

## **Socio-economic Justifications for Renewed Calls for Girl-child Education in South-South Nigeria**

**Gladys E. Aleru**

*Department of Educational Management  
Faculty of Education,  
Rivers State University  
Nkpolu-Oroworukwo, Port Harcourt  
gladys.aleru@ust.edu.ng  
08036674968*

&

**Sunday T. Afangideh**

*Department of Educational Management  
Faculty of Education  
University of Port Harcourt, Port Harcourt  
sunday.afangideh@uniport.edu.ng  
07037815073*

### **Abstract**

*The study examined the extent social and economic advantages justify the renewed calls for girl-child education in South-South Nigeria. Two research questions and two hypotheses guided the study, whose design was descriptive, the populations as the 12 Ministries of Education and Women Affairs in the Zone and the sample as 141 Ministerial Directors, selected using the census and stratified random sampling techniques. The study instrument was the validated researcher's designed Socio-Economic Justifications for Girl-Child Scale, with a reliability index of 0.89. Mean and standard deviation were used in answering the research questions and t-test for testing the hypotheses at 0.05 probability level. The results show that social and economic advantages justify the renewed calls for girl-child education to a high extent. It also established significant differences between the responses of the Ministerial Directors on the extent to which socio-economic advantages justify the calls for girl-child education. The study submitted that, renewed calls for girl-child education are results from some identified social and economic advantages.*

*Consequently, the study recommends that, stakeholders should probe to identify more rationalizations to buttress the renewed calls for the education of the female folk in society.*

**Keywords:** Social Justification. Economic Justifications, Girl-Child Education, Renewed Calls

### **Introduction**

Locally, nationally and in global perspectives, education remains a veritable instrument for genuine development in all positive ramifications. Conceptually and as a process, it is considered as deliberate and in-deliberate to introduce the younger folks in society to the worthwhile knowledge, skills and values of the society from one generation to another (Schofield, 1990). When education is perceived from this perspective, it tends to work as an instrument for sustaining the cultural heritages, legacies, skills, values and attitudes of the society from generation to generation yet unborn. Little wonder, it is regarded as an instrument for social control, general enlightenment and societal re-direction.

Apart from the foregoing and in more practical terms, education is seen to have the capacity to make people healthier, raise crop yields, promote girls and women rights, saves children lives, increases income, reduces poverty, foster peace and boost economic growth (Mentalup, 2022). These have become feasible arising from the contemporary perception of education as different from the presentation in Schofield (1990). In the light of the contemporary conception, education is considered as the deliberate and in-deliberate introduction of the younger, needy and desiring members of the society into societies worthwhile knowledge, skills and values (Afangideh & Aliexi, 2016). As is customary, the younger folks in society occupy a major position in the ranking of those to be educated, since they must (as a rule) be introduced to the cultural knowledge, skills and values of their respective societies. Also, there are often those folks in society irrespective of their age and backgrounds who move from their permanent places of abode to places away from their homes, arising from some natural and, artificial forces like occupation, wars, insecurity, outbreak of pandemics and even natural phenomenon like earthquakes and other disasters. These people,

caught in the web of the scenario, when finally settled, also need to be educated in the knowledge, skills and values of his people. This category of people to be educated are accommodated in the Nomadic education programmes like Migrant Fisher Folks school programme, migrant Farmers education programme and school programmes in Internally Displaced Peoples Camps (Afangideh & Beffi-Nwile, 2016; Afangideh & Beffi-Nwile, 2020; Afangideh & Nwachukwu, 2021).

Thirdly, there are those folks in society, who could not access formal education as consequences of some social and economic incapacitations, like poverty and absence of sponsors, when these people are of age and consider it expedient to acquire formal education as they desire, they should have access to education (Kpee & Afangideh 2018). This category of folks is accommodated in Adult Education programmes, distance learning programme and outreach centres. It is the considered position of the researchers that, when the foregoing categorisation of individuals are given the benefit of access to education, that humanity, society and its institution stand to benefit as such opportunities trigger societal development in many ramifications. However, arising from some incursionary effects of some social variables, the reverse often times prove to be the case.

Explanations for the foregoing perception on the effects of some societal forces on access to education tend to show some observed discriminations against certain categories of individuals. These individuals may be male or female. S. O. Oluwo (Personal communication, April 20, 2023) notes that, some groups in Eastern Nigeria, discriminate against the education of their male and female children, citing some economic, social and cultural reasons, linked to poverty, socio-economic status and cultural discrepancies. On a general note, L.E.S Kaegon (Personal Communication, May 20, 2023) and N. M. Abraham (Personal Communication, May 21, 2023) decry the rate, at which the education of the female folks in South-South Nigeria is relegated to the background, also for reasons that are considered social, economic and cultural.

An added dimension to the existing discussion is that, though not unaware of the dangers of such discrimination, on the education of the girl-child, in particular, it is noteworthy that certain trends in society have made some groups to have a re-think on the need for the education of

the girl-child. As in the case of Nigeria, most cited cases of women who have made it to the top in their chosen fields of endeavours are those of Dr. Ngozi Okonji-Iweala Director General of World Trade Organization (WTO), Prof. Dora Akinyuli of Blessed memory (Former Director General of National Agency for Food and Drug Administration (NAFDAC)), Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie (Renowned Novelist), Dr. Cecilia Ibru (Industrialist and School Proprietaries), Senator Paulin Tallen and a host of others. At the international level, names like Ellen Johnson Sirleaf (Former Liberian President), Margaret Thatcher (Former Prime Minister of Great Britain), Angela Merkel (Chancellor of Germany), among others.

Arising from the long list of successful women in the business, economic, political and social spaces, there have been continuous calls for the education of the girl-child, citing social and economic reasons. These reasons are examined in the proceeding paragraphs, thus;

#### *Social Justifications for Educating the Girl-Child*

In most societies of the world, the education of the girl-child is considered a priority in contemporary times. Reasons often adduced for the change of perception, attitude and actions are basically social. Some of the social imperatives for the education of the female folk education as given by some academic sources among them Nigerian Finder (2023), School Drillers (2022) and Blueprint (2022) include that, female education reduces early child marriage, increases female participation in politics, reduces infant mortality rate, contributes to the education of upcoming generation, leads to gender equality, reduces human trafficking, increases literacy rate and improves social wellbeing. The list also includes providing strength for the girl-child, raising future generation opportunities for sex education, adequate and effective political representation, effective participation in societal affairs, protection from Human Immune Virus (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (HIV-AIDS), reduction of sexual exploitation, reduction of complicated child birth, encouragement of children education and adequate socialization.

#### *Economic Justification for the Education of the Girl-child*

Apart from social reasons, stakeholders in the education of the female folks also present economic advantages for the education of the girl-

child. As Nigerian Finder (2023), School Drillers (2022) and Blueprint (2022) advance, the justifications for renewed calls for girl-child education include and are not limited to boosting of economic growth, increasing productivity at work, increasing earning power, providing economic skills of life and developing skills for gainful employment. The list also includes acquisition of skills for gainful employment living a life of self-reliance, developing skills to solve problems and economic empowerment.

The foregoing paragraphs are justifications in terms of their social and economic implications for the education of the girl-child from scholars and other academic sources, they are basically not research findings and not even the results of empirical examinations on the phenomena on any known environment. This is the gap in this study which the result of this study will fill.

### **Statement of the Problem**

As part of efforts to widen access to formal education for the girl-child, concerted efforts have been made to enlighten the parents and concerned stakeholders on the social and economic reasons or advantages for educating the girl-child. These efforts have been to encourage parents and the entire society not to discriminate any sex in matters concerning educational attainment and pre-occupies the actions of governments, individuals, groups and significant others in recent times. Surprisingly, the researchers were bothered that, despite this deliberate effort, the education of the girl-child still appears to be on the decline, as observations, general opinions, comments from stakeholders and research findings tend to show. This status of girl-child education therefore calls to question whether the reasons often adduced for girl-child education are not convincing enough to warrant appreciable enrolment of the female folks in educational programmes in the light of the benefits of female education. Hence, the need for an examination of the social and economic justifications for girl-child education in South-South, Nigeria.

### **Aim and Objectives of the Study**

The study examined the extent to which social and economic advantages justify the renewed calls for girl-child education in South-South Nigeria.

Specifically, the study sought to:

- 1) determine the extent to which social advantages justify the renewed calls for girl-child education in South-South, Nigeria.
- 2) establish the extent to which economic advantages justify the renewed calls for girl-child education in South-South Nigeria.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions were answered in the study.

- 1) To what extent do social advantages justify the renewed calls for girl-child education in South-South Nigeria?
- 2) To what extent do economic advantages justify the renewed calls for girl-child education in South-South Nigeria?

### **Hypotheses**

The following hypotheses were tested in the study at 0.05 level of significance.

- Ho1: There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of Directors from Ministries of Education and Women Affairs on the extent to which social advantages justify the renewed calls for girl-child education in South-South Nigeria.
- Ho2: There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of Directors from Ministries of Education and Women Affairs on the extent to which economic advantages justify the renewed calls for girl-child education in South-South Nigeria.

### **Methodology**

The design for the study was the descriptive survey and the population as the 12 Ministries of Education and Women Affairs in the six states of South-South Nigeria. The 12 Ministries have 144 ministerial Directors, who were also selected as sample, using the census and stratified random samplings techniques (These were 84 from Ministries of Education and 60 from Ministries of Women Affairs). The instrument of the study was the validated researchers' design Socio-Economic Justification for Girl-child Education Scale (SEJGCES), with a reliability index of 0.89, obtained using Cronbach Alpha statistical procedure. Mean and standard deviation were used in answering the research questions while t-test was used in testing the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

## Results

The result of the study came from the answers to the research questions and test of hypotheses. Thus;

**Research Question I:** To what extent do social advantages justify the renewed calls for girl-child education in South-South Nigeria?

**Table I:** Mean and Standard Deviation on the Extent to which Social Advantages Justify the Renewed Calls for Girl-Child Education in South-South Nigeria

SN	Items	Mean responses					Remarks
		$\bar{x}_1$	SD <sub>1</sub>	$\bar{x}_1$	SD <sub>1</sub>	$\bar{xx}$	
1	The education of the female child reduces incidences of child marriage	3.66	0.60	2.83	1.11	3.25	VHE
2	Female folks who are educated stand the chances of participating in politics	3.78	0.42	2.78	1.18	3.28	VHE
3	Female education reduces infant mortality rate in society.	2.81	0.82	2.89	1.04	2.85	HE
4	Women who are educated contribute to the education of upcoming generation	2.25	1.39	2.28	1.11	2.27	HE
5	Women who are educated are fairly treated in the society	2.94	0.84	2.73	1.07	2.84	HE
6	Female education reduces the incidences of girl-child trafficking	3.78	0.42	3.10	0.98	3.44	VHE
7	Women education reduces literacy rate in society	3.31	0.78	3.60	1.06	2.96	HE
8	Female education sees to the improvement of social wellbeing	3.78	0.42	3.63	0.48	3.71	VHE

9	Educational opportunity for a girl-child provides strength to the child	2.63	1.10	2.54	1.15	2.59	HE
10	Educated women can raise future generations of educated women	3.63	0.49	2.80	1.11	3.22	VHE
11	Educated women enjoy the best of sex education	2.72	1.14	2.89	1.08	2.81	HE
12	Educated women make good political representation in society	3.44	0.80	2.85	1.01	3.15	VHE
13	Educated women can participate effectively in societal affairs	2.78	0.71	2.55	1.03	2.67	HE
14	Women who are educated are exposed to protection from human immune virus. Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (HIV/AIDS)	3.25	0.80	2.89	0.98	3.07	VHE
15	Educated women are free from sexual exploitation	2.06	0.76	2.49	1.05	2.28	HE
16	Educated women have the capabilities to resist pressures for early marriage	3.34	0.97	3.06	1.04	3.20	VHE
17	Educated women are exposed to the causes of complicated childbirths	2.00	0.00	2.25	0.86	2.13	HE
18	Educated women are adequately socialized	3.00	0.98	2.69	1.10	2.85	HE
19	Educated women encourage the education of their children	3.41	0.61	3.22	0.86	3.32	VHE
	Total	3.08	0.74	2.79	1.02	2.94	HE



### Legend

$\bar{x}_1$  = Mean

SDI = Standard deviation

$\bar{xx}$  = Weighted mean

Data on Table 1 show that items 1, 2, 6, 8, 10, 12, 14, 16 and 19 had weighted mean ratings within the range of 3.01 and 4.00, indicating that social advantages justify the renewed calls for girl-child education in South-South Nigeria to a high extent.

### Scale

0.00 – 1.00: Very Low Extent  
(VLE)

**Research Question 2:** To what extent do economic advantages justify the renewed calls for girl-child education in South-South, Nigeria?

**Table 2:** Mean and Standard Deviation on the Extent to which Social Advantages Justify the Renewed Calls for Girl-Child Education in South-South Nigeria

Data on Table 2 show that, items 20, 21, 24, 25, 26, 27 and 29 had weighted mean ratings within the range of 2.01 and 3.00, indicating that economic advantage justify the renewed calls for girl-child education in South-South Nigeria to a high extent. Differently, items 22, 23 and 28 had weighted mean ratings between the range of 3.01 and 4.00, which indicates that, economic advantages justify the renewed calls for girl-child education in South-South Nigeria to a high extent.

In summary with an aggregate weighted mean of 2.86, between the range of 2.01 and 3.00, Ministerial Directors responded that economic advantages justify the renewed calls for girl-child education in South-South Nigeria to a high extent.

Differently, items 3, 4, 5, 7, 11, 13, 15, 17 and 18 had weighted mean ratings between the range of 2.01 and 3.00, which indicates that social advantages justify the renewed calls for girl-child education in South-South Nigeria.

In summary, with an aggregate weighted mean of 2.94, between the range of 2.01 and 3.00, Ministerial Directors from the Ministries of Education and Women Affairs responded that social advantages justify the renewed calls for girl-child education in South-South Nigeria to a high extent.

Ho1: There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of Directors from the Ministries of Education and Women Affairs on the extent to which social advantages justify the renewed calls for girl-child education in South-South Nigeria.

**Table 3:** Summary of z-test Analysis on the Mean Ratings of Directors from Ministries of Education and Women Affairs on the Extent to which Social Advantages Justify the Renewed Calls for Girl-Child Education in South-South Nigeria.

Status	N	$\bar{x}_1$	SD	df	Calculated z value	P value	Significant value	Decision
Directors (Education)	84	3.07	0.67	142	4.279	0.05	0.000	Significant (Rejected)
Directors (Women Affairs)	60	2.66	1.07					

#### Legend

N: Number of subjects

$\bar{x}$  : Mean score

SD: Standard Deviation

df: Degree of freedom

Data on Table 3, present the summary of t-test analysis on the mean ratings of Directors from the Ministries of Education and Women Affairs I on the extent to which social advantages justify the renewed calls for girl-child education in South-South, Nigeria. The observed t-value used in testing the hypotheses came out as 3.540, using 142 degrees of freedom at 0.05 level of probability. At 0.05 level of probability, 142 degrees of freedom, 3.540 observed t-value, the significant value of

0.000 is less than the probability value of 0.05, hence, there is a difference between the mean ratings of the respondents.

Ho2: There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of Directors from the Ministries of Education and Women Affairs on the extent to which economic advantages justify the renewed call for girl-child education in South-South Nigeria.

**Table 4:** Summary of z-test Analysis on the Mean Ratings of Directors from Ministries of Education and Women Affairs on the Extent to which Social Advantages Justify the Renewed Calls for Girl-Child Education in South-South Nigeria.

Status	N	$\bar{x}_1$	SD	df	Calculated z value	P value	Significant value	Decision
Directors (Education)	84	3.08	0.74	142	3.540	0.05	0.000	Significant (Rejected)
Directors (Women Affairs)	60	2.79	1.02	142				

The legend for Table 3 applied

Data on Table 4, present the summary of t-test analysis on the mean ratings of Directors from the Ministries of Education and Women Affairs on the extent to which economic advantages justify the renewed calls for girl-child education in South-South Nigeria. The z-calculated value used in testing the hypotheses came out as 4.279, using 142 degrees of freedom at 0.05 level of probability. At 0.05 level of probability, 142 degrees of freedom, and z-calculated value of 4.279, the significant value of 0.000 is less than the probability value of 0.05, hence, there is a difference between the mean ratings of the respondents. Based on the forgoing observations, the researchers rejected the null hypothesis in

favour of the alternative that there is a significant difference between the mean ratings of Directors from the Ministries of Education and Women Affairs on the extent to which economic advantages justify the renewed calls for girl-child education in South-South Nigeria.

Based on the forgoing observations, the researchers rejected the null hypothesis in favour of the alternative that, there is a significant difference between the mean ratings of Directors from the Ministries of Education and Women Affairs on the extent to which social advantages justify the renewed calls for girl-child education in South-South, Nigeria.

### **Discussion of Findings and Implications**

The discussions are done in consonance with the systematic arrangement in the introductory part of the study. Thus;

#### ***Social Advantages as Justifications for Renewed Calls for Girl-Child Education in South-South Nigeria***

The first finding of the study is that, social advantages justify the renewed calls for girl-child education in South-South, Nigeria, to a high extent. Also, a corresponding finding from the test of hypothesis, establishes that, there is significant difference between the mean ratings of Ministerial Directors from ministries of Education and Women Affairs on the extent to which social advantages justify the renewed calls for girl-child education in South-South Nigeria. These findings are in agreement with Nigerian Finder (2023), School Drillers (2022) and Blueprint (2022). These academic sources provide appreciable theoretical evidence on the social advantages of female folk education in society. A possible explanation for the trend of the finding may be in the fact that, the enormous progress made by women in the social realms of life tend to ascribe their milestones to the fact that the female folks have access to formal education which have heralded their social transformation and attainment. These finding mostly that, societies that have appreciable numbers of educated women are those that can fathom the beauty of the social appendages to female education.

### ***Economic Advantages as Justifications for Renewed Calls for Girl-Child Education in South-South Nigeria***

The second finding of the study is that economic advantages justify the renewed calls for girl-child education in South-South, Nigeria, to a very high extent. Also, a corresponding finding from test of hypothesis establishes that, there is a significant difference between the mean ratings of ministerial Directors from Ministries of Education and Women Affairs on the extent to which economic advantages justify the renewed calls for girl-child education in South-South, Nigeria. These findings are in agreement with Nigerian Finder (2023), School Drillers (2022) and Blueprint (2022). These academic sources have in stock, appreciable theoretical information on the veracity of economic advantages on the clamour for the education of female children. Back home in Nigeria, notable names among them, Chris Anyanwu, Cecilia Ibru among others made names as captains of economic industries that have made significant impacts on society. Consequently, the respondents will naturally be guided to respond in favour of female education occasioned by economic appendages. These findings imply that the education of female folks in the society can witness a great boost when consideration is made of the economic returns to the society.

### **Conclusion**

Based on the findings of the study, it is submitted that social and economic advantages are veritable justifications for renewed calls for girl-child education in South-South Nigeria.

### **Recommendations**

In the light of the findings and submission of the study, the following recommendations are offered.

- 1) Society should continue to keep open the social space in society for use by educational females to display their social advantages accrued from formal education in order to attract more female converts and significant others to embrace formal education of the female folk.
- 2) Society should continue to float and implement favourable economic policies that will guarantee the educated female folks in society the free space to showcase their economic benefits of education in order to continuously attract more female converts

and many other categories of persons to embrace the education of the girl-child.

## References

- Afangideh S. T. & Befii-Nwile, C. (2020). School emotional environment and academic supports as predictors of students success in publicsenior secondary schools in Rivers State of Nigeria. *Global Journal of Human Social Science, Linguistics and Education*, 20 (12), 58-62.
- Afangideh, S. T. & Befii-Nwile, M. M. (2016). Strategies for improving the funding of migrant fisherfolks schools in Rivers State. *Trends of Educational Studies*, 9 (1 & 2), 206-213.
- Afangideh, S. T. & Nwachukwu, P. O. (2021). Societal and institutional inhibitions to the management of education of internally displaced persons in Rivers and Bayelsa States of Nigeria. *Nigerian Journal of Educational Administration and Planning*, 21, 270-280.
- Afangideh. S. T. & Aliexi, E. M. (2016). External stakeholders' participation in funding and personnel administration in secondary school administration in Rivers State of Nigeria. *Trends in Educational Studies*, 9 (1 & 2), 196-205.
- Blueprint (2022). Benefits of girl-child education. <https://www.blueprints.ng>why-se...>
- Kpee, G. G. & Afangideh, S.T. (2018). Socio-cultural inhibition to school-aged children access to basic education in Akwa Ibom and Rivers States of Nigeria. Proceedings of 16th International Conference on Private Higher Education in Africa, 382- 396.
- Mentalup (2022). The importance of education. <https://www.mentalup.co/blog/the-importance-of-education>.
- Nigerian Finders (2013). Top 10 advantages of girl-education in Nigeria. <https://nigerianfinders.com>imports...>
- Schofield, H. (1990). *An introduction to the philosophy of education*. George Allen and Unwin.
- School Drillers (2022). Top 10 advantages of girl-education. <https://www.schooldrillers.com>ad.org,2022>.