

# **JOB CREATION AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION CHALLENGES FOR THE 21ST CENTURY**

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## **Abstract**

Low level of economic activities of a nation leads to low level of job creation. Sourcing an alternative way of improving economic activities and human resources development will improve the level of job creation in the country. In Nigeria, economic activities are strangled which leads to low job opportunities. There is the need therefore, to find alternative means of improving economic activities for human resources development and job creation. The scenario revealed that state of the economy did not favour or guarantee job creation and reduction of unemployment, especially in a situation where the state economy is based on government budgetary allocations. Possible ways of eliminating unemployment and solving economic problems were highlighted. Entrepreneurship education was highlighted as a panacea for solving the economic problems of the jobless members of the society, especially the skilled graduates. Entrepreneurship education is identified as an alternative path to youth empowerment as they will acquire necessary skills and competence for self reliance.

Economic depression is the suppression of economic development and activities which results into poverty and unemployment. The state of the economy of any nation determines the level of economic activities and the extent of job creation within her labour market. Oranu (1990) stated that the economic down-turn of any nation will not encourage new investments which could have created jobs for the citizenry. A close look at the visible manifestation of the economic recession in the industrialized countries shows that low grade jobs are the most affected by the state of the economy. This is evidenced in the disengagement saga of Federal and State civil service and the near closure of almost all the industrial sectors that gives jobs to the youths. International Labour Organization (I.L.O. 1976) lamented that the collapse of numerous theories which were previously used by the market economy, economist to remedy the unemployment problems in many States have not yielded any positive results. The organization also stated that new jobs must be created for young graduates in order to reduce poverty and enhance the standard of living of the people. In order to alleviate the problems of the citizenry in terms of job creation and poverty eradication, the Federal Government of Nigeria established the National Directorate of Employment (NDE) in (1988) and recently the Poverty Alleviation Programme (PAP) in (2001). All these programmes are meant to cushion the effect of unemployment in Nigeria.

Yesuf (1972) highlighted the warning by economists and social scientists, stating the gravity of the problems of unemployment and its attendant poverty implications. He stated that the economic policies designed to ensure high ratio of growth of the national product are no longer adequate for Nigeria. A well articulated economic development will on its own create enough job opportunities for the masses. The alleviation poverty can only be actualized by a well planned economic activities and policies that are well implemented.

A deliberate creation of job opportunities for gainful employment should be the guiding principle of public and private sectors of our economy. That should be a step forward in poverty alleviation in our society. Enugu state for example have achieved an economic growth rate which compares favourably with what can be achieved anywhere in Nigeria.

Onyia (2005) observed that there are alternative paths to economic development, and along some of these more jobs will be created more quickly. He stated that the main purpose of economic development is to raise levels and standards of living of the citizenry. He emphasized that employment objectives should be given weight in the choice of alternative paths of economic development. That is the surest means of improving the living standards of citizens of the state, and in fact, the entire country as a whole.

### **The Problem of Job Creation**

The economy of Nigeria have strangulated industrial development, thereby creating poverty at all levels of human existence in the nation. Unemployed youths roam the streets with their faces showing poverty at its peak. The poverty alleviation programmes was meant to cushion the unemployment problems, but the effect is still being seriously felt.

According to the blue print of National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP) (2001) many unrealizable strategies were embarked on for the eradication of absolute poverty in Nigeria, but all to no avail in many States. Youth empowerment Scheme (YES) could not work due to poor implementation and corruption within the society. Therefore, the problem is multi-dimensional in terms of implementation and policy formulation. The jobless members of the society in this nation are confused on how to solve their economic problems, thereby causing some of them to engage in criminal acts against their wish. It is more heart breaking to note that 85% of this army of the unemployed are graduates without employable skills. There is therefore, the need to find alternative ways of providing succor to the masses who need jobs to eliminate poverty. In the opinion of Onyia (2005) he emphasized that it is only through technology and entrepreneurship education that individuals can be equipped to combat poverty through the provision of saleable skills and abilities to create jobs and compete with others in the world of work for personal economic survival.

### **Improving Job Creation Strategies**

The present situation where skilled graduates are seen roaming the streets without jobs has more than ever before stressed the need for improving the economy of the nations industrial sectors which is the major job provider for the youths. It is the view of the paper that the cause of skilled graduate joblessness in the country is as a result of lack of entrepreneurship education. Okafor (1991) stated that poverty in Nigeria can only be alleviated if the training being received by our youths is directed towards self employments. Okafor (1991) further maintained that for our educational system to perform its role creditably, it should be flexible enough to meet the needs of its recipients and the entire society. It is in the bid to solve the problem of unemployment that the Federal Government of Nigeria realized the need to make education at all levels relevant and responsive to the needs of the country and the needs of individuals. Despite the innovative measures taken by the government, low job creation still persisted. But Oranu (1991) opined that improvement in poverty alleviation strategies could only be attained through entrepreneurship education. He recognized the preparation for occupational life as a legitimate function of vocational education which creates jobs as its main objective. Blang (1973) argued that it is imperative to direct the present concern of job creation and poverty alleviation to government attitude on preparation of individuals for gainful employment within the nation's economy.

While government apprehended the possible dimension of poverty and joblessness being created by the depressed economy, frantic efforts are being made to create more jobs opportunities within the nations economy. Beside the inability of the economy to achieve the anticipated targets in terms of job creation, other factors played a significant role in the constraints within the economy. These social and economic factors proved unfavourable towards creating adequate job opportunities thereby escalating unprecedented magnitude of jobless youths in the society. A periscopic view of the job expectations of youths shows that a high degree of imbalance exist between what is expected and what is available in the labour market. A reflection of the social values on the present imbalance would mean that social expectations are somewhat beyond the economic realities of the country.

### **21<sup>st</sup> Century Challenges**

Nigeria, like other third world countries, is faced with under utilization of human resources of varying kinds. According to Yesufu (1972) graduates without jobs are seeking for jobs and are unable to find any. He stated that this is essentially a phenomenon of the Nigerian society of today.

Economic policies designed merely to ensure a high rate of growth of the national product are no longer adequate for Nigeria. However, it cannot now be taken for granted that measures which promote economic development will of

themselves necessarily create enough jobs for the masses of the unemployed. It is now imperative to the government that job creation must be conscious objective of the development planners even if it means a radical overall growth rate in the short run.

The National directorate of employment (NDE) and Poverty Alleviation Programme (PAP) are government programmes meant to cushion the effect of joblessness within the Nigerian society. But the implementation has failed to yield any meaningful dividend in terms of job creation and alleviation of poverty even to the barest minimum. International Labour Organization (I.L.O 1972) emphasized that alternative paths to economic development should be sourced so that more jobs will be created more quickly to arrest the deteriorating conditions of our jobless members of the society. Oranu (1990) lamented that the problem of joblessness have reached or attained a tremendous proportion in Nigeria especially in many communities of today. He stated that efforts should be made to create job opportunities for our young graduates in the States and Nigeria in general.

### **Entrepreneurship Education – The Way Out**

The National University Commission (NUC) policy statement emphasized compulsory programme on entrepreneurship for undergraduate students in all institutions in Nigeria. This brings into focus the need for technology and entrepreneurship education which prepares individuals for self reliance. The need becomes much more peculiar as many graduates join the world of work competing with others in the quest for few openings in the public and private sectors. A number of job openings may abound in the labour market, but what matters is the competence to fill such positions. Most of these jobs seekers do not possess saleable skills for either self employment or paid employment. The objectives of entrepreneurship education by the National University Commission's policy is to encourage the graduates from our tertiary institutions to establish small-scale business and be self-employed. Entrepreneurship education will help young graduates to use their skills, knowledge and other potentials to form co-operative groups and start or set-up business that will serve them throughout their life.

Nwachukwu (1990) defined an entrepreneur as one who has the ability to see and evaluate business opportunities, gather the necessary resources to take advantage of them and initiate appropriate action to ensure success. Nwachukwu continued by describing an entrepreneur as one who is a risk taker that braves uncertainty strikes out on his or her own, and through native wit, devotion to duty and singleness of purpose, somehow creates a business and industrial activity where none existed before. Schumpeter (1979) viewed an entrepreneur as someone who undertakes the responsibility of making innovations in the

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economy, that is, either by introducing new goods, new methods of production or of distributions, opening a new market, developing a new market, developing a new source of supply of raw materials or carriers out a new organization or enterprises of any industry. The position of this paper is that in addition to the other definitions of an entrepreneur, that the entrepreneur is one who must be innovative and hardworking, one who is self-confident and resourceful, one who must be honest, truthful and accountable and one who has a penchant for risk bearing as well as insatiable desire for success in business setting. These attributes of an entrepreneur are the distinguishing qualities that make an entrepreneur to persist and succeed where others have failed. With entrepreneurship education, skilled graduates have what it takes to be self-employed. In spite of the basic attending risks that stares the entrepreneur at his face, the Nigerian graduate has what it takes to wade through given the rigours of acquiring education in this country. Nwachukwu (1990) opined that these risks include family risks, that is, the entrepreneur risks the smoothness of the day today running of the family and parental unity of the children; financial risks that is, the entrepreneur risks the had earned capital through austere savings, emotional risks, that is, having stressful feelings when the enterprisers is going through a trial period. Some entrepreneurs who are career civil servants risk their jobs in order to keep afloat with the entrepreneurial activities. Stainhoff and Burgas (1993) defined the entrepreneur as a person who organizes, manages and assured the risk of a business or enterprise. Nelson and Leach (1981) had earlier observed that an entrepreneur is one who has chosen to assume risks, identify business opportunities, gather resources to initiate action and establish organizations to meet market opportunities. According to Anaele (1997) entrepreneurs have the ability to spark new ideas and new products that create businesses, which in turn create the need for new jobs. Shutt (1989) opined that entrepreneurs are the risk takers in production. Brown and Warner (1982) stated that entrepreneurs take risks in building their enterprises and aim at making profit as well as making impact on the society.

United Nations (1988) described entrepreneurs as people that bear risks of launching a new venture, developing a new product, commercializing an invention, adapting a technology and developing a new market place. Anaele (1997) observed further that it is individual entrepreneurs who create most of the new jobs each year, and it is new ventures that produce many of the new products that come on the market each year. Nigerian graduates fits in very properly with their native wits and rugged determination for success.

Entrepreneurship education deals with the acquisition of right habits, attitude and skills as well as means of surviving in the face of unemployment and underemployment. Anyaoha (1993) stressed that entrepreneurship education aims at helping students to acquire saleable and managerial skills, which can assist

them in becoming self-employed and self-reliant. Esomonu (1997) defined entrepreneurship education as education that is geared towards producing self-employed or self-reliant persons for societal growth. Ayeduso in Osuala, (2004) opined that entrepreneurship education is a specialized training given to beneficiaries of technology education to assist them to acquire skills, ideas, and the managerial abilities and capabilities, for self-employment rather than being employed for pay. The acquisition of entrepreneurship skills and competencies will not only assist in job creation for the elimination of unemployment but will so enhance economic development and reduce social ills plaguing the society. It will enable these jobless graduates to be employers of labour themselves.

### **Conclusion**

The pitiable condition of unemployment is clearly manifested on the faces of the graduates and youths who roam the streets showing poverty at its peak. This situation can no longer be tolerated in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Moreover, the closure of nearly all the industries that gives jobs to the citizenry and the disengagement of workers by the federal and state governments worsened the problem of job creation. Most of these graduates do not possess saleable skills.

For the 21<sup>st</sup> century, entrepreneurship education is identified as an alternative path to economic development. The jobless members of the society seem to be confused on how to solve their economic problems, thereby causing some to engage in criminal acts against their wishes.

Entrepreneurship education is the panacea to solving the economic problems of the jobless members of the society. Therefore, it is our informed opinion that for an improved economy which will precipitate job opportunities and eliminate unemployment of graduates, entrepreneurship education must have to be given to undergraduates at different levels of education to enable them embark on meaningful economic activities for self-reliance and economic emancipation. Furthermore, entrepreneurship should be extended to graduates of technical colleges.

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