

The Roles of Entrepreneurship Training and Education in Poverty Reduction among Women in Kwara State

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Abstract

Entrepreneurship development is considered as an alternative to poverty reduction among women in Nigeria. Despite the various strategies embarked upon in alleviating poverty among women ranging from family support programme aimed at reducing poverty, the problem still persists. The important role of entrepreneurship training and education in alleviation poverty therefore cannot be overemphasized. This paper therefore highlighted some of the important role of entrepreneurship in poverty reduction with particular reference to women in Kwara State. The paper drawn inferences from previous studies as it relates to the significance of training and education to poverty reduction. The paper concluded by highlighting some of the identified challenges to entrepreneurship development in Nigeria. The paper recommended that adequate attention be paid to entrepreneurship development because of the important role in poverty reduction.

Keywords: *Entrepreneurship, Entrepreneurship Education, Training and Women*

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Background to the Study

Globally, poverty is one of the major challenges facing developed and developing countries of the world. Although, the level and extent is different across nations and from region to region and yet still remains the major hindrance to optimum allocation of resources to achieve the desired goals (Hussain et al 2014). The poverty situation is alarming going by 2018 report from Brooking institution where it was estimated that the number of Nigerians that lives below poverty line increases by six people every minute (Brooking, 2018). This shows that about 87 million of her population are extremely poor going by the rising trends of its population growth. The notion of Nigeria as a poor nation is justified by the larger percentage of the population that lives below the poverty line (Oshewolo, 2001 in Ovwasa, 2006). Today, Nigeria is ranked among the poorest countries in the world. As observed by Nnamani (2003:60), poverty in Nigeria has reached an alarming stage and has been rising steadily not exponentially. Nigeria is a country with about 200million people (World Bank, 2018), therefore the dimension of mass poverty in Nigeria is both dreadful and shocking. For example, the situation has increased since the late 1990s and can best be described as inflammable (NBS, 2012). The issue of poverty alleviation has therefore assumed national and international importance after decades of its relegation to the background. During the mid-1980s for instance, the concern for poverty and adoption of poverty alleviation strategies have become universal in scope.

Sanda, et al. (2006) noted that this is particularly so as many countries in the Sub-Saharan Africa region have embraced sweeping development policy reforms aimed at achieving significant reduction of poverty in their domains. This is perhaps in order to indicate their commitments to the realization of the MDGs, which target, among other things as noted earlier, halving the number of people living in abject poverty by 2015. The high incidence of poverty in the country has made poverty alleviation strategies important policy options over the years with varying results. Despite her enormous resources, both human and physical, the country's still remains poor. Quite a number of programs and policies were initiated with the sole target of addressing the poverty level in Nigeria. In the light of this, several programs and policies have been initiated to address the monster with a view of improving the standard of living of the populace. This programs and policies can be categorized as follows: the post-independence era, or otherwise known as the pre-SAP period, the Structural Adjustment program (SAP) period and the democratic dispensation period. The post-independence period in Nigeria witnessed a number of policies and strategies aimed at alleviating the poverty level in Nigeria. Thus, poverty reduction strategies in Nigeria can be categorized in to three main phases. The pre-SAP period the SAP era and the period after SAP. The pre-SAP period witnessed an indirect approach to poverty reduction as the primary objective of the national development planning was how to improve the health sector and generate more employment. Notably among the poverty reduction strategies that were implemented during the period under review are the Operation Feed the Nation (OFN), which was launched in 1977, the Free and Compulsory Primary Education of the same and the Green Revolution that was set up in 1980.

The SAP era creates a lots of distortion in all indices of growth and thereby worsening the fragile economic situation which ultimately affect the living condition of Nigerians. The government therefore embark on series of poverty reduction strategies in a bid to tame the monster and restore sanity into the system. The various programs and policies adopted to reduce poverty are the National Directorate of Employment (NDE) established in 1986 with primary target on youth employment through training, finance and guidance, the Directorate for Food, Roads and Rural Infrastructure (DFRRI) set up in 1986 with emphasis on rural roads and water supply to boost agricultural production. Other notably policies are the Better Life Program (BLP), the Peoples Bank of Nigeria (PBN) and Community banks. In the same manner, the following programs and policies were also initiated to address the problem of poverty. These are the Family Support Program (FSP). Family Economic Advancement Program (FEAP) among others (Ajakaiye, 2001).

The period after SAP otherwise known as the democratic period witnessed a number of policies and program aimed at reducing the problem of poverty at all levels. These policies and programs includes the poverty alleviation program (PAP), the National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP) which consist of programmes such as the Youth empowerment programme (YES), Rural Infrastructure Development Scheme (RIDS), Social Welfare Scheme (SOWESS) among others. Other notable poverty reduction strategies are, the Subsidy Re-investment Scheme (SURE-P), Social investment programme (SIP) etc. Despite these policies and programmes, the problem of poverty remains largely unabated. Thus entrepreneurship training and education is seen as an alternative to reduce poverty among women. This paper therefore x-rays the major contribution of entrepreneurship education and training in generating income and consequently reduce poverty among women. The paper also identifies some of the challenges mitigation entrepreneurship development and possible solution to those problems.

Concept Clarification

Entrepreneurship is seen as a process whereby an individual or groups of people in the society identify a noble business opportunities in an environment and able to manage the available resources to exploit these opportunities (Hill and Magowan 1999) in the same manner, Osuaguw (2002) sees entrepreneurship as the catalyst that accelerates the rate of economic growth in the country. It is a process usually undertaken by government to reduce the high level of poverty and unemployment in the country through the establishment of small and medium enterprises (Arogundade, 2011).

Entrepreneurship can also be seen as the identification of a new idea or business opportunity and the mobilization of resources to achieve the desired goals under the condition of risk and uncertainty (Adenutsi, 2009). In a simple language, entrepreneurship is a process whereby a single entrepreneur initiates a new venture with the ultimate aim of making profit. According to Mohammed et al (2014) cited in Kuratko and Hodgetts (2004), Entrepreneurship is describing as a dynamic process whereby an individual or group used their organized means and efforts to purse a particular task to create value and grow by fulfilling wants and needs through creativity and innovation. So therefore entrepreneurship is not just of process

running a particular type of business but rather a process of creating or initiating new ideas with a view of adding value through innovation (Bagheri and Pihie, 2010). Entrepreneurship is regarded as one of the most important contribution to a country share of GDP's and a large size of the labour force in most developing countries. They women are recognized as the backbone of economic growth and development mainly to her contributions to the economy (Sanuse, 2012).

Concept of Poverty

One of the major challenges facing developed and underdeveloped countries of the world is poverty. Although the level and extent of poverty has been observed to be different within and across the nations and it is still remains the major obstacle to economic growth and development. The World Bank categorized as both absolute and relative ((Misango and Ongiti, 2013) Absolute poverty describe a situation whereby an individual cannot meet the basic needs for survival, like food shelter and clothing. On the other hand, relative poverty can be categorized in relation to particular groups or areas in relation to the economic status of other members of the society which is interpreted as a lack of resources to achieve a standard of living that allows people to play roles, participate in relationships, and live a life that is deemed normative of the society to which they belong ((Misango and Ongiti, 2013). Poverty in relative terms simply means the absence of basic securities, which not only include financial resources, but also education, employment, housing, health care and other related aspects leading to deprivation [Misango and Ongiti, 2013) Poverty is widely understood as the condition of living on an income below a certain minimum threshold. The World Bank defines those living on under US\$2 a day as living in poverty, and those living on under US\$1.25 as living in extreme poverty internationally (Chen and Ravallion, 2008).

Roles of Entrepreneurship on Poverty Reduction among Women

The role of entrepreneurship on poverty reduction among women in Nigeria cannot be overemphasized, because of their valuable contribution to growth and development. For instance, Oladimeji et al (2015) describe the socio-economic characteristics of household's poverty, determine its profitability as a means of getting income and consequently reduce poverty among women. The study employed primary data as a means of gathering information. The man tools of analyses are: descriptive statistics, gross margin and ordinary least square (OLS) their findings revealed that the enterprises profitable. Furthermore, research have shown that women entrepreneurs are in no way different from their male counterparts. According to Jemmova (1995), women are regarded as the soul of economic growth and development, as they are always involved in agriculture, trading micro enterprises. Women entrepreneur plays a significant role in the socio- economic development of a country. Woman are crucial inboth wealth creation and employment generation. (Bruch etal 2006) women entrepreneurs made a significant contribution to the country's gross domestic product (GDP) through their participation in start-up and their growth in micro, small and medium enterprises (Agrawal, 2017). Entrepreneurship training and education has enhanced the capacity of women to create large scale direct and indirect employment opportunities for the unemployed. Therefore, entrepreneurship plays a vital role on reducing poverty among women due to skills and knowledge acquired in the process of entrepreneurship development.

Kareem (2015) believes that entrepreneurship takes the center stage in promoting prosperity by creating new jobs, reducing unemployment and poverty as well as increasing economic growth of a nation. Kareem added that entrepreneurship boosts productivity by introducing new innovations and fast-tracking structural changes thereby forcing existing businesses to reform and increase competition.

Challenges of Entrepreneurship Development in Nigeria

Basically, there are numerous challenges confronting the success, growth and entrepreneurship development in Nigeria. Anekwe et al (2018) in Obeleegu (2008) observed that inadequate capital, incompetent management, lack of technological and infrastructural facilities are the common problems, among others that affect the potentials of entrepreneurs in Nigeria.

Nasif (2014) in his own opinion identifies the major obstacles to entrepreneurship to include the following:

1. Poor knowledge of basic science and technology. It was observed that the role entrepreneurship played in economic development involve more than just increasing income and employment generation. It includes initiating new ideas and constructing change in the pyramid of business and society. Innovation is thus the key and not just developing a new idea. The lack of expertise in this area to match technology with appropriate entrepreneurship development in Nigeria is a cause for concern and deserve urgent attention.
2. Another important obstacle confronting entrepreneurship development in Nigeria is the high level of competition from foreign producers. There are instances where the local entrepreneurs are not given adequate protection on their new innovations due to apparent lack of trust and faith in our laws.
3. Furthermore, there is inadequate funding of entrepreneurship education in Nigeria and this has created a serious bottlenecks in the implementation of entrepreneurship education in most of our tertiary institutions.
4. More importantly again, is the business environment that is characterized with inconsistency in government policy and programs as regarded taxes, poor government patronage, difficulty in getting registered and problems of accessing funds in banks couple with government harsh regulations.

The high cost of doing business in Nigeria is also another factor mitigating the success and growth of entrepreneurship in Nigeria. There are cases where the expected return from a venture is less than the opportunity cost and this in turn act as a disincentive for the entrepreneur.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This paper primarily focusses on the impact of entrepreneurship training and education on poverty reduction among women in Nigeria. It was observed that series of poverty reduction strategies so far implemented in the past, yielded little or no results. This is because the programs and policies do not have a direct effect on the most vulnerable group in the society.

Thus, entrepreneurship seems to have a direct bearing in solving the problem of poverty if the right environment is guaranteed. Similarly, entrepreneurship education and training are essentials in poverty reduction among women in Nigeria.

The study therefore concludes that training in entrepreneurship and provision of other facilities could give owners of micro, small and medium enterprises, particularly women opportunities to grow and get out of poverty. Most importantly, entrepreneurship training and education are important tool for poverty alleviation, employment generation and consequently income generation. The paper therefore recommends that government should create an enabling environment for small businesses to strive and be able to compete with foreign investors. This can be done by removing all bottlenecks associate with success, growth and development of entrepreneurship in Nigeria.

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