

POVERTY AND EDUCATIONAL LEVEL AS DETERMINANTS OF GIRL-CHILD PARTICIPATION IN POLITICS IN ONDO NORTH SENATORIAL DISTRICT OF ONDO STATE, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

The study examined the influence of poverty and educational level on girl-child via their political participation in Ondo North Education Senatorial District of Ondo State, Nigeria. Three research questions guided the study. A descriptive survey research design was adopted. A sample size of 363 Senior Secondary School (SSS) 3 female students was adopted. A questionnaire was the instrument used for data collection. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions. The findings of the study revealed that most of the poor children, especially the girl-children whose parents are farmers find it difficult to receive necessary support from them. This invariably affects their education and socio-political involvement in the society. Girl-child civic engagement was limited and influenced by poverty and the level of their educational attainment as revealed by the study. The study recommended among others that government should encourage farmers to go into massive production to enable them generate enough income that would help them support their children adequately while in school. This would help to reduce poverty level and increase their political participation. additionally, Children Press should be encouraged to stimulate passion and reactions from children on their views over social and political matters.

Keywords: Influence, poverty, educational level, girl-child and politics

Introduction

Poverty is a common plague afflicting people of the world and Nigeria is not left out. Poverty is multidimensional in nature because it affects various segments of the population and their corresponding needs and aspirations. It is multidimensional because it is viewed differently by individuals considering time, environment and situations. From the past century for instance, in the work, 'Booth's study of London poor' in 1887 precisely in the city of York defined and measured poverty only on established numeric income and caloric level below which poverty exists, and beyond which the people cease to be poor (Agrawal& Redford, 2006). Since 1970s to the present, approaches to defining poverty have included among other factors such as: the identification of non-income dimensions such as longevity, literacy, and health, vulnerability, lack of access to opportunities, exposure to risk, powerlessness, and lack of voice among others (Agrawal& Redford, 2006).

Poverty can simply be described as the lack of some basic amenities of life – monetarily and materially. Poverty refers to the condition of not having the means to afford basic human needs such as clean water, nutrition, healthcare, clothing and shelter. Individuals, families and groups in a population can be said to be in poverty when they lack the resources to obtain the type of diet, participate in activities (including political activities), acquisition of some basic amenities and attain a living conditions which are customary, or are at least widely encouraged or approved, in the society to which they belong (Lister, 2004). It is therefore also viewed by other scholars as the condition of having fewer resources, or less income, low social/political participation than others within a society or country as compared to at least widely encouraged or approved standard.

Bradshaw (2006) one of the most famous theorists of poverty in the most recent time, viewed poverty in its most general sense as the lack of basic necessities such as food, shelter, medical care and security, which are thought necessary based on shared values of human dignity (Adekunbi [n.d]). This definition was supported by UNICEF (2014) in its identification of certain basic needs, such as food, clothing and shelter that must absolutely be fulfilled to keep people out of poverty. Poverty in this sense, and as applicable to this study, is defined as deprivation in the material requirements for minimally acceptable fulfillment of human needs, including food and the denial of basic involvement in the societal activities which in particular are civically or politically in nature. This derivational concept goes far beyond a lack of private income. It includes the need for basic health and education and essential services that must be provided by the society to prevent people from falling into poverty.

Child poverty is more than just lack of money but commonly viewed from the angle of deprivation of basic necessities/capabilities of life or denial of rights and privileges (UN General Assembly, 2007). Children living in poverty experience deprivation of the material, spiritual and emotional resources needed to survive, develop and thrive, leaving them unable to enjoy their rights, achieve their full potential or participate as full and equal members of society (UNICEF, 2005 as cited in Biggeri, Trani & Mauro, 2010). Poverty affects a lot of human activities especially education and political participation. In line with this, the World Bank (2005) asserts:

Poverty is hunger. Poverty is lack of shelter. Poverty is being sick and not being able to see a doctor. Poverty is not having access to school and

not knowing how to read. Poverty is not having a job, is fear for the future, living one day at a time. Poverty is losing a child to illness brought about by unclean water. Poverty is powerlessness, lack of representation and freedom.

Children were defined as being absolutely poor if they suffered from two or more different types of severe deprivations of basic human needs, such as, malnutrition; children who only had access to surface water (e.g. rivers) for drinking or who lived in households where the nearest source of water was more than 15minutes away; children who had no access to private or communal toilets; children who had not been immunized against any diseases or young children who had a recent illness involving diarrhoea and received no medical treatment; children in dwellings with more than five people per room or with no flooring material (e.g. a mud floor); children between 7 and 18 who had never been to school and were not currently attending school; and children between 3 and 18 with no access to radio/TV/telephone/newspapers at home (Biggeri, Trani & Mauro, 2010). These and among other factors the researchers observed are peculiar to the study area – Ondo North of Ondo State as the people are mostly poor farmers who find it difficult to provide adequate care and support for their immediate families. One of these limitations suffer by the inhabitants of the place is lack of availability of land to support agriculture. People travel hundreds of kilometres or miles away for source of fertile land to grow both food and cash crops. Their economic strength and standard of living depend wholly on the output of harvest made after paying royalties to the neighbourhoods whose land they farm. Often time, most of the farmers are unlucky to acquire fertile land or whose land fertilities depreciate or reduce after a few years of farming, leaving them with little or nothing to support their families. This ordeal brings a lot of the people to experience certain degrees of lack – poverty which affect households, especially the children whose expectations from parents are cut low in an attempt to have their educational pursuits a reality.

Education is the process through which individuals are made relevant and functional members of a given society. It is defined as the acquisition of knowledge, realization and application of potentialities by the young ones (Goodluck & Odaro, 2011). Education has equally been described as the most important aspect of human development, a key to a successful living, especially girl-child education (Michael, 2011). Denying the girl-child/female access to education implies making her a dysfunctional member of the society.

Education for a girl-child means, making the next (girl) generation well educated, full of virtues, free from the useless superstitions, confident and capable to do things good for the family, for the society, and for the country as a whole. Girls are potential mothers. Girl-child education should be paramount to any nation. Abandoning girl-child education, amount to creating an illiterate and ignorant generation/nation. In a larger society, educated woman adds to the social and economic development of the nation. Therefore, education is the key to transforming both the life of a girl and the life of her community. Girls without education are denied the opportunity to develop their potential fully and to play a productive and equal role in their families, societies, country and the world at large (Kainuwa & Yusuf, 2013).

Educational level which is a component of socio-economic background of individuals is an important variable in this study. Educational level is used interchangeably

with educational attainment of individual, especially that of girl-child. Study has it that poverty and low socioeconomic status of a household to a large extent have negative influence on child outcomes, including low IQ, educational attainment and achievement, and social-emotional problems (Palmer, 2010). In another context, it was established that schooling has direct effects on children's educational achievement, their acquisition of literacy, numeracy and scientific knowledge [*which perhaps include the knowledge of the science of politics and political participation*] (Kathy, 1994).

Formal educational qualifications are the keys to a child overall development in later life. It also influences the child's involvement in various activities in her immediate environment and community as she grows up. There is a connection between the girl-child educational attainment and that of her parents, especially the mother. Research reveals uniquely that the mother's education has a significant impact on her children's learning process and has greater success in providing their children with the cognitive and language skills which includes civic or political skills that contribute to their early success in school. The impact of educated mother on their children was also emphasized by Gratz (2016) who succinctly stated that children of mothers with high levels of education stay in school longer than children of mothers with low level of education. However, the focus of this study is on poverty and educational level as determinants of a girl child participation in politics.

The concept of girl-child in relation to her age bracket and in relation to this study, remains an unsettled debate among scholars. Merriam Webster Dictionary defined a girl-child as a young female child. Also, thesaurus online free dictionary, defined a girl-child as a female person between the age range of 7 - 18. Similarly, Idele, Gillespire, Porth, Suzuki, Mahy, Kasedde and Luo (2015), in their work, operationalised a child as any young person below the age of twenty (20). UN Women in the UN Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995 puts girl-child as female child who is in elementary school age to 19 years old. To buttress the age limit of a girl-child in relation to political participation or civic engagement, US engage children in mock elections between the age of 15 to 18 years depending on the prevailing circumstance and place of election. In the most recent Clinton and Donald Tuumph election in America, children votings were done within the age bracket of 11-18 years from early August to October 12th, 2016 in all elementary to high school classrooms in the states (Greg, 2016). In this work, a girl-child is operationalised as a young female child within the age of 13 to 18 years. In this study, political participation, civic involvement or civic engagement are used interchangeably, and one at the same time.

Politics is the way we understand and order our social affairs, and acquire greater control over the situation. It is the strategy for maintaining cooperation among people with different needs and ideals in life or for resolving the conflict within any social group (Tamayao, 2010). Politics also includes for instance concrete behavior and activities of real people, groups and institutions having to do with how a political community is actually governed (Ayene-Akeke, 2008). For politics to succeed there is need for people to come together. There is need for social interaction to fully utilize the intellectuals and potentials of individuals. That is, the essence of social interaction is politics. According to Aristotle, as people seek for power, security, position, economic resources, etc. they try to influence other people to accept their views and therefore involve in politicking. So, the highest social life is through interaction which comes about through participation.

Participation is any act of involvement of individuals in the activities of a given social group or society. It could also be conceived to be the involvement of individuals in the activities that concern the community, society or state which to a large extent are to foster unity and peaceful co-existence of the individuals to meet the socio-economic and socio-political needs of the people. Political participation is often being referred to as political engagement or civic engagement by some scholars (Lee, An, Sohn, & Yoo, 2018; Bennion, & Simpson, 2013). As Reley, Griffin and Morey (2010) have pointed out; political engagement has traditionally been thought of as ‘a set of rights and duties that involves formally organized civic and political activities.’ Political participation extends beyond parties. However, individuals can also become involved in certain aspects of the electoral process through independent action particularly at the local level and by joining civil society organizations. On the other hand, Ezegebe (2006) was of the opinion that engagement can also be in the form of protest or organisation of rallies/political campaigns to bring about political consciousness or sensitise the people on political issues. Professional networks, trade unions, non-governmental organizations, and the media can all equally provide avenues for political participation (Igwe, 2007; Ayeni-Akeke, 2008).

However, from children perspective, political participation could be ways in which they exercise their civil/political rights and carry out their civic responsibilities and duties. Civil and political rights are people’s entitlement to liberty and equality. They include the rights to justice and equal treatment, the rights to freedom of expression and religion, to take part in political life, and to have access to information, skills and opportunities for development and enhanced participation (Inter-Agency Working Group on Children’s Participation, 2008). Children can participate in a political system or exercise their civic rights in many ways such as organizing social/civic associations where political issues are discussed, organizing debate on political matters on radios and T.V, attending seminars on politics and offering of compulsory courses like Civic Education, organizing mock elections, among others that would help them keep abreast of the political exigencies of the state. This is necessary because children tend to be more creative, positive and energetic, offering ideas devoid of prejudices and stereotypes (UNICEF Nigeria, 2007).

From the foregoing, it seems that children, especially girl-children are not being given their pride of place in Ondo State political system to express their civic rights and responsibilities as contained in Article 12, 13, and part of 23 of the Convention on the Right of the Child (CRC). The Ondo State Children Parliament (ODSCP) is a name coined out of necessity. It is not functional or acknowledged. One among a number of programmes by Ondo State Government under the leadership of Olusegun Mimiko that is geared towards girl-children by giving them a sense of belonging and which is in line with the Girl-Child Social Foundation, held on the 22nd of May, 2014 on equal and quality access of girl-child to health and education. The issues were addressed on a day sensitization of “Post MDG’s: Sustaining Health Gains in Ondo” title: Emerging Issues on Girl-Child Social Protection in West African (Adeleye, 2014). It is pertinent to acknowledge that research shows that as children grow older, political socialization takes effect speedily in males than in females and their political or civic engagements get increasing as they grow up (Adelabu & Akinsolu, 2009). Therefore, researchers were of the opinion that poverty and educational level could be limiting factors to girl-child participation in politics. The study also sought

to find out if the girl-child is aware of her civic rights that would aid her political involvements. This formed the gap which this study was set to fill.

To carry out this study the following research questions guided the study:

1. To what extent has poverty inhibited the educational support of girl-child in Ondo North Senatorial District of Ondo State?
2. In what ways do girl child participate or exercise her civic responsibilities?
3. What is the influence of poverty on the political participation of girl-child in Ondo North Senatorial District of Ondo State?

The theoretical significance of this study hinges mainly on the theories of poverty by Ted K. Bradshaw (2006) and Service-Learning Model by Delve, Mintz, and Stewart (1990). The theories of poverty as Ted K. Bradshaw in 2006 emphasized that poverty places its origin on individual deficiencies, cultural belief system that support subcultures in poverty, political economic distortions, among others. While the Service Learning Model by Delve, Mintz, and Stewart (1990) is a model that analyses a form of experiential education in which students engage in activities that address human and community needs together with structured opportunities intentionally designed to promote students-learning opportunity to serve in the community so as to provide a pragmatic, progressive learning experience as a form of involvement in the community. The findings of the study upheld the tenets of the aforementioned theories and model, hence, they were used to identify areas of improvement for the study.

Methodology

Survey research design was adopted for the study. The study was carried out in Ondo North Senatorial District of Ondo State which consists of three education zones. They are Ikare Education Zone, Oka Education Zone and Owo Education Zone. Each of the zones consists of two local government areas which made up the six local government areas, while the focus area of the study was Ikare and Oka Education Zones which consist of four local government areas - Akoko North West, Akoko North East, Akoko South West and Akoko South East Local Government Areas. These local government areas are commonly referred to as Akoko because they occupy the part of Yoruba land called “Akokoland.” These groups of people are traditionally referred to as the people of “eledemeji” – people of diverse languages. This area (Akokoland) covers the two-third of the Ondo North Senatorial District. The choice of this area for the study emanates from the people’s ways of life which to a reasonable extent made the researchers feel might largely be responsible for their level of poverty and denial of the people’s rights especially girl-children to enjoy maximum supports for proper growth, development and engagement in the society.

The population for the study was three thousand, nine hundred and ninety-five (3995) 2015/2016 female SSS Three (3) students in public secondary schools in Ondo North Education Zone or District (Ondo State Teaching Service Commission [TESCOM], 2015). A sample size of three hundred and sixty-three (363) female senior secondary school three students in public secondary schools was used. Senior Secondary Schools Three (SSS 3) female students were chosen because they have spent ten academic terms (10 academic terms) in the school as senior students and are likely to give relevant information. This was also to enable researchers sample students of the same characteristics, who were mature and knowledgeable enough to respond to the research instrument.

The instrument for data collection was questionnaire consisted of two sections: Section A and B. Section A consisted of items on demographics. Section B consisted of three clusters and thirty-eight (38) items. In Clustser 1, the items were scaled using four-point scale of ‘Very High Extent’ (VHE), ‘High Extent’ (HE), ‘Low Extent’ (LE) and ‘Very Low Extent’ (VLE). In the same vein, Cluster 2 and 3 also used a four-point scale of ‘Strongly Agree’ (SA), ‘Agree’ (A), ‘Disagree’ (D) and ‘Strongly Disagree’ (S.D). The instrument was subjected to face validation by three experts, while the reliability of the validated instrument was established using Cronbach Alpha with the reliability coefficients 0.823.

Direct method of instrument distribution and collection was done by researchers with the help of four research assistants. The data collected was analyzed using mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions 1–3 The research questions were answered using the 4- point response options which was assigned real limit of numbers in the mean values as follows: Very High Extent (VHE) or Strongly Agree (SA) 3.50-4.00; High Extent (HE) or Agree (A) 2.50-3.49;Low Extent (LE) or Disagree (D) 1.50-2.49 and Very Low Extent or Strongly Disagree (SD) 1.00-1.49. Based on the real limit of the mean values, any item receiving a mean score of 2.50 and above will be considered as agreed or not rejected while any one with the mean score below 2.50 was regarded as disagreed or rejected

Results

The results for the study were obtained from the research questions answered through data collected and analysed.

Research Question 1: To what extent has poverty inhibited the educational support of girl-child in Ondo North Senatorial District of Ondo State?

Table 1: Mean ratings and Standard Deviation of respondents on the extent poverty inhibits the educational support of girl-child in Ondo North Senatorial District, Ondo State

S/N	Item Statement	N	\bar{x}	SD	Dec.
1	Providing cost of transportation	363	1.92	0.92	LE
2	Paying of school fees	363	2.19	1.20	LE
3	Providing cost of textbooks	363	3.40	0.82	HE
4	Having enough to cater for my education	363	2.12	1.17	LE
5	Preferring to educate male over female child is an issue in my family	363	2.42	1.16	LE
6	Preferring male child education over female’s is caused by low income of the family	363	2.42	1.15	LE

7	Engaging in extra income generating activities to support the family	363	2.90	1.06	HE
8	Eating balanced diet daily	363	2.21	1.28	LE
9	Going to school on empty stomach	363	2.91	1.21	HE
10	Having relevant books to prepare for exams	363	3.22	0.94	HE
11	Feeling ashamed attending school because of its structure	363	2.40	1.12	LE
12	Learning in a poor environment inhibits performance	363	2.48	1.15	LE
13	Staying away from school as a result of not paying school fees	363	2.79	2.42	HE
14	Going to farm during school session to seek for fund.	363	3.06	1.19	HE
Cluster Mean		14 items	2.60	0.45	HE

Note: \bar{x} = Mean, SD = Standard Deviation, Dec. = Decision

The result in table 1 shows the mean and standard deviation of respondents on the extent poverty inhibits the educational support of girl-child in Ondo North Senatorial District, Ondo State. Result shows that item 3, 7, 9, 10, 13 and 14 have mean rating of 3.40, 2.90, 2.91, 3.22, 2.79 and 3.06 with standard deviation of 0.82, 1.06, 1.21, 0.94, 2.42 and 1.19 respectively. These mean ratings are within the range of 3.50 – 400. The scores are above the cut-off point of 2.50 which indicate that most of the respondents accepted the items on the extent poverty inhibits the educational support of girl-child in Ondo North Senatorial District of Ondo State at “High Extent.” These items include the inability of parents to meet cost of textbooks, engaging the girl-child in extra income generating activities to support the family, not having enough to eat or going to school on empty stomach, staying out of school as a result of not payment of school fees, not having adequate textbooks to prepare for exams, and lastly going to farm during school session to seek fund. The cluster mean of 2.60 with a standard deviation of 0.45 means that most of the respondents’ responses are clustered around the mean indicating that most of respondents are highly limited and deprived of lots of educational supports from parents or guardians as a result of poverty. This also explains one of the reasons for a lot of school drop-outs among the girl-children in Ondo North Education District which largely affects their educational level.

Research Question 2: In what ways do girl child participate or exercise their civic responsibilities?

Table2: Mean ratings and Standard Deviation of respondents on the ways girl-child participates or exercises her civic responsibilities in Ondo North Senatorial District, Ondo State

S/N	Item Statement	N	\bar{x}	SD	Dec.
1	Speak up publicly and through the press	363	3.11	1.03	A
2	Organize and participate in formal peaceful association	363	3.29	0.77	A
3	Influence the school system to enact favourable rules	363	3.31	0.80	A
4	Organize and participate in debate on social and political matters	363	3.27	0.83	A
5	Play leadership roles in the class	363	3.25	0.88	A
6	Respect for national coat of arm	363	3.28	0.80	A
7	Pay courtesy visit to relevant members of national assembly	363	3.08	0.89	A
8	Develop political consciousness	363	3.25	0.85	A
9	Respect for established rules and regulations	363	3.26	0.94	A

10	Engage in mock election	363	2.99	0.98	A
11	Engage in question time in the class	363	3.24	0.76	A
12	Organize discussion classes	363	3.12	0.79	A
13	Wish to lead others	363	3.21	0.83	A
14	Listen to political news	363	3.18	0.93	A
Cluster Mean		14 Items	3.20	0.09	A

Note: \bar{x} = Mean, SD = Standard Deviation, Dec. = Decision

The scores obtained in table 2 above indicate that all the respondents are of the opinion that the items 1-14 of the mean scores: 3.11, 3.29, 3.31, 3.27, 3.25, 3.28, 3.08, 3.25, 3.26, 2.99, 3.24, 3.12, 3.21, 3.18 are the ways girl child participate or exercise her civic responsibilities. The scores are above the cut-off point of 2.50, together with the cluster mean and standard deviation of 3.20 and 0.09 shows that almost all the respondents accepted the items as the ways girl-child participates or exercises her civic responsibilities in Ondo North Senatorial District, Ondo State.

Research Question 3: What is the influence of poverty on the political participation of girl-child in Ondo North Senatorial District of Ondo State?

Table 3: Mean ratings and Standard Deviation of respondents on the influence of poverty in the political participation of girl-child in Ondo North Senatorial District, Ondo State

S/N	Item Statement	N	\bar{x}	SD	Dec.
1	Politics is boring because it offers no incentives for motivation	363	2.93	1.00	A
2	Family responsibilities hinder girl-child for exercising her civic responsibilities	363	3.06	0.87	A
3	Lack of income discourages girl-child from involving in school politics	363	3.04	0.90	A
4	A girl-child shows interest in the political ideology of her parents	363	3.03	0.89	A

5	The inability to afford basic education discourages girl-child to participate in social and political gathering in her immediate environment	363	3.02	0.87	A
6	Poor girl-child does not like to join school politics	363	2.79	0.96	A
7	Poor girl-child does not like to play leadership role in school	363	2.79	1.01	A
8	Lack of radio to listen to or T.V to watch political programme at home limits girl-child awareness about politics therefore affecting her political socialization	363	3.09	0.90	A
9	Lack of civic consciousness limits girl-child's political participation	363	3.10	0.82	A
10	Political socialization from poor family background limits girl-child political participation	363	3.03	0.96	A
Cluster Mean		10 items	2.99	0.11	A

Note: \bar{x} = Mean, SD = Standard Deviation, Dec. = Decision

The scores obtained in table 3 above indicate that all the respondents are of the opinion that the items 1-10 of the mean scores: 2.93, 3.06, 3.04, 3.03, 3.02, 2.79, 2.79, 3.09, 3.10, and 3.03 are the influence of poverty on the political participation of girl-child in Ondo North Senatorial District, Ondo State. The scores are above the bench mark of 2.50 and are not rejected, indicating that poverty influences the political participation of girl-child in Ondo North Senatorial District, Ondo State. Also, the cluster mean and standard deviation of 2.99 and 0.01 indicating that most of the respondents agreed that all the items which are poverty indicators influence girl-child political and civil involvement at school, home and immediate environment. This also explains the indifferent attitude exercise by young ones especially the girl-child to political issues and activities at a particular point in time.

Discussion of Results

The study revealed that poverty is largely responsible for poor educational support of girl-child which affects her educational level especially in the following ways: the inability of parents to meet the cost of textbooks to enhance personal development; engaging the girl-child in extra income generating activities to support family; hunger (going to school on empty stomach; staying out of school as a result of not payment of school fees; going to farm during school session to seek fund among others.

Findings from the study also revealed that in spite of girl-child political consciousness, girl-child can participate and exercise her civic responsibilities in her immediate environment by organizing and participating in formal peaceful association, debate on social and political matters, influencing the school system to enact favourable rules, playing leadership role in the class/school, paying courtesy visit to relevant members of national assembly, respect for established rules and regulations and the national coat of arm, listening to political news, engaging in question time, discussion classes, mock elections among others. The findings are in line with Quintelier (2007) who reported in an empirical investigation on the perceived difference in the political attitude and interest of young people that children aged 12-18 on average participate in activities, while 19-25 years old engaged in more activities and the participation keeps improving from age 26. Quintelier(2007) revealed significantly that young ones differ in the levels and ways of political participation; they tend to bring up newer forms of participation, which include wearing of badges, signing petitions, demonstration among others. However, the girl-child

suffers a number of limitations as a result of poverty. Some of these limitations are: Politics is boring because it offers no incentives for motivation; family responsibilities hinder girl-child for exercising her civic responsibilities; lack of income discourages girl-child from involving in school politics; a girl-child shows interest in the political ideology of her parents; the inability to afford basic education discourages girl-child to participate in social and political gathering in her immediate environment; poor girl-child does not like to join school politics; poor girl-child does not like to play leadership role in school; lack of radio to listen to or T.V to watch political programme at home limits girl-child awareness about politics therefore affecting her political socialization; and political socialization from poor family background limits girl-child political participation. This study is in agreement with the findings of Quintelier (2007) which revealed that the differences in the social/political participation of young and old people are explained by the level of educational attainment (which poverty has limited them to attain).

In a brief, the implication is that girl-child is conscious of her political rights and willing to exercise them but lack the ability to do so as a result of poverty or presence of the influence of poverty induced factors. Take for instance, as the study revealed, the ability to earn income, afford basic education, acquire or have access to basic necessities like T.V., radio, computer, good food, good shelter, etc. discourage a whole lots of people from involving in politics or carrying out civic responsibilities. It implies that active participants are those who can afford basic education, earn income or acquire basic necessities – therefore, poor girl-child never like to join politics or play leadership role in schools, and in her immediate environment because she lacks some essential necessities of life.

Conclusion

The study focused on poverty and educational level as determinants of girl-child participation in politics in Ondo North Education (Senatorial) District of Ondo State. From the foregoing discussion, based on the results of the study, the following conclusions were made:

1. The study revealed that most of the poor people are farmers who find it difficult to provide the necessary support for their children, especially the girl-child.
2. Poverty was largely responsible for poor educational support of girl-child which affected her educational level and socio-political involvement in the society.
3. Girl-child is conscious of her political rights and willing to exercise them
4. Girl-child possesses equal rights like any citizens and can exercise her civic and political rights in certain ways or carry out her civic responsibilities in her immediate environment by organizing and participating in formal peaceful association, debate on social and political matters, influencing the school system to enact favourable rules, playing leadership role in the class/school, paying courtesy visit to relevant members of national assembly, respect for established rules and regulations, listening to political news, engaging in question time, discussion classes, mock elections among others.
5. Girl-child civic engagement or participation is limited and influenced by poverty in a number of ways as revealed by the study in spite of the knowledge of her civic responsibilities.

Recommendations

On the strength of the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made:

- 1 Government should make available policies that will encourage farmers to go into massive production to make income that can reduce poverty level by supporting their children adequately while in school.
- 2 Skills acquisition courses (subjects) such as entrepreneurship should be encouraged and strictly implemented to enhance creativity at primary and secondary school levels. This will help to alleviate poverty in the state.
- 3 Children parliament should be encouraged and practiced in real terms and not on paper or on air. This will awaken political consciousness in young ones.
- 4 Mock elections among children should be encouraged from the grassroots to national levels as practiced in most western countries of the world.
- 5 Children Press should be open in all nooks and crannies of the state to stimulate actions and reactions from children on their views over social and political matters.
- 6 Bills should be proposed on how to increase children political participation in the state.

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