

Chapter 3

Education, Gender, and Child–Rights: Salient Issues in SDGS Years in ADO–ODO/OTA Local Government Area of Ogun State, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

Promoting and improving quality education is one of the core missions of the United Nations at ensuring sustainable future; hence, the slogan: Change towards a better quality of life starts with education. This paper examined the place of education, gender and child rights within the current status of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Ado-Odo/Ota local government of Ogun State, Nigeria. Questionnaire and interviews were used as instruments of data collection. School children between ages 7 and 18 in both private and public schools formed the study population. A sample size, 1000 respondents, was drawn from the population out of which 976 responded effectively to the questions. The findings revealed that education and child rights remain in a precarious state in the local government. There was a limited awareness about child rights among children in primary schools and secondary schools; teaching materials and instructors were grossly inadequate in many of the schools sampled and basic needs such as water and electricity were unavailable. It was also observed that the number of enrolled male children in schools is 24% higher than the females. These challenges should be put into consideration when formulating policies for education in developing countries. There is therefore the need to prioritize education, especially female education, as well as child rights in general in the local government through adequate funding, investment in teachers and creation of awareness about the rights of the child.

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INTRODUCTION

One of the core missions of the United Nations at ensuring sustainable future is improving the quality of education, hence the slogan: ‘Change towards a better quality of life starts with education’. Quality education entails provision of school building and amenities, as well as textbooks, qualified and trained teachers, etc., which would ensure the full development of the human personality and the sense of its dignity. As contained in the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the new Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), education is one of such rights to ensure future sustainability and the goals can only be realised when the rights of children are targeted and fulfilled (Oyero, 2010).

Global organizations such as The World Bank, UNDP and UNICEF recognize the relevance of education in the drive for sustainable national development around the world. Thus, Education for All (EFA) as an international initiative was first launched in 1990 to bring the benefits of education to “every citizen in every society”, with six main goals:

- To expand and improve comprehensive early childhood care and education, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children.
- To ensure that by 2015 all children, particularly girls, those in difficult circumstances, and those belonging to ethnic minorities, have access to and complete, free, and compulsory primary education of good quality.
- To ensure that the learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life-skills programmes.
- To achieve a 50% improvement in adult literacy by 2015, especially for women, and equitable access to basic and continuing education for all adults.
- To eliminate gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005, and achieve gender equality in education by 2015, with a focus on ensuring girls’ full and equal access to and achievement in basic education of good quality.
- To improve all aspects of the quality of education and ensure the excellence of all so that recognized and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all, especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills.

In 2000, 189 countries and their partners adopted the two EFA goals that align with Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 5, which refers to gender equality and empowerment of all women and girls and goal 10, which refers to the reduction of inequality within and among countries.

The idea of women in development is an issue to be prioritised as women play a significant role in fulfilment of the rights of the child because many of child rights would not be fulfilled without the women. As primary care-givers to children, women need to be appropriately positioned to perform their responsibility. Positioning women then begins from the cradle, such as receiving necessary education, healthcare and empowerment to function. Unfortunately, women in developing countries are generally marginalised. Many young women face serious threat to their empowerment through child marriage and denial of educational opportunities. It thus follows that development must focus on women too if something tangible would be achieved. Thus, there exist wide-ranging and deep linkages among gender, child rights, education and the Sustainable Development Goals.

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