

Enhancing Investment in Girl-Child Education in Nigeria for Sustainable Development: Focus on 21st Century Skills

¹Helen N. Elems-

Ikwegbu &

²Juliana Isa Mohammed

^{1&2}Department of Educational

Foundations

Faculty of Education, Rivers State

University, Port Harcourt

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Abstract

This paper examined the current state of girl-child education in Nigeria, and its persistent barriers which among others include poverty, religion, cultural norms, and labour market demands. It also explored 21st century skills and their relevance to Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) particularly SDG 4 (Quality Education) and SDG 5 (Gender Equality). The paper explained how investment can be targeted to fostering innovation in the girl-child and break intergenerational cycles of poverty. It argued that to truly harness the potential of the girl-child for sustainable development, investing in girl-child education must go beyond conventional measures of mass enrolment and literacy. The paper concluded that channelling investment into 21st century skills for girls, is building a generational asset to the family, society and the nation as well as liberation from ignorance and poverty. It therefore suggested among others that Government should put an end to gender discrimination in appointments and employment.

Corresponding Author:

Helen N. Elems-Ikwegbu

Background to the Study

Every country's strength is derived from its residents' level of development. Most people agree that one of the most crucial ways to reach a desired level of growth is via education. It is one of the most important levers for sustainable development and is a fundamental right for everyone, regardless of sex, age, race, colour, ethnicity, individuals with disabilities, immigrants, children and youth in vulnerable situations, and other statuses. However, in Nigeria, the aspiration to train the girl-child in line with the 21st century demands remain incompletely fulfilled. As the nation moves beyond the traditional goals of literacy and numeracy to meet the complexities of 21st century, it becomes imperative to encompass the acquisition of skills which prepares girls for a technology-driven, interconnected global economy. The current landscape of girl-child education in Nigeria like other developing countries has suffered persistent barriers that undermine progress in the integration of 21st century skills into education for sustainable development.

Though, it cannot be denied that there are good number of influential women occupying leadership positions locally and internationally. Recent studies have shown that Nigeria is currently facing profound educational challenges that affect its female population disproportionately. In 2021, it was revealed that about 9 million children were on the streets wasting away. Out of the above-mentioned figure, about 5.5 million were girls (Murtala & Nasiru, 2021). By the year 2022, UBEC Personal Audit Statistics in Nigeria cited in UNICEF Nigeria (2022) indicated the estimated number of out-of-school girls at 7.6 million, having 3.9 and 3.7 million at the primary and junior secondary schools respectively. This means that more than 50% of girls were not attending basic school at the time. Going on, record from UBEC Personal Audit and Basic Education Statistics in Nigeria cited in UNICEF Nigeria (2022) reported that 48% of the out-of-school girls are in the North-West and North-East, while the News Agency of Nigeria as at July 2025, recorded net attendance rates of female primary pupils at only 47.7% and 47.3% in the North-East and North-West zones respectively, (News Agency of Nigeria, 2025). This means that more than half of the girls in this area are not receiving formal education. According to Ishaku (2020), out of the three geopolitical zones in the Northern areas, the North-Central shows remarkable improvement over others.

The Federal government, through the National Policy on Education made basic education compulsory and a fundamental right of every individual irrespective of gender, race, socio-economic background and geographical location (FRN, 2014). As the world speedily advances towards achieving Sustainable Development Goals, especially Goals 4 & 5 which aim to ensure quality and equality in education, many initiatives have been put in place to address obstacles standing against achieving inclusivity in girls' education. Thus, adequate investment in girl-child education can catalyse remarkable progress, improve general health condition, economic growth and poverty reduction (Williams, Thompson & Green, 2022). There is no gain-saying that education is capital intensive, however, it should be noted that investing in education triggers significant improvement on the quality of human input in the society. To this end, it becomes pertinent to discuss the prospects and challenges of the girl-child education in Nigeria.

Conceptual Clarifications

Many academics describe a girl-child as a biological female progeny from birth to eighteen (18) years of age, which includes the developmental phases of infancy, childhood, and adolescence. The girl child is a young person who will ultimately develop into a lady. During this time, a girl's personality and character are shaped by the adults in her immediate family or community. She picks up knowledge by mimicry, repetition, memorisation, imitation, and observation. The girl-child is easily swayed and reliant on others at this time to develop her personality, character, and career, mostly via imitation and observation (Jekayinfa & Akanbi, 2016). The practice of teaching a biological female child under the age of eighteen is known as "girl-child education." According to the functionalist philosophy of education, a girl's education is the process by which she gains the knowledge necessary to properly function in society. Education helps each person reach their full potential. A girl learns the what, why, and how of things through education. It is designed to help girls acquire the skills, knowledge, abilities, attitudes, and behaviours that can lead to positive changes and long-term growth. In the context of this course, investment refers to putting money into someone or something with the intention of making a profit. Therefore, investing is the process of assembling concepts and resources, developing them, and fostering them with the intention of turning a profit and achieving a desired outcome. According to Andrew (2019), an investment is something that is bought with money with the expectation that it would provide revenue or profit. Investing in education entails making financial investments to raise the required calibre of human resources. Its goals are advancement and sustainable development.

A shift in the right direction is called development. The degree of economic, political, infrastructure, and educational achievement or advancement is used to gauge it. Education and national development are closely related; they are seen as two sides of the same coin. It is a general improvement or improvement in the state of a nation. According to Oke (as quoted in Kingdom & Makare, 2013, p.314) National development, is the "capacity of a nation to satisfactorily provide the food and fibre that are needed by its people and industry." When residents' lifestyles significantly improve, national growth takes place. Conversely, sustainable development is an international idea that aims to satisfy current societal demands without jeopardising the welfare of future generations. The following are the three essential components of sustainable development: 1. Economic growth, with a focus on inclusive growth and developmental advantages for all societies, regardless of location. 2. Social inclusion, which emphasises everyone's equal involvement in developmental processes including poverty and uneven access to healthcare and education. 3. Environmental protection, emphasising the necessity of preserving the ecosystem by managing natural resources appropriately, cutting pollution, and minimising environmental deterioration (Ibimilua & Ayiti, 2023; World Bank, 2022). Each of the 17 objectives of sustainable development has particular targets that must be met by 2030 in order to solve global concerns. As previously said, this essay focuses on Goals 4 and 5, particularly Goal 5, which highlights gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls.

The call for 21st century skills has been ringing for more than 20 years. It may be summed up as a change from conventional standards to sophisticated technology revolution. It is a

complicated and dynamic time characterised by fast change in many facets of human existence, technical breakthroughs, globalisation, and environmental issues that collectively have a significant impact on the future (Castells, 2010; Friedman, 2005). According to Manafa and Onwuchulum (2025), 21st century talents include creativity, problem-solving, teamwork, and competency with information and communication technology (ICT). These skills include a variety of cognitive, interpersonal, and intrapersonal skills that are essential to the advancement of the society.

The Need for Investment in the Girl-Child Education

Education is a tool for developing individual's abilities, attitudes, skills, knowledge and all forms of behaviour. It is through education that the girl-child acquires the required knowledge to function right in the immediate society irrespective of the prevailing circumstances. In the words of Oduro (2024, p.1), "one fundamental principle underlying the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), as contained in the United Nation's 2030 Agenda, is to make life meaningful to everybody". Unfortunately, the prevailing circumstances in most Nigerian families or societies have placed investment in girl-child education on a secondary scale. Having realized the fact that the girl-child grows up to be a woman/mother whose primary assignment will be to nurse or care for her offspring right from birth, it becomes a source of worry because we cannot give out what we don't have, and no nation can rise above the educational attainment of its citizens. This is why both governmental and non-governmental agencies set upon themselves the task to ensure mass literacy. The Jomtien conference in 1990 – World declaration on the rights of the child to education articulated in Article I that: "every person, child, youth and adult shall be able to benefit from educational opportunities designed to meet the basic learning needs". Article 3 of the above declaration paid attention to women and girls stating that no obstacle or discrimination shall hamper their active participation (Osaat and Legborsi, 2012). Apart from the world declaration at Jomtien, other international developmental partners as provided by Osaat and Legborsi also declared as follows:

1. Provision of fund for the support of mass literacy programmes in some selected states by UNDP.
2. Provision of adult literacy and girls' education through the National Commission for Mass Literacy Adult and Non-formal Education (through education, radio programmes provision of supportive materials and creation of awareness).
3. Provision of library books to primary schools by the World Bank.
4. Promotion of more girls' enrolment in school by the United Nations Girls Education Initiative (UNGEI).

Going on, Okojie (2011) cited in Osaat and Legborsi, (2012) explained the extent at which efforts have been made by the United Nations to improve the socio-economic well-being and advancement of women in their immediate societies. To this effect, the international women's year (1975), the United Nations Decade for Women (1976-1985) the world conferences held at Mexico (1975), Copenhagen (1980), Nairobi (1985) and Beijing (1995) have contributed immensely to the promotion of gender equality and women empowerment. Again, in Nigeria, the National Policy on Gender 2007 which replaced the National Policy on Women, 2000

advocated the recognition of gender issues on education (Osaat & Legborsi, 2012). It was noted that the policy addressed gender issues so as to encourage national development. Girl-child education can go a long way to solve many nagging issues hindering socio-economic growth. Girl-child education is aimed at raising women for societal development. It is commonly said that when you train a boy, you have trained an individual but training a girl-child is as well as raising a society and generation of disciplined and morally sound citizens. Women are creative in nature; they need adequate educational attention to be able to convey their talents and potentials. Both the male and the female have a quota to bring to the family and the society. Imbalance from any side can cause some strains and hindrances in societal growth and development.

Girl-child Education and Sustainable Development

The learning required to preserve and enhance people's quality of life for both the current and future generations is the focus of education for sustainable development, or ESD. The goal of education for girls and 21st century skills is to help them acquire the information, abilities, qualities, attitudes, and values needed to overcome obstacles and influence the future. A key component of achieving sustained national development is education. Until a nation is prepared to reorganise and readdress the quality of education supply in a qualitative and quantitative manner, it cannot experience growth (Udofia & Gberevbie, 2019).

Putting money into a girl child promotes and maintains national growth. It is true that the girl-child bases her decisions on her mental state or degree of thinking. These choices have the power to make or ruin her. She inevitably develops into a woman who nurtures her children in accordance with her cognitive level. To put it simply, you educate an entire country when you educate a girl. Today, every nation faces a variety of problems, but sustainability is the capacity to give long-term answers. In order for a girl to identify the problems in her environment and contribute significantly to the quest for answers, education is essential in providing her with the necessary proficiency to find her strengths and skills. The educated female is essential to the advancement of society. Every country's lifeblood is education, which also defines the level of human capital development that would elevate Nigeria's economy to the top of the globe.

Government Efforts to Promote Girl-Child Education in Nigeria

Nigerian government has over the years done commendable efforts to enhance girl-child education by policy and programme interventions like Gender Responsive Education Policies and Support Programmes (GREPSP), 2019, which is meant to do away with gender differences in access and completion of education. Moreover, Girls' Education and Skills Partnership (GESP) programme of 2024 is a joint training initiative aimed at empowering young women with digital and technical skills, which increases their employability and future preparedness and relevance (Vanguard Nigeria, 2025). These initiatives, as indicated in Table 1, indicate a change of the broad access policies to specific programmes to deal with enrolment, retention, completion, safety, skills and employability.

The Universal Basic Education (UBE) Programme of 1999 is significant as it puts basic education in the context of being free and mandatory to all children, including girls (Suleiman & Mrakpor, 2025). Nonetheless, it is effective based on the quality of implementation, poverty alleviation, teacher accessibility and secure school conditions. This is why gender specific policies were required. National Gender Policy in Basic Education, 2008 and the National Policy on Gender in Education, 2021 offer guidelines on how to minimize gender disparities, enhance inclusive education and overcome social obstacles that deny girls access to school (Federal Ministry of Education, 2006; Federal Ministry of Education, 2021). They are strong in policy direction, but policy statements do not suffice to conquer poverty, early marriage, insecurity and weak local accountability.

More feasible interventions have attempted to seal this implementation gap. The Girls' Education Project Phase 3 of 2012 facilitated enrolment, retention and learning outcomes, particularly in Northern Nigeria, where the issue of gender inequality in education is more acute (UNICEF Nigeria, 2024). In the same way, the Adolescent Girls Initiative for Learning and Empowerment, 2020 increased the focus on secondary school, life skills, safe places and second chance education among vulnerable girls (World Bank, 2025; Yekini, 2025). The significance of these programmes is that they acknowledge that girl-child education is not just about entering school, but also about advancing, securing and moving on to productive adulthood. Sustainability is enhanced by institutional and community mechanisms. Gender responsive education sector planning assists agencies to incorporate gender priorities in budgeting and implementation (UNESCO, 2019), and gender desks enhance coordination and monitoring in education ministries (UNESCO, 2025). School Based Management Committees promote community ownership, attendance checks and local advocacy of schooling to girls (Kwashabawa, 2017). Recent skills-based interventions, such as GESP and the National Skills Programme, take the agenda further, beyond formal schooling, equipping girls with digital work and employment opportunities (Anyanwu, 2025). Thus, the work of Nigeria is important, yet the success of the work is conditional on the funding, security, accountability and evaluation.

Table 1: List of Nigerian Government Policies and Programmes Interventions for Improving Girl-Child Education (2000-2025)

Programme/Policy	Year	Aim	Source
Universal Basic Education Programme (UBE)	1999	To provide free, compulsory and universal basic education for all Nigerian children, including girls.	Suleiman and Mrakpor (2025)
Gender Desks in Federal and State Ministries of Education	2004	To mainstream gender concerns in education governance and school-level planning.	UNESCO (2024)
Federal Ministry of Education (2006)	National Gender Policy in Basic Education	To eliminate gender disparities in primary and junior secondary education.	Federal Ministry of Education (2006)
School-Based Management Committees (SBMCs) and Community Mobilisation for Girls' Education	2006	To increase local participation in school governance and support girls' enrolment and retention.	Kwashabawa (2017)
Girls' Education Project Phase 3 (GEP3)	2012	To increase girls' enrolment, retention, completion and learning outcomes in basic education.	UNICEF Nigeria (2023)
Gender Responsive Education Sector Planning (GRESP)	2019	To integrate gender equality into education planning, budgeting and implementation.	UNESCO (2019)
Adolescent Girls Initiative for Learning and Empowerment (AGILE)	2020	To improve secondary education opportunities for adolescent girls in targeted Nigerian states.	World Bank Nigeria (2025)
National Policy on Gender in Education	2021	To ensure gender equity and social inclusion across all levels of education in Nigeria.	Federal Ministry of Education (2021)
Girls' Education and Skills Partnership (GESp)	2024	To equip adolescent girls and young women with market-relevant, digital and technical skills.	INASP (2025)
National Skills Programme with 60% Female Participation Target	2025	To connect young Nigerians, especially women, to jobs, training and entrepreneurship opportunities.	Anyanwu (2025)

Source: Authors compilation (2026)

Challenges to Investment in Girl-Child Education

Many African countries (Nigeria inclusive) still experience inequality in education. Equal educational opportunities enable the citizens to participate and contribute meaningfully to the growth and developmental process of the nation. Investment in girl-child education is

crucial for societal development. However, despite the campaign and government effort towards equal opportunities for education and its benefits in Nigeria as can be seen in table 1, scholars have testified to challenges, such as:

- 1. Resource Constraints:** The level of education of the young ones is always measured and determined by the economic situation of the immediate family. This is more noticeable in low income families. Such families place priority on immediate financial returns over long-term education benefits. The financial burden of school expenditure may compel such categories of families to prioritise boys' schooling, while the girls are made to help their illiterate mother in the petty trading or domestic chores. Osokoya (2007) stated that apart from keeping these girls at home for domestic chores, some of them are given out for domestic work in other homes in exchange for money or married off to relieve the family of the burden of spending on them.
- 2. Religion and Cultural Barriers:** Ogakwu and Isife (2016) submitted that obnoxious cultural practices and religious belief in some parts of Nigeria hinder full participation of the female offspring in outdoor activities. As a result, the girl-child is encapsulated in inferiority status, confined to domestic duties, secluded from the men and waiting to be married off. For example, in the Northern states, the impact of Islamic religion on gender has hindered investment in girl-child education. Very few parents spend money to train the girl-child. More attention is given to the male offspring in the name of becoming the heir. Furthermore, Abdulrahman (2018) affirmed that Islamic religion which forbids boy-girl mixing up and playing together played high role in low level girl-child enrolment in schools. Even at that, attempts have been made by the government and United Nations to eliminate gender discrimination, irrespective of religion, geographical location, and socio-economic background.
- 3. Early Marriages:** UNICEF (2020) reported the effect of traditional beliefs and cultural norms of getting girls married at the earlier stage of life and prioritising male children education over girls' schooling and completion. The blow of early marriage is more on the girl-child. Any community where early marriage is being practiced sees investment in girl-child as a waste. Secondly, the illiterate parents in such community crave for the bride price. Early marriage leads to premature motherhood and the withdrawal of girls from school
- 4. Organization of schools:** This is an additional problem impeding the education of girls. Allowing their female children to attend mixed schools may be challenging for parents who are subject to strict religious and cultural regulations. Instead than going against their tradition or faith, many parents would rather keep their female children at home. This is typical in the northern region of Nigeria, where the Islamic faith predominates and prohibits the indiscriminate mingling of people of different sexes (Abdulrahman, 2018). Some parents may not be able to afford the alternate arrangement provided by the government, religious institutions, and concerned individuals for both sexes to study differently. Once more, parents may find it unsafe or inconvenient to let their female children attend due to the distance and location.

5. **Parental Literacy Rate:** The literacy rate or level of enlightenment of parents are significant factors influencing girl-child education. Literate parents recognise the long-term benefits of sending their daughters to school with the aim of getting a better job to improve socio-economic status irrespective of culture, religion or prevailing circumstances in the society (Bashir, Flgueiredo & Sadat, 2018). They believe that the education given to the girl-child becomes a light which must be kept burning from one generation to the other, while the illiterate mother is glued to the custom and tradition of her immediate environment, and pays attention to societal attitudes towards the girl-child and some insinuations that fly around the community such as: she is a weaker vessel, vulnerable to all forms of attack and so on (Davis, 2024).
6. **Labour Market Policy:** Opportunities and policies in the labour market are also difficult, and they are mostly influenced by cultural and religious beliefs. When it comes to women, time and the attire needed for the profession are constant problems. In order to support their families, they are required to take on fewer complex tasks. Additionally, the local community or religion may not approve the job's clothing code. Additionally, certain vocations are dangerous and hence not suitable for women. Regardless of the financial benefits to the family, most women are often prohibited by their husbands from accepting occupations that require them to spend days away from the house.
7. **Insecurity:** Insecurity is seriously becoming a cankerworm in Nigeria. It is a significant barrier to investment in girl-child education. Insecurity can manifest in various forms such as armed conflict, political power tussle, youth restiveness, violence, cult group activities, child napping, inter-communal war, flood, earth quake and so on. Each of the above mentioned can hinder a girl-child access to education. United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) explained that conflict leads to a remarkable increase in dropout rates among girls, as families may prefer to send the boys to school in such unstable situation (UNICEF, 2016).

The Benefits of Investing in Girl-Child Education

There is no doubt, educating both the boy and the girl-child is beneficial. However, educating the girl-child seems to be more lucrative in the sense that the girl child grows to motherhood, reproduces and raises her duo. As well, the uneducated girl-child grows also to motherhood and reproduces her duo. So, the benefits associated with girl-child education include:

1. **Proper Raising of Future Leaders:** The mother teaches the child from birth to school age and becomes a co-teacher when the child is enrolled in the school. It is in this regard that Levi in Osokoya (2007) argued that educated women have all it takes to prepare their children to function effectively in the immediate society and beyond. In fact an educated woman is a fertile ground for creativity. Adamu, (as cited in Ishaku, 2020), asserted that a girl's education broadens her knowledge and enables her to comprehend and carry out the socioeconomic, cultural, and political changes required for growth. She will use education as a weapon to combat cultural norms and attitudes that might impede the advancement of society.

2. **Reduction of Infant and Child Mortality Rates:** Women with some level of education seek their children's welfare. They are better informed about their children's nutritional requirements and adopt improved sanitation practices. They know the what, why and how of pregnancy and take proper care. Even from the lactation period, they understand the child's feelings more than anyone else. They follow medical advice in the treatment of the child in case of any ailment (Murtala & Nasiru, 2021). In agreement, Mangwat (as cited in Ishaku, 2020) stated that there is a link between an educated mother and the survival of her children. She can keep her children safe from communicable diseases through proper immunization and adequate precautions.
3. **Reduction of Maternal Mortality Rates:** Women with formal education tend to have better knowledge about health care practices (Murtala & Nasiru, 2021). They are less likely to fall victims of early marriage leading to early or unwanted pregnancy (Ishaku, 2020). They tend to have adequate knowledge toward spaced pregnancies and seek pre and post-natal care. As earlier stated, they know the what, why and how of pregnancy, and take proper care of not only the child in the womb but of themselves as well.
4. **Increase in Women's Participation Rates and Earnings:** Two good heads, they say are better than one. Behind every successful man is a successful woman. The educated woman sees the need to increase her earnings and she knows how to go about it without neglecting her duties as a wife and mother. An educated woman is a voice in the family and society. The family and society feel the socio-economic impact of an educated girl-child when she turns into a woman (Ishaku, 2020). She helps to improve the financial status of her husband.
5. **Intergenerational Educational Opportunities:** It has been stated earlier that the girl-child grows to become a woman and a mother. When you train a girl-child you have automatically trained a knowledgeable nation and generation. The girl-child matures into womanhood and transfers the knowledge and skills acquired to her offspring. By so doing, continuous transmission of knowledge is guaranteed. Her lineage remains educated and contribute wholesomely to sustainable national development (Murtala & Nasiru, 2021).
6. **Builds Tenacity and Self-confidence:** The education of a girl-child helps build her confidence to explore and fully maximize her potentials despite all odds. It helps to reduce peer influence (Murtala & Nasiru, 2021). Education also improves the individual's self-esteem and confidence to participate and contribute meaningfully in the immediate society and the nation. She stands tough against all odds and grows into a responsible adult and agent of change in various spheres of development.

Integrating 21st Century Skills into Girl-Child Education for Sustainable Development

Educating the girl-child through the lens of 21st century skills fosters a generation of women who can tackle pressing global challenges. 21st century skills are empowerment tools that prepare individuals for meaningful participation in the society and labour market. These skills can be integrated through:

- 1. Digital Literacy and ICT Integration:** Adequate provision of digital tools and Information Communication Technology (ICT) resources and unfettered access for girls are crucial in the fields of Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics (STEAM) education. These will serve as empowerment to entrepreneurship and encourage them to pay attention to subjects which address social issues and health, especially as related to girls. Such subjects include Arts, Sciences and Social Sciences (Beauchamp & Madan, 2016; UNICEF, 2024).
- 2. Curriculum Development:** Integrate 21st century skills into the curriculum through project-based learning (PBL) that addresses real world Sustainable Development (SD) challenges. This is all about engaging students in projects that require collaboration for problem-solving. For example, girls can carry out teamwork on projects addressing specific issues in specific areas, thereby solidifying their thinking and teamwork abilities.
- 3. Community Engagement:** Involving parents and members of the community in discussions about the value of educating the girl-child in accordance with the 21st century demands, especially in some parts of Nigeria where obnoxious cultural practices and religious beliefs hinder full participation of the female offspring in outdoor activities. This can create an enabling environment for parents in such of the condition of learning, and also allow their female grown-up children to associate with women who are professionals in 21st century skills (Kirk & Winthrop, 2013; Sulivan et al, 2018).
- 4. Teacher Training:** From the account of Ofoego and Ebebe (as cited in Osaat, Elems-Ikwegbu, and Jerry (2022), teachers are professionals who have a beneficial influence on individuals. This influence as a matter of fact is determined by their degree of knowledge. It is often said that no education system can rise above the level the teachers. Therefore, adequate and proper training of the trainer is very crucial for effective integration of 21st century skills in the education of the girl-child. All teachers need to be trained in the use of technology in education. This will enable them get girls familiarised with digital tools and resources in a way that they can learn from a distance if the condition is not favourable for them to learn on site perhaps due to the existence of any of the hindering factors, especially on security matters or national emergencies.

Integrating 21st century skills into girl-child education is crucial for personal growth and sustainable development. By embracing innovative teaching methods, engaging communities in discussing the education of the girl-child, and training the trainers, girls can be empowered to become proactive contributors to their immediate families, societies and global economy.

Conclusion

Girl-child education in Nigeria has faced series of persistent barriers which among others include resource constraints, religion and cultural norms, parental literacy rate, and insecurity. Investing in girl-child education is crucial, particularly through the lens of 21st century skills.

These skills serve as empowerment tools which prepare individuals for meaningful participation in the society and by implication foster sustainable development. The unlimited benefits of educating the girl-child through the lens of 21st century skills have mandated the need for a shift from conventional measures of mass literacy to integrating 21st century skills as empowerment tools for meaningful participation in the society. Training the girl-child in line with 21st century demand is to build a generational asset to the family, society and the nation. It will also help in achieving generational liberation from ignorance and poverty.

Suggestions

From the above discourse, the following suggestions are made

1. Government should eradicate and eliminate social and cultural forces that tend to ignite preferential attitude towards investment in girl-child education.
2. There should be reformation of religious and cultural order regarding the derogatory position of women in the society.
3. Government should put an end to gender discrimination in appointments and employment.
4. Parents should give equal opportunity to the education of both boys and girls in the family no matter the prevailing circumstances.
5. National Orientation Agency should step up its enlightenment programme to cover gender discrimination which is still being practiced in some parts of the country.
6. Government should develop gender-responsive curricula that integrate digital skills, invest in teacher training for modern pedagogies, and provide inclusive and conducive pathways from school to labour market.

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Appendix A: Summary of Plagiarism test

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