

# **WOMEN EMPOWERMENT THROUGH ENTREPRENEURSHIP DEVELOPMENT: A VEHICLE FOR ECONOMIC GROWTH IN NIGERIA**

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## **ABSTRACT**

This study looks at women empowerment through Entrepreneurship Development as a vehicle for Economic growth in Nigeria. This study was purely an extensive review on past related literature. In this case, the data for this paper were retrieved from secondary sources in terms of books, journal articles related to the subject. The findings revealed that women empowerment through entrepreneurship development is truly a vehicle for economic growth of a nation based on its importance of entrepreneurship to individual, societies, benefits, impact to women empowerment and the role of Entrepreneurship in the Economic Development of a nation, in terms of creation of job opportunities, wealth creation and distribution, improvement of the standard of living etc. which consequently leads to economic growth. The study recommended among others that: women should be educated on the importance and benefits of entrepreneurship which could be achieved through organizing seminars for women. They should be an awareness campaign on the need for women to acquire skills. Special training course should be offered for women entrepreneurs to learn a skill. The government should make efforts in providing entrepreneurship development programmes targeted at assisting the women to access funds. The government should beefed up security both in urban and rural communities and tackle the issue of corruption. The government should address the problem of power supply because it is the major factor in the economy in terms of entrepreneurial activities. Interest free consumption credit for women should be provided by the government, banks, financial institution.

*Keywords: Women Empowerment, Entrepreneurship Development and Economic growth*

## **1 INTRODUCTION**

One of the critical factors in deciding the success of development in any country is the status and position of women in the society. This goes to show that the disuse of women in the development process of any country constitutes a human resource waste. It means, it will be disservice for any country to ignore its women population in its development efforts. The task before any government should be that of moving steadily and firmly in the direction of economic development by involving women. Faley (1999) as cited in Money and Edjore (2016) stated that women's development is not about reducing poverty but increasing productivity, as well as women's liberation and empowerment.

Wikipedia (2019), posited that over the years, a high level of entrepreneurship is what has led to the economic development of many nations we see today. Even the United Nations University World Institute for Development and Economics Research carried out a project on the role of entrepreneurship in economic development. Their work was compiled into a book titled Entrepreneurship and Economic Development to really showcase the importance of entrepreneurship in economic development.

China is a good example of a nation with an impressive economic development that came about as a result of the promotion of entrepreneurship among its citizens. Well developed countries are more interested in entrepreneurs than people in white collar jobs. In the economy today, education is being redefined to produce entrepreneurs and not just job seekers. No wonder today, we have Entrepreneurships Development Centre in most Institutions of Higher Learning and Federal Polytechnic, Ilaro inclusive. So, the role of entrepreneurship in the economic development of Nigeria cannot be underestimated especially in times like this.

Ajayi, et al (2010:1&2) posit that, whenever one is thinking of establishing and managing of small business, one is thinking of entrepreneurship. Entrepreneurship is very interesting because many people want to establish small businesses but certain questions are in their minds which are yet to be satisfied or given good answers to. Because of these questions, some are out there still in paid employment and some are not in any employment but cannot take the bold entrepreneurial step because of the fear of failure which results from lack of entrepreneurship knowledge.

The questions which usually counter the thought of establishing a business are: How do I start the business? How do I run the business? And how do I run the business successfully or profitably? Where answers are not provided for these questions, it would be very difficult to actualize one's desire to business establishment. It should be noted that many people want to establish a business in life but lack of knowledge of at least the idea of entrepreneurship prevents most people from realizing their business dreams or visions.

As a result of the above, the main objectives of the study was to educate and expose the women on the strategies of starting a business, the importance of entrepreneurship to individual, societies, as well as the benefits, impact to women empowerment and the role of Entrepreneurship in the Economic Development of a nation, in terms of creation of job opportunities, wealth creation and distribution, improvement of the standard of living etc. which consequently leads to economic growth of a nation.

The significance of the study was to exposed those key areas where Entrepreneurship can lead to women empowerment and Economic growth as well as leading to development of a nation like Nigeria. The study may be of benefits to women as they engage in Entrepreneurship Development as well as the government in the area of economy, planning, education, researchers, policy makers and academicians of the concern areas.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Concept of Entrepreneurship**

Different authors have given different definitions to this word but entrepreneurship is simply defined as the establishment and management of small business. A wide definition of entrepreneurship is the generation of a business idea or identification of a business opportunity and putting in place of a business to take advantage of the idea or opportunity within an economy.

There has been difficulty in reaching a consensus about an exact definition of entrepreneurship and it has been argued that the term 'entrepreneurship' in itself has three levels of meaning. In the first level, entrepreneurship refers to small firms or enterprises, in the second level it refers to new firm formation and at the third level highest entails innovation and a system-wide coordination of complex production. Entrepreneurship embraces small business, innovation and regional and local development policy.

The business dictionary (2013) as cited in Adeniyi (2017:149) defines entrepreneurship as the capacity and willingness to develop, organize and manage a business venture along with any of its risk in order to make profit.

Oduşina in Osuala (2004) as cited in Adebola (2017:2), defined entrepreneurship as a process of using available capital in any form for business endeavours in an open and free market economy for the sole purpose of making a profit. Nwaokolo in Osuala as cited in Adebola (2017) also defined entrepreneurship as the ability to set up a business enterprise as different from being employed. This ability should be acquired and should differ in some respects from the abilities required to enable a person get employed; it involves the acquisition of skills, ideas and managerial abilities necessary for self reliance. The entrepreneur is a person who owns and controls a business through which income is gained. The sole idea of entrepreneurship is achieved when the entrepreneur takes risk which is energized by inner drive and the ability to develop a new venture and apply a new approach to old business.

### **Women's empowerment**

Empowerment is one of the key concepts of this study. Ajay S. et al (2012), the word empowerment means giving power. According to the International Encyclopedia women empowerment means having the capacity and the means

to direct one's life towards desired social, political and economic goals or status. Empowerment is a process by which women gain greater control over resources (income, knowledge, information, technology, skill and training), challenge the ideology of patriarchy and participate in leadership, decision making process; enhance the self-image of women, to become active participants in the process of change and to develop the skills to assert themselves. Entrepreneurship may be a force that mobilizes other resources to meet unmet market demand, the ability to create and build something from practically nothing, it is a process of creating value by pulling together a unique package of resources to exploit an opportunity.

Wikipedia (2019) Empowerment is the process in which women elaborate and recreate what it is that they can be, do, and accomplish in a circumstance that they previously were denied. Empowerment can be defined in many ways, however, when talking about women's empowerment, empowerment means accepting and allowing people (women) who are on the outside of the decision-making process into it. "This puts a strong emphasis on participation in political structures and formal decision-making and, in the economic sphere, on the ability to obtain an income that enables participation in economic decision-making." Empowerment is the process that creates power in individuals over their own lives, society, and in their communities. People are empowered when they are able to access the opportunities available to them without limitations and restrictions such as in education, profession and lifestyle. Feeling entitled to make your own decisions creates a sense of empowerment. Empowerment includes the action of raising the status of women through education, raising awareness, literacy, and training. Women's empowerment is all about equipping and allowing women to make life-determining decisions through the different problems in society.

### **Entrepreneurship Development**

UNDP (2010) as cited in Kennedy (2014) defined entrepreneurship development as referring to the process of enhancing entrepreneurial skills and knowledge through structured training and institution building programmes. According to UNDP, entrepreneurship development aims to enlarge the base of entrepreneurs in order to hasten the pace at which new ventures are created. This accelerates employment generation and economic development. Entrepreneurship development focuses on the individual who wishes to start or expand a business. Furthermore, entrepreneurship development concentrates more on growth potential and innovation.

### **Economic Growth**

Economic growth can be defined as an increase in the real value of goods and services produced in the economy from one year to the next. In other words, the country is aiming to have more goods and services available for sale every year (<http://economics.mrwood.com.au/student.asp>). Other scholars view economic growth as "a positive change in the level of production of goods and services by a country over a certain period of time". It refers only to the quantity of goods and services produced. It is often measured as the rate of change in GDP (Wikipedia, 2010) as cited in Kpelai (2013)

### **The Relationship between Entrepreneurship and Economic Growth**

Asc (2006), Ahiauzu (2010) and Henderson (2007) as cited in Adeoye (2015) posited that there is a positive relationship between entrepreneurship and economic growth while Henderson (explained that entrepreneurship is increasingly being recognized as a primary engine of economic growth. By combining existing resources with innovative ideas, entrepreneurs add value through the commercialization of new products, the creation of new jobs, and the building of new firms. The Global Economic Monitor indicates that nations with higher levels of entrepreneurial activity enjoy strong economic growth.

Findings from Zwingina (2017) are evidence that, entrepreneurship development is positively related to women economic empowerment in term of wealth creation and standard of living with statistical significance. This implies that, women wealth creation and standard of living improve as women entrepreneurship development programmes increase. This finding is consistent with the findings in previous studies such as Asc (2006); Ahiauzu (2010), and Kpelai (2013) as cited in Zwingina (2017) The study tallies with the theory of Economy. The theorists here saw an entrepreneur as an agent of economic change. They argued that changes either in the environment or organization are a transformation that can occur as a result of the reaction of some economic forces. Economists assume that

entrepreneurs behave rationally towards some economic forces (business opportunities, resources etc.) that result to change in environment in form of enterprise. Entrepreneurship was seen as a process or positive event to every economic revolution.

### Strategies to Starting a Business

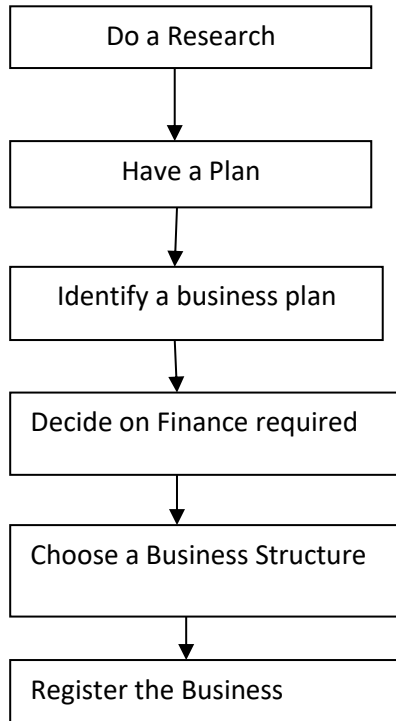


Fig. 1 Process of starting a Business

*Do a Research:* After identifying a business idea, it is necessary to balance it with a little research. Find out whether there is a need for the goods or services you have in mind. Make a research of your potential market. Ask pertinent questions such as: Is there a need for the anticipated goods/services? Who are the potentials e.g. children, adults, women, students, etc? Are there companies offering similar products/services now? What is the competition like? And how will the potential business fit into the market? These and many more are some of the research questions that require empirical answer.

*Make a Plan:* A plan is needed in order to make a business idea a reality. A business plan is a blueprint that will guide the business from the start-up phase through establishment and eventually business growth, and it is a must-have for all new businesses.

*Identify a Business Location:* Setting a place or location of business is important for its operation. Decide whether to have a home office, a shared or private office space, or a retail location. You will need to think about your location, equipment and overall setup and make sure the location works for the type of business you will be doing.

*Decide Your Finances Required:* Starting a small business doesn't have to require a lot of money, but it will involve some initial investment as well as the ability to cover ongoing expenses before turning in profit. Put together a spreadsheet that estimates the one-time startup costs for the business as well as what to anticipate and will keep the business running for at least 12 months.

*Choose a Business Structure:* A small business can be a sole proprietorship, a partnership, a limited liability company or a corporation. The business entity chosen will impact many factors from the business name, to liability, to how

you file taxes. A business structure can first be chosen and then reevaluate and change the structure as the business grows and needs change.

*Pick and Register a Business Name:* A business name plays a role in almost every aspect of a business. Once a name has been chosen for the business, it will need to be checked if it's trademarked is currently in use before it can be registered. *Wikipedia (2019)*

### **Importance of Entrepreneurship to Individuals**

Entrepreneurship is very important to individuals and the societies at large according to Adeyanju et al (2010).

- It is a means of livelihood for individuals by way of employment for the entrepreneur and his employees.
- It keeps individuals busy.
- It helps in improving standard of living.
- Entrepreneurship forms the means by which individuals get their various demands satisfied through the provision of goods and services by businesses.
- It forms a practical training ground for employees.
- It encourages employees to establish businesses thereby allowing talented and creative ones to display their talents and creative abilities to their advantages.
- It helps individuals to get improved goods and services as it creates competition among businesses.

### **Importance of Entrepreneurship to Societies**

- It reduces the economic problem of unemployment in a community, state or nation.
- It trains people and aids entrepreneurial development for the good of the community and nation.
- Entrepreneurship helps communities and nations to reduce socio-economic crime such as robberies associated with unemployment, thereby making the communities and nations enjoy relative peace.
- It helps in the revamping of a nation's poor economy and to improve the good ones.
- It helps in the utilization of a community or a nation's resources.
- It helps to reduce rural/urban migration.
- It helps to reduce poverty, thereby increasing the standard of living of the citizens of a nation thereby satisfying the desires of such nation.
- It encourages the patronage of local goods and services and relatively discourages patronage of foreign goods and services.
- Entrepreneurship brings industrialization and economic development to communities and nations.
- It aids a nation's wealth building.
- It helps to improve efficiency and effectiveness in operations.
- It allows a nation's resources utilization, while keeping down resources wastage in a nation.
- It helps to support the much needed industrial production of the real sector of an economy.
- It helps a nation to have improved foreign reserves and balance of payments and balance of trade, via increase in Gross Domestic Exports GDP and exportation.

### **Benefits of Entrepreneurship**

*The freedom to pursue your own vision:* You can have your own view of the world, and entrepreneurship is the only venue where you pursue that view and see the fruition of your vision. Self-employment allows you to do your own thing, and pursue those areas that you feel passionate about.

*The control and flexibility you have over your own time:* As your own boss, you work when you want to work; and stop if you want to stop. You can tailor your work according to your lifestyle and accommodate various tasks. You can work in however way you please. Self-employment means freedom from rules.

*The opportunity to learn and gain knowledge:* The entrepreneur often wears many hats, the strategic planner, the marketer, the customer service rep, and the sales rep, even the bookkeeper. There are a million things you probably didn't know before you started the business that you are now forced to learn and gaining all these knowledge enriches you as a person.

*The sense of pride and fulfillment in accomplishing things:* As an entrepreneur, you make things happen. You create a vision, lay out the plans to bring the plan to fruition and pursue the steps needed to make the business a success. Doing all these things can give you an incredible feeling of pride and joy – seeing your website used by people.

*The confidence you gain in knowing that you can do it:* Entrepreneurship is tough. There will be moments where you will question yourself, or your decisions into going into the business. Sometimes, you'd even think that you couldn't do it when the obstacles seem insurmountable. But once you succeed and overcome the challenges, you gain a renewed confidence and respect for yourself that you can do it.

*Potential earnings exceed a salaried employee:* As an employee, no matter how hard you work, the financial remuneration you receive is limited to your salary and an occasional bonus. As a self-employed person, you can earn so much more if you hit the right business idea and execute the business well.

*Business owner reaps the full rewards:* You are the business; anything the business gain is yours. If you are an employee in the corporate world, your bosses may even claim your success as theirs! If you are working for others, you are only a cog in the whole machine. *Wikipedia (2019).*

### **Impact of Entrepreneurship Development on Women Empowerment**

*Self-confidence of Women:* Increased self-confidence through entrepreneurship development gave the women a prosperous future.

*Economic Solvency:* The most important changes come through increase in income, which not only upgrades the individual's life but also increases her standard of living, bringing economics solvency within the family. The increase in her income is also an increase in the family income and as such it provides family members to a better life style, including education for the children and improvement of family health.

*Capital Building:* Their (Women) economic success enables women to expand their business, procure new machinery, tools, accessories and relevant necessities. Modernization of the work-place, introduction of new technology for increase production, increase of labourers, along with the increase in purchasing power, upgrades their status both socially and economically.

*Role of Status:* Some aspects of household decision making are reported to have changed as a result of women's contribution in family income. Most of the men now consult with their wives in important family matters. Their power of decision making has increased because they have money. Since women retain control over earnings, women can easily lend small and big amounts to business and others without asking for their husbands' permission. Since women perceive that their bargaining power within the family has increased as an indirect outcome of participating in the business. Women's status has changed in the family and society gradually. *Wikipedia (2019)*

### **Role of Entrepreneurship in the Economic Development of Nigeria**

Entrepreneurship in Nigeria has helped the economy of the country over the years in a lot of ways. Let us take a look at some of the most important roles of entrepreneurship in economic development of our country.

*Creation of job opportunities:* Entrepreneurship creates job opportunities, first for the entrepreneurs. However, entrepreneurs are referred to as job creators as well, because when they start a business for themselves they create jobs for other people. Once more of these businesses hire people, they reduce the unemployment rate in the country.

*Development of Small and Medium-sized Enterprises:* Entrepreneurship in a country promotes and gives strength to Small and Medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). The level of entrepreneurship development in a nation is determined by

the number of Small and Medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). The more SMEs a country has, the more likely it will attain progress.

*Increase in Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and Per Capital Income:* Gross Domestic Product is known as the total value of all the goods and services that are produced by a country in one year. Per capita income is the average income earned per citizen or resident of a geographical region in one year. Per capita income is calculated by dividing the total income of a geographical area by the population. Entrepreneurs make use of the resources in a country to produce more goods and services and added value. This will, in turn, increase the Gross Domestic Product of the country. Also, SMEs create employment income for people, thereby accounting for an increase in the per capita income of Nigeria as a country. A growth in the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and a high per capita income are strong indices of economic development of a country.

*Wealth creation and distribution:* Through the creation of business entities, wealth is mobilized and distributed by entrepreneurs. The public will benefit from the success and wealth of entrepreneurs in Nigeria. As businesses grow and expand, it allows for more investors to come into the market with their ideas to improve the goods and services and make them available at an affordable rate. The more capital and resources are being pooled into generating product and services, the more entrepreneurs, employees, and the public will benefit from it. Wealth is created for the entrepreneurs and also distributed to the public in the form of employment, goods, and services.

*Improvement of the standard of living:* The standard of living of a country is usually determined by the per capita income of the country. It is the amount of wealth, goods, and services available to people, especially of the lower socioeconomic class. Entrepreneurship through Small and Medium-sized Enterprises will provide more employment income for Nigerians. As explained above, this will increase the average per capita income of Nigeria and as a result improve the standard of living. Also, innovative ideas of entrepreneurs who create wealth, goods and services that improve the lives of the people in the country. *Wikipedia (2019)*

### **3. METHODOLOGY**

Considering the objectives of this study, the researcher relies on past related literature to lend credence to assertion as identified in this paper. This is based on universally accepted notion that past authorities views can be relied upon in academic papers and to be acknowledged. In that case, data for this paper were derived from secondary sources in terms of previous researches and analyses of scholars, books, journal articles related to the subject as the study involved in an extensive literature review which analyzed the importance and benefit of entrepreneurship as well as the impact on women empowerment and the role of entrepreneurship in the Economic Development of Nigeria.

### **4. CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **4.1 Conclusion**

Findings from this study and that of other researchers one can come into a conclusion that Entrepreneurship is truly a vehicle for women empowerment and economic growth of any nation considering the impact of entrepreneurship development on women empowerment and the role of entrepreneurship in the economic development of Nigeria in terms of employment opportunities etc. there by leading to economic growth of a nation.

#### **4.2 Recommendations**

From the above result, the study therefore recommends the following:

- Women should be educated on the importance and benefits of entrepreneurship which could be achieved through organizing seminars for women.
- They should be an awareness campaign on the need for women to acquire skills. Special training course should be offered for women entrepreneurs to learn a skill.

- The government should make efforts in providing entrepreneurship development programmes targeted at assisting the women to access funds.
- The government should beefed up security both in urban and rural communities and tackle the issue of corruption.
- The government should address the problem of power supply because it is the major factor in the economy in terms of entrepreneurial activities.
- Interest free consumption credit for women should be provided by the government, banks, financial institution etc.

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