

## ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION – A VIABLE TOOL FOR POWER AND EMPLOYMENT IN NIGERIAN YOUTH

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### **Abstract**

Nigeria is faced with myriad of problems among which are graduate unemployment, poverty, crime and other social vices. In a bid to mitigate the scourge of poverty and unemployment, diverse poverty reductions policies have been initiated with the objective of boosting industrial production and level of employment thereby checkmating joblessness, yet poverty and unemployment have remained endemic. This paper examined entrepreneurship Education as a viable tool for power and employment in Nigerian youths. The objective of entrepreneurship Education include to offer functional education to the youths that will enable them to be well employed and self reliant. The study looked at roles of entrepreneurship Education such as provision of individual with adequate training that will enable creativity and relevance to skill acquisition which encourages self employment and self reliant. It reviewed some techniques of acquiring entrepreneurship skills which includes industrial training exercise, workshop/seminar and excursion. The paper identified challenges facing entrepreneurship Education such as inadequate funding, lack of trained teachers etc and recommended formal integration of entrepreneurship Education into school curriculum at all levels of Education. This will help reduce unemployment since entrepreneurship Education is skill orientated and employment motivated.

**Key Words:** Entrepreneurship Education, Skill Acquisitions, Unemployment, Youths, Poverty.

Nigeria is a nation blessed with enormous wealth but a larger proportion of the citizens live in abject poverty and unemployment.

Education is defined as the process individuals undergo through the acquisition of knowledge, skills, abilities and attitudes that are necessary for effective living in the society. It then follows that Education should prepare people for enterprise as they may be employees, entrepreneurs, employed and/self employed. In Nigeria today, the above definition of Education is far fetched. Graduate find it very difficult and impracticable to get a job or to handle their own businesses or be self employed. Thus, the present Education has not achieved its aim of making graduates self reliant. It has failed in its responsibility of fostering scientific skills and attitudes as graduates roam the streets with no job and skill to start off their own business. Entrepreneurship Education is aimed at training students to acquire the right habit, experience and skills that are suitable for entrepreneurial endeavours and therefore prepare graduates with entrepreneurial knowledge, competence and skills needed to be self reliant and means of surviving in the face of unemployment. In the long run, there will be great reduction in the high rate of unemployment, faster Economic growth, increased productivity and new technologies, products and services.

The high rate of unemployment among youths in Nigeria has contributed to the high rate of poverty and insecurity in the country (Ajuto, 2013). In order to check the rising unemployment, surging crime rate and incidence of poverty, different government administration introduced diverse poverty reduction policies to redress the problems and

challenges (Eriki & Okafor, 2005), with the hope of making Nigerians creative, innovative and resourceful to create more wealth and improve their general wellbeing. Apart from the poverty reduction policies (PRPs), the Federal Government of Nigeria complemented the programmes with the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The Millennium Development Goals were initiated by the United Nations in 2000, an ambitious development Agenda to tackle frontally and head-long by 2015, the multi faceted socio-Economic challenges, stifling economic growth and sustainable development in most developing and under-developed countries (United Nations, 2000). The eight Millennium Development goals are:

- Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger
- Achieve universal primary Education
- Promote gender equality and empower women
- Reduce child mortality
- Improve maternal health
- Combat HIV, Aids, malaria and other diseases
- Ensure environmental sustainability
- Develop a global partnership for development source. Raimi, Bellow and Mobolayi (2010).

In spite of the diverse poverty reduction policies (PRPs) and romance with the MDGs, the wellbeing of the Nigerians did not really improve as evidenced from reliable Socio Economic data. International rating agencies especially UNDP reported that indices of poverty in Nigeria are worsening. Furthermore, official report of National Bureau of Statistics (2011) indicates that the unemployed stood at 14 million in 2011, compared to 12 million in 2010. This represents an increase of 16.7% within a period of one year. It has been consistently been argued that for developing nations (Nigeria inclusive) to grow and catch up with other developing nations, there is the urgent need for a viable entrepreneurship model that would help tackle poverty,

unemployment illiteracy, crimes, while at the same time promote growth, create wealth, enhance value reorientation, preserve the Ecosystem from abuse and in the final analysis achieve sustainable economic development.

### **Concept of Entrepreneurship Education**

Ezeani (2012) views entrepreneurship Education as teaching students, learners and would be business men the essential skills required to build viable enterprises, equipping the trainees with skills needed for taking responsibility and developing initiatives of perspective trainees. Olawolu and Kaegon (2012) view entrepreneurship Education as education that prepares youth to be responsible and enterprising individual who became entrepreneurs or entrepreneurial thinkers by exposing them to real life learning experiences where they will be required to think, take risks, manage circumstances and incidentally learn from the outcome. Ememe (2010) stated that Entrepreneurship Education enables youths to seek for success in ventures through one's effort. According to Abefe-Balogun (2012), Entrepreneurship Education involve a dynamic process of creating wealth through the process of creating something new and in the process assume both attendant risk and rewards. Izodonmi (2008) states categorically that it is a process of preparing trainees for self employment. Okereke and Okaroafor (2011) asserted that entrepreneurship education has been acknowledged world wide as a potent and viable tool for self empowerment, job and wealth creation. To Atakpa (2011), entrepreneurship education is an aspect of Education which equips an individual and creates in the person the mindset to undertake the risk of venturing into something new by applying the knowledge and skills acquired in school. In this light therefore, there is need to educate people to acquire basic entrepreneurial skills for self reliance and national

development. This is because many people today are living in poverty due to ignorance even though they have the capital but don't know how to start up a business. This position is in line with the views of Bassey and Archibong (2005) that entrepreneurial education provides the base for the development of a private sector economy as opposed to public oriented Education where individuals are prepared for white collar jobs.

### **Concept of Youth Empowerment**

According to Sasaka (2006), youth empowerment is an attitudinal, structural and cultural process whereby young people gain the ability, authority and agency to make decisions and implement change in their own lives and the lives of other people, including youths and adults. According to Ezeanu (2012), youth empowerment sprang from the need to enable young people to have a say in decisions which affect them. Young people are empowered when they acknowledge that they have or can create choices in life, are aware of implications of these choices, make an informed decision freely, take action based on that decision and accept responsibility for the consequences of that action. Oluka (2013) opines that any nation that is knowledgeable and skilled enough to influence positively the industrial, educational, agricultural and all other sectors of the Economy is classified as a developed nation. To achieve this fact, the youth of such nation must be given the right type of Education which will enable them to be self employed after graduation hence the need for the type of education that will make its graduate or products acquire skills and knowledge to fit into occupations or become self-employed. In recognition of this fact, the best education needed in this country at present is entrepreneurship Education. Since unemployment is increasingly high among graduates, a more dependable course of study is needed which entrepreneurship Education offers. This will help young people build confidence in their abilities to become

entrepreneurs and be empowered in their future as a result of varieties of entrepreneurial activities provided through Education.

The empowerment of young people should be everybody's business. It is no longer news today that most people involved in criminal activities fall within the youth age bracket. Armed robbery is on the increase due to unemployment. If the young people are not provided with employment opportunities, there is a chance that they risk becoming disaffected and also turn to crime and violence in order to survive or be co-opted by extremist group to engage in terrorist acts. Ojo (2013) attributed the youth unemployment problems to four major factors.

- High population growth
- Low literacy rates – Nigeria has low education outcomes with high dropout rates.
- A poor investment climate
- A lack of targeted investment in key, youth-dominated sector.

### **Objectives of Entrepreneurship Education**

According to Ossai and Nwalado (2012), Entrepreneurship Education is structured to achieve the following objectives:

- (1) To offer functional Education to the youths that will enable them to be well employed and self reliant.
- (2) Provide the young graduates training that will enable them to be creative and innovative in identifying novel business opportunities.
- (3) To serve as a catalyst for economic growth and development.
- (4) Offer tertiary institution graduates with adequate training in risk management.
- (5) To reduce the high rate of poverty
- (6) Create employment opportunities
- (7) Reduction in rural/urban migration
- (8) Provide young graduates with enough training and support that will enable them

to establish a career in small and medium sized businesses.

- (9) To incubate the spirit of perseverance in the youths and adults which will enable them to persist in any business venture they embark upon.

### **Techniques of Acquiring Entrepreneurship Education**

1. **Industrial Training Exercise:**

Skills does not depend solely upon a person's fundamental innate capacities but must be developed through training practice and experience. If the objective of entrepreneurship education is to equip individual with entrepreneurial skills, which are applicable directly to work, then the best techniques is industrial training exercise which would provide education and training that enable individuals to be involved directly in the entrepreneurial process.

2. **Experimental/Practical Technique:**

One of the objectives of entrepreneurship Education is to prepare individuals to act as entrepreneurs. One of the most efforts are techniques to facilitate experiments by trying entrepreneurship out in a controlled environment (Ahmad, Baharun and Rahman, 2004).

3. **Excursion Technique:**

This will facilitate first hand information on a particular field of study. This will enable young entrepreneurs' opportunity to acquaint themselves with the various skills needed in the accomplishment of their dream and aspirations as future entrepreneurs.

4. **Co-operation or Group Learning Techniques:**

This is the process of organizing young entrepreneurs into small groups so that they can work together to maximize their own and

each other's learning. This technique will prompt a sense of mutual responsibility among the entrepreneurs, boost their self esteem, improve social skills and offers greater comprehension of the subject matters.

### **Theoretical Framework for Entrepreneurship and Employability Need for Achievement Theory (NAT)**

This is a psychological theory of David McClelland (1965), which shows functionality of strong relationship between need for achievement, economic development and entrepreneurial activities. According to the proponent of the theory, there would be a relatively greater amount of entrepreneurial activities in the society, where the average level of need is relatively high. The importance of the theory is that when students/learners are sufficiently motivated to have a high need for achievement in life through entrepreneurship education, there is the greater tendency for them to set up their own businesses after graduation.

### **Risk Taking Theory (RTT)**

Another theory that supports entrepreneurship education is the risk taking theory of Richard Cantillon and John Stuart Moll. The theory perceives entrepreneurship as a mental education that stimulates individuals to take calculated risk for which future streams of benefits are guaranteed and people taking the big risk have to content with a great responsibility (Alam and Hossan, 2003). The summary of the theory is that entrepreneurship education improves the ability, capability and potentials of individuals to undertake risks for which economic benefits are assured.

### **The Schumpeter Effect (TSE)**

Schumpeter effect states that phenomenon of unemployment is inversely

related to a new firm start-ups otherwise called entrepreneurship (Garafoli, 1994). In other words, when new businesses are established in the economy, employability is stimulated through the power of creative destruction that is education act as an impetus for creating new ideas, improved techniques, new technologies and new products. Jovanovic (1982) is of the view that high level of unemployment is often associated with a low degree of entrepreneurial activities, that is, where people are not motivated to set up business enterprises, the rate of unemployment would be high. The implication of Schumpeter effect is that unemployment tends to be very high because people have lower endowments of human capital and entrepreneurial talents required to start and sustain new firms.

#### **The Refugee Effect (TRE)**

The refugee effect explains the process by which unemployment fast-tracks entrepreneurship activity. It is a model that dates back to Oxenfeldt (1943), who postulates that when individuals are confronted with the blow of unemployment and associated hopelessness, they often turn to self-employment as a viable alternative for keeping body and soul together. The refugee effect presumes that an increase in unemployment will eventually lead to an increase in start-ups activity because the opportunity cost of not starting a firm has decreased.

#### **Human Capital Theory (HCT)**

The human capital theory advocates education as a tool for improving human capital, stimulating labour productivity and boosting the levels of technology across the globe (Robert, 1991). Human capital theorist encourage spending on nation's workforce (people working in private and public sector organizations) because expenditure on training and development is a productive investment. Besides, human capital enhancement through quality education is

a critical factor that propels economic growth and sustainable development.

In summary entrepreneurship education is seen as an intervention tool driven by diverse theories for the purpose of stimulating employment, poverty reduction, fast-tracking Universal Basic Education (UBE) and promotion of gender equality in Nigeria.

#### **Roles of Entrepreneurship Education**

The following are the expected roles to be played by entrepreneurship education when properly and actively implemented.

- Entrepreneurship education can positively impact a learner at all levels on a wide number of contexts. This may explain why there are such a wide entrepreneurship education programs, all of which can provide important outcomes at various stages of a learner's life.
- Entrepreneurship education is a key to drive the economy, wealth and a high majority of jobs are created by small businesses started by entrepreneurially minded individuals. Thus it will make learners to be relevant in today's Economy.
- Entrepreneurship education equip people with traits of creativity, innovation, independence and foresight to promote local technology. National Directorate of Employment (NDE), Industrial Development Centres (IDC), National Association of Small Scale Industrialists (NASSI) etc provides a platform for people to appreciate local technology.
- Training and learning centres: Entrepreneurship education will serve as learning and training centres for the translation of dreams and ideas into successful venture. It will help the students to think entrepreneurial. This will help them to discover their potentials and work towards achieving it and by so doing will reduce over reliance on white collar jobs.

- Entrepreneurship Education brings about self fulfillment to the recipient when he has actually discovered the strength, weakness, opportunities and threat in business.
  - If entrepreneurship education is implemented, a lot of students who travel to urban areas to search for job will be reduced and the rural area will also develop and more jobs will be created as well.
  - Research have shown that 70% of the entire work force is employed by entrepreneurial ventures and hence rate of unemployment is greatly reduced.
  - Youths can build confidence in their abilities to become entrepreneurs in future as a result of a variety of entrepreneurial activities provided through Education.
  - Entrepreneurship Education provides a guide to empower the youth based on the belief that young people are themselves the best resources for promoting their development in meeting the challenges and solving the problems faced in today's world.
  - Entrepreneurship Education also provide the individual with adequate training that will enable creativity and innovative relevance to skill acquisition which encourages self employment and self reliant.
- (3) Unavailability of fund. Indigenous entrepreneurs do not have enough capital to start business.
  - (4) Poor enterprising culture. Traditional attitudes discourages the full utilization of human resources in most developing countries. People are not placed according to their capacity to do particular job but by sex, clan and kinship. Jhingan (2007), pointed out that people prefer traditional trades and profession rather than venture in new trade. The cultural value system within developing Nation is not favourable to economic growth for national development.
  - (5) Non inclusion of entrepreneurship programme in the school curricula.
  - (6) Poor societal attitude to technical and vocational Education development.
  - (7) Inadequate facilities and equipment for teaching and learning.
  - (8) Insensitivity of government to enterprise creation and expansion strategy.
  - (9) Poor plan and execution of processes of action.

Other challenges according to Nzekwe (2012) and Ikeme (2012) include

- (1) Management incompetence.
- (2) Inappropriate location of business
- (3) Poor capital
- (4) Lack of managerial skills and experience
- (5) Insufficient preparation and risk bearing
- (6) Lack of determination and zeal of hardwork
- (7) Lack of focus
- (8) Negligence, fraud, disasters and threat from the business environment.

### **Challenges facing Entrepreneurship Education and Youth Empowerment in Nigeria**

Entrepreneurship Education has been receiving recognition as a source of job creation and empowerment for the unemployed. But despite this, there are several factors that hinder entrepreneurship education in Nigeria which include:

- (1) Poor knowledge based economy and low spur of competition.
- (2) Lack of entrepreneurship teachers, materials and equipment.

### **Strategies for Effective Entrepreneurship Education and Youth Empowerment in Nigeria**

Ayodele (2006) suggested the following strategies that will help to solve the

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problem of entrepreneurship Education and youth empowerment in Nigeria.

1. Government should establish small business schools where interested students and community members can participate. This will make students to be self reliant.
2. Government should develop entrepreneur internship programme by matching students with locally successful entrepreneurs with clearly stated education programme.
3. The Government should establish entrepreneurship college aimed at fostering specific skills required for entrepreneurship. This will serve as skill acquisition centre for the youths.
4. There should be enough incentives for students of vocational and technical schools. This will motivate them to establish their own business after school.
5. There should be some form of genuine school work based learning incorporated in some students as part of the National economic development strategies. This implies enriching the curriculum to incorporate more vocational and technical training. The development of apprenticeship scheme would give new graduates some work skills and experiences.
6. There should be school based enterprises where students identify potential business plan, create and operate small business by using the school as mini incubators.
7. Government should create an Economic friendly environment. This centres on reduction of taxes on small scale businesses.

#### **Recommendations**

The following recommendations are made:

1. Programmes such as National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP), National Directorate of Employment (NDE), Family Economic Advancement Programme (FEAP) etc should be intensified by the government

- at all levels in order to create new ideals and new ways of doing things by individuals, agencies and governments.
2. Indigenous science and technology education should be encouraged so as to motivate the patronage for local goods for this will go a long way to restore hope in the life of the young entrepreneurs in the country.
3. Creating awareness of entrepreneurship education amongst the youths and encouraging the youths to harness their ideals and intellectual potential to make them self reliant.
4. Formal integration of entrepreneurship Education into school curriculum at all levels of education. This will promote human empowerment and development through entrepreneurial skill acquisition. It is a means of reducing unemployment since it is skilled oriented and employment-motivated.
5. Funding of entrepreneurship Education should be taken seriously by the governments. This can be achieved through increase in the budgetary allocation to the educational sector.

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