

PRIORITIZATION OF TRAINING NEEDS OF DISADVANTAGED YOUNG WOMEN FOR IMPROVED LIVELIHOOD FOR SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

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ABSTRACT: *Women form the great workforce of every nation. Providing opportunities for women, more especially the young disadvantaged, to participate in the economy will improve their earning capacity, help families to move out of poverty and contribute to overall economy. For disadvantaged young women to meet up with their responsibilities, they need to generate their own income and take decisions for their well-being. Disadvantaged young women capture all young women with fewer opportunities than their peers. They could also be referred to as young women at risk, vulnerable young women with fewer chances to achieve goals, such as education; disconnected or socially and economic exclusive young women. These young disadvantaged women need to be leveraged, given the opportunity in the labour market, education and training, to incorporate innovation approaches to skills acquisition that combine training with employment and income generating opportunities for sustainable livelihood.*

KEYWORDS: Disadvantaged young women, livelihood, training needs and sustainable community development.

INTRODUCTION

Women form the great work force of every nation. The time has passed when women are seen but never heard. Women and girls are disproportionately affected by the current economic crises. The need to ensure that the energy, skills, strengths, values and wisdom of women become an integral part of the remodelled economy infrastructures is now being developed by global leaders. Empowering and investing in girls and young women is part of the global solution for us all, now and in the future (Grace Machel 2010).

More often than not, it takes only a woman to make a difference. If you empower a woman with knowledge, information, training or a micro loan, she can lift up her entire family and contribute to the success of her community. If we multiply this impact of one woman by a hundred or a thousand and perhaps a million, lives can be very sustaining and more progressive (Condoleezza Rice, Former US Secretary of State).

Providing opportunities for women, more especially the young disadvantaged to participate in the economy will improve their earning capacity, helping families to move out of poverty and contribute to overall economy. The value of helping women to achieve their economic potentials cannot be overemphasized, women are responsible for the wellbeing of the home and they are also responsible for raising up the future generation and the impoverished people of the nation are also women.

Women have severally demonstrated their worthiness of investment and resources to ameliorate their poverty. Women are at the heart of societal development especially in the area

of the economy. Glassy in Ugwu and Mbalisi (2016) assert that Nigeria's female population is a powerful hidden engine for economic growth. Women make remarkable impact in area they find themselves, at home, farm, education, business places, work places and so on. Even where they are not directly involved, they play supportive roles to men who have also made remarkable progress in their own fields. It is important for every society to leverage all-inclusive human capacity, particularly women and specifically young women because of the role they play in the society. Women are critical catalysts for meaningful changes in the society. These disadvantaged young women, are the women between the ages of eighteen and thirty-five (18-35) years whose means of livelihood is either below or just of sustenance. Disadvantaged young women captures all young women with fewer opportunities than their peers. They could also be called vulnerable young women with fewer chances to achieve goods such as education or societal positions. They could also be referred to as young women at risk, vulnerable young women, disconnected or socially and economic excluded young women (Glossary 2009). Wikipedia defines "the disadvantage women as women from lower income background or the disadvantaged poor or the economically disadvantaged. These are typical with reduced upward mobility, suffering social exclusion and having limited access to natural resources and economic opportunities. Such groups are of low socio-economic status.

Many young women are confined to household work. Most of the employed young women are in petty trading or casual employment for survival. Most of them are in casual jobs with daily or short term engagement without better opportunities for education and skills training. Some of them especially those with low levels of education, informal sector work is a necessity for survival. They receive very low pay and face poor and unsecured working condition. Many of these young women will remain in vicious cycle of poverty and trapped in subsistence living. The infliction of the disadvantage could come inform of primary and secondary schools dropout, teenage pregnancy, early marriage, drug addiction, vicious cycle of poverty. People's way of life, for example, the nomads, the fisher folk settlement, different farm settlement, lack of employment of different categories could inflict disadvantage on people.

The need to sought for these young disadvantaged women within our nation Nigeria, both in the rural and urban areas has come in order to establish them in various areas of endeavour in other to build a sustainable community. Based on this backdrop, these young women, since they are still on their prime should be harnessed and helped to contribute their own quota for the improvement of themselves, their families and the general wellbeing of the nation.

Women and Livelihood

Women are empowered so that they can generate their own income and become empowered socially, economically, politically, etc. Ensuring access to financial resources is a key component of successful livelihood development. For disadvantaged young women to meet up with their responsibilities, they need to generate their own income and take decisions for their wellbeing. Sangha (2015) posits that in order to alleviate poverty, it is critical that communities have access to livelihood opportunities. Ensuring that families have adequate access to financial resources which is a key component of successful livelihood development. Furthermore, without adequate access to loans or insurance, families are vulnerable to negative shock. The UN Secretary Ban Ki-Moon (2015) in his message marking the occasion for international day for rural women affirmed that the role of women are significant and crucial for progress of rural households, local and national economies. Rural women are the backbone of sustainable livelihood and provide food security for their families and communities. He

urged the global leaders to seize the opportunity offered by the new framework to transform the disadvantaged young women's lives.

Livelihood is every human's right; it is the basis of our human existence. What is clear here is that livelihood for women is not a new issue. Gigi (2009) highlighted the link between women's economic empowerment and food security in women's livelihood. The right to food; agriculture, food security and food sovereignty, education, skills, works, markets and credit are essential for sustainable livelihood. Women are more concerned about issues of livelihood and vital conditions of life. Costa (2009) on women's economic, social and cultural right argued that women need to be assured of dignified livelihoods and access to means of production. Concerning women in the context of livelihoods and family, are the issue that must be redressed and woman being perceived as the helper rather than a protagonist, despite the significant work they actually do.

Wikipedia defines livelihood as means of securing the basic necessities such as food, water, shelter and clothing of life. Livelihood is also defined as a set of activities performed to live for a given life span, involving securing water, food, fodder, medicine, shelter, clothing and capacity to acquire above necessities working either individually or as a group by using empowerments (both human and material) for meeting the requirements of the self and household on a sustainable basis with dignity.

Why women are More Disadvantaged

In the 1960s, when most African States began to gain their political independence, there was considerable gender disparity in education and education is the bedrock of socio-economic development of every nation. Girls enrolment into schools were very low in Nigeria and throughout the continent. In Nigeria as at 1960, there were fourteen notable girl's schools, ten mixed and sixty one boys only. According to the adage that says a woman's place is in the kitchen or home and this kept many girls away from the school. However, with the government intervention and public awakening, parents began to send and keep their girl children in school. A target was set to achieve 100% universal primary education in Nigeria by the year 1980. Despite all the efforts made even into 1990s, it was still observed that gender disparity existed in education.

Reasons behind the Gender Disparity.

- **Cultures, values and traditions:** culture and social values contributed a lot to gender disparity not only in education but in other aspects of life. The general assumption holds that, it is better for the women to stay at home and work with the mother instead of going to school. Nigerian tradition attach more value to men than women. The patriarchal practises which gave girls no traditional right to succession. Some women are forced into early marriage. Daughters are identified with mothers and sisters and sons identified with fathers and brothers. Gender disparity even within the family was so endemic and prevailing. Even with the religion in both colonial and post-colonial Nigeria society leveraged men at the expense of women. Male are always believed to be superior while female subordinate.
- **Cost of education:** The cost of education is high and majority of families cannot afford it. The choice has to play its part and since male are preferred the choice would be on them while daughters continue to assume their home responsibilities which has affected both the women economy and self-worth.
- **Colonial policies:** At the onset of colonialism and Christianity, rigid ideas on gender perception which was imposed on African mind precisely Nigeria about the limited role of a

woman such as sexual satisfaction to men (husbands), working in the farm, tending babies and general home management so much disempowered the women educationally, economically and socially.

Women perform the bulk of household work, they often have little time left to pursue economic opportunities, and they also remain disproportionately affected by poverty, discrimination and exploitation. Gender discrimination means that women often end up in insecure, low-wage jobs and constitute a small minority of those in senior positions. It limits access to economic assets such as land and loans. It curtails participation in shaping economic and social policies (United Nations Women, 2015).

To give these young disadvantaged women the best chance in the labour market, education and training need to incorporate innovation approaches to skills acquisition that combine training with employment and income-generating opportunities. Support services including literacy and remedial education, vocational and job readiness training, career guidance and counselling can also help young disadvantaged women to find their way to work (International Labour Force, 2011).

In order to make the right options in the choice of skills, Fares and Puerto (2009) assert that young people who go through combined classroom and workplace training are 30 percent more likely to get a job than those who have only a classroom education; but those who take part in programmes that combine in-classroom and workplace training and other services are 53 percent more likely to find work than those with classroom-based training alone. As you make your choice based on the training and skills available to you, be very wise and make the best combination.

Training Needs of the Disadvantaged Young Women for Improved Livelihood.

- **Education:** education is the bedrock of every nation, women are part and parcel of the society saddled with a lot of responsibilities. They are mothers, caregivers and fully in charge of their homes, making sure that every aspect of the home work are harmoniously done for the general good of the family and the nation at large. For all these and more, to be well accomplished they need to be encouraged and supported with education for effective execution of these responsibilities. Most of these disadvantaged young women are illiterates, school dropouts, etc. According to Ikejiani in Ojo and Ronke (2010), education should aim at making men and women good and as citizens. The millennium education goals is to make citizens good as citizens with a view to making human race associate effectively and be happy as one oriented global people. Another common opinion held in all ages is that education should seek to develop characteristic excellency of which men and women are capable and that its ultimate end is happiness and the welfare of the society. Education is an eye opener when acquired, it liberates man from constraint, ignorance, exploitation, poverty, etc. For some of these young women that are illiterates, they can be exposed to Adult Basic Literacy, where they will be taught how to read, write and compute in any language used by man, with a view of communicating information, knowledge, skills, meanings and ideas for the facilitation of day to day living (Indabewa in Adekola and Uzoagu 2014). From this basic literacy they can climb the ladder of education which could fetch them good job or create self-reliance which enable them fend for themselves and be able to have sustainable livelihood

- Some of these disadvantaged young women may be exposed to Functional Literacy which is the combination of basic literacy and impartation of new knowledge in the occupation or the skills of the new learner. In functional literacy, the facilitator guides the learning towards the

occupation or the skills of the learner. This help these young disadvantaged women to have a good grip of the terminology of the area of their occupation or skills. Young women who combined classroom and workplace training are likely to get job than those who have only classroom education.

Akinpelu in Jegede (2010) define functional literacy as a form of education given with the view to help the beneficiaries function effectively on the activities or area they have not being functioning before. This could also mean giving the beneficiary the leverage of been able to read, write and calculate with the view to improve the disadvantaged young women economically on productive labour.

Functional literacy could come as innovative training for business skills. The subjects taught include; an introduction to retail sector, customer relations, front office management skills, basic financial skills, personal presentation, interpersonal skills. These prepare the young women to gain the work force at entry level with skills they can use to establish themselves or continue to support them throughout their career.

Remedial Education should also be provided for these disadvantaged women who for one reason or the other dropped out of school or have some education deficiencies to ameliorate. These could be the disadvantaged young women of primary/secondary school dropouts. Remedial education gives them the opportunity to amend or remedy their deficiencies and put them back to formal school system if they wish to further their studies, which at the end, helping them to meet up with their livelihood.

According to Ojo and Ronky (2010), education in a remedial form indicates that there is an earlier problem or fault that education is required to improve. Just as the name implies, remedial education is sought after, in order to correct deficiencies. They are sought for by completers of education programmes with the view to remedy earlier deficiencies. This remedial education is another option for the completers of educational programme of these disadvantaged young women for the improvement of livelihood.

Apart from educational training, these disadvantaged women can still be trained vocationally in various skills. There are various vocational centres organised by NGO(s), government or individuals, that these disadvantaged women could register with. Some of them with average academic background can enrol in basic computer classes, where they will be trained in Microsoft Word and Excel since we are now in the world of technology. Acquiring the needed technology skills can now secure permanent employment that will give them a better livelihood.

Traditional apprenticeships which are already a major provider of skills development for vocational sector work and training to enhance entrepreneurship. Traditional apprenticeships are the most prevalent of skills acquisition. Traditional apprenticeship is flexible, cheaper and has immediate practice relevance for many disadvantaged young women, traditional apprenticeship is the preferred way to acquire skills. Tie and dye, weaving of fabrics e.g. asoke, akwete etc., ladies attending classes in these will acquire the skill and start a small business that will help develop their economic independence, support their families and the society and their self-esteem. Some other skills include event planning, baking of all sorts, cake making and cake decoration, hair dressing, bead making, shoe making, catering and hotel management,

cosmetology etc. Tailoring is another aspect of skills for these young disadvantaged women where they will be exposed to training and apprenticeship.

Under the project given as skills, the women should not be left alone, but should be made to form self-help group or form cooperative group and be connected to cooperative banks to obtain loans to start their new learnt skills. Forming a self-help group or cooperative organization will be helpful, since it helps in building up their confidence, unity, social awareness and leadership qualities among them. These young women in self-help groups will also help strengthen their ideas as they collaborate on helping one another in idea sharing for the success of their new skills. By forming self-help group or cooperative group, it will strengthen them to put resources together for bulk buying which will enhance their better buying and profit making. This could also help them buy on government subsidized rate and increase profit making. Self-help group or cooperative group can also help in obtaining loans in cooperative banks to start off their business or expand it. Sansthan (2019) asserts that long term impact of self-help group (shh) will help reduce the number of young disadvantaged women who are living below poverty line. These disadvantaged women will get better quality of life and livelihood which will help to increase them socially, economically and as a result, the future will be bright for these women and their families.

Health Education

Livelihood of disadvantaged young women cannot be separated from health because everything is health and health is everything. Many of the health programmes are focused on improving people's knowledge about health. Many of such programmes focus on women and nutrition, hygiene, family planning etc. Health education is being taught to these women to help improve wellbeing and promote community development.

Wikipedia (2019) defines health education as the principle by which individuals and group of people learn to behave in a manner conducive to the promotion, maintenance, or restoration of health. The Joint Committee on Health Education and Promotion Terminology (2001) defines Health Education as any combination of planned learning experience based on sound theories that provide individuals, groups, and communities the opportunity to acquire information and the skills needed to make quality health decision. Information about family planning should be given to these disadvantaged young women so that they can make the number of children they could care for. This will also help them in well spacing of the children and prevent unwanted pregnancy. This will help them to know that the size of the family can be determined by individual choice. They should be exposed to food and nutrition, knowing the importance of balanced meals, that you must not go out for expensive foods but there are still cheaper foods when well combined, becomes more nutritious and balanced.

To ensure good health, these disadvantaged women should also be exposed in the area of hygiene. Peebuddy (2018), defines hygiene as maintaining cleanliness for keeping fit and healthy. Maintaining personal hygiene is important for these young women as it ensures good health and has several social benefits as well. Personal hygiene is a way of life which is usually concerned about maintaining cleanliness, following daily good habits and practicing a disciplined lifestyle. It helps one to stay protected from diseases by preventing the spread of harmful germs or bacterial around us by following an all comprehensive hygienic approach. Maintaining good personal hygiene helps in improving one's self esteem and will make you feel better about yourself.

Agricultural Extension Information

The young disadvantaged women should also be informed about agriculture as a good skill to acquire for livelihood. They should be taught on how to improve their efficiency for increased yields. Agricultural extension provides farmers with access to knowledge, information and technologies that will help them to develop their own technical organisation and management skills and practices on their agricultural skills to improve their livelihood and well-being. Agricultural extension provides a sound base for rural development. Agricultural extension is conceived as the development of individual, village leaders and rural society as whole and as a continuous education process. Agricultural extension education programme exposes people to the benefits of cooperative activities, new farming methods, improved seedlings and cooperative buying to reduce cost at government subsidized rate (Ezimah 2009)

Sustainable Community Development

Frankenberg in Onyeozu (2007) defines community as a territorially bounded social system within which people live, sharing common social, economic and cultural characteristics. Onyeozu (2007) asserts that a community may contain more than one ethnic groups which have different ways of life, still the social and economic problems which they fight together to eliminate, remains the common bond that tie them together. Community development is a process where community members come together to take collective action and generate solutions to common problems for community well-being (economic, social, environmental and cultural).

Most of the definitions of sustainable development are based on integrational equity, which captured the idea that the current generation must not compromise the ability of the future generations meeting their material needs and enjoy a healthy environment. A sustainable community is continually adjusting to meet the social and economic needs of its residents while providing the environment's ability to support it. It seeks a better quality of life for all its dwellers while maintaining nature's ability to function over time. Sustainable development can only be achieved through long-term investments in economic, human and environmental capital. At present, the female half of the world's human capital is undervalued and underutilized the world over, specifically Nigeria. As a group, women and their potential contributions to economic advances, social progress and environmental protection cannot be quantified. Better use of this female population could increase economic growth, reduce poverty, enhance social well-being and help to ensure sustainable development in the country (Organisation of the Economic Corporation and Development (OECD) 2008). This is why the disadvantaged young women should be leveraged on their various disadvantaged positions for sustainable community development.

CONCLUSION

A nation cannot develop in isolation. Where there are several disadvantaged populace, the country grows in a very slow pace or may be totally retarded. For a nation to have sustainable development, it has to do with all hands being on deck. Every member should participate fully. This is why it is necessary that the disadvantaged should be liberated, by directing their attentions to several ways of meeting up with livelihood. They could be leveraged through conscientization, Basic Literacy Programme, Functional Literacy Programmes, Remedial Programmes, vocational education, skills acquisition, etc.

Women are more in this disadvantaged group because of their large scope of responsibilities of care-giving, home keeping, making and rearing of children etc., and therefore should be helped in their prime for improvement of themselves, their families and the general well-being of the nation.

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