

Enrollment, completion, and early marriage of girl child among bade communities in Guri district of Jigawa State

Ahmed Kasimu ^{1,*}, Abubakar Abdullahi Aliyu ² and Abdullahi Ahmed ²

¹ *Social Science and Humanities, College of Education, Gumel, Jigawa, Nigeria.*

² *General Studies Education, College of Education, Gumel, Jigawa, Nigeria.*

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Abstract

The education of the female child is a crucial factor in socio-economic growth; however, it is often obstructed by early marriage, especially in rural areas. This research investigates the relationships among school enrollment, completion rates, and the incidence of early marriage among female children in the Bade villages of Guri District, Jigawa State, Nigeria. The study utilizes a mixed-methods approach, collecting quantitative data from school records and questionnaires, as well as qualitative insights from focus group talks with parents, educators, and community leaders. Research indicates that while initial enrollment rates for females are comparatively high, completion rates significantly diminish owing to socio-cultural and economic influences that favor early marriage over schooling. Poverty, cultural norms, and gender-based expectations are recognized as primary factors sustaining this tendency. The research further examines the impact of community awareness initiatives, governmental legislation, and non-governmental (NGO's) activities in tackling these issues. This study highlights the pressing need for comprehensive measures that amalgamate education, community involvement, and policy implementation to address early marriage and enhance educational results for girls. The study offers practical suggestions that enhance initiatives aimed at empowering girl children and promoting sustainable development in Guri District and beyond.

Keywords: Education; Early Marriage; Culture; Educational Policy; Dropout

1. Introduction

Education is a fundamental human right that enables individuals to attain their full potential and contribute to societal development. However, certain cultural, social, and economic factors often hinder the education of girls, particularly in marginalized communities. This proposal focuses on the Bade communities in Guri District of Jigawa State, where low enrollment, high dropout rates, and early marriages among girls are prevalent issues that require urgent attention.

1.1. Problem Statement/Justification

The Bade communities face significant challenges in ensuring the equal education of girls. The persistently low enrollment rates, high dropout rates, and prevalence of early marriages hinder the educational and socio-economic development of girls. These factors perpetuate a cycle of poverty and reinforce the existing gender disparities within the community. Understanding the root causes and implications of these issues is crucial for designing effective interventions and promoting positive change.

1.2. Objective(s) of the study

- To assess the current enrollment rates and completion levels of the girl child within Bade communities in Guri District.

* Corresponding author: Ahmed Kasimu

- To explore the factors contributing to low enrollment, high dropout rates, and early marriages among Bade girls.
- To identify the socio-economic, cultural, and educational barriers preventing the education of girls in Bade communities.
- To examine the short-term and long-term consequences of early marriage on the educational, health, and socio-economic outcomes of girls.
- To develop evidence-based recommendations and strategies to improve enrollment, completion rates, and delay early marriages among Bade girls.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Universal Definitions of Marriage

Marriage is a social institution that varies across cultures and religions, but universally refers to a legally recognized union between two individuals, typically involving emotional and economic commitments [32]. It is important to note that child marriage, defined as a marriage before the age of 18, is considered a violation of a child's rights [32].

2.2. Types of Marriage among Cultures and Religions

Marriage practices differ among cultures and religions. Some common types include:

- **Monogamy:** The practice of marrying one spouse at a time, which is the most prevalent form of marriage globally [36]; [16].
- **Polygamy:** A practice where an individual can have multiple spouses simultaneously. It can be further divided into polygyny (one man having multiple wives) and polyandry (one woman having multiple husbands) [36]; [30]; [18].
- **Levirate and Sororate:** These practices involve a widow marrying a brother of her deceased husband or a widower marrying a sister of his deceased wife, respectively [36]; [15]; [20].
- **Arranged Marriage:** The practice where parents or guardians select spouses for their children, commonly seen in many cultures [32]; [7]; [10]; [19].

2.3. International (United Nations) Marriage Conventions on Marriage

The United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) recognizes the importance of gender equality in marriage and emphasizes the need to protect women's rights within marriage [35].

2.4. Regional Conventions on Marriage

2.4.1. African Union

The African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR) promotes the rights of individuals, including women, within the context of marriage [3]. It highlights principles such as equality, non-discrimination, and the promotion of consent in marriage (African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, 1986; Murray, 2016; African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, 2012[3]).

The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) has developed regional frameworks to address child marriage. The ECOWAS Plan of Action on the Eradication of Child Marriage (2014-2020) aims to coordinate efforts among member states to prevent child marriages and protect the rights of girls [9].

2.4.2. Marriage Legislations in Nigeria

Nigeria has a diverse legal framework that governs marriage practices. While there are different legislations at the federal and state levels [27]; [15], some notable examples include:

2.4.3. The Marriage Act of 1990

This federal legislation governs marriage registration and provides guidelines for monogamous marriages, including consent and age requirements [13]. Child Rights Act of 2003: This Act, though not uniformly adopted across all states in Nigeria, sets the minimum age of marriage at 18 and prohibits child marriage [12].

2.5. Traditional and Religious Marriages in Nigeria

Traditional and religious marriages play a significant role in Nigeria [25]; [26]. Traditional marriage practices vary among ethnic groups, such as the Bade communities in Guri District of Jigawa State. These marriages often involve cultural rites and ceremonies to celebrate the union [30]; [8]; [29]. Islamic and Christian religious practices also influence marriage customs, with Islamic marriages being guided by Sharia law and Christian marriages being conducted according to the church's regulations [5]; [11]; [14]; [17].

2.6. Demographics of Bade Communities in Hadejia Emirate of Nigeria

The demographic profile of the Badé communities in Hadejia Emirate of Jigawa State in Nigeria is characterized by a predominantly Hausa-Fulani ethnic group, who are primarily Muslims. The communities are mostly rural, with agriculture and animal husbandry being the main sources of livelihood. According to the National Population Commission of Nigeria, the population of Jigawa State was estimated to be 4,348,649 as of 2006, with a growth rate of 3.2% per annum. The majority of the population in the state resides in rural areas, including the Badé communities in Hadejia Emirate [6]; Jigawa State Government; [23]. A study conducted by the Jigawa State Ministry of Health in collaboration with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) found that the population of Hadejia Emirate is predominantly young, with a high fertility rate and a large proportion of the population being under the age of 15.

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) also studied that the poverty rate in Jigawa State is relatively high, with a significant portion of the population living below the poverty line UNDP [22]; [37]; [28]. This is likely reflective of the socioeconomic conditions in the Badé communities in Hadejia Emirate. In terms of education, the UNESCO Institute for Statistics studied that the literacy rate in Jigawa State was 34% as of 2015, indicating that a large proportion of the population, including those in the Badé communities, may have limited access to formal education [32]; [22].

Overall, the demographic profile of the Badé communities in Hadejia Emirate of Jigawa State reflects a predominantly rural, young, and economically disadvantaged population, with limited access to education and healthcare resources [1]; [2]; Jigawa State Government, n.d.; [23].

3. Research Design and Methodology

3.1. Research Design

This study will utilize a sequential explanatory mixed-methods research design. The quantitative phase will involve collecting numerical data to provide a broad understanding of enrollment, completion, and early marriage trends among girl children. The qualitative phase will complement the quantitative findings by exploring the underlying factors and experiences of the participants.

3.2. Data and Data Sources

- **Jigawa State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB)**

Official records on enrollment and completion rates of primary schools in Guri District.

- **Guri Local Government Education Authority**

Studies on educational policies, interventions, and initiatives aimed at promoting girl child education in Fulbe communities.

- **Bade Hamlets/Communities**

Focus group discussions and interviews with community leaders, parents, and girl children to understand their perspectives on enrollment, completion, and early marriage.

- **Primary, Secondary Schools, in Guri Local Government Area**

School records such as enrollment extracts, school attendance extracts, and common entrance examinations extracts.

3.3. Data Collection Instruments

- **Questionnaires:** Structured questionnaires will be administered to parents and girl children to collect quantitative data on enrollment, completion, and early marriage. The questionnaires will be developed based on existing literature and adapted to the local context.

- School's Enrollment Extracts: Official records obtained from primary schools will provide data on the number of enrolled students, including gender and age.
- School Attendance Extracts: Records of student attendance will be collected from primary schools to assess regular school attendance patterns.
- Common Entrance Examinations Extracts: Data on students who have successfully completed primary school and proceeded to secondary education will be obtained from common entrance examination records.

3.4. Analysis

- Enrollment by Completion of Primary Schools, Quantitative data will be analyzed using descriptive statistics to determine the enrollment rates and completion rates of girl children in primary schools. Enrollment and completion ages
- Quantitative data will be analyzed to identify the average ages at which girl children enroll and complete primary schools.
- Enrollment and completion ages, and marital status after expected completion Comparison analysis will be conducted to examine the relationship between enrollment and completion ages and the subsequent marital status of girl children after reaching the expected completion age.

3.5. Limitations

The study faced limitations such as:

- Limited access to reliable historical data on enrollment, completion rates, and early marriages.
- Potential biases in self-studying data from questionnaires.
- Cultural and language barriers that may affect communication and data collection in Fulbe communities.

3.6. Ethical Considerations

- Informed consent will be obtained from all participants, ensuring their anonymity and privacy.
- Confidentiality and data protection measures will be implemented throughout the research process.
- The research will prioritize the well-being and safety of the participants, especially concerning sensitive topics such as early marriage.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1. Enrollment of Girl Children

Table 1 List of Schools and their Enrolment

S/NO	District/Wards	Schools	Enrolment
1.	Abunabu (Abunabu)	Prim, Junior, Senior	426
2.	Diribda (Abunabu)	Primary	265
3.	Gaduwa (Abunabu)	Primary & Junior	285
4.	Galdimari (Kadira)	Primary & Junior	218
5.	Kubulu (Gargabal)	Primary	46
6.	Lafia (Lafia)	Prim, Junior, Senior	306
7.	Madamawa (Lafia)	Primary	120
8.	Musari (Musari)	Prim, Junior, Senior	550
9.	Tasgan-Gabas (Kadira)	Primary	82
10.	Tasgan-Yanma (Kadira)	Primary	47
		<i>Total</i>	2,345

4.1.1. Enrollment Rates

According to the statistics, the enrollment rate of female students in elementary and secondary schools in the Bade settlements of Guri District remains low. Only 48% of the questioned families stated that their female children were enrolled in school. elementary school had a greater enrollment rate (65%) than secondary school (31%), suggesting a considerable drop-off following elementary schooling.

4.1.2. Factors influencing enrollment

Table 2 Correlation Matrix

Corrections		Entrol in School	Age of Starting School	Currently entrolod in School	Grade of Dropout	Reason of Dropout	Family Support
Entrol in School	Pearson Correlation	.a	.a	.a	.a	.a	.a
	Sig. (1 - tailed)	
Age of starting school	Pearson Correlation	.a	1	0.229	-0.175	-0.057	.339**
	Sig. (1 - tailed)	.		0.55	0.113	0.347	0.008
Currently entrol in school	Pearson Correlation	.a	0.229	1	.284*	-0.013	-0.134
	Sig. (1 - tailed)	.	0.055		0.023	0.464	0.176
Grade of dropout	Pearson Correlation	.a	-0.175	.284*	1	.572**	0.229
	Sig. (1 - tailed)	.	0.113	0.023		0.000	0.055
Reason of dropot	Pearson Correlation	.a	-0.057	-0.013	0.572	1	0.408**
	Sig. (1 - tailed)	.	0.347	0.464	0.000		0.002
Family support	Pearson Correlation	.a	0.339	-0.134	0.229	.408**	1
	Pearson Correlation	.	0.008	0.176	0.055	0.002	

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (1 – tailed) N = 50; * . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (1 – tailed)

The table presents Pearson correlation coefficients between different variables related to enrolment, dropout, and family support. Here's a breakdown of the results:

Age of Starting School and Family Support

Correlation: 0.339 (significant at the 0.01 level, 1-tailed). Interpretation: There is a moderate positive correlation between the age at which a child starts school and the level of family support. This suggests that as family support increases, children may start school at a slightly older age.

Currently Enrolled in School and Grade of Dropout

Correlation: 0.284 (significant at the 0.05 level, 1-tailed).

Interpretation: There is a weak positive correlation between current enrolment and the grade at which children drop out. This may indicate that children who remain enrolled longer are more likely to drop out at higher grades.

Grade of Dropout and Reason for Dropout

Correlation: 0.572 (significant at the 0.01 level, 1-tailed).

Interpretation: There is a strong positive correlation between the grade at which students drop out and the reason for dropping out. This suggests that specific dropout reasons may be closely tied to the grade level at which students leave school.

Reason for Dropout and Family Support

Correlation: 0.408 (significant at the 0.01 level, 1-tailed).

Interpretation: There is a moderate positive correlation between family support and the reasons for dropping out. This implies that the level of family support may influence or mitigate the reasons why children drop out of school.

Currently Enrolled in School and Family Support

Correlation: -0.134 (not significant).

Interpretation: The correlation is weak and negative, but it is not statistically significant. This suggests no clear relationship between current enrolment and family support in this sample.

Non-Computable Correlations (Marked with 'a')

Certain correlations, such as those involving enrolment in school, could not be computed. This may be due Constant variable which is all the tested subject have been enrolled at school at some point in their life.

4.2. Completing Schooling

Table 3 Factors Affecting School Completion

Corrections		Challenges	Scholarship/Educational programs	Does early marriage affects girls	How often does girls complete school
Challenges	Pearson Correlation	1	-0.029	0.894**	0.582**
	Sig. (1 - tailed)		0.420	0.000	0.000
Scholarship/Educational Programs	Pearson Correlation	-0.029	1	-0.121	-0.181
	Sig. (1 - tailed)	0.420		0.200	0.104
Does early marriage affects girls	Pearson Correlation	0.894**	-0.121	1	0.646**
	Sig. (1 - tailed)	0.000	0.200		0.000
How often does girls complete school	Pearson Correlation	0.582**	-0.181	0.646**	1
	Sig. (1 - tailed)	0.000	0.104	0.000	

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (1 - tailed); N = 50

The table highlights the Pearson correlation coefficients and their statistical significance:

- **Challenges vs. Early Marriage**

There is a very strong positive correlation ($r = 0.894$, $p < 0.01$) between challenges and early marriage's effect on girls. This indicates that as challenges increase, the influence of early marriage on girls' education is more pronounced.

- **Challenges vs. Girls' School Completion**

A strong positive correlation exists ($r = 0.582$, $p < 0.01$) between challenges and how often girl's complete school. While this may seem counterintuitive, it suggests that certain challenges might indirectly motivate or emphasize interventions improving school completion.

- **Scholarships/Educational Programs**

The correlation between scholarships and other variables is weak and not statistically significant ($p > 0.05$). This implies that the role of scholarships in addressing challenges, early marriage, and completion is less direct or possibly undermined by other factors.

- **Early Marriage vs. Girls' Completion**

A moderate positive correlation ($r = 0.646$, $p < 0.01$) exists between early marriage's effect on girls and school completion, signifying that addressing early marriage could enhance school completion rates.

4.2.1. Completion Rate

Completion rates were disturbingly low in the assessed localities. Only 18% of females who enrolled in elementary school finished secondary education. The completion rate for elementary school alone was 40%.

4.2.2. Barriers to Completion

The key impediments to completion included:

- **Early Marriage:** A large number of females dropped out of school owing to early marriage, which typically occurred before finishing secondary education.
- **Lack of Support:** Families often emphasized the education of male children above females, resulting in a lack of motivation and resources for girls to finish their education.
- **Education Quality:** Poor education quality and a shortage of female instructors contributed to higher dropout rates.

4.3. Early Marriage for Girl Children

4.3.1. Rate of Early Marriage

The research discovered that early marriage is quite common in the Bade populations. Approximately 62% of females married before the age of 18, with most weddings taking place between the ages of 14 and 16.

4.3.2. Causes of Early Marriage

Table 4 Early Marriage for Girls

Corrections		The age that girls get married	Reason for early marriage	Early marriage effects on Education/ Career	Community efforts & Support to delay early marriage	Can early education reduce early marriage
The age that girls get married	Pearson Correlation	1	0.412**	0.579**	0.315*	.460**
	Sig. (1 - tailed)		0.001	0.000	0.013	0.000
Reason for early marriage	Pearson Correlation	0.412**	1	-0.148	0.468**	0.105
	Sig. (1 - tailed)	0.001		0.152	0.000	0.234
Does early marriage affects girls on Education/ Careers	Pearson Correlation	0.579**	-0.148	1	0.784**	0.516**
	Sig. (1 - tailed)	0.000	0.152		0.000	0.000
Coomunity efforts & support to delay early marriage	Pearson Correlation	0.315*	0.468**	0.784**	1	0.604**
	Sig. (1 - tailed)	0.013	0.032	0.000		0.000
Can early education reduce early marriage	Pearson Correlation	0.460**	0.105	0.516**	0.604**	1
	Sig. (1 - tailed)	0.000	0.234	0.000	0.000	

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (1 – tailed)N = 50; * . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (1 – tailed)

The first table shows Pearson correlations and their significance levels. Key takeaways include:

The Age That Girls Get Married

Positively correlated with reasons for early marriage ($r=.412$, $p<.01$ $r=.412$, $p<.01$) and early marriage effects on education/career ($r=.579$, $p<.01$ $r=.579$, $p<.01$). Positively but moderately correlated with community efforts to delay early marriage ($r=.315$, $p<.05$ $r=.315$, $p<.05$) and early education's role in reducing early marriage ($r=.460$, $p<.01$ $r=.460$, $p<.01$).

Reasons for Early Marriage

Weak negative correlation with early marriage effects on education/career ($r=-.148$, $p=.152$). Significant negative correlation with community efforts ($r=-.264$, $p<.05$). Moderate positive correlation with community support efforts to delay early marriage ($r=.468$, $p<.01$).

Early Marriage Effects (Education/Career)

Strong positive correlation with community efforts ($r=.784$, $p<.01$). Moderate positive correlation with education's ability to reduce early marriage ($r=.516$, $p<.01$).

Community Efforts to Delay Early Marriage

Significant positive correlation with education's ability to reduce early marriage ($r=.604$, $p<.01$).

These results suggest a complex relationship, with education and community efforts playing a critical role in delaying early marriage and reducing its impact on girls' futures.

4.4. Interview Results

In an interview with government parastatals, community leaders, and guardians, key insights were gathered regarding the challenges causing girls to drop out of school in Bade communities. The findings point to three main factors: financial difficulties, distance to schools, and early marriage issues. This study provides an in-depth analysis of these causes and proposes actionable recommendations to address them.

4.4.1. Financial Difficulties

Nature of the Challenge: Many families in Bade communities face significant financial hardships, making it difficult to afford school-related expenses such as tuition fees, uniforms, books, and transportation. Girls are particularly vulnerable as families often prioritize boys' education over girls' when resources are limited.

Impact: Financial difficulties are a leading cause of school dropouts, forcing girls to abandon their education to support household income or reduce family expenses. This perpetuates a cycle of poverty and limits their future opportunities.

4.4.2. Distance to Schools

Nature of the Challenge: Schools in Bade communities are often located far from residential areas, requiring long commutes. This issue disproportionately affects girls due to safety concerns and cultural norms that restrict their mobility.

Impact: The long distances lead to fatigue, absenteeism, and eventual dropout. Parents are hesitant to send their daughters to schools far from home, particularly in cases where infrastructure such as roads and transportation is inadequate.

4.4.3. Early Marriage

Nature of the Challenge: While early marriage is described as a "minor" issue in comparison to financial and logistical challenges, it still plays a role in girls leaving school prematurely. Cultural and economic pressures often lead families to marry off their daughters at a young age, cutting short their educational journey.

Impact: Early marriage not only disrupts education but also places girls in roles of domestic responsibility, further limiting their ability to pursue personal and professional development.

5. Discussion

The results highlight the intricate interaction of cultural, economic, and infrastructure issues impacting female children's enrollment, completion, and early marriage among the Bade villages of Guri District. While national efforts like as the Universal Basic Education (UBE) program seek to enhance girl-child education, their effectiveness is constrained owing to regional constraints.

6. Conclusion

The dropout of girls from schools in Bade communities stems from financial constraints, logistical barriers, and cultural practices like early marriage. Addressing these issues requires a multi-faceted approach involving financial assistance, infrastructure development, and community advocacy. By implementing the recommendations outlined in this study, stakeholders can create a supportive environment for girls' education, ultimately fostering empowerment and long-term development in Bade communities.

Recommendations

- **Scholarships and Subsidies:** Introduce government-funded or NGO-sponsored scholarships for girls to cover tuition fees, uniforms, and study materials.
- **Conditional Cash Transfers:** Provide financial incentives to families who keep their daughters in school, linked to attendance and performance.
- **Build More Schools:** Establish additional schools closer to residential areas to reduce commuting distances and address safety concerns.
- **Transportation Services:** Implement community-led or government-supported transport services for students in remote areas.
- **Awareness Campaigns:** Educate families and community leaders on the long-term benefits of girls' education through workshops, town hall meetings, and media campaigns.
- **Support Networks:** Form community groups to support girls facing financial or logistical barriers to education.
- **Policy Enforcement:** Strengthen and enforce laws against underage marriage while ensuring that they are culturally sensitive and community-inclusive.
- **Education Continuation Programs:** Allow married girls to continue their education through flexible learning schedules, vocational training, and distance education.

Future Research Areas

- **Cultural Dynamics:** Investigate how cultural norms influence early marriage and school attendance rates.
- **Economic Impacts:** Examine the long-term economic consequences of girls' education on families and communities.
- **Effectiveness of Interventions:** Assess the impact of financial aid and community support programs on reducing dropout rates.
- **Gender-Sensitive Education Policies:** Explore the role of inclusive policies in addressing educational challenges faced by girls

Compliance with ethical standards

Disclosure of conflict of interest

No conflict of interest to be disclosed.

Statement of ethical approval

'The present research work does not contain any studies performed on animals/humans' subjects by any of the authors.

Statement of informed consent

Informed consent was obtained from Education Secretary of Guri Local Government, Head Teacher, Principals, Parent/Guardians and Community Leaders. The study was carried out under the umbrella of Tertiary Education Trust Fund (**TETFund**).

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