

PRIMARY EDUCATION AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP AS TOOLS FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract

Education is an eye opener. It is an essential tool for individual and national development. Education is an invaluable instrument of political, social, economic, scientific and technological development. People and communities look up to education as a source of hope for the achievement of their aspiration, aims, livelihood and sustainable national development. Primary Education is the crucial link between entrepreneurship and sustainable national development. It is a gate way to the opportunities and benefit of economic and social development. Primary education is the cornerstone for every spare of life both entrepreneurial and otherwise. Mismanagement of Primary Education can mar the nation. This paper therefore focuses on primary education and entrepreneurship as a tool for sustainable national development. It emphasizes the need for special attention on primary education both in terms of qualified teachers, provision of equipment and facilities for entrepreneurship, the paper recommended that the federal, state and local government should make adequate provision for entrepreneurship in the primary level of education and to employ specialist teachers.

Keywords: Entrepreneurships, Specialist Teachers, Sustainable, Primary education and National Development.

Introduction

Employment trend in recent years shows that formal sector employment for graduates is gradually declining. This is attributed to the disparity between number of graduate and jobs opportunities. The situation has led to increase vociferation for re-orientation of primary education to incorporate entrepreneurship training. It is argued that the inclusion of entrepreneurship training in primary school, will improve the chance of self employment, hence reducing the incidence of unemployment. The knowledge and skills acquired at primary school level will go a long way helping them in future to have strong technical and practical experience in different areas of skills and specialization.

In every modern society, it is believed that education is the key to national development and there is a need to maintain every level of education especially the primary stage, because it is the bedrock upon which all other educational level build. Once a child misses that early stage, it is usually difficult for the learner to get back to the basics.

Education has generally been regarded as the training and development of the mind and character of an individual. It is necessary if human beings must live meaningfully and attain their individual needs, desires, goals and aspirations. Education is no doubt the process through which people are exposed to every relevant knowledge, skills and values needed for the sake of stability and sustainability of the recipient and the society in general. Education is therefore a means to a good end in all ramifications. The importance of entrepreneurship education both to individual and national growth and development cannot be over emphasized. From the foregoing, it implies that individual involvement in entrepreneurship education is paramount and critical if entrepreneurship education must succeed during primary education. Meanwhile, for entrepreneurship education to succeed, several ingredients must be in place otherwise, there are bound to be challenges (Oduma, 2012). This

paper desires to consider primary education and entrepreneurship as a tool for sustainable National development.

Concept of Primary Education

Primary education is the education given in Institutions for children aged 6 to 11 plus. Since the rest of the education system is built upon it, the primary level is the key to the success or failure of the whole system. The duration shall be six years. This being the case, the goals of primary education are to:

- a. Include permanent literacy and numeracy and ability to communicate effectively.
- b. Lay a sound basis for scientific and reflective thinking
- c. Give citizenship education as a basis for effective participation in and contribution to the life of the society
- d. Mould the character and develop sound attitude and morals in the child
- e. Develop in the child the ability to adapt to the child's environment
- f. Give the child opportunities for developing manipulative skills that will enable the child function effectively in the society within these limits of the child's capacity;
- g. Provide the child with basic tools for further educational advancement, including preparation for trades and crafts of the locality

These goals will form the basis of primary education in all the states of the Federation (NPE, 2014).

In the traditional African society, education was given purely for skill acquisition. The purpose was to equip the individual with marketable skills for wealth creation. Every individual was trained and empowered to create wealth. However, with time, emphasis shifted to western education and realization of this knowledge paved way for introduction of both academic and vocational curricular. The literacy curricular becomes the norms in both official and mission schools. Western education laid the solid foundation upon which the present educational system in Nigeria is assessed. The (9-3-4) system is embraced with the motive of developing the nation (Oroka, 2005).

Experience shows that accumulation of scientific facts no doubts, have failed people in terms of sustainable development as educational practices were tailored towards acquisition of the so-called "white collar jobs" after graduation. Not only are these jobs non-existent, they have also not provided required impetus for development. With the current global dispensation and economic recession, it becomes imperative for the nation to have a re-think on educational delivery in order to produce graduates who can be self-reliant and self-sustaining. It is worthy of note that one of the primary education objectives as stressed by the National Policy on Education (2014) is the acquisition of appropriate skills, abilities and competence both mental and physical, and the equipment of the individual to live in and contribute to the development of the society. The above may be seen as promising projection or foresight to adequately handle the challenge of graduate unemployment, as well as to reduce the incidence of poverty among graduates in our society. Primary school pupils should be empowered at this level of education for profitability.

Empowerment is the process of enabling or authorising an individual to think, behave, take action and central work in an autonomous way. It is the process by which one can gain control over one's destiny and the circumstance of their lives. Empowered pupils enable them to have control over their lives, affords them a level of autonomy. The empowered individual become agents of their own development and are able to exercise choice to set their own agenda and be strong enough to challenge their subordinate position in the society (Bajuwoye, 2018).

Bush (2012) views empowerment as the process of strengthening the existing capacities and capabilities of disadvantaged groups in society so as to enable them perform towards improving themselves, their families and the society as a whole. It involves the provision of enabling environment for their production and intellectual abilities to be realized.

Primary school pupils should be engaged in meaningful social and economic activities that would help them gain vital skills, responsibilities and confidence necessary to become productive. At primary, pupils gain the skills and knowledge that will allow them to overcome obstacles in life. Pupils are empowered when they acknowledge that they can create choice in life and are aware of the implication of those choices, make a decision freely, take action based on that decision and accept responsibility for the consequence of their action. Pupils empowerment is necessary as it would create an enabling environment that would grow new sets of entrepreneurs, enhance private sector investment and contribute to socio-economic advancement.

Impact of Primary Education to Sustainable Development

When a child is equipped with essential skills, he or she can utilize them to feed, assist others and even invest for future use, aiding the nation economically and curbing the rate of poverty to a large extent (Wikipedia, 2019). When children feel empowered, they become active contributors and collaborators at home, at school and beyond. At the core of pupils empowerment is the belief that young people are capable of incredible things. When young people have exposure to inspiring ideas and opportunities and the tools to build their confidence, they can take on anything and everything. They recognize their capabilities, self determination and worth, feel comfortable trying new things. They have the confidence to take risks and are aware that failure is a step towards progress, not a sign to give up. They don't use the opinions of others as their guideposts in life. They stand up for their values. And they know they have built a foundation of self-empowerment to rely on in times of struggle or when they are feeling lost and need to recalibrate (Ajufo, 2013).

Concept of Entrepreneurship

The concept of entrepreneurship has a wide range of meanings on the one extreme, an entrepreneur is a person of very high aptitude who pioneers change, possessing characteristics found in a very small fraction of the population. On the other extreme, anyone who wants to work for him or herself is considered an entrepreneur. Entrepreneurship is the willingness and ability of an individual to seek out investment opportunities in an environment and be able to establish and run an enterprise successfully, based on the identifiable opportunities (Kayode, 2006).

Entrepreneur skill is a carefully planned process that comes out into the acquisition of entrepreneur competence. It is the acquisition of skills and ideas for the sake of creating employment for one's self and for others. This acquisition includes the development based on creativity. Personal empowerment and development is necessary for every individual and most importantly for the children. One needs to have the specific job function or technical skills to pursue a particular vocation. An entrepreneur is one who always search for change, responds to it and exploit it as an opportunity. According to Okoro (2017) entrepreneurship is the willingness and ability to take up self-employment.

Shane (2013) noted that entrepreneurship education seeks to prepare people especially youths to be responsible enterprising individuals who become entrepreneurs or entrepreneurial thinkers and who contribute to economic development and sustainability of their societies or community.

Okoro (2017) asserted that the process of bringing together creative or innovative ideas and combining them with management and organisational skills in order to combine people, money and resources to meet an identified need and thereby create wealth essentially describe entrepreneurship.

In introduction of entrepreneurial skills training in primary education injects a new spirit in the mind set of the pupils. This will no doubt help to make them become self-reliant or self-employed in future. Primary education is the foundation level of greatness because skill acquired at this level can make one competent, able to find jobs in industries and personal establishment.

The introduction of entrepreneurship training into the primary school curriculum is a welcome development at this time of our national development. Encouraging entrepreneurship is high

on the agenda of most government globally, especially in transition, emerging and developing economies, as entrepreneurs are the catalysts of growth combining capital, innovation and skills. The importance of entrepreneurship stands out in this time of innovation changes and in fostering a climate to help the dynamism in firm, creation and therefore is considered fundamental worldwide.

Nigeria is faced with high rate of unemployment of graduates of tertiary institutions. Institutions are blamed for producing unmarketable job seekers. The curricular taught in most tertiary institutions were meant to prepare graduates for public service and very little was done to equip them for entrepreneurial knowledge and skills (Eboh, 2009).

Benefit of Entrepreneurship in Primary Education

The nation currently is experiencing economic meltdown, hardship and a lot of crisis increasing rate of unemployment and poverty. The directive of Nigeria government through NUC to integrate entrepreneurship courses into the curriculum of Nigerian universities is a right call and at the right time since entrepreneurship education will provide additional skills resources and methodologies for graduates to further transform their ideas into visible and viable businesses after graduating from the university but it must start at the cradle and that is where the tap root is formed. If this is rightly done, the graduates would not need to queue up in the labour market for paid employment but rather create jobs for themselves and others. This will go along way reducing poverty in the society and unemployment in the labour market (Babalola, 2010). It is a well known fact that entrepreneurship constitutes a vital engine for economic, social, practical and all round development of any country. It has been identified by many; both globally and nationally as a tool for a sustainable, virile and stable economy. No wonder successive governments in Nigeria have attempted to strengthen relevant agencies in order to achieve this position.

Entrepreneurship education is made up of all kinds of experiences that give pupils the ability and vision of accessing and transforming opportunities of different kinds. It goes beyond business creation. It is about increasing pupil's ability to anticipate and respond to societal changes. Besides, it is the type of education that seeks to provide pupils with the knowledge, skills and motivation to encourage entrepreneurship success in a variety of setting. It also empowers pupils to develop and use their innate creative skills to take initiatives, responsibilities and risks. Entrepreneurship have a lot of benefits:

- a. **Autonomy:** the need for independence and the freedom to make decisions is one of the major benefits. The feeling of being your own boss is very satisfying for many entrepreneurs, the challenge of a start-up is exhilarating. The opportunity to develop a concept into a profitable business provides a significant feeling of achievement and the entrepreneur knows that he or she is solely responsible for the success of the idea.
- b. **Financial control:** because it is often stated that entrepreneurs have financial independence, one might get the impression that they are wealthy. Many are not necessarily seeking great, wealth, but they do have more control over their financial situation. They do not want a boss who can unexpectedly announce a layoff after they have dedicated years of work to a company. According to Scarborough (2014), the following are benefits of entrepreneurship
 - i. **Opportunity to create your own destiny:** entrepreneurship provides the business owners the independence and the opportunity to achieve what is of immense benefit to them. They want to "call the shots" in their lives, and they use their business to make this a reality come true.
 - ii. **Opportunity to make a difference:** entrepreneurs start businesses due to the fact they want to make a difference in a cause that is important to them. Social entrepreneurs, for example are business builder who seeks innovative solution to some of society's most vexing problems. They use their skills not only to create profitable business enterprises but also to achieve social and environmental goals for society as a whole. Their businesses are often characterized to have a triple bottom line which include economic, social and environmental objectives.

- iii. **Opportunity to reach your full potentials:** entrepreneurs do not find their work boring, unchallenging and unexciting. This is because there is no much difference between work and play; to them the two are the same. Their businesses become their weapons for self-expression and self-actualisation. To them, the only boundaries on their path to success are those imposed by their own enthusiasm, vision and creativity. They are empowered as a result of their own businesses.
- iv. **Opportunity to reap impressive profits:** entrepreneurship is driven primarily by money, the profits their businesses can make are an important motivating factor in their decision to launch and build their businesses. A recent research shows that a high percentage of small business owners agree that they are in a better financial position running their own business than working for someone else. Most entrepreneur are wealthy but may not be super rich.
- v. **Opportunity to do what you enjoy and have fun at it:** Many entrepreneurs decide to enter their particular business lines because they have an interest in them and enjoy those lines of work. They have made their hobbies (avocations) their work (Vocation) and are happy they did!

Concept of Sustainable Development

According to Wilken (2008) sustainable development can be said to be a type of development that is characterized by equity and that is socially responsive to the problem of poverty and inequality between classes, communities and nations. It advocates for development that account for ecological and environmental balance to avoid development today at the expense of tomorrow, it ensuring that technological, economic and social development does not compromise human needs today and of the future.

The concept of sustainable development was first recognized and used in 1980 by the international union for the conservation in Nature (IUCN) in the world conservation strategy. He stated further that the link between the environment and development (WCDE) redefined the concept. Thus, as defined by the WCDE, sustainable development was conceived as “meeting the needs of the present generation without compromising the needs of the future generation. Sustainable development should address the needs and aspiration of thee present and the future on a continuous basis”.

The Entrepreneur and Society’s Needs

The society is alive. To live many person’s in society have needs to be met. Entrepreneurs watch over society’s need and how they are not. When there is a need and the means of satisfying the need is either not available or unaffordable. Then, such problem create opportunities for employment generation and wealth creation for entrepreneurs. In addition to watching out for society’s needs, the entrepreneurs should also watch over society’s productive resource and make innovative use of it (Eshiobo, 2010).

The Role of ICT in Entrepreneurship

Information and communication Technology is a tool of communication that have far reaching impact on the performance of economic activities and success of individual firm. ICT carried with it a great potential for transforming the lives of the citizens by connecting markets, improving access to government services, education and entertainment.

ICT can bring about innovation and establishment of new businesses even in challenging environment in rural settings. Although, ICT has opened new entrepreneurial opportunities in Nigeria, access to and use of it is at the minimal. There is a gap to bridge between the knowledge and skills the entrepreneurs possess and what is needed in ICT. With IC, entrepreneurs can run more efficiently and reach markets that were “ab initio” out of reach (Garba, 2010). Most ICT devices and programmes are based on the ability to read and write and so it is necessary to start it at primary school level and for more sophisticated ICT equipment it would be necessary to get requisite ICT training on how such devices work.

Ways to Incorporate Entrepreneurship Training

There is need to develop a curriculum that expose pupils to realistic business enterprise and experiences before entering secondary school in order to stimulate them opt for self employment. An important component is that the pupils need to understand market trends, including prices rise and falls for the business enterprise they choose. For pupils to appreciate the importance of being competitive, the curriculum would need to emphasis methods of making them innovative in their chosen enterprise. This might require that they search for and try out new ideas and methods of cultivating, harvesting and delivering their products to gain a comparative edge over competitors. All the equipment necessary for entrepreneurial skills should be provided for the pupils. Pupils should be engaged with skills like computer maintenance and repairs, fashion and designing, hair dressing, paint and other chemical products etc.

Conclusion

The future of the Nigerian economy depends on a new generation of entrepreneurs that would have to come up with ideas and resolve to make them a reality as well as having the vision to create wealth and jobs. For this to be achieved, there is the need for a cultured change in Nigeria. Entrepreneurship education is needed in Nigeria economy to create jobs, reduce unemployment, crime, government's expenditure, poverty, social unrest, create wealth and raise the standard of living in the country and it must start at the primary school level.

Recommendations

For incorporating entrepreneurship education in Nigeria primary schools to be an instrument for National development, the following recommendations are suggested:

- 1) Training, on a regular basis of all primary school teachers on entrepreneurship education. Primary school teachers should be recruited, trained and re-trained in the area of entrepreneurship education. They should be sponsored to attend conferences and workshops to acquire more knowledge so that they can effectively transfer entrepreneurial skills into the pupils
- 2) The state government should contact banks to give soft loans/grants to entrepreneurship educators to establish and run their own businesses. This will enable them acquire practical experience from their own initiative for onward transmission to the pupils.
- 3) As we are in technological era, pupils should be thoroughly taught how to troubleshoot service, maintain computer and other related office equipment. They should also be provided with adequate information about starting a new business and about business trends in order to minimise future risk and maximise success rates. This will help them to run business centres.
- 4) Provision of appropriate instructional materials and local infrastructure and support services to ensure relevance to the Nigerian situation.
- 5) Centre for entrepreneurship education should mandatorily be established in every Nigerian primary schools and should constantly organize workshops for teachers and pupils as well as invite successful businessmen and women to give talk on how to initiate, source for funds, start and run a business successfully.
- 6) Parents should provide appropriate guidance to their children to learn skills and encourage them never to stay idle. Holiday periods should never be a free period for gallivanting and visitation, it should be an opportunity to acquire skills because no knowledge is a waste.
- 7) Government should provide adequate funding and support for entrepreneurship programmes in all primary education and make policies to encourage and facilitate linkage between education and industry and economy

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