

**ENTREPRENEURSHIP TRAINING: A TOOL FOR JOB CREATION AND  
SUSTAINABLE NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA**

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**Abstract**

The Nigerian economy is characterized by widespread and deep-seated level of unemployment. This negative socio-economic phenomenon results from poor industrial base, inadequate social infrastructure and failure of the educational system to produce graduates with requisite skills relevant to societal needs. Unemployment is a state of joblessness under which sustainable national development is unattainable. Entrepreneurship has in recent time, been identified as effective means of fast-tracking national development of developing countries hence, the overriding need for entrepreneurship training. This paper posits that entrepreneurship training is critical in any effort to rescue Nigeria from endemic unemployment and under development as it provides graduates with necessary skills for self-reliance and job creation, which are necessary ingredients for socio-economic development. The need for re-orientation of the youths and governments' political will to overhaul the educational system in Nigeria with emphasis on entrepreneurial development are recommended.

**Introduction**

It is a common knowledge that the system of education bequeathed to Nigeria by her colonial master is devoid of technical skill acquisition and self-reliance which could result in sustainable

development. Undue emphasis was placed on clerical/administrative facet of education.

This distorted educational system continued in the wake of the country's

independence resulting in the existence of army of graduates who are largely job seekers, who depend absolutely on white-collar jobs available in government establishments, multinational companies and few indigenous investments.

In view of the economic contractions that took a toll on the economy of Nigeria and severely limited the capacity of private organizations and forced government to adopt “minimum government”, the frontier of employment availability contracted significantly. This condition is exacerbated by phenomenal rise in the number of job seekers (graduates) churned out from the educational institutions. The enormity of the situation can be appreciated considering the observation that while Ashby Commission Report of 1959 targeted 7,500 students enrolment in Nigeria universities by 1970, the actual figure was 15,272 (Oni, 1999). In the same token, the number of graduates leaving our tertiary institutions annually has increased steadily and significantly.

The foregoing smacks of widespread and deep-seated unemployment which no nation can pride itself of as it is antithetical to sustainable national development and even human dignity. Consequently, there is overriding need to overhaul the educational system with emphasis on entrepreneurship training/education which provides graduates with necessary skills and attitude that will make them self-employed, self-reliant, employers of labour and productive members of the society. Entrepreneurship training inherently fuels the drive for

increasingly efficient use of resources (human and materials) and serves as key to accelerating the generation, dissemination and application of innovative and creative ideas, which culminates in job creation, economic empowerment and foster sustainable national development.

This paper seeks to clearly establish that entrepreneurship training is a veritable mechanism for job creation and impetus to attainment of sustainable national development in Nigerian economy replete with socio-economic imperfections.

### **The Concept of Entrepreneurship**

Entrepreneurship has been defined in various ways by many writers. Utomi (2000) in Adidu and Olannye (2006) defines the concept as the persistent pursuit of opportunity to create wealth through innovative creation of a product or service that meets customers' needs, using scarce resources in a way that results in a growth of an enterprise which satisfies the expectations of stakeholders, whose roles sustain the business. In their own view, Nwaogwugwu and Ugiagbe (2008) hold that the concept is the willingness and ability of an individual (or group of individuals) to seek out investment opportunities especially through innovation, establish and run the enterprise successfully. Further, Egboh (2009) states that entrepreneurship involves perception and identification of business opportunities, decision on the location of enterprise, innovation, which involves creative response to an opportunity, risk bearing of all uninsurable risks and management of the ongoing organization.

We consider the last definition more suitable due to its emphasis on some of the issues we christened “tenets of entrepreneurship”, which include perception of business opportunities, innovation, creativity and risk taking. However, this definition is punctured for muddling up innovation and creativity. We therefore, see the concept as the process of perceiving business opportunity, mobilizing resources (financial, human and otherwise) and initiating action(s) under an enterprise which is characterized by risk taking, innovation and creativity to meet individual, groups, or societal needs.

#### **Entrepreneurship Training/Education**

As a departure from the hitherto prevailing educational curriculum, which was devoid of equipping, graduates with vocational, saleable and productive skills, the searchlight is now beamed on entrepreneurship training and skill acquisition. Weihrich, Cannice and Koontz (2008) assert that becoming an entrepreneur is an increasingly popular career alternative for many individuals and more and more universities have begun to teach entrepreneurship, making it a field of learning that is increasingly being offered across university campuses and not just within business schools. This is sequel to the significant reduction of opportunities for employment in large companies and government and the conviction that entrepreneurship involves a body of knowledge, skills and attitudes which can be learned and applied by individuals who are adequately motivated or guided.

The vital place of entrepreneurship training is revealed by the assertion by Limbo (2002) that the less emphasized but most important causes of unemployment and failure of small scale businesses seem to be lack of skill for successful entrepreneurship. Entrepreneurship training is a conscious process of equipping graduates with the skills and attitudes of entrepreneurship. Ezema, *et al* (2005) in Adidu and Olannye (2006) view entrepreneurship education as a specialized training given to students to acquire the skills, ideas and the managerial abilities and capabilities for self-employment rather than being employed for pay. It is a deliberate attempt to provide trainees with relevant knowledge, appropriate skills, competence and right attitude to effectively run or manage a business outfit. This training enables the beneficiaries to be self-employed, self-reliant, economically empowered and employers of labour.

#### **The Concept of Sustainable National Development**

Sustainable National Development is a relatively new and dynamic philosophy of development that lays emphasis on development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. It ensures that socio-economic development programmes endorsed by nations is devoid of unbridled exploitation and depletion of non-renewable resources, unmitigated degradation of the environment, dislocation of community life and impaired quality of life for large

sections of the population (Oni, 1999). Sustainable national development emphasizes the creation of sustainable improvements in the quality of life of all people through increases in real income per capita, improvement in education, health and general quality of life and improvements in quality of national environmental resources. It is the process of accelerating economic development in order to conserve and enhance the stock of environmental, human and physical capital without making future generation worse-off (Jhingan, 2007).

Sustainable national development entails that development be emancipative: development must foster self-reliance, local resource control, empowerment and participation of underprivileged and marginalized and offer opportunities for self-gratifying actions. It is concerned with transformation of the entire society for the wellbeing of present generation without jeopardizing the existence or comfort of future generation.

### **Entrepreneurship Training and Job Creation**

With the contraction in employment opportunities available in government establishments and large companies, entrepreneurship has a vital role to play as source of new jobs. Entrepreneurship training, which has been seen as a specialized training given to students to equip them with the skills, ideas and capabilities for self-employment and self-reliance rather than depending on paid employment, positively affects the formation, growth and survival of new

firms as well as the viability of existing ones. When many of the graduates are exposed to the nitty-gritty of establishing and managing enterprises successfully in the formal and informal education system, it will inspire significant number of the graduates to venture into the world of enterprise and be successful too. It provides necessary training in skills and encourages creativity and innovation in identification of business opportunities, organization and management of the enterprise. Consequently, it reduces the spate of graduate unemployment given the fact that it serves as impetus for graduates or unemployed youths to believe in themselves, be self-reliant, self-employed and, in fact, employers of labour.

The correlation between entrepreneurship training and job creation is obvious. Firstly, it enhances job creation due to its potency of making the graduates perceive business opportunities to be exploited.

Secondly, it provides the trainees the requisite skills to run their organizations successfully because according to Isoun (2002) in Egbah (2009), "businesses don't fail, people do". Suffice to say that people fail because they lack the necessary skills, attitudes and knowledge for entrepreneurial effort. Entrepreneurship training curbs this managerial deficiency.

Thirdly, entrepreneurship training facilitates the growth, profitability and expansion of any enterprise. This is because the entrepreneur, by virtue of the training acquired is able to manage the ongoing business efficiently.

Fourthly, the success of the entrepreneur results in the employment of others. They become employers of labour as their business succeeds and expands significantly. Many entrepreneurs have scores of employees in their payroll. The above reflect the strategic place of entrepreneurship training in job creation.

#### **Entrepreneurship Training and Sustainable National Development**

On account of the job creation inherent in entrepreneurship, it is a viable tool for curbing unemployment, which is a threat to sustainable national development. Egboh (2009) asserts that there is a strong link between economic development of any nation and entrepreneurship education and sees it as a key element in the industrial and commercial development of any nation. In the same vein, Zimmerer and Scarborough (2006) describe entrepreneurship training as the most significant tool for economic development in recent business history. It is pertinent to state that sustainable national development aims at maximizing the net benefit of economic development, giving everyone the chance to participate in public life, helping to curb degradation of the environment, promoting intergenerational equity, thus, meeting the needs of the present generation without endangering those of the future generation.

The correlation between entrepreneurship training and sustainable national development can be appreciated as; firstly, it equips trainees with skills to be efficient in the application of resources thus eschewing wastes and misuse of

resources which negatively affect future generation.

Secondly, the self-employment and job creation elements inherent in entrepreneurship training frontally tackle the spate of unemployment, which impedes sustainable national development.

Thirdly, resources that would have been lying idle or rotting away are utilized with the application of creativity and innovation.

Fourthly, joblessness breeds crime in the society as idle mind is the devil's workshop. It is a tacit fact that criminality inhibits sustainable national development hence, in as much as entrepreneurship training provides job for the unemployed and by extension, reduces crime, it definitely contributes to sustainable national development.

Fifthly, it enhances economic empowerment and standard of living of the society since those employed, earn income that enables them to meet their basic needs and escape the blight of absolute poverty. Sixthly, the GDP (Gross Domestic Product) of any nation is enhanced by more number of small and medium scale businesses that are successfully established and run in that nation. The hallmark of entrepreneurship training is to enhance the birth and growth of small and medium scale businesses which contribute greatly to the domestic products of that nation.

The foregoing ensures the attainment of present and future needs of any nation which is the core of sustainable national development.

**Conclusions**

Until quite recently, the educational system in Nigeria neglected the areas of vocational and entrepreneurship training. This resulted in the existence of large number of unemployed graduates oriented towards white-collar jobs. However, economic realities contracted employment opportunities in the society. As a result, government and authorities in the educational sector have turned attention to self-employment generating platform with inherent feature of creating jobs and entrepreneurship is a central phenomenon in this regard. Consequently entrepreneurship training has become a common attribute of most tertiary institutions with many of them establishing Centre for Entrepreneurship Studies headed by a Director.

This paper argues that entrepreneurship training results in job creation and sustainable national development.

In the area of job creation, entrepreneurship training equips trainees with requisite skills, attitude and knowledge for perceiving business opportunities, formation and management of enterprise profitably. This makes the trainees to be self-employed and delisted from the unending queue of job seekers. It equally creates job for others as more hands might be required to effectively manage the expanding enterprise.

Also, entrepreneurship training is effective tool for entrenchment of sustainable national development. It imparts skills and attitude necessary for maximization of resources (human and

materials). Self-employment inherent in entrepreneurship training and its multiplier effect of creating jobs for others directly reduce unemployment which is antithetical to sustainable national development. In the same vein, the economic empowerment and improved standard of living for the self-employed and those engaged in the enterprise, by virtue of the acquisition of relevant entrepreneurial training, ensures the attainment of sustainable national development as no nation can be said to be developed when a significant number of its populace is assailed by gross deficiency in meeting basic needs driven by joblessness.

Conclusively, entrepreneurship training is central to the attainment of economic progress in a market economy characterized by socio-economic deficiencies manifesting in unemployment and underdevelopment. This derives from the potency of entrepreneurship training to create new jobs through the establishment of enterprises (self-employment) as well as provide jobs for others; thus addressing the issue of unemployment which is a strange bed-fellow to sustainable national development.

**Recommendations**

To strengthen the capacity of entrepreneurship training to translate to job creation and sustainable national development, the following recommendations are made:

Government, through tertiary institutions, should embark on appropriate re-orientation of Nigeria undergraduates to have the mind-set of self-employment and creation of employment opportunities

rather than searching for paid employment which has increasingly become unavailable.

Handicraft/handiwork should be taken seriously right from the primary level of education. The practice of paying money in lieu of this essential aspect of education that instills creativity and innovation in young minds should be discouraged.

It is heart-warming that Centres for Entrepreneurship Studies are being established in our tertiary institutions. However, the centres should be well equipped with workshops, Mini-marts and other facilities that will enable students to acquire practical training. The continued theoretical approach to entrepreneurship should be revisited. Also, the directors for the Centres of Entrepreneurship Studies should be persons in disciplines that have a tint of entrepreneurship. The current practice where Mechanical Engineers, Industrial Chemist, and the likes occupy the helm of affairs of these centres does not augur well for professionalism and efficiency in operations.

Government should put machinery in motion to provide grants and requisite tools for young graduates who are motivated to venture into entrepreneurial milieu. This derives from the fact that lack of "seed money" is a common impediment to entrepreneurship endeavour.

Basic infrastructural facilities should be provided to serve as impetus to entrepreneurship activities. To this end, cluster or industrial parks should be established. For instance, it is not encouraging if the first challenge of an

average prospective entrepreneur is how to acquire electricity generating set with its attendant high cost of running, which eats deep into the viability of the enterprise.

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