

Chapter 12

Growing Women Entrepreneurship in the Creative Industries in South Africa

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ABSTRACT

This chapter interrogates the potential of women entrepreneurship as an economic strategy to address unemployment and job creation. The chapter focusses on creative industry to demonstrate that creativity and innovations can activate entrepreneurship among women in South Africa. It is through entrepreneurship that entrepreneurs transform their innovative and creative ideas into business enterprises and job creation. Although female entrepreneurship for economic development is recognised internationally, it lags behind those of men especially in the number of women business owners and the size of businesses including access to economic resources. The chapter argues that entrepreneurs are central in boosting the economy and the optimal use of their skills, innovative new ideas that sustain entrepreneurial creative projects. The chapter makes use of a visual profile, participant observation, case studies, and face-to-face interviews with women involved in creative industries such as bead making, pottery, traditional dress-making, and traditional dance.

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INTRODUCTION

The problem of poverty and unemployment is felt world-wide and more so with causing a negative impact in the developing nations (Schoeman, 2019). Soudien, Reddy and Wooland (2019, p. 5) argue that poverty and unemployment have implications for human well-being. Global economic inequality has reached crisis point coupled with skewed economic systems widening the gap between the richest and the rest (Ofam, 2016, p.1). This situation is further aggravated by the adoption of neo-liberal policies which push poor and disfranchised into an economic struggle for socio-economic survival (Therbon, 2019). The development model developed from the North to bring development in the South, rather exacerbate poverty and underdevelopment (Hopper, 2012 & Rampele, 2008). Hence the alternative theories of development advocate for micro strategies capable of reducing poverty, inequalities and unemployment (Nayyar, 2003, p. 62). The World Sustainable Summit (2002, p. 12) regard the eradication of poverty as a development challenge thus it is argued that managing development should not only be to eradicate poverty but also wealth creation, which must become the portfolio of the institutions of state. Development especially in Africa is tied to socio-economic and political improvement of the lives of the ordinary people whom without the concerted effort of the state, the private sector and people represented by organs of civil society their plight would persist (Chetu, 2002 and Maathai, 2010. According to The World Sustainable Summit (2002, p. 12) 'there can be no development without effective states, and there can be no effective states without effective governance'.

Throughout the world, women in particular are faced with multiple social and economic challenges, such as poverty, unemployment and inequality (Triegaardt, 2009, p. 2). These challenges are often exacerbated by social exclusion and economic marginalisation of women. Lack of job opportunities and structural inequalities based on gender placed women in the marginalized groups (Okafor and Amula, 2010, p. 67). Poverty, unemployment and inequality are the greatest triple burden confronting the South African women especially those in the rural areas (Mzanga, 2016, p. 58). The unemployment rate for black women is 34.2%, followed by coloured women at 23.5%, and whites who are the least affect at 6.7% (Mhlana, 2018, p. 1). According to the World Bank Group (2018, p. 6), poverty is consistently higher among South Africans living in rural areas than for those in urban areas, where in rural areas, 65.4% of the population lived below the poverty line in 2015, which is higher compared to urban areas where 25.4% of the population were poor in 2015. The failure of the formal sector to absorb people in Africa in general and in South Africa in particular has seen most people resorting to creative industries in order to secure livelihoods aimed at mitigating the side effects of poverty, unemployment and inequality (evil triplets) (Cebekhulu, 2013 and Terreblanche, 2012).

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