



CHALLENGES HINDERING ENTREPRENEURSHIP SKILLS ACQUISITION AMONG RURAL WOMEN IN BONNY LGA, RIVERS STATE

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Abstract: The study was conducted to examine the constraints to entrepreneurship skills development among rural women in Bonny Local Government Area of Rivers State. The objective of the study include to identify entrepreneurship opportunities for rural women in Bonny Local Government Area, to determine the level of involvement in the entrepreneurship skills development among rural women in Bonny Local Government Area and finally to identify factors constraining the entrepreneurship skills development among rural women in Bonny Local Government Area. A total of 100 w omen were randomly sampled and used to obtain primary data. The questionnaire was used to gather data that was analyzed using mean statistics. The findings showed that rural women are very skillful in areas like mat weaving, hair plating, dress making etc. and they depend on their skills for their daily living. The study therefore recommends that Government, Multinationals and Non-Governmental Organizations should improve the infrastructural facilities in the area.

Keyword: Constraints, Entrepreneurship, Skills, Development, Rural Women.

Introduction

According to the business dictionary Entrepreneurship is defined as the capability and willingness to develop, organize and manage a business venture along with any of its risk to make a profit, it also states that entrepreneurial spirit is characterized by innovation and risktaking, and is also essential part of a nation's ability to succeed in an ever changing and increasing competitive global marketplace.

Entrepreneurship plays a vital role in the growth and development of any nation. The consistent rise in the level of unemployment and poverty in Nigeria has made entrepreneurship a rallying point to create employment for the unemployed. Ottih [2000] opines that the greatest of human endowments are intelligence and entrepreneurship. He said, besides man, animals and plants, every other thing in the world is a product of human intelligence and entrepreneurship. Also, Kishor and Choudhary [2011] in their study focused on the function of women entrepreneurs and formed that women have been making important impact in all segments of the economy in India. Entrepreneurship aid in empowering and liberating women by opening opportunities to advance their capabilities. On the other hand, if it is driven by anguish and reduced public support, then it may boost women's drudgery. In the same vein, [Razghandi and Darani 2007] quipped that in the current era, the increasing growth of the population, lack of resources and facilities and emerging new social and economic needs are the main

challenges facing the developing countries. Although some of these problems are rooted in economic slack, but with a view to development procedure in developed countries, entrepreneurship is the efficient tool for reduction of challenges [Razghandi and Darani 2007].

According to Verma [2010], challenges faced by women entrepreneurs in a developing economy include financial, marketing, production and workplace facility. In the same vein, Ahirro and Sadavarte [2010], indicated that lack of identification of financial affairs, complexity of loan process and negative attitude of banks towards women are limiting factors for rural women entrepreneurship in India. Also, the UNDP [2008] reported that Youth and women micro entrepreneurship development are limited by challenges which include; lack of knowledge and entrepreneurship skills and nonexistence of modern technologies.

Choudhary and Raylwar [2011] considered the main challenges faced by entrepreneurial women in development of their skills as- educational problems, initial capital, barriers in access to raw materials, psychological barriers, insufficient aids, high defects, lack of technical knowledge and weak infrastructure. Sathibama [2010] noted that entrepreneurs are faced with a sense of marketing barriers for their products, including family responsibilities that lead to non-access to some opportunities. Women entrepreneurs investing money in business is not large because of lack of awareness of sources of finance available to them. However, Kumar [2005] suggested that banks through rigorous interviews should try to find those women entrepreneurs who have better traits and skills to do business and give some relax in terms and conditions to developing women entrepreneurs.

Ming-Yen et-al [2007] found that women entrepreneurs in Malaysia faced a shortage of peer support networks compared with men. Though various women entrepreneurs and industry associations have been formed, which generally serve as a platform for women entrepreneurs to establish networks and exchange information and experiences as well as to conduct training programmes, seminars and workshops on motivation, leadership and entrepreneurship development and to provide other means of support. According to his study, this is due to the fact that women may not join these associations as they might be overloaded with family responsibilities. This limits the women entrepreneur's ability to seek advice and peers financing as well as the information networks needed for survival and growth. These challenges are faced by women entrepreneurs while establishing networks which are helpful to the survival of their businesses. Similarly, Raghavalu [2003] observed that women entrepreneurs cannot be ignored since they are almost equal to men in terms of significant participation in economic development. However, changes are limited in backward area because of poor socio economic condition and literacy level, low entrepreneurial skill, lack of financial help and related agencies. Others include limited support of Government, rare availability of raw materials on time and poor marketing facilities. In the same vein, Tambunan [2009] found that participation of women in enterprise is still low in Asia, because of low level of education, lack of training opportunities, heavy household chores, legal boundaries, customs and work in rural areas. Also were lack of supportive network, financial and marketing problems. According to Tambunan [2009], these listed challenges de-motivate morale of women entrepreneurs as they try to initiate entrepreneurial activities.

The interest of Government towards the wellbeing of rural women spurred them to introduce the National Directorate of Employment, established in 1987. This body is responsible for training, guidance and provision of finance for the unemployed and prospective entrepreneurs who wish to set up their own businesses, especially after undergoing skills training programmes organized by the institution. Also, the Nigerian Bank for Commerce and Industry was established in 1973, as a buffer to aid the indigenization exercise and grant credits to small and medium sized entrepreneurships. Ottih [2000] noted how rural women involvement in entrepreneurship skills training will help in income diversification as well as women not been a burden on their husbands. He equally said that rural women can also help in shouldering some family responsibilities through their income.

Entrepreneurship development among rural women helps to enhance their personal capabilities and increase decision making status in the family and society at large, [Sharma,et-al 2012]. In the same vein, Duru [2011] in his article titled, “challenges and opportunities for entrepreneurship in Nigeria”, concluded that entrepreneurship is required for growth and economic development and skill is one of the essential components for development. Also, Rana [2011] noted that during the last two decades, Indian women have entered the field of entrepreneurship in increasing numbers, that with the emergence and growth of their businesses, they have contributed to the Indian economy and society. According to Rana, women entrepreneurs can play powerful roles in confidence building as well as creating awareness in other women to promote self-reliance. Similarly khanka [2000] noted that a woman entrepreneur is a confident, innovative and a creative woman capable of achieving economic independence individually or in collaboration generates employment opportunities for others through initiating, establishing and running an enterprise by keeping pace with her personal, family and social life.

Entrepreneurs need various skills for launching and administering a successful business. Capability for recruitment, acquire knowledge correctly and using it in managing the business indicate the expert's skill level of an entrepreneur. Such skills vary in different businesses. Thus, it is certain that each business need unique skill and knowledge. [Ahmad and Moghimi 2001]. The viability of women entrepreneurship activities depends on skill, knowledge, talent, job capability and their tendency to being fruitiness in the community. Guidance of rural women towards economic and social equality is just by entrepreneurship skills.

Purpose of the study

The purpose was to investigate the constraints to entrepreneurship skills development among rural women in Bonny Local Government Area of Rivers State. Specifically, the study intends to:

1. Identify areas of entrepreneurship opportunities available for rural women in Bonny Local Government Area.
2. Determine the level of involvement in the entrepreneurship opportunities by rural women in Bonny Local Government Area.
3. Identify factors constraining the entrepreneurship skills development among rural women in Bonny Local Government Area.

Research Questions

1. What are the entrepreneurship opportunities available for rural women in Bonny Local Government Area?
2. What are the levels of involvement in the entrepreneurship opportunities by rural women in Bonny Local Government Area?
3. What are the factors constraining the entrepreneurship skills development among rural women in Bonny Local Government Area.

Methodology

The survey design was adopted for this study, with a sample size of 100 women [respondents], randomly selected from twenty out of the thirty-five communities that made up the Local Government Area. A total of five women from each community was selected for the study. The instruments used to gather data was a well-structured questionnaire designed in the Likert 4-point rating scale determined by the research questions and responses expected. Also, a structured interview schedule used for the respondents who could neither read nor write to complement the questionnaire. Data were analyzed using mean and standard deviation with a decision rule that any item with a mean value of 2.50 and above will be accepted while any item with a mean less than 2.50 will be rejected.

Results and Discussions

Entrepreneurship opportunities for rural women in Bonny Local Government Area.

Table 1 Respondents opinion on available entrepreneurship opportunities.

Entrepreneurship skills	SA	A	DA	SD	X	Remark
Snail rearing	20	15	55	15	2.35	Reject
Mat weaving	35	40	20	5	3.10	Accept
Fish farming	45	40	15		3.30	Accept
Weaving of traditional wrappers	45	40	15		3.30	Accept
Knitting	35	40	20	5	3.10	Accept
Plaiting of hair	40	30	20	10	3.00	Accept
Trading	20	10	55	15	2.35	Reject
Dress making	35	40	20	5	3.10	Accept
Making of local beads	45	40	15		3.30	Accept
Bee farming	10	10	50	30	2.00	Reject
Livestock farming	15	20	40	25	2.25	Reject
Product/processing packaging		15	70	15	2.00	Reject
Soap/cosmetics	5	15	60	20	2.05	Reject

Source: field Survey 2016.

$X > 2.5$ and above Accept

$X < 2.5$ Reject

Data in Table 1 showed the distribution of respondents based on their entrepreneurship skills. Nine variables were listed, the grand mean response on snail rearing was 3.0, mat weaving 3.1, farming 3.0, weaving of traditional wrapper 3.3, knitting 3.1, plaiting of hair 3.0, retail trading

3.3, making of local beads 3.3. the findings was indicative of the fact that rural women in Bonny are very skilled in a lot of things as listed above and it corroborated that of Ottih [2000] who opines that the greatest of human endowments are intelligence and entrepreneurship. He further said that besides man, animals and plants, every other thing in the world is a product of human intelligence and entrepreneurship.

Level of Involvement in the Entrepreneurship opportunities by rural women in Bonny Local Government Area

Table 2 Distribution of the respondents by level of involvement

Level of involvement	VHL	HL	ML	LL	X	Remark
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							Bee		farming
							10	10	50 30
Snail rearing	20	15	55	15	2.35	Reject	2.00	Reject	
Mat weaving	35	40	20	5	3.10	Accept	Life-stock		farming
Fish farming	45	40	15		3.30	Accept	15	20	40 25
Weaving of traditional wrapper	45	40	15		3.30	Accept	2.25	Reject	
Knitting	35	40	20	5	3.10	Accept			Product/processing
Plaiting of hair	40	30	20	10	3.00	Accept	packaging		15
Trading	20	10	55	15	2.35	Reject	70	15	2.00
Dress making	35	40	20	5	3.10	Accept	Reject		Soap/cosmetics
Making of local beads	45	40	15		3.30	Accept		5	15 60
	20	2.05							
Reject									

Source: field Survey 2016.

X > 2.5 and above Accept

X < 2.5 Reject

Data in Table 2 showed the distribution of respondents based on their level of involvement. The nine variables listed above were all accepted. The mean response on snail rearing was 3.0, mat weaving 3.1, farming 3.0, weaving of traditional wrapper 3.3, knitting 3.1, plaiting of hair 3.0, retail trading 3.3, dress making 3.1, while making of local beads was 3.3. This proved that the rural women in Bonny Local Government Area are seriously involved in entrepreneurship skills when presented to them. These efforts were acknowledged by Rana [2011] who mentioned that during the last two decades, Indian women entered the fields of entrepreneurship in increasing number due to the growth in their businesses thereby contributing maximally to the Indian economy and society at large, they equally noted that rural women entrepreneurs can play powerful roles in confidence building as well as creating awareness in other women to promote self reliance. Similarly, Khanka [2000] equally noted that rural women entrepreneurs are capable of achieving economic independence individually or in collaboration, generate employment opportunities for others through initiating, establishing and running an enterprise by keeping pace with her personal and social life.

Constraining factors to entrepreneurship skills development among rural women in Bonny Local Government Area.

Table 3 Distribution of respondents by constraining factors to entrepreneurship skills development

Constraining factors	SA	A	DA	SD	X	Remark
Difficulty in securing loans		60	40			3.6 Accept
Low level education and lack of training		50	40	10		3.40 Accept
Gender stereotype		30	50	10	10	3.00 Accept
Heavy household chores		50	40	10		3.40 Accept
Restraining customs and traditions		30	50	10	10	3.00 Accept
Marketability of products		50	40	10		3.40 Accept
Limited mobility		35	40	20	5	3.10 Accept
Lack of motivation		45	40	15		3.30 Accept
High cost of production		50	30	20		3.40 Accept
Lack of raw materials		30	50	10	10	3.00 Accept
Weak infrastructure		40	50	5	5	3.25 Accept
Lack of technical knowledge		45	40	15		3.30 Accept
Insufficient aids		60	40			3.60 Accept
Lack of entrepreneurial aptitude		35	40	20	5	3.10 Accept

Source: field Survey 2016.

X > 2.5 and above Accept

X < 2.5 Reject

Table 3 showed the distribution of respondents based on the constraining factors to entrepreneurship skills development. The findings showed that difficulty in securing loans from financial institutions had a mean value of 3.60, low level education and lack of training opportunities was 3.40, gender stereotype 3.00, heavy household chores placed on the women was 3.40, restraining customs and tradition 3.00, marketability of products 3.40, limited mobility 3.10, lack of motivation 3.30, high cost of production 3.40, lack of raw materials 3.50, weak infrastructure 3.25, lack of technical knowledge 3.30, insufficient aids 3.60, and finally lack of entrepreneurial aptitude 3.10. These responses recorded were indications that rural women were greatly marginalized in reaching their goals of becoming successful entrepreneurs. The findings were in line with Ahirro and Sadavarte [2010] who indicated that lack of identification of financial affairs, complexity of loan process and negative attitude of banks towards women includes limiting factors for rural women entrepreneurship, also Sathiabama [2010] noted that rural entrepreneurial women are faced with a sense of marketing barriers for their products including family responsibilities that lead to non access to some opportunities. Finally, UNDP report of 2008 listed lack of access to financial institutions, lack of social capital, lack of knowledge and entrepreneurial skills as well as non existence of modern technologies as part of limitations and challenges faced by rural women entrepreneurs.

Conclusion

From the findings, it was deduced that:

There are many entrepreneurship opportunities for rural women in Bonny Local Government especially in areas such as snail rearing, fish farming making of local beads etc.

Rural women in Bonny Local Government Area are low in their level of involvement except quite a few who are naturally endowed.

Efforts of women in the rural areas are constrained due to unavailability of capital as well as non encouragement from their spouses etc.

Recommendations

1. Government and Non-Governmental Organizations should create opportunities where these women can access funds easily.
2. Government and the Multinationals in the domain should improve the infrastructural facilities in the area as this could boost trade.

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