). The EFA Dakar assessment was supposed to analyze how well the EFA aims were met. The EFA Dakar Framework focused on six educational goals: early childhood care and education; universal access to compulsory primary education by 2015, especially for girls; learning needs of all young people and adults; 50% improvement in adult literacy by 2015, especially for women; elimination of gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005; gender equality in education by 2015; and improvement of all aspects of educational quality by 2015. By providing access to and increasing the quality of education for girls and women, as well as removing any barriers to their active engagement in school, education for girls and women has been designated as the most urgent priority in achieving the EFA objectives (Lasonen et al., 2015).

Moreover, the philosophical foundation of this research is that achieving gender equality in and through education is at the heart of the human rights agenda, and the key to achieving the transformational 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The Sustainable Development Goals, adopted by UN member states in 2015, provide a global framework of goals and targets for sustainable development that deal with quality and equality for different phases of education. These include eliminating gender bias, discrimination and stereotyping in classrooms and throughout the education system; gender-

sensitive policies and practices; and ensuring the personal safety of girls and women in education institutions (UNESCO, 2015). Most recently, the 2018 G-7 meeting agreed to put gender concerns and the empowerment of women at the center of development assistance. These global public goods serve as a source of normative obligations for nations, international organizations, and civil society. Çöker (2020) provided an analysis of gender equality in the Turkish education system by looking at policies and their outcomes on girl's schooling. The study's main finding is that Turkey's educational policies and practices are built on the principles of "formal equality" and "meritocracy," which attempts to provide equal chances to all members of society. The functional view of education, which is based on the ideals of "formal equality" and "meritocracy," however, supports the belief that males and girls gain equally and serves to obscure the inequitable distribution of knowledge and abilities between men and women. As a result, educational policies remain gender-neutral, ignoring the gender dynamics that discriminate against women and girls.

At the regional level, Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want promotes gender equality by stating, "An Africa whose growth is people-driven, depending on the potential of African people, particularly women and youth, and caring for children" (African Union, 2014). The Program of Action agreed at the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) in Cairo, Egypt, in September 1994 underlines everyone's right to education, with a special focus on women and girls. Education is recognized as a factor in sustainable development and women's empowerment in the Program of Action, and the reduction of illiteracy among women is given top priority. The Program of Action also encourages governments to take initiatives to retain girls and adolescents in school so that the gender gap in primary and secondary education can be closed by 2005 (Jejeebhoy, 1995). Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE) developed the Gender Equality Strategy for the Continental Educational Strategy for Africa (CESA) 2016-2025, which was adopted at a meeting of Pan-African ministers of education in Nairobi in April 2018 and has subsequently been endorsed at the political level (FAWE, 2018). Thus, Sustainable Development Goal, inclusive and equitable quality education for all, is about much more than education access. It calls for education policies to look beyond gender parity in school enrolment in order to put gender equality at the heart of education through gender-sensitive plans and policies (UNGEI, 2019).

Global trends are increasingly recognizing the intrinsic and extrinsic needs for investing in girls' education, especially for adolescent girls, including in situations affected by fragility and conflict (Unterhalter, 2019). Gender equality refers to "equal rights, responsibilities, and opportunities for women, men, girls, and boys, as well as equal capacity to influence their own lives and contribute to society," according to the Global Partnership for Education's Gender Equality Policy and Strategy 2016-2020 (GEPS) (GPE, 2016). Gender equality means that men and women have equal opportunity to exercise all of their human rights and to contribute to and profit from economic, social,

cultural, and political growth. The foundations of educational equality are parity and equity (USAID, 2008).

Gender equality has four main dimensions: equal access, equal participation in the learning process, equal educational outcomes, and equal external outcomes (Subrahmanian, 2005). Equal access refers to the provision of equal chances for girls and boys to enroll in formal, nonformal, or alternative approaches to basic education. In the equal participation in the learning process, equality means that both girls and boys are treated equally and have equal opportunity to study. This means that both boys and girls are taught the same curriculum, yet the coursework may be taught differently to meet the various learning styles of boys and girls. Equal educational outcomes refers to the fact that both girls and boys have equal possibilities to succeed, with outcomes determined by their individual skills and efforts. The length of a person's educational experience, academic qualifications, and degrees should not differ based on their gender to offer equal opportunities for success. When men and women have equal status, access to products and resources, and the ability to contribute to, participate in, and gain from economic, social, cultural, and political activities, external outcomes are equal. This means that men and women with equivalent skills and experience have equal job opportunities, time to find work after leaving full-time education, and earnings (USAID, 2008).

Countries that prioritize gender equality in education are rewarded with tremendous dividends fostering economic and social development, sustainability, public health, and lasting peace and stability. Examples include (i) a growing stronger economy: women with at least some primary education earn 14% to 19% more than those with no education at all. Women who have completed secondary school can expect to earn nearly twice as much as those who have not completed secondary school. Women's lifetime earnings may increase by \$15 trillion to \$30 trillion globally if every girl received 12 years of free, safe, and high-quality education. (ii) saving lives and improving health: every \$1 invested to increase the average number of years children go to school by one year, particularly for girls, generates a 10-fold health benefit in low-income countries. A child whose mother can read is 50% more likely to live past the age of five, 50% more likely to be immunized, and twice as likely to go to school. (iii) protecting rights, promoting peace and resilience: each additional year of secondary education for girls is associated with an average 6% reduction to the risk of child marriage and pregnancy before the age of 18.7. In circumstances where there is gender parity in average years of schooling, national armed conflict is less likely to occur. The country's resilience to climate disasters is predicted to grow by 3.2 points for every additional year of schooling a girl receives (UNGEI, 2019).

According to the World Bank Publication_ *Girls' Education in the 21st Century*, educating girls is not only a women's issue it is a development issue. According to their sources, girls' education is `positively correlated with increased economic productivity, more robust labor markets, higher earnings, and improved societal health and well-being (Tembon & Fort, 2008). Educating females can help communities and civilizations become healthier, wealthier,

and safer, as well as minimize child deaths, enhance maternal health, and combat HIV and AIDS spread (DFID, 2005). Female education is a “protective factor” that decreases girls’ risk of child marriage. Out of 42 countries analyzed by UNICEF, females who had some primary education were significantly less likely to be married off by age 18 than those with no education (Smith et al, 2012). Educating girls has a cascading effect that benefits not only the girls but also their families, communities, and countries, making them healthier, safer, and more prosperous (Unterhalter, 2019). As a result, officials should support girls' education and look for methods to address the problems that girls experience in Sudan's educational system.

Sudan's educational system is divided into four stages: pre-school, primary school, intermediate school, and secondary school. In the pre-school stage, the children are between 4 and 5 years old. By the end of this stage, kids can join the primary education stage; this primary school consists of six years. Followed by intermediate education consists of three years. Then, secondary education lasts three years, leading to the Sudan school certificate examination (Tairab & Ronghuai, 2017). The objectives of this general education as stated in the 1992 Education Act and the educational strategy are as follows (UNESCO, 2010): to instill in the young people religious ideas, beliefs and morals, and social values to build a responsible character; to develop the thinking abilities of learners through experience and science and to strengthen their bodies by physical education; to encourage self-esteem and national pride and to develop a sense of patriotism and loyalty within an improved spirit of national unity; to build up a self-reliant community and to activate the spiritual and material energies and encourage ambition; to encourage creativity and to build up the individual's abilities and skills through technical training to fulfill the goals of comprehensive development; and to develop environmental awareness and promote the preservation of natural resources.

Nevertheless, Sudan has witnessed low development of girls' education because of the country's traditions. Parents tended to look upon girls' education with suspicion, if not fear, that it would corrupt the morals of their daughters. Moreover, preference was given to sons, who, by education, could advance in society to the pride and profit of their family (UNESCO, 1989). As a result of this, Sudan has one of the lowest girls’ net enrolment rates in the world (42 percent), the state of West Darfur has a much lower rate (22 percent) and in this locality, things are worse still, with only 1 percent of girls attending school (UNICEF, 2005). According to the Sudanese Federal Ministry of General Education (2008), Sudan's gross enrolment ratio (GER) increased in 2007/2008, although there was a 12-percentage-point difference in the proportion of boys and girls who had access to school; boys had more access (77,7%) than girls (65,7%). The most recent numbers from the Government of Sudan date from 2014, in a report supported by (UNICEF, 2015): Sudan has 7.9 million school-aged children of 5-13 years, out-of-school children account for 3.1 million of the total.63% of them are 6-11-year-olds who were supposed to be in primary schools, and 53% of them are girls. Each year, 54% of the 6-year-old children expected to start grade one on time do not enroll in schools. One-third of

elementary school students are on the verge of dropping out before completing their last year. Girls are more likely than boys to drop out before graduating from high school (FED, 2016).

According to UNESCO (2007) report, in 2005 only 59 (about one-third) of 181 countries with data available had achieved gender parity ... in their [gross enrolment rates] for both primary and secondary education. Iddrisu (2016) sought to assess whether the universal basic education policy really have an impact on access at the basic level. Enrollment and retention are both increasing, according to the research. It again found out that girl's dropout rate was higher in control schools than boys. The study concluded that girl's enrolment and retention is largely determined by the universal basic education policy. To fulfill the rising demand for enrolment and retention, it is consequently vital to provide incentives for females as well as better facilities. Hence, despite significant gains in recent years, education outcomes for girls in developing countries continue to lag behind those of boys (Brief, 2019).

Based on what stated above, the situation of girls' education still needs attention and re-examination. Most often, these girls are deprived of their human right to basic education in terms of enrolment, achievement, retention, and completion (UNESCO, 1996). This is a key issue in Sudan, in particular, and it helps to highlight the need for a re-examination of girls' education in the country (Holmarsdottir et al. , 2013). So, it is necessary to assess girls' education policy in Sudan. Therefore, this paper strives to identify the factors that affect girls' education and to present the strategies for promoting girls' education policy in Sudan.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study followed a descriptive qualitative approach to the type of library research, which is based on a collection of data in many forms such as books, theses, and dissertations, national and international journals, and reports or documents related to the significance of girls education, including the various research outcomes related to this topic. Therefore, the data collection technique was carried out based on literature data. Besides, the data analysis technique is done through content analysis whose scope consists of the depth of information content. This is done so that the study of the topics discussed in this article can be presented comprehensively and systematically.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The reality of girls' education in Sudan

Despite its rich natural resources and fertile land, Sudan remains one of the least economically developed countries in the world. The country's economy was severely harmed by the country's long-running war, continuous conflicts, and the resulting separation of the north and south in 2011 (Nomlomo, Farag and Holmarsdottir, 2012). People's access to social services degraded and eventually collapsed. While about 46, 5% of the total population live in poverty, the majority of the poor comprise women and internally displaced people (IDPs) living in rural areas, making up about 12% of the total population (UNDP, 2011). There is also a high rate of unemployment in the

country. Youth unemployment has reached around 18% (Sudan Central Bureau of Statistics, 2010). These factors, coupled with inequalities in traditional power structures, left women, in a precarious position, suffering from some of the poorest material conditions in the world (UNDP, 2007).

Traditionally in Sudan, women's education was of the most rudimentary kind, frequently provided by a Khalwa, or religious school, in which Quranic studies were taught to prepare women morally. Largely through the pioneering work of a Sudanese businessman Shaykh Babikr Bedri who supported women's education (Duany, 1996), and considers a visionary man who founded the first primary school for girls in 1903 in Sudan despite great opposition (Bedri, 2013). So, girls' education in Sudan is always part of the legacy of Babikr Bedri. From the 1940s to the 1950s, girls' education was reported to be confined to the urban population who were foreigners (Bedri, 1986).

In the early 1950 the first intermediate school for girls, the Omdurman Girls' Intermediate School, opened. By 1955, ten intermediate schools for girls were in existence. In 1956, the first secondary school for girls opened with an enrollment of 265 students; it was operated by the government. Girls' education began to expand. By 1960, 245 elementary schools had been established, but only 25 junior secondaries and two senior secondary schools were established. There were no vocational schools for girls, only a Nurses' Training College with a low enrollment of eleven students. By 1970, girls' education claimed approximately one-third of the total school resources available. By the early 1990s, the numbers had remained approximately the same, especially in the rural areas and in the south (Duany, 1996).

The National Salvation Revolution (NSR), the past ruling party in Sudan, has a different view on women's education from that of the Socialists. The Islamists are concerned with improving women's status and well-being through Islamic principles. They wish to preserve the traditional culture and traditional roles of an Islamic woman (Hassan, 1995). Whilst there is evidence of greater access to education in Sudan since 2000 (Sudanese Federal Ministry of General Education, 2008), it appears that females have not benefited equally (Diko, 2007). There have been instances of gender-based violence and unfavorable traditional/cultural practices directed at girls, such as early marriage, which have hampered their educational opportunities.

The Education Sector Strategy Plan for 2012-2016 expresses the country's commitment to the EFA goals and outlines activities to meet the MDG education targets. A variety of national sub-strategies and frameworks targeted at enhancing access to education for marginalized children were created and implemented by the Federal Ministry of General Education (FMoGE). They include strategies for the education of nomadic groups, girls, and children with disabilities. Moreover, the government adopted the 'Child-Friendly School' concept to improve education quality and learning achievement (UNICEF, 2015). Consequently, the Vision and mission of Girls' Education in Sudan (Ministry of Education, Department of Girls' Education) are: *Vision*: to see girls safe and reassuring, has the right to free and high-quality education in empowering and instill high positive values in the girl by

2015. *Mission*: Cultural, social and economic empowerment of girls through education to eradicate poverty and achieve social and economic development to the progress of society and access to well-being.

Challenges to Girls' Education in Sudan

There are several challenges to girls' education in Sudan, such as school fees, early marriages, tradition and customs, lack of nearby schools, and girls helping at early age activities that help in generation of family income (Etim, 2016). Modi (2017) summarized the barriers that girls in rural areas face to access their right to an education such as; (i) child marriage; (ii) patriarchal norms, patriarchal mindsets dictate a powerful preference for sons, with the result that girls are often relegated to second-class citizenship. (iii) sexual harassment, parents of adolescent girls are often fearful of their daughters being sexually harassed, either on the way to school or at school itself. (iv) poverty, poverty tends to make girls more vulnerable to dropping out of school and getting married, as parents often consider marriage the only option for a girl. (v) menstruation issues, most rural girls lack the most basic information about menstruation and menstrual hygiene, often resulting in various health problems later in their lives. (vi) poor quality of education, schools in rural areas lack even the most basic infrastructure of desks and benches, playgrounds, and sanitary facilities such as separate toilets for girls. In addition to, the gender of teachers can have a significant impact on whether girls go to school and how well they are able to learn. The presence of female teachers often makes parents more willing to send their daughters to school and these teachers also serve as role models for girls (Brief, 2019). Another study of Fincham (2018), which one of the most recent studies conducted in Sudan. The findings of her study indicated that there are several barriers to girls' education and dropping out of school, from these: Education of parents and their participation in their daughters' education, early marriage, quality of education and teaching, lack of student progression and academic failure, and gender bias within schools.

According to Bedri (2013), the most prevalent restraint is early marriage, which is a problem that is ignored by the authorities and not adequately handled by civil society, robbing females of their right to an education. Early marriage also has many social and health risks as teenage girls are not mature enough to care for a newborn child. In addition to delivering a kid with a low birth weight who required extra maternal care, she had high blood pressure and gave birth prematurely. Despite that still, it is very difficult for civil society members to intervene or convince people to stop marrying their girls off at an early age.

Another challenge deals with the quality issue in education. This challenge is related to the school environment such as lack of desks and chairs, in which case children sit on the floor or rocks, there are no separate restrooms for girls, no boundary walls around the school, no drinking water, no teachers or teaching supplies, such as textbooks, and no appropriate and gender-aware curriculum. Low-income communities are particularly short of teachers, perhaps because they also lack basic services, making living in these areas an

unattractive proposition. All of these variables have an impact on girls in particular and can make them feel as though the school environment is hostile, which becomes increasingly important as they grow older and hit puberty when some of these concerns become significant in terms of keeping girls in school (Bedri, 2013). Governments and donor organizations, on the other hand, have primarily concentrated on boosting female enrollment and access, with little attention devoted to the quality or relevance of education for girls, as well as their retention and achievement rates (Sibbons, et al. , 2000).

DFID (2010) reported that the major social challenges to girls' education in Sudan are sexual escapades and lack of parental control lead to girls getting pregnant at a young age so they are unable to complete secondary school. Girls are reluctant or unwelcome to return to school after giving birth. The onset of puberty and the occurrence of periods shames girls for staying away from school. This hurdle is exacerbated by the lack of privacy in sanitation facilities. The prevalence of gender-based violence in schools deters girls from attending. More male teachers lead to higher dropout rates for girls. The presence of mature pupils, who were unable to attend school during the conflict, creates completion problems. In addition, textbooks often reinforce stereotypes about the subordinate role of women. The social construct of gender. The subordinate role of women is depicted in textbooks reinforcing this construct.

The social challenge is particularly crucial for nomadic girls of different tribal backgrounds who are among the most marginalized and hard to reach children in Sudan. For example, in some rural areas, the distance between the school and villages forms a logistic constraint; in many cases, children travel to school in groups and some donkeys. However, girls have to be accompanied by their brothers or close male relative as they cannot travel on their own, particularly in the Northern regions of Sudan where Islamic law is more rigorous than in the South (Bedri, 2013). Their educational deprivation and exclusion to some extent are related to, among other things, socio-cultural values and the view that the education of girls is less important. As stated in the UNESCO report *Our Creative Diversity* "gender rights must become an integral part of basic human and cultural rights. And this lesson must be learned by all human beings, irrespective of their gender, right from their childhood" (UNESCO, 1996). Most recent study conducted by Sultana (2019) revealed that the socio-economic status of the parents, socio-cultural barriers and child labor are the main reasons for the low motivation of education for girls in the slum areas.

In terms of the economic challenges, the cost of education, even at the primary level, affects poor families in particular; many of whom usually give boys priority in terms of education. Many NGOs offer help in the form of income-generating activities for the mothers to be able to shoulder this extra financial burden and to free the children from the necessity of child labor, i.e. to find work to help in meeting family expenses. Girls, in particular, must work during the day to pay school fees to enroll in afternoon classes; they typically work as maids and attend schools (afternoon classes) in the neighborhood or at the mosque, as is the situation in many Omdurman neighborhoods (Bedri,

2013). In addition, location, vulnerability, and gender affect access to schooling: disadvantaged groups are significantly under-represented, urban children are 17% more likely than rural children to be at school, and boys are 8% more likely to be participating in primary education than girls (Sudan Ministry of Education Census, 2010).

Supporting the economic challenges, Vázquez (2017) mentioned the main barriers to girls' education include: the poverty conditions of many families make it very difficult to support their girls' education. Rurality, due to the remoteness of their villages, girls from rural communities who have family support for school face difficulties in getting to school safely. Parsitau (2017) stated that the education of girls living in arid and semi-arid regions presents many challenges include: lack of funding for education, lack of trained teachers, lack of classes, poor sanitary conditions (e.g., bathrooms, toilets, and sanitary pads), insufficient desks and chairs, and lack of finances to pay school fees.

The biggest economic impediments to girls' education in Sudan, according to DFID (2010), are: girls are needed at home to contribute to the household economy. Girls are especially needed to assist in the household and, in some situations, to run households when parents have died or vanished. A girl is considered ready for marriage when she enters puberty. After puberty, her marginal dowry worth diminishes. Marriage proposals from rich troops are frequently used to entice girls away from school.

In addition, conflict compounds the challenges girls face. Nomlomo, Farag and Holmarsdottir (2012) stated that in post-conflict countries like Sudan educational changes have taken place over the past decade. As a result, several countries have established inclusive and nondiscriminatory education policies to address educational inequities, policies that aim to improve not just free and equal access to education but also the quality of education, particularly among the poor and marginalized. Sudan is, however, still struggling to address issues of equal access to education and gender equality owing to cultural and socio-economic factors. Girls in conflict-affected countries are about two and a half times more likely to be out of school, and young women are nearly 90 percent more likely to be out of secondary school than their peers in non-conflict-affected nations. With a growing feminization of displacement, girls make up a considerable portion of the refugee population in some places. Gender issues become particularly important throughout puberty, when customs, society, and safety concerns limit girls' lives and chances to narrow while boys' continue to expand. Gender and social norms and expectations about young women's duties, as well as insufficient or inaccessible infrastructure, such as substandard water, sanitation, and hygiene facilities, frequently prohibit girls from finishing their education (USAID, 2019).

Prospects for Promoting Girls' Education in Sudan

Despite international human rights law and global declarations, the fact remains that the hegemony of men and oppression of women and girls particularly in the nomadic or semi-nomadic communities of Sudan continues. This hegemony, along with other socio-cultural practices, is the main reason behind the poor participation of girls in schools (Holmarsdottir et al., 2013). As

a result, some recommendations for addressing economic and social barriers to girls' education in Sudan include society adopting communal responsibility for protecting girls. Having one respected female instructor assigned to assist, counsel, and support adolescent females, particularly throughout their monthly periods, in schools with adolescent girls. Converting mosques and other community facilities into satellite feeder schools to reduce long walks to school and associated abduction dangers. Using cattle camp as a teaching opportunity for sex education. Parent and teacher partnerships educate women and families to appreciate and value women as more than sources of bride wealth (DFID, 2010).

Furthermore, the World Food Program initiative on keeping girls in school by providing food incentives has had some success. It gives a clear advantage to parents over keeping girls at home for household labor contributions. It also means girls do not have to travel home at lunchtime to eat. However, there were indications that food shipments were delayed or did not arrive at the schools. It was also discovered that taking teachers out of class to prepare meals reduced their time in the classroom. Also, a review of many kinds of literature gives insight into how female teachers act as positive role models for girls; improve the safety of the school environment, and increase girls' attendance and achievement. In addition, Accelerated-learning programs teach a condensed curriculum. This helps reduce the opportunity cost of education for girls (DFID, 2010).

Also, the Girls' Education Challenge (GEC) aims to better the lives of up to a million of the world's poorest girls through education. The project encourages non-governmental organizations (NGOs), charities, and the commercial sector to identify more effective ways to enroll girls in school and ensure that they obtain a high-quality education that will help them alter their lives. The GEC funds programs that demonstrate new and effective ways to increase educational possibilities for underrepresented girls, as well as those that can be rigorously assessed to increase their impact (GEC, 2014). Thus, improving girls' access to education, particularly among the most marginalized groups, has been one of the major goals of many national and international organizations (Holmarsdottir et al. , 2013). In addition, the establishment of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in 2000 was a significant step toward, among other things, poverty reduction, greater access to education, and gender equality in education, all of which were based on the concept of Education For All (EFA) (Arnot & Fennell, 2008).

The Sudanese government and UNICEF launched the Child-Friendly Community Initiative, which has resulted in over 378 such communities taking the lead in building schools, supporting teachers, and monitoring school activities in the nine most disadvantaged states in the north and three accessible urban areas in the south. UNICEF contributes to school repair or construction, classroom furniture, teaching and learning resources, and teacher training as part of the collaboration. The World Food Program provides cooking utensils and food supplies to ensure that over 40,000 children in 6 states have access to a daily meal in school. They also assist with the development of school latrines

and sanitation facilities. The curriculum integrates basic issues of health and hygiene, reinforced by health clubs that also remind children about the importance of vaccinations and that have recently started awareness sessions on HIV/AIDS (UNICEF, 2005).

In recycling decisions on girls' education, some international organizations need to work together to improve girls' education in Sudan, they need to work with UNGEI to more effectively coordinate the actions of all agencies and civil society partners to support country-led efforts, as well as the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) to create a strong position for women in society and create a safe environment for girls to realize their right to education, including active support for the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the Beijing Platform for Action. Also need to work with UNESCO, to strengthen its mandate to coordinate international efforts on Education for All, of which girls' education is a part. In addition to, the World Bank, which is the single largest funder of education programs to encourages coordinated support among donors to help countries put in place effective policies (DFID, 2005).

Kwauk, et al. (2018) offered solutions for addressing girls' education, such as generating additional evidence through non-formal sector coalitions to guide girl-centered policy and action. For broader systemic change for girls, create regular opportunities for learning amongst non-formal and formal education stakeholders. Naveed (2018) suggested that existing data be used to improve education planning. All educational planning should be based on real-time data, and each district's requirements and reality should be considered. Create efficient procedures to improve parent-teacher cooperation and connections. In addition, providing financial assistance to help parents split the cost of a girl's education. Some strategies for girls' education suggested by Agusiobo (2018) include ensuring the rights of the girl child (development, participation, protection, and survival), maintaining gender equity, the government's strong political will, more funding for education, international aid, empowering girls/women with various life skills, ensuring girls retention and completion in school, and effective implementation of the National policy on gender in basic education.

CONCLUSION

This article confirms that girls' education one of the most issues in educational policy took its position in universal Declarations and international conferences. The World Declaration of Education for All in Jomtien, Thailand in 1990 pointed out that education is a fundamental right. The achievements of the EFA goals were to be evaluated through the EFA Dakar assessment. The EFA Dakar Framework focused on access to primary education is compulsory, particularly for girls. According to the World Bank Publication, *Girls' Education in the 21st Century*, educating girls is not only a women's issue it is a development issue. Because, educating girls helps to make communities and societies healthier, wealthier and safer.

There are several barriers to girls' education in Sudan including economic factors (i.e. cost of educational materials, girls are needed at home to contribute to the household economy.), cultural factors (early marriages, tradition, and customs), and school factors (motivation as the lack of female role models). In some rural areas in Sudan, the distance between the school and villages forms a logistic constraint; in many cases, children travel to school in groups and some donkeys. However, girls have to be accompanied by their brothers or close male relative as they cannot travel on their own. All these factors affect the participation of girls in education in Sudan.

The researcher suggests that the authorities should enforce laws against the marriage of young girls based on the findings of this study. In addition, schools should be built in such a way that they are close to villages, allowing girls to attend. Subsidies, such as food, are given to underprivileged families in exchange for schooling, allowing girls to continue their studies. In addition, the nomads should be given lectures to be aware of the necessity of girls' education. Furthermore, international organizations must assist to boost the education of Sudanese girls.

REFERENCES

- African Union. (2014). *Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want. Framework Document* (Addis Ababa: African Union, 2014).
- Agusiobo. (2018). Education of the girl-child in Nigeria for a just, peaceful, harmonious society and sustainable development. *International Online Journal of Education and Teaching (IOJET)*, 5(4), 768-786. <http://iojet.org/index.php/IOJET/article/view/425/293>.
- Arnot & Fennell. (2008). (Re) visiting education and development agendas: Contemporary gender research. In *Gender education and equality in a global context* (pp. 13-28). Routledge.
- Bedri. Y. (1986). Ahfad University College for Women: A Sudanese Educational Experiment. *The Ahfad Journal*, 1, 3-10.
- Bedri. A. M. (2013). Reflections on the Struggle for Girls' Education in Sudan. In *Gendered Voices* (pp. 25-40). SensePublishers, Rotterdam.
- Brief, G. (2019). Educating girls: The path to gender equality.
- Çöker, B. (2020). Girls' Education in Turkey: An Analysis of Education Policies from a Feminist Perspective. *Online Submission*, 7(9), 242-261.
- DFID. (2005). *Girls' education: towards a better future for all*. Published by the Department for International Development.
- DFID. (2010). *Helpdesk Report: Girls' Education in Sudan*.
- Diko. (2007). Changes and continuities: Implementation of gender equality in a South African high school. *Africa Today*, 54(1): 108-116.
- Duany. J. A. (1996). *Sudanese woman and education: the struggle for equal access and participation* (Doctoral dissertation, Indiana University).
- Etim. (2016). *Introduction to gender studies in Eastern and Southern Africa: a reader*. Springer.

- FAWE. (2018). (Forum for African Women Educationalists). Gender Equality Strategy for the Continental Education Strategy for Africa 2016-2025. Nairobi: FAWE, 2018.
- FED. (2016). Provision of Technical Assistance for the support of the Implementation of the Primary Education Retention Programme (PERP) in Sudan.
- Fincham. (2018). Gender and primary school dropout in Sudan: Girls' education and retention in Red Sea State. *Prospects*, 1-16.
- GEC. (2014). *Girls' Education Challenge Project profiles*.
- GPE. (2016). Gender Equality Policy and Strategy 2016-2020 (Washington, DC: GPE, 2016b).
- Holmarsdottir et al. (2013). *Gendered voices: Reflections on gender and education in South Africa and Sudan* (Vol. 23). Springer Science & Business Media.
- Iddrisu. (2016). Universal Basic Education Policy: Impact on Enrolment and Retention. *Journal of Education and Practice*, 7(17), 141-148.
- Jejeebhoy. (1995). Women's education, autonomy, and reproductive behaviour: Experience from developing countries. *OUP Catalogue*.
- Kwauk, C., Braga, A., Kim, H., Dupuy, K., Bezu, S., & Knudsen, A. (2018). Non-formal girls' life skills programming Implications for policy and practice. *Policy Brief*.
- Lasonen et al. (2005). *Education and training in Ethiopia: an evaluation of approaching EFA goals* (No. 23). Institute for Educational Research.
- Modi, A. (2017). Giving Girls Wings to Fly: Tools to Empower Adolescent Girls in Rural Communities in India. Echidna Global Scholars Program. *Center for Universal Education at The Brookings Institution*.
- Naveed. (2018). The importance of educating girls in the Newly Merged Districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. *Echidna Global Scholar at the Brookings Institution and Education Specialist at USAID Pakistan (Issue November)*. www.brookings.edu/echidna-global-scholars-program.
- Nomlomo, V, Farag, A and Holmarsdottir, H. (2012). Challenges to gender equality and access in education: Perspectives from South Africa and Sudan. *Southern African Review of Education*, 18(2), 41-57.
- Parsitau, D. S. (2017). Engaging the Custodians of Tradition and Culture: Leveraging the Role of Multiple Actors in Maasai Girls' Education. Echidna Global Scholars Program, Policy Brief. *Center for Universal Education at The Brookings Institution*.
- Sibbons, M., D. Swamfield, H. Poulsen, A. Giggard, A. Norton, and A. Seel. (2000). Mainstreaming gender through sector wide approaches in education: Synthesis report. London: Overseas Development Institute/Cambridge Education Consultants.
- Smith et al. (2012). A model of women's educational factors related to delaying girls' marriage. *International Review of Education*, 58(4), 533-555.
- Subrahmanian, R. (2005). Gender equality in education: Definitions and measurements. *International Journal of Educational Development*, 25, 395-407.

- Sudan Central Bureau of Statistics. (2010). Sudan Statistical Year Book: Sudan Statistics 2010. Khartoum: Sudan Central Bureau of Statistics, Sudan Ministry of the Cabinet.
- Sudan Ministry of Education Census. (2010). *Red Sea State school census*.
- Sudanese Federal Ministry of General Education. (2008). Baseline Survey on Basic Education in the Northern States of Sudan. Khartoum: Sudanese Federal Ministry of General Education.
- Sultana, I. (2019). Social Factors Causing Low Motivation for Primary Education among Girls in the Slums of Karachi. *Bulletin of Education and Research*, 41(3), 61-72.
- Tairab & Ronghuai. (2017). Analyzing ICT Policy in K-12 Education in Sudan (1990-2016). *World Journal of Education*, 7(1), 71.
- Tembon & Fort. (2008). *Girl's education in the 21st century: Gender equality, empowerment and growth*. The World Bank.
- UNDP. (2007). Human Development Report: Making Globalisation Work for All [online].
- UNDP. (2011). Achieving the MDGS and Reducing Human Poverty [online]. Khartoum: United Nations Development Programme in Sudan.
- UNESCO. (1989). *UNESCO Statistical Yearbook*. Paris: UNESCO.
- UNESCO. (1996). *Our Creative Diversity. Report of the World Commission on Culture and Development*. Paris: UNESCO.
- UNESCO. (2007). Education for all by 2015: Will we make it? Paris: UNESCO.
- UNESCO. (2010). World data on education. *Principles and General Objectives of Education*.
- UNESCO. (2015). Education 2030: Incheon Declaration and Framework for Action for the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 4 (Paris: UNESCO, 2015).
- UNGEI. (2007). United Nations girls' education initiative: Regional updates.
- UNGEI. (2019). Gender-Responsive Education Sector Planning A pathway to gender equality in education.
- UNICEF. (2005). *Strategies for girls' education*. Sudan: The community that made a difference.
- UNICEF. (2015). *Sudan country report on out-of school children*. UNICEF Sudan Country Office.
- United Nations. (1948). The Universal Declaration of Human Rights [online]. Available at www.un.org/en/documents/udhr/.
- Unterhalter. (2019). *Achieving Gender Equality in and Through Education: A Knowledge And Innovation Exchange (KIX) Discussion Paper*. Global Partnership for Education.
- USAID. (2008). Education From a Gender Equality Perspective.
- USAID. (2019). USAID education: girls' education.
- Vázquez, M. C. O. (2017). Understanding Girls' Education in Indigenous Maya Communities in the Yucatán Peninsula: Implications for Policy and Practice. Echidna Global Scholars Program, Policy Brief. *Center for Universal Education at The Brookings Institution*.