

An Analysis of Daily Trust Newspaper in The Promotion of Girl Child Education in Northern Nigeria

Adidu Anita Similola

Department Mass Communication, Elizade University, Nigeria

Abstract: Girl child education has been a problem in most developing countries, Nigeria inclusive. The problem of the Nigerian girl child is the cultural web in which she is caught which makes it impossible for her to compete with her peers in the developed world. Various studies have shown that there is a strong link between girls' literacy rates and religious and traditional misconceptions. As Nigeria is a very religious country, many of its citizens tend to live according to the holy writings, be it the Bible or Quran. That is why many households think that girls should not receive education in the same way boys do, if they receive it at all. The same can be said for traditions. Many people still live with a very traditionally biased view on life. According to this view, a girl should grow up to be a mother and a housewife. Why would she need education for that? Out of these reasons stems another one: gender discrimination. Girls are discriminated based on their gender both in their communities and in schools. Their achievements are not considered as significant as the boys' achievements are. Women's history is not taught at schools. Less attention is paid to educating girls on the topics of their bodies and their health. In line with this background, this research work was conducted to determine the role of the print media (Daily Trust Newspaper) in promoting the girl child education through its publicities and to what extent. Internet based method was used to gather data which were analysed using descriptive method and simple percentage. The population of the study is 391 weekly editions (educational stories) within 12 months (September 2020-October 2021). The findings revealed that educational issues are paid the least attention to in news coverage in Daily Trust Newspaper when compared to other issues. It was recommended among others that the print media should make conscious effort to ensure a wider and consistent coverage of educational issues to sensitise policy makers, and other stakeholders on the importance of girl child education as this will ensure the provision of solutions to problems affecting girl child education, promoting national development

Keywords: Girl child, Education, Media role, Daily Trust Newspaper

I. INTRODUCTION

Education is a basic human right and has been recognized as such since the 1948 adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Since then, numerous human rights treaties have reaffirmed these rights and have supported entitlement to free compulsory primary education for all yet 10.5 million children in Nigeria are out of school; approximately 60 percent are girls (UNICEF, 2014). They are dropouts due to various factors: socio-cultural, economic,

governance etc. vulnerable to forms of abuses, harms- female genital mutilation, insurgency effects and other negative influences which deny her rights and dignity. Most girls do not have access to education despite the fact that it is their right. The girl- child is often saddled with responsibilities like cooking, running errands, cleaning, hawking, raising children and taking care of the home, which may make her not to have access to quality education. As citizens of Nigeria who form a great percentage of the population, women in Nigeria are expected to contribute their quota to the development of their country. For individual and national development, it is crucial that girls and female adults should acquire formal education. Unfortunately, a cursory look at the pattern of women's involvement in education in Nigeria reveals abysmal low levels.

In the context of this paper discussion, the girl child is referred to as the female human being, a child under 18 years of age (Child Labour Convention, 1999, the Nigerian Constitution, 1999).

Northern Nigeria has always had wider margins of out-of-school children in Nigeria with the girl child making a higher percentage on these numbers. This situation has been further escalated for close to a decade, as Northern Nigeria has been plagued by continuous attacks from the Boko Haram Insurgency group as well as the new trend in banditry which has included mass kidnappings and abductions some of which have targeted schools in this region. This for a region that has the highest rate of out-of-school children in the country, with less than 50% of girls in school. Though attacks have involved the abduction of both school boys and girls, there has been a higher reported number of abduction of school-aged girls and women (Chukwu, 2021)

A major consequence of the insecurity in the region and the violence against school girls has been the fear by parents of sending their girls back to school and also the fear of the girls themselves in going back to school. Even when girls agree to go back to school, the mental and psychological stress caused by such violent events hinders girls' learning, especially in a context where girls have little or no access to psychological support or a trauma-informed learning environment. This predicted loss in learning comes as a double assault after the learning loss as a result of COVID-19 school closures. Also, the lack of a safe schooling environment creates a chain of

negative consequences for the future lives of girls, such as loss of education, early marriage, early pregnancy, and increased rates of sexual violence and the stigma associated with these attacks.

II. HISTORY OF DAILY TRUST NEWSPAPER

The Weekly Trust and Daily Trust are well-focused, market driven and general interest newspapers. The publications, which made their debut in March 1998 and January 2001 respectively, crystallize the revolutionary vision of an independent Board of Directors.

The Weekly Trust and Daily Trust are now the largest circulating newspapers in Northern Nigeria. (<https://www.aboutus.org/dailytrust.com>)

Theoretical Framework

The study was anchored on Development Media theory and Agenda setting theory

I. The Development Media Theory

Development Media Theory

This propounded by Dennis McQuail (1987) canvasses media support for an existing government and its efforts to bring about socio-economic development. It argues that until a nation is well established and its economic development well underway, media must be supportive rather than critical of government, but assist them in implementing their policies. As the name implies, the theory relates to media in third world nations. It favours journalism that seeks out good news, requires that bad news stories are treated with caution, for such stories could be economically damaging to a nation in the delicate throes of growth and change. The media is seen to fulfil particular social and political duties; hence media freedom while desirable should be subordinated to national integration, socio-economic modernization, promotion of literacy and cultural creativity. Development media theory seeks to accentuate the positive, it nurtures the autonomy of the developing nations and gives special emphasis to indigenous cultures. It is both a theory of state support and one of resistance to the norms of competing nations and competing theories of media. As the press performs its responsibilities, according to McQuail, it bears the following tenets in mind:

- Media must accept and carry out positive development tasks that are in line with the policies formulated by the political leadership and freedom of the press should not be at variance with economic priorities of the government and the development needs of the citizenry.

- Media should therefore give priorities to the coverage of those areas that touch on the lives of the people. In other words, content should be development-driven and should centre on socio-economic and political lives of the people.

- In the overall interest of development, the state has the right to intervene in media operations by the use of censorship devices, especially when the activities of the press are not in consonance with the development objectives of the government. Mass media should accord priority to politically, geographically and culturally contiguous developing countries in their coverage as part of the holistic strategy for less developed societies.

This theory seeks to explain the normative behaviours of the press in the countries that are conventionally classified together as developing countries.

The development media theory is of the view that the media are to be used to serve the general good of the nation. This, the media can do by functioning as government instruments for achieving economic, political and cultural development, national sovereignty etc. The media are seen as agents of development and social change in any community thus, the theory says that the media should be used to complement government's effort by carrying out programmes that will lead to positive behavioural change among the people.

The development media theory is relevant to the study in that it places emphasis on using the media for development purposes. Thus, print media can be used to effectively promote girl-child education in Nigeria.

II. Agenda Setting Theory

The beginning of agenda setting theory can be traced as far as 1922, when Walter Lippmann expresses his concern on the vital role that mass media can do in influencing the setting of certain image on the public's mind (Lippmann, 1922: 9-16). In portraying the influence of mass media, Lippmann gives an example of individuals who supposed to be enemies while their countries are at war. Instead of becoming enemies, without having access to information about the war through media, those individuals are able to live harmoniously in a secluded island. Lippmann indicates on how mass media can set a particular agenda which can influence the opinions of the public. However, he never uses the term „agenda setting theory“ in his book. Nevertheless, he did generate the foundation for the agenda setting theory.

The agenda setting theory is a theory that discusses on how the mass media influences in making a certain issue as a public agenda. The public agenda is the main focus or prime issue which the members of the society or public concern about. The term agenda setting theory is first used by McCombs and Shaw (1972). This theory elaborates the connection in term of relationships between the emphasis that the mass media put as an issue and the media audiences or the public's reaction or attributes to such issue (Littlejohn and Foss: 2009).

Asemah, Edegoh and Olumuji (2013) assert that the agenda setting theory which was proposed by Maxwell McCombs and Donald L. Shaw in 1972 assumes that the

media set agenda for the public to follow. The theory holds that most of the pictures we store in our heads, most of the things we think or worry about, most of the issues we discuss in our society, are based on what we have read, listened to or watched in different mass media. The media make us to think or feel that certain issues are more important than others in our society. The agenda setting theory argues that the media may not tell us what to think but may tell us what to think about.

The relevance of the agenda setting theory to the study cannot be over-emphasized. The media generally set agenda for the people to follow. What people think about in the society is based on the information conveyed to them through the media. Thus, with the power of the print media, promotion of girl-child education will yield fruits

Statement of the Problem

News inform society which in turn informs the decisions members of the society take on a daily basis. The media has a mandate to set agendas and yield development in the society as the fourth estate of the realm through its reportage. The media therefore, being a powerful tool in shaping people's opinions and thinking with proper usage and mobilization of the people could yield a positive impact and change towards girl child education thereby bringing about positive development and growth in the society at large as rightly commented by former United Nations Secretary General, Kofi Annan "There is no tool for development to be more effective than the education of girls". It is on this premise that Daily Trust Newspaper was selected being one the most widely read newspapers in northern Nigeria where out of school children are on the rise and girl child education on the low to ascertain the role it plays in the promotion of girl child education in northern Nigeria.

III. METHODOLOGY

The study adopted the qualitative research design using internet-based research method. Internet-based research method refers to any research method that uses the Internet to collect data. Most commonly, the Web has been used as the means for conducting the study, but e-mail has been used as well. This method sought to identify and analyse the role of Daily Trust newspaper in the promotion of girl child education in northern Nigeria. The data collected were systematically analysed using descriptive method and simple percentage. The population of the study included purposively chosen educational stories from the weekly edition of Daily Trust Newspaper from September 2020 to October 2021 making a total of 391 stories. This is because some papers had more than one educational story while some did not have. The

stories were analysed in terms of identifying the role of the print media in the promotion girl child education through its publications and its extent.

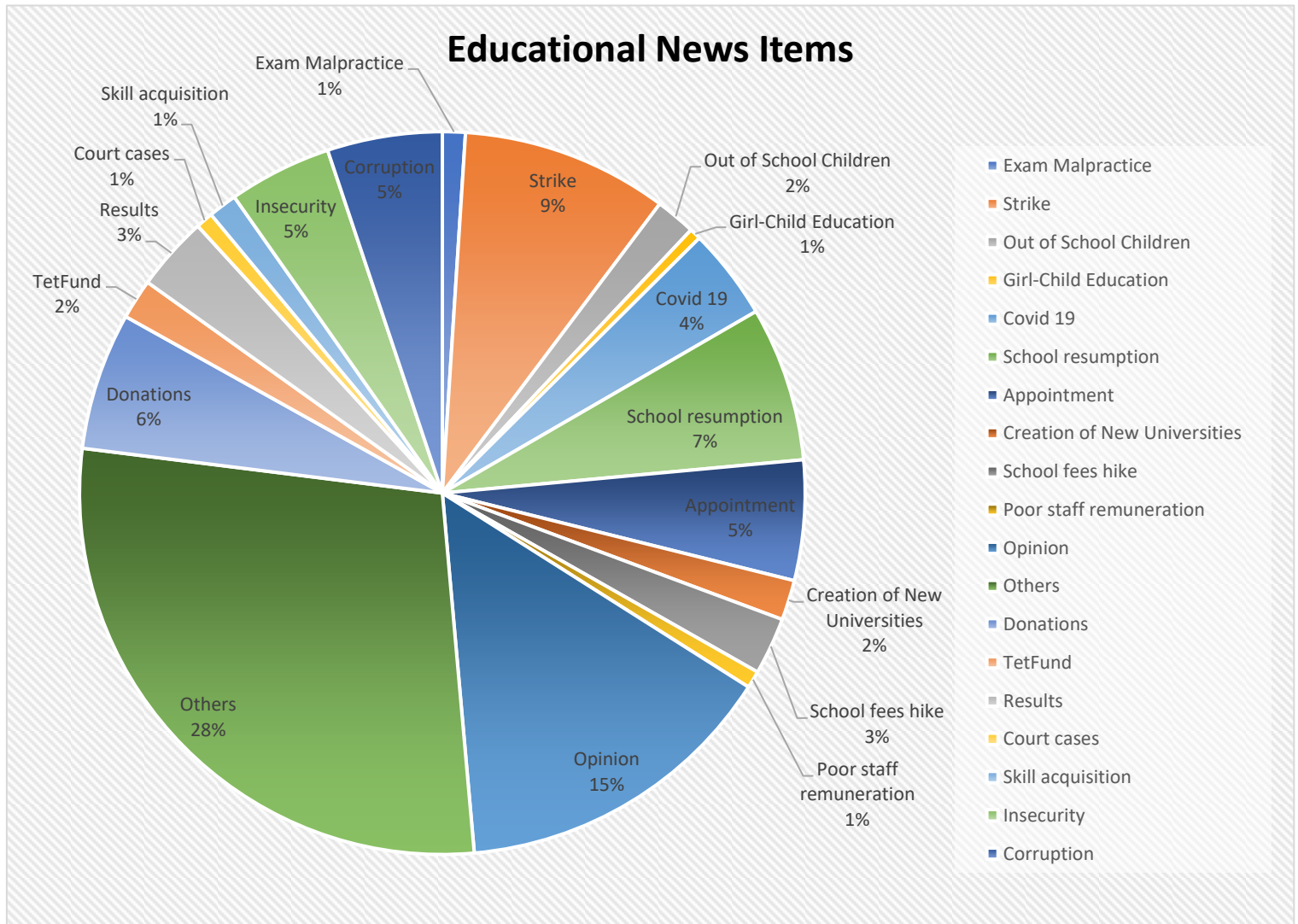
IV. FINDINGS

The findings revealed that Daily trust newspaper does not promote girl child education through its reportage. Of all 391 stories that were found in the education desk, only two (0.51%) promote girl child education. The major stories were on Opinions with 57 stories (14.58%) and others with 111 stories (28.39%). Other categories include Strikes with 36 stories (9.21%), out of school children, creation of new universities and TETFund with 7 stories each (1.79% x 3), School resumption 27 (6.91%), covid 19 had 16 stories (4.09%), appointments 21 (5.37%), results had 13 stories (3.32%), exam malpractice 4 (1.02%), donations had 24 stories (6.14%), school fees hike had 10 stories (2.56%); skill acquisition 5 (1.28%), court cases and poor staff remuneration had 3 stories each (0.77% x 2), insecurity 18 (4.60%) and corruption 20 (5.12%).

Tabular Representation of Findings

Educational News Item	Frequency	Percentage
Exam Malpractice	4	1.02%
Strike	36	9.21%
Out of School Students	7	1.79%
Girl child education	2	0.51%
Covid 19	16	4.09%
School resumption	27	6.91%
Appointment	21	5.37%
Creation of new Universities	7	1.79%
School fees hike	10	2.56%
Poor staff remuneration	3	0.77%
Opinion	57	14.58%
Others	111	28.39%
Donations	24	6.14%
TetFund	7	1.79%
Students' Results	13	3.32%
Court cases	3	0.77%
Skill acquisition	5	1.28%
Insecurity	18	4.60%
Corruption	20	5.12%
Total	391	100%

Graphical Representation of Findings



V. RECOMMENDATIONS

The print media (Daily Trust Newspaper) should make conscious effort to ensure a wider and consistent coverage on educational issues to sensitise policy makers, and other stakeholders on the importance of girl child education as this will ensure the provision of solutions to problems affecting education, especially when it has to do with the girl child as this will promote national development. This is particularly imperative as the media plays a crucial/critical role in influencing public opinion and perceptions. This would have a great impact in improving girl child education in the North since it is one of the most widely read newspapers in Northern Nigeria.

At the policy level, government should implement and monitor its blue print on women’s education and ensure that all facilities necessary are available in all schools

The government in partnership with the school authorities and security agencies need to ensure the safety of children in schools. Sensitization against violence, sexual harassment, kidnappings and insurgency should be done. This will go a long way in reducing the number of out of school children in Northern Nigeria

Government should also come in by granting funds to the educational sector like awarding scholarships to female students to supplement the cost of educating female children as this would encourage and create awareness on the subject matter

VI. CONCLUSION

Daily Trust newspaper is one of the most largely read newspapers in Northern Nigeria where girl-child education is low hence the need for deliberate steps to promotion girl child education. This promotion will aid in developing the country, as education relates to all facets of life and is crucial to

national development. It is imperative the Daily Trust takes a more proactive role in the promotion of education in northern Nigeria.

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