
Entrepreneurship Education for Youth Empowerment in Nigeria: A Vital Tool for Self Reliance

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Abstract

The present realities of the need to develop and empower particularly the youth for self-reliance in the contemporary society, calls for another dimension in teaching and learning; i.e a change towards inculcating values that promote skills, competencies for self employment, independence, youth empowerment and poverty eradication.. This paper therefore, discusses the need and some strategies to empower the youths through entrepreneurship training (skills). Some definitions of entrepreneurship, Education, and Youth Empowerment, self-reliance are featured. Other discussions include the contemporary issues in Nigerian education, the misconception and the realities of the system. The paper suggested some procedures of production that will help to empower the youth. Also creative centres should be provided and the aims of education re-directed towards improving the skills, knowledge and attitude of the Nigerian youth in preparing towards their future jobs and make use of their heads, hands and heart wisely.

Key words: Empowerment, Youth Empowerment, Self-reliance and Entrepreneurship Education.

Education and skill are important elements of economic development. Thus, unemployment of secondary school leavers and graduates is a common feature of many

countries of the world today including the industrialized world. In the contemporary society, creative (white collar) jobs for the educated youth who lack the needed skills for employment are dim (Ali 1997). Unemployment has become a global concern and of more dire consequence is that of the youth. The Global youth unemployment rate was projected at 12.7 percent in 2012. Nigeria has an unemployment rate of 11% in 2012. The population in the 15-24 age groups has an unemployment rate of 25.6%, twice that of the 25-44 age groups and three times that of the 45-64 age groups (retrieved from <http://risenetworks.org/2013/05/16>).

The productive skills according to Lassa in Ali (1997) that are lacking in the Nigerian youths resulted in the high rate of graduate unemployment, bastardized work ethics, corruption in public services and so on. Umo (1995) was obviously worried about the situation of “jobless graduates in Nigeria which he described as the tendency to discourage further investment in formal education and training”. The youths and adults enter into the labour market without the skills and attitudes which the employers need. This poses a great threat to the skills for economic development and self reliance.

The mind set of young people wanting or waiting for government jobs has to change, hence, the need to empower the youths for self-reliance through entrepreneurship education. In contrast, the USSR ‘creates’ its technicians as it needs them, is prepared to leave the cultural aspects well behind if need be(Mallinson 1975:260) cited in (Ali 1997:29). To Kerschenstenin, the first aim of education to be accomplished by every school graduate should be:

“the development of trade efficiency and love of work and with this the development of those elementary virtues which effectiveness and love of work immediately call forth-conscientiousness, diligence, perseverance, responsibility, self – restraint and dedication to a strenuous life”.

In America there is strong faith in the comprehensive schools to prepare the manpower needed in industry. Onwuka (1997:24) blamed the type of education inherited from the colonial masters which offered a menial job (clerk, interpreter/converts). He noted that Nigerians are ill-equipped to turn out products with an independent or practical turn of mind. In the words of Landkard (1987) cited in Onwegbuna (2004:58) many employers believed that employable skills (skills that enable an individual to acquire and keep a job), are of primary importance. The issues of the moment become the development of well-prepared, skilled and equipped workforce for (self-reliance) empowering the youths through entrepreneurial education in the Nigerian system.

As society becomes more complex, life becomes tougher, and education has become more problematic in functions; therefore, different programmes (innovations) become necessary. In an attempt to produce skilled manpower, the federal governments' attention is now focused on entrepreneurship education across all levels of education. In response to the current socio-economic problems, questions were raised by various people as to what should be the educational policy and whether education addresses unemployment or manpower problem? What is then the meaning of economic growth when the basic essentials of the youths are not their? In what ways can youth unemployment be tackled in Nigeria? What are the economic empowerment strategies to be used by the Nigerian Government?

There are policies and programmes designed to help curb unemployment and poverty problems. Entrepreneurship education and all other forms (ICT) have been acknowledged worldwide as potent and viable tools for self-employment, job and wealth creation. This type of education prepares individuals specifically for the world of work. Entrepreneurship has been conceptualized as a means of solving human problems and improving on peoples living condition. The term "entrepreneurship" according to (Di-Masi 2010) involves the creation of new enterprises.

According to Mbanusi (2008) in Ihebereme (2010) Youths can become self employed after schooling, when they are given adequate training in skills, and thus; become active partners in both community and national development. Effective training in skill provides a platform for entrepreneurship (creation of new enterprises). This necessitated the spread and acceptance of entrepreneurship education as a clear indication of its usefulness and importance in this present time. The development of entrepreneurship strategies will be crucial in boasting productivity, increasing innovation, creating employment and prosperity and revitalizing economies. This paper looks into the need and strategies for empowering the youths. It also discusses the concept of education, entrepreneurship, and youth empowerment.

Definition of Concepts

Empowerment: The term Empowerment is used to refer to a range of activities and actions that may involve self-assertion, collective resistance and protest which are all geared towards mobilization of the youth towards the challenge or burden of unemployment and poverty in our society. No society can develop without carrying along the youths who are the leaders of tomorrow.

Youth Empowerment: Simply means all positive efforts taken deliberately towards improving the lives of young people, efforts channeled towards developing the capacities of young ones to draw

the best out of them, bearing in mind that they are truly leaders of tomorrow. It encompasses efforts from parents, youth and the government to develop young people attitudinally and creating conducive atmosphere for realization of aspirations which will translate into reduction in youth unemployment, criminality, human capital flight and above all national development . The number of young people in the world is at an all time high, at about 1.2 billion (<http://risenetworks.org/2613/05/06>).

Self-Reliant means self independent, self enterprising, self providing, self sufficiency, ability to face challenges, this is when a person is self employed.

Entrepreneurship Education

The concept of entrepreneurship education encompasses two important words, Entrepreneurship and Education.

Education according to Onwuka and Enemuo (1994:2) is the process by which people acquire knowledge, skills, habits, values, or attitudes. It is used to describe the result of the educational process. Education is not only an investment in human capital but also a pre-requisite as well as a correlate for economic development. It expels ignorance and liberates the mind from superstition, prejudices, poverty and ignorance. It has always been the desire and plan of every nation to give her citizens the best and right type of education.

Entrepreneurship according to Egai (2009) is a deliberate planned process of actions that are aimed at transforming a country's economy through primitive enterprise culture, enterprise creation and expansion and in turn creating employment for young men and women. An Entrepreneur is one who undertakes innovations, finance and business acumen in an effort to transform innovations into economic goods (Wikipedia, on-line). An entrepreneur is a person who creates, makes money by setting up businesses, especially when this involves taking financial risks (Wehmeier, 2001). An entrepreneur according to Akinola (2006) is a person who perceives a business opportunity and takes advantage of the scarce resources to use them.

What is then Entrepreneurship Education? This is viewed as a specialized training given to people to acquire the skills, ideas and the managerial activities and capacities for self-employment rather than being employed for pay (Adidu and Olannye 2006). 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. Entrepreneurial Education seems to be the major key policy to promote/empower the youths in Nigeria. This therefore should be reflected in the school curriculum at all levels. The thrust of the programme should be in promotion, training, equipping the youth and in advisory services, in income generation activities.

Objectives of Entrepreneurship Education

The objectives of entrepreneurship education and training, as succinctly presented by the European Union (2002) include raising students' awareness on self-employment as a career option (the message being that you can become not only an employer, but also an entrepreneur); promoting the development of personal qualities that are relevant to entrepreneurship, such as creating, risk taking and responsibility; and providing the technical and business skills that are needed in order to start a new venture. The primary focus of the teacher in achieving the above objectives is to; teach basic entrepreneurial skills, ensure that learners understand the real world of work and entrepreneurship to the economic system through classroom and practical experience, launch an in school business, explore learners' entrepreneurial qualities.

Contemporary Issues in Nigeria Education

It is now universally recognized that formal and non formal education are essential for self-actualization, better health and income, and improved life-style or quality of life (Family Support Programme FSP, 1994). Poverty and illiteracy are still very high in Nigeria and the youth with the statistic of 94.7% of the Nigeria population are unemployed (Egai 2009). The greatest proportions of the nation's unemployed are youths between ages of 15 to 29 years. Their continued unemployment constitutes a huge waste of human and financial resources and worst still, leads to anti-social behaviours. The Federal and State Governments recognize the above fact and have instituted a number of programmes for the unemployed but to no avail. In the contemporary society; education that is needed is such that is responsive to the need of the society. Contemporary education should address the issues through policies and programmes that promote qualitative and functional education which involves skills that can significantly affect the quality of life in the society and maximally contribute to the process of nation building. In other words, in the face of the serious and growing threat of unemployment in Nigeria today, the need for Nigerians to seek avenues for self-employment and self-fulfillment is now compelling. Hence, the citizens can no longer rely on the Nigerian Labour market to provide them with jobs. Therefore, invention of an alternative source of employment (ie encouraging self employment) becomes the current issue.

Nigeria's future prosperity depends on producing children and youths who are well prepared to take their place in the society. This can be done by ensuring better education for the youth at all levels. According to the National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS, 2004), to improve the lives of Nigerian people; there is need to strengthen the skill base through a better schools system and colleges and better trained teachers and trainers, by ensuring that funds are spent on; (a) Providing courses that build vocational and entrepreneurial skills. (b)

Building technical schools and buying equipments (c) Improving training and exposure to information and communication technology at all levels.

In order to enhance self-employment, entrepreneurship education should be integrated in the curricula at all levels of education. The infusion will invariably strengthen the weakness of the contemporary universal education in the country. Entrepreneurship skill should be made compulsory for all disciplines in the 21st century for the students who wish to survive and thrive. Everybody needs entrepreneurship education.

Entrepreneurship Education as a Link between Formal and Non-Formal Education

In contemporary Nigerian education, the issues become how to marry formal and non formal education together for the growth of the nation.

In the traditional society (prior to the introduction of formal education), learning took place through the apprentice system. In its crude form, it consisted in watching elders and following their examples thereby gaining experience in the use of some tools and equipment over time. The modern apprentice system, however, involves learning through the acquisition of some formal education and the opportunity to learn modern trades, such as motor mechanics, carpentry, printing and few others. This however, is done under some contractual agreements. Modern apprenticeship continues to function in Nigeria and accounts for a significant percent of employed persons.

The colonial era policy was not really directed towards meeting the manpower requirement of the Nigeria nation. There was no conscious manpower planning, education was literary and the schools aim was to produce interpreters who can read the bible for religious purposes and book keepers and clerks.

In 1959, Federal Government set up a panel (known as Ashby commission) to look into the nation's manpower needs in the post secondary and higher education field. Other bodies include the National Universities Commission (NUC), the National Manpower Board (NMB) and the Secretariat and the Regional (State) Manpower Committees (Anyanwu 1997). In response to the yearning of the Nigerian citizens, to make education relevant to the Nigerian need and situation; led to the 1969 curriculum conference and various other National education policy Review/Reform Conferences, by different bodies such as the National Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC), National School Curriculum Review Conference (NSCRC), National Commission for Mass Literacy (NCML) and few others. Before the introduction of the National policy on Education in 1981 which brought

comprehensiveness into secondary education, education at all levels was devoid of practical relevance. The products of the system came out with no skill acquisition and as such were unemployable in most establishments. The shift from general education to specifically entrepreneurship education (skills) becomes necessary in the present realities of chronic unemployment especially among the youth. This is because education and skills are important elements of economic development.

In the contemporary society, there's increase in youth unemployment and to meet the training needs of all spectrums of human resources the apprenticeship scheme was to be complemented by the National Directorate Employment under the Ministry of Employment, Labour and Productivity. Both the Federal (NDE Programme) and the State governments programme appear to have planning and implementation problems. Entrepreneurship education therefore entails the combination of knowledge, skill, competency, that is, academic, practical, vocational and technical skills in addition to science and technology.

The Misconception and Realities of the System

Misconception – Is referred to a belief or an idea that is not based on correct information or that is not understood by people (Oxford Advanced Learners' Dictionary). It is the privately held knowledge of an individual or groups that depart significantly from the publicly held version of that domain and concepts. It is surprising that areas that ought to have enhanced skills like Agriculture, Auto mechanics, Building construction, computer education, Electronics, clothing and textiles, wood work, fine Arts, and music are classified as electives (Federal Republic of Nigeria FRN, 2004). The structure of education implementation period of 6-5-4 systems under National policy these subjects which are the leading skill subjects were misconstrued by the government. Instead of regarding these vocational subjects as compulsory subjects they are regarded as subjects done by non-serious students. Igata (1990) noted that some skilled subjects are grouped and regarded as commercial subjects and tagged as women subjects. For instance, Typewriting, Commerce, Business Method, Secretarial subjects, shorthand, Home economics and host of others. Most people of the world believed that such knowledge (skill acquisition) is meant for the dullard, poor and handicapped) peel less privileged, aged and female students. The Nigerian Education system has contributed to the relegation of these subjects as learning that is insignificant. The erroneous notion has largely contributed to the non-acquisition of entrepreneurial skills by the youth.

In order to instill spirit of Entrepreneurship education in the youth there should be an attitudinal change in the mind set of the people. Supporting this view Obiojole (2008) noted that “vocational education has been witnessing academic snobbery by secondary school students because of the erroneous notion that this type of education is

meant for mediocre students who could only work with their hands rather than their heads. Unfortunately, the challenge of education today is such that its emphasis should be on the use of the head (thinking), hand (skills) and the heart (feelings) (Kurumeh 2012). Educators have advocated creating situations in which students engage in reflective thinking, reasoning and increased knowledge to invent and discover development through entrepreneurship training.

The Realities of the System

Education has been recognized as an indispensable vehicle for youth empowerment, since it is through education that the young talents and general consciousness of individuals is best developed. The reality of the Nigerian education system is that from the beginning the education system was theoretically oriented. The western education system which at best was calculated to produce clerks and interpreters of the colonial era was ill-equipped. Their role has been questioned, which led to the curriculum conference of the 1969 at Addis Ababa. This resulted to the first publishing of the National Policy on Education in 1977, Revised in 1989, 1998 and 2004.

The issue of poverty eradication has been a top priority of many governments and institutions especially in the developing countries. The need to abolish illiteracy, poverty; corruption, insecurity and unemployment which are the major developmental challenges Nigeria is facing, demand re-orientation and re-structure of the system and economy. In addressing this issue the curriculum should be re-designed to adequately make provision for the necessary entrepreneurship skill. The reality is that the system is not designed to help the youth to become self-employed and self-reliant.

The pressure of globalization and the MDG's/NEEDs create new challenges in the Nigerian education system. The global attention has been made to develop the spirit/culture of entrepreneurial skill in the Nigerian students. The reality is that the state of education has been said to be in a state of decay (Sam-Ngwu 2010). Entrepreneurship remains the bedrock and a good road map for a meaningful national and sustainable development. The Federal Government has been enjoined to commit at least 40% of the national budget to education, science and technology, if it tends to realize vision 20:20. The reality is that if the present trend continues the country is not likely to meet the Millennium Development Goals (MDG's) (National Planning Commission 2004). About 170,000 graduates are turned out annually from our tertiary institutions, if only 10% of this population become successful entrepreneurs, the country will be transformed rapidly (Sunday Champion March 12 2006). Until adequate skill acquisition programmes for youths compliment Federal Government efforts in job creation, there may not be an end to the different kinds of nefarious acts that have dented the image of the country due to the high rate of jobless youth. This is a

reality. The need for a life long learning and training in the skilled workforce to facilitate poverty alleviation and integrate the youth into the labour market with competitive technical skills to be their own boss and not to rely on the white-collar job that is visibly absent.

Strategies for Effective Implementation of Entrepreneurship Education for Empowering the Nigerian Youth

Some of the enabling factors for effective implementation of Entrepreneurship Education include;

- 1. Increasing Interest:** The first step is to increase interest in the area of entrepreneurship education in various institutions. There is the need to establish an entrepreneurship development Institute in Nigeria as was done in India in 1983 (Ozumba 2003).
- 2. Funding:** Every project requires money for its effective implementation. The establishment of entrepreneurship workshop and providing facilitates for entrepreneurship education requires finance. Government should finance these projects adequately. Facilitation of easy loans from financial institutions and state governments (such as the Peoples Bank, Commercial Banks) for small and medium scale profit oriented project for graduating youth should also be encouraged. Government should encourage the youth to take advantage of NDE apprenticeship and loan schemes for self sustainable development. Therefore, invigorating financial market is necessary in Nigeria in order to make funds available to the future entrepreneurs (the youth) in form of loan and advances.
- 3. Employment of Qualified and Competent Teachers:** The teachers employed should be professionally qualified in practical skills and knowledge of business venture. Adetayo (2009) suggested that qualified, competent and dedicated teachers who have the interest of students at heart should be employed in schools to ensure the delivery of qualitative education.
- 4. Creating Enabling Environment/Training Centers:** Entrepreneurship training centers or development vocational institutes that will help engage the youth in real practical activities is essential. Thus, for the opportunity of students to participate in skills training in science and technology, well equipped laboratories, for adequate skill acquisition are needed for effective implementation of Entrepreneurial education. Establishment of Entrepreneurship centers for youth empowerment through state, community orientation internship/apprenticeship support programme will help the students to practice with small business organizations with the aim of exposing the skills they learned in the school.

5. **Seminars/Workshops:** Some entrepreneurs and experts in trade and skills like mechanics, Bakery production, Computer/ICT etc. resource persons can be invited to teach the youths how to make these things. This will widen their minds and help to actualize their dreams.
6. **Capacity Building:** The establishment of small scale industries e.g. for the production of izal, shampoo, car wash and food enterprise like snacks, pop-corn, Soya beans among others and encouraging students to visit such industries periodically to learn how to produce them. Government ability to stimulate and sustain entrepreneurship development in Nigeria will remove competition.
7. Regular improvement of teachers' welfare to achieve job satisfaction and a commitment to total care of the students.
8. **Follow-Up:** Constant and follow-up visits to the local entrepreneurship centers should be done by students with their teachers, as this will avail students the opportunity to familiarize themselves with all the entrepreneurial skills and management tasks. This will enable them develop interest and direct their talents towards entrepreneurial aspiration. Follow-up activities will serve as an eye-opener for the students to actualize their dreams.
9. **Teaching Techniques/Method of Teaching Approach:** In teaching entrepreneurship education, the employed competent teachers should endeavour to use appropriate teaching methods such as demonstration, team teaching, involving resources person, collaborative learning and field trip. Teaching strategies should be career-oriented and work-related. Omoifo (2009) is of the view that for a successful implementation of entrepreneurial curriculum, the teachers should use project work, case studies, field trips and link with entrepreneur in the community. Entrepreneurship educators should stress in the curriculum, the importance of hands-on, active participation; within a real life entrepreneurial environment, where constructive feedback from an expert is provided.

Production of items and procedures enumerated below should be introduced into the curriculum at all levels to help the youths in wealth creation and human/national development.

1. Bleach/scrubbing powder
2. Dettol production
3. Disinfectant (izal)
4. Air freshner
5. Liquid soap
6. Car wash

Bleach/Scrubbing Powder

Materials

1. HTH Chlorine (1kg)
2. Soda ash (1kg)
3. Caustic soda($\frac{1}{2}$ kg)
4. Menthol (small pieces)
5. Industrial salt($\frac{1}{4}$ kg)
6. Water (20 liters.)

Procedure

Measure out 20 litres of water and pour the chlorine into it, followed by caustic soda, add industrial salt, mix properly, Grind your menthol into a fine, powder before adding it to the entire mixture, then stir very well, cover the entire mixture and leave for 12 hours and filter it. The residue is not a waste, it can be used for scrubbing powder by adding little quantity of sulphur-ic acid to it, mix together and allow it to dry well before usage.

Detol Production

Material

1. Pine oil($\frac{1}{2}$ litre)
2. Texapon ($\frac{1}{4}$ kg)
3. Phenol($\frac{1}{4}$ litre)
4. Chloroxynol($\frac{1}{2}$ litre)
5. Water(1 liter)
6. I.P.A (3 liters)
7. Detol colour (optional).

Procedures

Measures your phenol into a bowel and add texapon into it. Mix thoroughly add pine oil to it and stir well, add chloroxynol, followed by water intermittently as you stir. Add your 3 litres 1PA, mix together and leave for a while for the chocking smell to subside then it can be used.

The above production procedures should be innovated into the curriculum. Also there is the urgent need for awareness and sensitization workshops to be organized by the youth's forum, associations, government agencies and Non governmental agencies (NGO's) and allied organizations to empower, educate/teach the youths.

Suggestion

In order to overcome the challenges of youth unemployment, the paper offered suggestions with a view to enhancing youth empowerment through entrepreneurship

education. All hands must be on deck (Government, Institutions of learning and so on) to make sure the youths (job seekers) are engaged in one skill or the other that aim at poverty eradication, employment, generational of wealth and wealth creation through series of production procedures as enumerated above.

Conclusion

The increasing interest in the area of entrepreneurship in secondary education and university has been necessitated because of rapid unemployment rate that has plagued the Nigerian youth as can be seen from the foregoing. These youths are majorly the graduates of the educational cadre. Entrepreneurship education will produce entrepreneurially inclined youth who will be self employed, providing job for themselves and for others; thereby reducing crime and fostering economic development of the nation. The identified strategies and the production procedures enumerated above will be effective in empowering and developing the entrepreneurial spirit/culture in the Nigerian youth. There is therefore the need for Nigerian youth to be empowered for self reliance by inculcating entrepreneurship education and training at all levels of education in Nigeria.

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