

# **GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING FOR ENTREPRENEURIAL SKILLS OF WOMEN IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES**

**HELLENELL OBIAGELI ONYEMACHI, Ph.D**

*African Thinkers Community of Inquiry College of Education, Enugu,  
Enugu State.*

## **Abstract**

*Entrepreneurial empowerment of women was introduced in African nations to enable women manage their own business. It was observed that women owning their own property and being secured in the knowledge that their right to that property cannot be challenged gives women security, peace of mind, independence and freedom. Other reasons for empowering women in Africa includes: to reduce poverty and increase economic growth. Many strategies have been applied to make empowerment of women in Africa successful but all to no avail, for instance in Nigeria Better life for rural women while among United Nations Countries, Task Force on Education and Gender Equality, Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women were applied. Some researchers have revealed that women are facing a lot of challenges from: their homes, time, workplace, social pressure, etc. While many reports have proved that all sorts of violence on women, discriminating practices and domestic affairs equally affect women. Guidance and counselling is a viable instrument for dealing with human problems. It is believed that when these women are guided and counseled they would acquire skills and techniques that would assist them to manage their desired business, manage others effectively, manage self, time and all that it takes to become and sustain entrepreneurial.*

**Keywords:** Women, Entrepreneurial, Empowerment, Challenges, Guidance and Counselling.

The development of any nation demands the collective effort of all the citizens in one way or the other. Women efforts are viewed as contributing to development in most developing nation of Africa. It was on this note that some scholars like Madu (2015) and Izumi (2007) emphasized that women are the backbone of any nation especially in the rural areas and that women need freedom, security, peace of mind for them to contribute their own quota to their nation. But unfortunately, most women in the developing nation of Africa are poor and uneducated as reported by United Nations report of 2006 and UNICEF 2008 and some others. Women face a lot of discrimination in the society to the extent that the leaders are careless about women contribution to

development in the community of the dangers the discrimination may cause them. Taiwo and Adeoti (2006), warned that gender inequality would lead to inefficient allocation of resources and reduction of economic growth, proper understanding of women plight in developing nations of Africa and the consequences that affect all concerned. There were much forces demanding that women must be empowered to contribute to the development of their household and society as a whole. The Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW, 1979) and the great Beijing Conference of 1995 and some others made breakthrough on women empowerment in Africa. Women empowerment according to Bakarl (2001), embraces areas of self-reliance, internal strength and capacity that entail the social, economic as well as political aspects of women's lives. In other words, it means all assistance given to women in order to develop their potentials, such that they acquire skills and techniques that would enable them face challenges, solve problems, set-goals and make realistic decisions.

However, various forms of empowerment have been given to women in Africa to become entrepreneurs but all efforts seem not to address the issue appropriately. Nwokolo (2003) defines entrepreneurship as the ability to set and effectively manage enterprises as different from being employed in paid employment. Women in developing nations of Africa are yet to succeed on entrepreneurial empowerment as a result of numerous challenges facing them. Some empirical studies have revealed some challenges facing women in the society. Among the studies are that of Egenti and Omoruyi (2011) which was a survey study in Lagos on women participation on part time programmes and that of Nwanesi (2006) on women and economic empowerment. Results were that women face challenges of: time, marital demand, restrictions, social pressure and some others. While Izumi (2007) stresses that women face lots of violence; Kilmartin and Allison (2007), observed sexual harassment. Other challenges include: widowhood, women trafficking and so on.

Guidance and counselling have been introduced in the society to assist individuals to understand self, problems and environment thereby develop is appropriate skills and challenges that would enable them face challenges and do things they were not able to do before. It is expected that when the women are guided and counseled they would acquire new ways of doing things, develop skills and techniques that would enable them perform effectively as entrepreneurs. Entrepreneurship according to Ogundele(2007) demands developing: entrepreneurship spirit, characteristics and personality, technical competencies, enterprise development, initiative and managerial capabilities. With guidance and counselling, the women would be empowered to develop skills and techniques that would enable them manage self and others, plan and coordinate their enterprises effectively, alternate existing unsatisfied situation, oppose any form of discriminating practices, refuse all forms of defeat toward mismanaging them, defend their worth and dignity, manage their official and domestic activities effectively face challenges and aspire for self-actualization in their business.

Entrepreneurial programme has been introduced in the society to ease the problem of unemployment by assisting individuals to acquire skills that would enable them develop their potential and set up business of their choice. It is a lifelong education that aims at making possible skills available for unskilled and unemployed individuals through training. The development of any society holds bearings from the number of skilled and employed individuals in that society, because their contributions would go in long way in resuscitating the economy for upward development. That is why Akpan (2015) see entrepreneurial training as a vital instrument for economic development as it unlocks the individual potentials of youths, empowers and equips them with skills, knowledge and attitudes to participate and benefit from the economy, facilitate industrial development and provide the basis for economic transformation.

### **The Needs for Women Entrepreneurial Training**

Many women in Africa or developing countries have been given one training or the other in entrepreneurial training. This is necessary because women are the backbone of rural development and agriculture in Africa, restricting women's effort means retarding the progress of development (Madu, 2015, P. 135). To Izumi (2007), women owning their own property and being secure in the knowledge that their right to that property cannot be challenged, gives women security, peace of mind, independence, and freedom. This was in line with the reports of UN-HABITAT (2006), UNICEF (2008); Ezilo, (2000); Deininger, (2003); Tskata and Whitehead, (2003); which observed that women in Africa are violated and abused of their rights to property. Another reason was to ease women from over dependence on their husbands as confirmed by reports of: Ssali (2008:194); Leroy, (2009:285); Yousif (2009:293); these reports noted that "many of these women are both poor and uneducated, making them highly dependent on their husbands, with awful socio-economic consequences". To ensure that women participate effectively in decision-making in line with ECA (2007:8) it was observed, that women's participation in decision-making varies according to communities; but "women who control wealth or who are engaged in the production of high-valued products have greater access to decision-making power relative to women who do not have economic power. To promote women status in Africa, as observed by the UNIFEM REPORT of (2003), the inferior status of African women makes women "undervalued, disrespected and prone to violence by their men counterparts should be duly addressed through entrepreneurial training. In other words, entrepreneurial training would enable the women acquire skills that would assist them become more responsible to their needs and that of their households irrespective of their husbands contributions. To reduce women's level of poverty, which was confirmed by UNFEPA (2005), that there is high incidence of poverty among women. Toch and Chen (2005), believe that 70% of the world's 1.5 billion poor are women. While DFID (2000:14); and ISCN (2006:6) affirmed that poverty has been identified to have a woman's face. Taiwo and Adeoti (2006:429), view that gender inequality would lead to inefficient allocation of

resources and reduction of economic growth. While white (2000:13) confirmed that development strategy most beneficial to society as a whole is the one which involves women as central players.

### **Entrepreneurial and Guidance and Counseling**

Entrepreneurship demands varied skills and techniques, Guidance and counselling aim at assisting individuals acquire skills that they never possessed and it is expected that after counselling, counsees will acquire new ways of doing things. It is expected that when individuals are guided and counseled before entrepreneurship, they acquire and develop skills and techniques that would enable them perform effectively as entrepreneurs. Nwokolo (2003), see entrepreneurship as the ability to set and effectively manage enterprises as different from being employed in paid employment. It is a continuous phenomenon which aims at bringing about innovation and creativity. To Olowa (2004), it is the type of knowledge and skills intended to prepare individuals for field work which equips citizens with the vision on the application of available asset of skills to existing talent, and available resources based on profit spurs. Entrepreneurship skills to be developed according to Ogundele (2007), are entrepreneurship spirit, characteristics and personality, technical competencies, enterprise development, initiative and managerial capability.

Guidance and counseling is a helping interaction aimed at providing usable information to the people. The counselor stands a better chance to assist the clients with usable and authentic information that would enable them develop skills and techniques that would prepare them with entrepreneurship spirit, personality, competencies, initiative and management. The counselor assist them to develop confidence and risk taking spirit, perseverance, goal setting and decision-making skills. Entrepreneurship involves competition, stress, finance or resources and the likes. There is need that women are counseled to acquire the skills and techniques of: competing on their defaulting attitude, behavior and aptitude, socializing, creating, innovating, networking, problem solving, researching, leading, planning, executing, evaluating, administrating, cordinating and so on.

Most women enter into business because of one reason or the other without defining their intentions or their attitude. Some take to a business because of time factor, available resources, opportunity and so on. In such situation, majority of them cannot identify or define their intentions for venturing into such business. Some may not equally have idea of expected attitude towards the success of the business or how to handle issue when things start falling apart. Entrepreneurial attitude according to Ajzen (2002) is a personal perception towards the value benefit and favorability of entrepreneurship which highly affect intentions to step into new venture creation. To Robison, Stimpson, Hucfner, and Hunt 1991 in Onongha (2015), entrepreneurial attitude is a multi dimensional concept that encompasses four key personality factors including “need for achievement”, “personal control over behavior”, “innovation; and

self-esteem”. There is need to guide the women through guidance and counseling services on how to achieve these as well as manage self and situation when the reverse becomes the case.

Entrepreneurial intentions Dell, (2008); Dhose & Walter, (2010) define entrepreneurial behavior intentions as willingness of individuals to perform on, to engage in entrepreneurial action, entrepreneurial self-employed or to establish new business. To Zain, Akram & Ghani (2010), it usually involves inner guts, ambition and the feeling to stand on one’s feet. To Krueger (2007), intention serves as a mediating factor between entrepreneurial action and potential exogenous influence-traits, demographics, skills, social, cultural and financial support. There is equally need for the counsellor to guide the entrepreneur to understand the intention or motive behind the decisions, how to achieve the goals and so on.

Entrepreneurship involves a lot of risks and hazards. There is need in assisting women to attain proper development and maturity, improved functioning, and improved ability to cope with life problems. Counseling is initiated to effect a change so that individuals and organizations can utilize their potentials maximally for their own benefits, and that of the society at large (Ilomuanya, 2009). It becomes necessary that the women should be guided and counseled on type of organization or business to open, how to open it, where, methods of promoting, who to hire, medium of promotion, introduction of products, market sales measuring innovation and so on. They need to be assisted with entrepreneurship, education that would guild them adequately. Akpan (2010) defined entrepreneurship education as the training of individuals to acquire the ability to recognize business opportunities and have insight, self-esteem, knowledge, business attitudes and skills to invest. And further explained that, it is that type of education that equip individuals with the required knowledge, skills and attitudes towards economic transformation and self-actualization. Akintola (2007), in a related definition, defined entrepreneurship education as a programme that prepare individuals to acquire knowledge and skills, and to undertake the formation and operation of small business enterprises. From all indications, entrepreneurship education is skill acquisition programme designed to equip individuals with the skills of developing their potential, setting up business (es) that agree (s) with their personality attributes, managing self, managing time and resources appropriately. It is a programme that demands the entrepreneur’s skills and techniques on: assertiveness, emotional intelligence, aptitude, public relationship, accountability, and varied aspects of knowledge that would contribute to effective setting up and management of business in acquired skills. These call for the services of guidance counselors that would enable the women identify their need areas and map out strategies on how to enable them meet up with the demands.

### **Women and Empowerment**

Empowerment of women have been in various forms for many decades. Some are in form of Self-empowerment, social empowerment, economic empowerment,

political empowerment, cultural empowerment, legislation and education empowerment. These aspects of empowerment of women have been done in Africa through many channels. For instance in Nigeria, women have been empowered through: life programme for rural women family support programme, better life for women, and the rest. To the United Nations (2011) the strategic priorities and practical actions for achieving women's empowerment were through Task Force on Education and Gender Equality, Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW; 1979), the great Beijing Conference of 1995, the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (UN, 2005) and some others. Explaining forms of empowerment of women, Madu (2015) explained that: Self awareness and self-esteem are fundamental to women's empowerment and for uplifting their status in the society.

Empowerment of women demand all processes that would get the women aware of all the skills and techniques that would enable them to understand their capabilities and limits in whatever they are doing, become aware of social, economic, political and educational opportunities as well as understand their rights in the society. Women's empowerment according to Bakari (2001), embraces area of self-reliance, internal strength and capacity that entail the social, economic as well as political aspects of women lives. While Onyemachi (2013) sees women empowerment as all the helping processes aimed at assisting the women to: develop attitude and behavior that would enable them alternate existing unsatisfied situation; identify their needs towards political participation, master their political world, oppose any form of discriminating practices; overcome coercion that stops them from achieving political representation, refuse all forms of defeat towards mismanaging them; defend their worth and dignity; control their environment and attract worthwhile attention; avoid unrewarding pains and be optimistic, organize themselves and fight for common goals... and enjoy sensuous things and form positive relationship with the opposite sex without losing focus. These however could only be achieved through counseling the women.

### **Challenges Facing Entrepreneurial Women Empowerment in Africa**

Various measures have been taken to empower women in many countries of which, entrepreneurship is among them. However, women in most developing countries are yet to stand on their own after all empowerment because of one problem or the other. This affect the development of the countries to an extent. Based on the findings of these empirical studies, Egenti and Omoruyi (2011), a simple survey study in Lagos Nigeria on women participation on part time programme a simple random sampling technique was used to draw a sample of 150 women in Bachelors of Education part time programme in Unilag. Sample were drawn from the departments of the faculty and data collected with questionnaire. Findings reviewed that challenges of the women participants in the programme include: time, marital demand, poor economic or financial base, lack of encouragement, increasing social pressure and poor

psychological disposition. These affect their contribution in one way or the other, therefore demand they be guided and counseled on how to manage the challenges. Nwanesi (2006) study on women and economic empowerment in relation to micro-credits schemes in Southern part of Nigeria, study design was drawn on gender analytical frameworks. Ethnographic field research which includes semi-structure interviews and participant observation was used. Data were obtained from state database, archives and development websites. Study used both qualitative and quantitative methods of analysis. Result reviews among other that financial responsibilities and household decision making are still prerogative of the male head of the family and that younger married women suffer restrictions on travels interms of distance and time.

In other words, even when the woman controls the money she is still restricted on how to spend it. Even when the type of establishment takes her far away home she may not be allowed to do so. In such situation, the woman becomes depressed or drops out, this calls for counseling in the family or home. Study of Okafor, Fagbemi and Adedoyin (2011) conducted in Lagos on Women Managers Delay in Promotion. The researchers used 397 women and 50men top managers sampled from both public and private organizations spread across major relevant sub-sectors of the Nigerian economy. Purposive and stratified sampling techniques were used. While career mobility inventory were used as instrument for data collection. Result showed that women are facing challenges resulting from: care of home, discrimination, family issues, low level of aspirations and lack of mentoring. These virtually demand for counseling them on: self-management, time-management and self-confidence for them to put more effort in their work place. There is need to assist them develop programme that would enable them co-ordinate domestic, leisure and official activities effectively. Based on the reviewed studies, both entrepreneurial and educational empowered women are facing challenges in their areas of activities. These calls for guidance and counseling that would enable all in the society to assist the women with opportunities or encouragement that would enable them contribute to the development of Africa. It demands counseling the women individual and in group for them to acquire skills and develop techniques on how to manage self and other challenges.

In related version, Izumi (2007) assess the general effects of gender-based violence against women- as something that “goes beyond immediate physical damage to the victim, psychological damage, and the threat of further violence, erodes a woman’s self-esteem, inhibiting her ability to defend herself or take action against her abuse...”. Izumi assessing the social and economic implications on rape, explained that it denies women their most basic human rights to health and is a major threat to the social and economic development of communities and whole countries. A woman or women entrepreneurs that are involved in such violations became traumatized and even labeled. These call for guidance and counselling to the victims and community members.

Many women entrepreneurs face sexual harassment that deprived them from contributing effectively in their business. To Kilmartin and Allison (2007), sexual harassment is unwanted conduct which is persistently demeaning or humiliating or creates a hostile or intimidating environment and which is related to sex gender or sexual orientation. They further confirmed that many Nigerian women face sexual harassment in their place of work, private and public places, such experiences affect their lives and performances. Counseling on self-discipline, work ethics and dress code and relationship with the opposite sex have a lot to do in suppressing this ugly menace. Maltreatment of widows is another challenge facing African women entrepreneurs. The death of a man makes the wife a widow.

For Fasoranti and Aruna (2005), widowhood experiences are generally traumatic, but in some African societies, they are considered more as an experience of deprivation, subjugation and humiliation. To Edemikpong (2005) and Okudo (2009), widows movements are restricted for mostly one year as observance of mourning rituals during these periods. She remains in incarceration and does not cut her hair nor pay attention to her physical appearance. The restrictions and unkept physical appearance not only affect the woman alone but all that she does and even the children and other family members living on her support. Her business if not taking from her by the laws these restrictions without the intervention of a guidance and counselor, counseling her and suggesting techniques that would assist the business survival within her period of mourning will be seriously affected.

Women trafficking is one other challenge facing entrepreneurial women empowerment in developing countries of Africa. Most women empowered in most cases are deceived, kidnapped, etc that could lead to their being trafficked. According to Carling (2005), the groups of prostitutes from sub-Saharan Africa are usually recruited through a specific type of trafficking network. These women end up contributing lesser to the economy compared to resources involved to empower them. This calls for reorientation on morals values through guidance and counseling. Violence and discrimination among women in Africa have contributed highly to affect the entrepreneurial empowerment of women in developing countries based on: The World Health Organization (WHO),(2005), reported that millions of women in Africa are affected by violence of various types and degrees. 50% of women in Tanzania and 71% in rural Ethiopia reported beatings and other forms of violence by husband or other intimate partners. Kimani reports of (2007), accounts that: In South Africa about one woman is killed by her husband or boyfriend every six hours. Zimbabwe, six out of 10 murder cases tried in Harare high court in 1998 were related to domestic violence. In Kenya, the attorney general's office reported in 2003 that domestic violence accounted for 47 percent of all homicides. In Congo, according to the United Nations Year, 27,000 sexual assaults were reported in 2006 in South Kivu province alone. During Dafur crisis, the population affected stands at 2.94 million, with over 60% of this figure being women and children (UNICEF, Official Report, 2008).Based on these, victims whowere

empowered end with their empowerment, thereby scaring other women from being empowered as well as being a source of empowerment, there is need for a counselor to prepare the minds of the women for such occurrence. and inform them on how best to manage such challenges.

### **The Way Forward**

Guidance and counselling has adequate skills that would enable the women develop and acquire various skills and techniques that would enable them face any challenge that will affect their business. The services of guidance and counselling is for everybody irrespective of age or status as such will equally take care of the masses in developing coping skills that would help them assist women within their environment. Among the strategies to work on women and society at large are:

**Family counselling:** The counselor should apply rational emotive therapeutic approach of Albert Ellis in assisting family members to develop hatred, dislike, disrespect, and the likes to any form of discrimination and violence against females. Assist them to develop family ethics or principles that would enable them develop family love, interest, tolerance, acceptance, flexible in the positive direction over one another and heir activities irrespective of the sex, make decisions with family members.

**Community counselling:** The Rational Emotive Therapeutic (RET) approach could be used to help the community members develop sincere desirable feelings towards the opposite sex, do away with stereotype feelings and ideas about females by being tolerant, accepting females with uncondition positive regard; think positively for all their children and family members irrespective of their sex, make decisions with their family members. Develop good interpersonal relationship among community members, assist them develop the sense of dignity of labour and hardwork, as well as positive work attitude and personality. Developing positive strategies on how to resolve all forms of violence and discriminating practices against females.

**Citizen reorientation on importance of women in the society:** This means retraining or re-informing the community on the new trends about women in the society. Citizen reorientation calls for a more intense effort to re-educate individuals on new values which can help to promote the general goals and philosophy of good citizenship, national development, unity and progress(Okorodudu, 2006). This is to say that citizen reorientation on the importance of female in the society means re-educating individuals in a more serious note on new discovered values about females that would help in the development of the nation. The counselor should provide adequate information with references to the citizen. Make them understand the ills of discrimination, rape and all forms of violence. Encourage them to understand the concept of peace, freedom, rights, self-concept, self-management, self-sufficiencies and the likes. Assist them identify

environmental problems within communities and the perpetrators with a view to giving them individual and group counseling on how to adopt positive skills and techniques.

**Individual and group counseling for females:** Counsel the females to understand their needs and problems and sources. Give them adequate and reliable information and counsel them on: Self-concept, self-management, self-monitoring, self-measurement, self-mediation, self-maintenance. Give them assertiveness training. Counsel them and assist them develop skills and techniques on: time management, decision-making, family communication, leisure and self-actualization. There is need to counsel the females and guide them adequately to understand the concepts of freedom and team spirit in the family. Encourage them to develop positive public relationship, and quest for usable information and advertisement. The counselor can deal with the clients using various techniques or methods like: workshop, seminar, instruction, buzz groups, case discussion, group tutorial, brain-storming, rehearsal, modeling and some others.

### **Conclusion**

The essence of empowerment in the society is to ensure that everybody is skilled and self-sufficient. This could be translated to national development. But whereby one is empowered but could not be self-sufficient, because of both internal and external challenges, the possibility of the individual contributing to the development of the nation is not assured. Guidance and counseling have been introduced in the society to handle challenges that are under-rating human nature. It is believed that when individuals are counseled to understand that both men and women possess skills and techniques that require team spirit and work to make African Nations or the world in general a better place to live. Women should be highly accepted with unconditional positive regard for their worth and dignity to be restored.

### **Suggestions**

It is suggested that:

1. Guidance and counseling units be established in all institutions of human interactions with qualified guidance counselors;
2. Providing counseling units in the urban and rural areas where it would be accessible to people.
3. Counselors can establish counseling clinics in the community: markets, halls, civic centers, and so on.
4. Guidance and counseling should be included in primary school time-table so as to start teaching the learners earlier.
5. Awareness campaign should be carried out in the localities through: media, films, posters, newsletters and so on, to enlighten the masses on the importance of counseling and need for women contribution in the society.

6. Entrepreneurs should seek for the services of counselors before commencing their business, then interact with them from time to time.
7. Organizers of entrepreneurship programmes should hire counselors to counsel participants before they start the programme and same after.
8. Community members and vigilantes should refer to counselors members who are found violating women in any form or discriminating obviously against them.
9. Counselors should visit homes and communities from time to time through the leaders, heads and so on to assist them resolve confronting problems.

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