

ROLE OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION IN REPOSITIONING THE GIRL-CHILD FOR NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract

Education is the key to the development of any nation. It does not discriminate between sex. Entrepreneurship is a very good ingredient that gives quality education a taste. Entrepreneurship will in no small measure help the girl-child to overcome some societal problems that have not allowed her to compete favourably within the society she finds herself. Such problem as early marriage, discrimination in the workplace, societal perceptions etc This paper looks at the issues and challenges of the girl-child, objectives of girl-child entrepreneurship education; relevance of entrepreneurship education. The researchers having x-rayed some of these challenges facing the girl-child are of the opinion that the girl-child can be repositioned and made to face the world practically through entrepreneurship. The place of women (girl-child) in the development of any nation cannot be over-emphasized. Thus, the great need to reposition the girl-child through entrepreneurship.

Keywords: Role, Entrepreneurship Education, Repositioning, the Girl-Child, National Development

Introduction

The era of bookishness is gradually going down the line. The twenty-first century is more of skill acquisition, practicality and do it yourself. It is possible for one to meet up with the demands of this century by engaging in entrepreneurial ventures. According to Okorie(2000) women's role in most countries of the world in the past was confined solely to the kitchen and other domestic activities. This view is still held high in most developing countries of the world.

In line with the changing situations in the world, the issue of women/girl-child and their role in national development continues to be a focal point at both political and academic discussions. In view of this, we strongly opine that repositioning the girl-child towards the area of entrepreneurship will in no small measure enhance the achievement of economic and socio-political development of our nation. The need to improve the girl-child potentials and workforce for meaningful national development, prompted the Nigerian government to sign all

international agreements that promote the advancement of women/girl-child. Education has been identified as the major instrument for girl-child empowerment and development. Education of the girl-child in the area of entrepreneurship will really bring out the potentials endowed in the girl-child. This is because it eliminates the inhibiting factors of women's growth such as inferiority complex, dogmatism, early marriages and low level of aspiration (Okorie, 2000). Repositioning the girl-child through entrepreneurship education will enhance the standard of living of the entire family and invariable the society where she lives.

Issues and Challenges to Girl-Child

Inspite of the governments' efforts towards women entrepreneurial development in Nigeria, a lot of factors still hold against the girl-child. Okorie (2000) outlined such factors as follows:

- ❖ Societal perception
- ❖ Gender role expectations
- ❖ Early marriage
- ❖ Religious practices
- ❖ Employers, discriminatory attitude
- ❖ Economic factors

Social Perception

It is important that we understand the fact that the girl-child can do most of the activities the male child can do. The girl-child should not be perceived to have different kind of personality and different pattern of behaviours. Entrepreneurship education should be provided to all, both male and female. In order to achieve the developmental stride that we desire, sexism should not be encouraged.

Gender Role Expectations

The pattern of social life of any society is usually built around its culture. For instance, Nigerian culture attributes certain characteristics to the individuals of the different **sexes** and also ascribes certain behaviours to these sexes. Worthy of note is the fact that entrepreneurship education is not hinged on sex (male or female). In the traditional society there may be gender role expectations but in this modern society, there should be balanced judgement in terms of expectations. Entrepreneurship education achieve that.

Early Marriage

The girl-child is made to marry at a very tender age in some communities in Nigeria. This is really against the growth and development of the girl-child. Entrepreneurship education does not give room for such anti-social practice. It creates room for the girl-child to be developed and creative so as to help the society where she finds herself. A study carried out by Ejembi (1994), showed that among 314 women from a rural community in Igabi local government area of kaduna state, 77.8 percent of the women got married before the age of 15, The effect of this practice is the exposure of women early enough to various family problems, thereby blocking their opportunities of being formally educated.

Religious Practices

In Nigeria, religion has influenced girl-child participation in certain trades, occupations or careers. For instance, the Islamic religion regards the totality of a women's body, nude except for her face, hands and feet. Some Christian religious groups also frown at certain patterns of women dressing as immoral. It is, therefore, not surprising that only few women join the police force, customs, prison services, sports and other similar careers. Tahir (1996) reported that women make up 2/3 of the illiterate population in Nigeria, majority of whom are rural women. Entrepreneurship education will help to break this ugly menace. The girl-child should have a wide range of occupations. Religion cannot be a barrier to a girl-child who has acquired skills through entrepreneurship education.

Employers Discriminatory Attitude

It has been observed that there is considerable evidence of employers' discrimination against women. Sometimes, it is justified by the employer on the ground of lower productivity and higher absenteeism and turnover of women. As a matter of fact, this discrimination is as a result of low skills or sometimes non acquisition of skills. No employer would want to run down his organization by employing unskillful employees. Therefore, girl-child should be repositioned through entrepreneurship education. The gap between the girl-child and the boy-child in terms of employment will be bridged when both have employable skills.

Economic Factors

The girl-child is mostly used to generate income to the family through hawking of food items, sending them out as house help to other families etc. These activities deprive the girl-child the opportunity of acquiring entrepreneurship education. Entrepreneurship education is however a means of economic empowerment. The girl-child should therefore be repositioned in the society through entrepreneurship education. There is unemployment problem in our country today because of lack of entrepreneurial skills. The girl-child should be guided to acquire skills in different occupations so as to be economically viable.

Objectives of Girl-child Entrepreneurial Education

According to Chukwuma-Nwuba (2007), girl-child education is the idea of giving the girl-child equal education with the boy-child with the intention of harnessing their potentials. This is aimed at making the girl-child more useful to their families and the society at large. According to Chukwuma-Nwuba (2007:), the objectives include the following:

- ❖ To develop the sense of managing business in girls.
- ❖ To make girls overcome the emotional feelings that starting business is for men.
- ❖ To fight unemployment problem among women
- ❖ To contribute positively to the development of the nation.

To cater for their families and render services to others. All these objectives may not be achieved if the girl-child is not properly trained. Therefore,

repositioning the girl-child in the area of entrepreneurship will help in achieving all these laudable objectives. The place of the girl-child in national development cannot be overemphasized Chukwuma - Nwuba (2007) stated that women are central in galvanizing, social and economic progress in India. In Nigeria, if the girl-child is repositioned, the women will achieve more economic progress in Nigeria than what is recorded in India. Similarly Fife (2007) stated that schooling remains the bedrock of development and that fortifying the formal school with practical based learning will build the skills of the girl-child towards social and economic empowerment. Ewogu and Uzor (2013) noted that women as home managers should be fully supported, encouraged and educated in the area of entrepreneurship as this would deeply help in poverty reduction. In the same vein, Stonner, Freeman and Gilbert, (2000) opined that entrepreneurship changes and rejuvenates market competitions and helps cushion the effect of unemployment.

Relevance of Entrepreneurship Education

For education to be relevant and responsive to the needs of the society, entrepreneurship education should be included in all aspect of education, especially the education of girl-child. This is because, according to Emeh and Ogbackirigwe(2012),entrepreneurship education seeks to improve backwardness of the people especially the girl-child who perhaps would have been tagged to domestic activities. Entrepreneurship education also helps to create self employment and also generate employment opportunities. It creates special attention to take up new activities and stir up economic gain and development. Entrepreneurship education encourages utilization of human potentials and creates room to analyze resources utilization.

If all these are imparted in the girl-child, her creative thinking and reasoning will change positively towards making the society better creatively and economically. These points mentioned above have no gender disparity, Eze and Emeh (2009) noted that entrepreneurship education is the type of education that seeks to prepare people especially youth to be responsible enterprising individuals who can contribute to economic and sustainable development. Entrepreneurship education is a specialized training given to students to acquire the skills, ideas and managerial abilities and capabilities for self employment (Emeh and Ogbaekirigwe, 2012). All these skills and abilities, when acquired will help to reposition the Youths vis-a-vis the girl-child.

Conclusions

It is important to note that no profession is meant for any sex. The parlance that 'whatever a man can do, a woman can do it even better' is in conformity with the philosophy of entrepreneurship. Giving useful and adequate training to the girl-child will in no small measure help in developing and improving the economic status of the society that embarks on this. Therefore, the position of the girl-child could be enhanced through entrepreneurship training. We can overcome some challenges facing the girl-child by repositioning the girl-child through entrepreneurship education. Such challenges as early marriage, societal perception, employers' discriminatory attitude, may be attributed to lack of skills and lack of entrepreneurial will-power to resist these challenges.

Entrepreneurship education changes the entire mind-set of individuals. The girl-child therefore needs to be repositioned positively through entrepreneurship.

Recommendations

Based on the discussions, the following recommendations are made:

- ❖ Government should create special fund for entrepreneurship training in tertiary institutions
- ❖ Entrepreneurship in all areas should be practical oriented and only those who are very knowledgeable in the field should teach those courses
- ❖ Curriculum planners should create room for students to visit industries.
- ❖ The girl-child should be encouraged to take up certain trades through scholarships in such areas or giving special grant.
- ❖ Entrepreneurship education shall be practically emphasized in our primary and secondary schools curriculum by the authorities.
- ❖ Teachers of entrepreneurship subjects shall be periodically retrained by the government to always be abreast of current information for progress.
- ❖ Rigorous advocacy campaign shall be made to cause re-orientation towards achieving the goals.
- ❖ Adequate teaching facilities and materials shall be provided in schools for the effectiveness of this endeavour.
- ❖ Adequate supervisory roles shall be enforced for proper monitoring of the educational systems.
- ❖ Non- governmental organization shall be encouraged to partner with government in pursuance of this course.

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