

ENTREPRENEURIAL AND FUNCTIONAL WOMEN EDUCATION AS A MEANS OF ACHIEVING THE NATIONAL OBJECTIVES OF VISION 2020 IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

Among the recent economic policies from Obasanjo administration to the present regime, aimed at revitalising the economy by the monetarism the public servants fringe benefits. With a careful study, it is clear that this target can not be achieved except the pronouncement accompanies the quest for good entrepreneurial functional education as a means of achieving the national objectives of vision 2020 in Nigeria. In this regard, this paper seeks to examine entrepreneurship, its sterling qualities and social responsibilities, together with the essential of entrepreneurship. The history of functional women education in Nigeria as a means of achieving the objectives of vision 2020 in Nigeria shall be ex-rayed.

Introduction

We are presently experiencing an entrepreneurial boom. According to Caleb McAfee, we are shifting from a managerial society to an entrepreneurial society. From 1950 to 1990 new businesses were created. While in 1995 to date, the total number of part-time, home-based businesses continues to increase daily.

Many big businesses are down sizing. Unfortunately several companies have laid off several thousands of employees in the last ten years. But today, there are hundreds of small businesses, many of which are home-based, thriving in Nigeria generating billions of Naira in revenue.

According to Lawal, quoting Shuaibu (2005) the International Labour Organisation (ILO) reported that the current education system in Nigeria (6-3-3-4) produces thousands of graduates each year out of which just 10 percent find white collar jobs in the public and private sectors of the economy, leaving 90 percent in the unemployment sector. Shuaibu further emphasised that the current system of education in Nigeria has been blamed on the following reasons:

- i) Failure to reconcile graduate turnout with manpower requirements.
- ii) The inability of the school curriculum to prepare beneficiaries adequately for the available or anticipated jobs, and
- iii) The failure of the curriculum to prepare its beneficiaries with orientation for self-employment.

In recognition of these problems, President Obasanjo addressed the Chicago Council on Foreign Relations (Chicago U.S.A.) in May 2005 reiterating the Federal Government of Nigeria's resolve to create jobs and generate wealth and thus expand the purchasing power of all. In line with this idea, the present regime from the days of late President Musa Yar'Adua to date, have worked out the issue of granting amnesty and empowering the militant youths at the Niger Delta region of the country in different trades or vocations. The women in the region are now crying out that they too should be engaged in the same useful ventures. As years continue to roll by, however, women have continued to gain more access to education.

Entrepreneurship: Its Meaning

According to Appleby (1994), entrepreneurship is enjoying great deal of attention in many countries today. It can be described as the process of bringing together creative and innovative ideas and coupling these with management and organisational skills in order to combine people, money and resources to meet an identified need and thereby create wealth.

The process may be undertaken by one person or a group. Inventors are innovative and creative but not all are able to use management and organisational skills to produce and market goods or services successfully. Creativity and management strengths do not usually reside in one person, so entrepreneurship is often found in groups which combine their strengths.

Self-employment is encouraged by government and is very popular at present as it creates jobs and aids the economy of a country. Entrepreneurship is often thought to apply mainly to the management of small businesses, but this idea has been extended to also apply to larger organisations and to managers who carry out entrepreneurial roles. Such managers are aware of opportunities and they initiate changes to take full advantage of them.

Someone who has innovative ideas and transforms them to profitable activities within an organisational environment is called an entrepreneur. The entrepreneur, in contrast, does the same outside the organisation.

The Essence of Entrepreneurial Functional Education as a Means to Achieve the Objectives of Vision 2020 in Nigeria

1. According to Appleby (1994) the roles that entrepreneurship plays in the process of economic development has long been recognised as an important subject of enquiry. Entrepreneurs are agents of development. As an enlarge supply of entrepreneur are necessary to accelerate the pace of industrial development in the country particularly for small and medium scale industries. Any meaningful industrial development cannot take place without cottage industries or small industries laying the foundation. It then serves as the bedrock of industrialization in the country.

2. It serves as a basis for diversification of ownership of business. For instance, no traditional, communities, occupational groups etc need to be attracted and developed by setting up and owing enterprise.

Similarly, entrepreneurs are necessary for regional spread of economic development. For economic development to be balanced in both rural and less developed areas, attention have to be given in terms of encouraging local entrepreneurs to stabilize themselves in such areas to start their business.

Additionally in the face of the prevailing unemployment globally, the unemployed rural and urban youths need to be awakened and spurred to take self employment. With entrepreneurship, people are trained even in the medical field. This goes a long way in reducing the proportion of the risk to a doctor, thereby improving the health condition of the citizen.

Entrepreneurial and Functional Women Education in Nigeria as a Means of Achieving the National Objectives of Vision 2020 in Nigeria

The stand of the national policy on education is provision of equal education.

According to Prof. Jerry Gana, development can only be brought into being by the creative capacity of our people to transform the natural resources of their environment into goods and services through

the imaginative application of their talents, skills and labour power. Thus, all over the world, wise governments often seek to spend substantial proportions of their budgets on education and health, thereby investing in people. Harbiton (1973) rightly assert that

Human resources ... constitute the ultimate basis for wealth of nations. Capital and natural resources are passive factors of production; human beings are the active agents, who accumulate capital, exploit natural resources, build social, economic and political organisations, and carry forward national development. Clearly, a country which is unable to develop the skills and knowledge of its people and to utilize them effectively in the national economy will be unable to develop anything else.

Nature of Traditional Education

Sex differences in school enrolment has been reported by old and recent researchers in both the Northern and Southern parts of Nigeria. In the olden days, traditional education was practised in Nigeria. Traditional education in the Northern Nigeria reflected sex-stereotyping. Girls were taught cooking, nursing, house-cleaning and how to be nice to husbands. On the other hand, boys were taught money-making occupations such as mat-making, farming, goldsmithing and petty trading. The traditional education in the Southern Nigeria followed the same pattern. Boys were taught palm-wine tapping, farming, fishing and other money fetching occupations. The girls were taught to tidy domestic chores, how to be good mothers.

Women need to be educated because there is an urgent need to eradicate all forms of discrimination against them based on their natural biological functions. Within this set up men complain that they cannot understand women. To them, when women increase in wealth, they are silent. But when they fall into trouble, the whole world gets to know.

Nature of Islamic Education

When Islamic education was introduced in the North, sex-stereotyping was not left out. Girls were only allowed to attend Islamiyya schools close to their homes. Boys attended both Islamiyya schools and Koranic schools. Koranic schools were respected for giving better education. Girls had to remain close to their home and guard their chastity. They could therefore not attend Koranic schools which were instituted in distant places. It should be observed, however, that with determination, chastity could be retained even in distant schools. You may not be surprised to hear that sex differences in provision of educational opportunities continued even with inception of Western Education. Western Education was introduced in Northern Nigeria in 1909 for boys. Girls schools started later in 1931. Many female students in secondary schools are married. Adidu (1995) recorded that females have more difficulty in gaining access to university education in Nigeria. Adidu (1995) recorded that out of 107 students admitted in Department of Engineering in Ahmadu Bello University in 1987/88 session only one was a female.

Entrepreneurial and Functional Women Education as a Means of Empowerment in Islamic society

According to Werthmann (2010), scholars in the Sudan, who more than any other Muslim community today on the globe, are having to live the Sharia in the present time, not in the past, have re-examined these interpretations in our contemporary context we have now given women equality in evidence. In respect of the verse in al-Baara, (Q2:282) for example, they have argued that at that point

in time. In the seventh century A.D. in Arabia, women were not involved in commercial transactions and hence, were not deemed to be familiar enough with the intricacies of trade to make their evidence in such matters reliable. Today, however, many women are involved and quite familiar with trade and commerce, thus obviating the need to undervalue their evidence.

Today, women in Northern Nigeria are expanding their options by stressing their Islamic right even obligation to become educated in order to live up to their family duties.

The prophet of Islam not only said that the search for knowledge was compulsory on every Muslim male and female, but he also said that who ever educates a male educates an individual and who ever educates a female educates a nation. Here, not only does the prophet give priority to the education of the female but also by likening the female with the nation, he conferred a special position and by virtue of that positive special role for the female. That an individual female is a nation is a concept that requires a whole book to expound, but for our immediate purpose here, it will suffice to point to the fact that the female who alone harbours the womb and carries the heaviest responsibility in child bearing also represents the pedestal on which the future of mankind as a whole revolves. The female to this extent, symbolises the human races and the custodian of human values and the conscience of society. If she is left ignorant and backward, so will the nation and if she is educated and advanced, so will the nation. This point has been amply demonstrated by the jihad of Usman Dan Fodio and is today being re-enacted in the Republic of the Sudan which saw tremendous transformation only after educating and incorporating its women in its struggles for a just society.

The average Muslim woman today may not quite understand the noise made about economic empowerment, largely because she has always been empowered; her dowry has always been hers, not even her parents can take any part thereof without her consent and permission; her wealth has always been hers, if she works she never had to operate a joint account with her husband, who will then decide what to do with the money. A lot of what is called economic empowerment is what Islam has given women 14 centuries ago. If over time and due to societal ignorance, this is denied her, she can best discover this through a process of re-education and enlightenment. Her economic independence is a right given her by the most High and no one can deny her. This right to own her property uninhibited must not, however, be confused with the right to work to earn money. The issue of work has to be weighed against the non-material needs of the family and the conveniences of the couple, for work touches on issues that Islam deem more important than material possession.

Sex Differences and Western Education in Nigeria

Uche (1986) stated that in Nigeria generally, females lag behind in education. He recorded that by 1961, females made up only 32.92% of primary school enrolment, between 1962 and 1965 the figure rose to 38.47%. By 1966 it came to 39.10%. In 1970 the percentage declined to 36.34%. The percentage of females in secondary schools in 1961 was 24.37% and in 1970 it was 33.57%. Uche (1986) further pointed out that, females in the western and southern parts of Nigeria made more effort to catch up with their male counterpart than females in the north.

Causes of sex Differences in Education

The causes of sex difference in education attainment in Nigeria have been traced to Nigerian traditional culture. You may be familiar with the fact that traditional role expectation for both sexes differs.

The traditional sex role expected of girls and the types of game they are exposed to do not give them opportunity for development of potentials needed for science and technology. Games

allowed for boys and their sex-role expectations have been found to correlate with spatial ability, creativity and potential needs for science and technology. Traditionally, girls were expected to play subsidiary roles to their male partners. Girls are supposed to be reserved, humble, submissive, obedient and quiet. Boys are expected to be bold, vocal, adventurous and the head of the family. Boys were allowed to climb trees, shoot, jump, throw darts, fly kites, construct them and play football. Girls do mock cooking, play with baby dolls, plait hairs and act mother roles. Sex differences in school achievement has also been blamed on greater use of male pronouns in textbooks and sex-roles modeled in school textbooks.

The Review of Female Entrepreneur with Functional Education as a Means of Achieving National Objectives of Vision 2020 in Nigeria

According to McAfee (1998), females are becoming a part of the entrepreneurial boom, although from antiquity there have been women in business.

Employment versus self-employment

For a mother of small children, there is an enormous financial difference between being an employee and being self-employed. Taking into consideration the cost involved, such as childcare and taxes, sometimes it does not make economic sense, for some women to be employed. Let's look at the hard facts of the advisability or inadvisability of a woman working as an employee outside her home.

Even in cases where a woman earns substantially more than minimum wages, the effect of the additional income can push the family into another income tax bracket.

Furthermore, the more income a family makes, the less they will be allowed to take advantage of deductions such as medical expenses, casualty losses, rental losses, child care credit.

Benefits of Self-Employment

The solution is for the wife to be a part of the family business or, if the husband is gainfully employed, to go into business for herself. The home-based business may allow her to spend more quality time with her children even teaching them at home if she desires. At the same time, it can afford a possibility for unlimited income, potentially more than she would have had as an employee.

In addition to the lifestyle flexibility and income potential, she can now arrange for many of the same benefits traditional employees enjoy and get tax deductions for them too – such as retirement. If she works for her husband's small business, he can arrange a medical reimbursement programme that will allow her to pay her family's health bill and fully deduct the expense. With tax breaks, even if she does not make as much as she would have had she being as an employee, she may come out ahead.

In the past, some women were bound by sexist traditions that relegated their entrepreneurial ventures to professions such as making crafts, sewing, childcare or maid services. Today, there are female business owners quite successful at writing, photography, graphic art, mail order, export/import, sales, training, financial planning, real estate developing – the list is endless, all operated successfully as home based businesses.

Entrepreneurial and functional education will serve as a means of empowerment in vision 2020. For instance her first business is in the area of milling of wool and flax. She discovers she has an eye for value. She searches long and far for sources of raw materials. She can buy wholesale to produce fabric for resale. Although she is involved in business, she takes steps to ensure that her

family is not neglected. She obviously is well adapted at time management. Out of the profits from her milling business, she ventures into real estate and the agricultural business. Here growth will be underwritten internally, not from lenders or venture capitalists with that she puts her heart into her work.

Unlike some business people today, who are not sure whether they are making profit or not, she keeps abreast of her progress. By spending time reviewing her profit and loss statement, she keeps a careful eye on the bottom line. She prepares for the future. She does not have a “lack” mentality. Because of her diligent preparation, she never fears whether or not her family is well cared for. Her home as well as her personal clothing reflect success. Notice that when the business starts operating profitably, she directs some attention to home decorating. No doubt she is a strong contributing factor to the respect and honour her husband receives.

Her next venture is in the retail garment and wholesale business. Her decorum reflects a real personal power and confidence that enables her to have no fear of the future. The word “laugh” suggests she has a sense of humor. Now as an accomplished business person, incredibly she enters into yet another business – the seminal business. She is an attentive and wise manager of her businesses and household. She remains clearly focused on what is most productive and worthwhile. She is not aloof but stays energetically involved, planning and directing for future growth and expansion.

Many would conclude that with so many business ventures her family would be neglected. Quite the contrary, she is loved and honoured by her family. Now she can be rewarded for her many accomplishments. She deserves the praise because of her diligence. She has justifiably earned the accolades.

What an outstanding role model! It must be that women are being inspired by this outstanding example or vision because today women-owned businesses are booming. To crown it all Kotler (2009) have concluded by asserting that female entrepreneur with functional education have been highly successful.

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