
ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA: THE NEED FOR EFFECTIVE CURRICULUM IMPLEMENTATION

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Abstract

Nigeria the most populous country in Africa has a myriad of opportunities for economic development ranging from agriculture to natural resources. Ironically, Nigeria is ranked among the poorest in the world despite the large volumes of crude oil she exports daily. Besides, the country is bedevilled with youth restiveness, high poverty and unemployment rates in recent years. Entrepreneurship education has been introduced into the country's educational system at all levels in a bid to curb the above mishaps and to encourage graduates at all levels to take advantage of the available opportunities and not only become self-employed but also become employers of labour there by reducing poverty, unemployment, youth restiveness and contribute to national economic development. The implementation of entrepreneurship education curriculum in the country is however confronted with bottlenecks like shortage of teachers, inadequate teaching materials/infrastructure, wage-earner mentality, population explosion and ignorance of School administrators among other things. This Paper discussed the concepts, the nexus, the need for effective implementation of entrepreneurship education curriculum, the challenges and suggested the way forward.

Nigeria is the most populated nation in Africa with a population of about 158 million according to 2006 Census and she has the fourth largest economy in the continent. Ironically Nigeria is categorized among the poorest in the world with more than 60% of the country's population living below poverty line i.e. they live on less than one U.S Dollar per-day according to National Planning Commission (NPC, 2004). This situation persists inspite of the fact that the country exports huge quantities of crude oil daily.

The problem with Nigeria stems from the fact that a vast percentage of her population is made up of peasant farmers, petty traders, civil servants (some of who are underemployed) and the unemployed. The unemployment rate in the country was put at about 3 million by 2004 (NBS, 2004); while the polytechnics, mono-technics, Colleges of Education and the Universities continue to churn out graduates yearly into the labour market that is already saturated.

As a result of the growing rate of unemployment and poverty in the country, there has been increased crises and insecurity in the country since the last decade. While government continues to make concerted efforts to curb the increasing insecurity and unemployment in the country that seems not to be yielding results, the introduction of Entrepreneurial Education is seen as one of the right steps taken in the right direction. It should be noted that the introduction of basic education in Nigeria has provision for entrepreneurship Education and it is also embedded in the secondary as well as Tertiary education curriculum.

Conceptualisation

The Concept of Entrepreneurship

According to Osuala (2004) Entrepreneurship Education is a programme that prepares individuals to undertake the formation of and/ or operation of small business enterprises which also includes franchise operations for the purpose of performing all business functions relating to a product or service with emphasis given to the social responsibilities, legal requirements and risks for the sake of profit making in the conduct of a private enterprise.

This implies that entrepreneurship programmes prepares or equips learners with the skills that make them not just capable but also willing to undertake and run a small business of any kind with the sole aim of making profit. This they can achieve because they have the acquired skills that are required for the task. Such business ventures could be in the area of product or service business.

Zochi (2004) viewed entrepreneurship as a process which involves the efforts of an individual(s) in seeing viable business opportunities in any environment, skilfully planning and managing the resources required to exploit those opportunities for profit making.

This suggests that entrepreneurship involves identifying and exploiting business opportunities within a given environment, while assuming its associated risks and gains. It involves taking business initiative, organising or reordering economic activities and accepting the risks for the purpose of profit making.

Invariably, entrepreneurship education is the process of acquiring the entrepreneurial skills through training that emphasis the acquisition and development of appropriate knowledge and skills that empower the individuals maximally to utilize the resources around them.

The Concept of Economic Development

There is no clear meaning for the concept of economic development even though vast literatures abound as regards the concept. The concept is however seen as having to do with general improvement in living conditions of people. This is different from mere provision of basic necessities of life such as food. Dada (2011) saw economic development as sustained, concerted actions of policy makers and communities that promote the standard of living and economic health of a specific area or location.

Olaitan (1996) in Wuana and Nachi (2005) viewed economic development as “growth plus change which involves material, mental, psychological, physical, institutional and organisational innovations”. At individual levels, growth in knowledge, skills, attitudes and enhanced ability to survive are good examples of development. At societal level, development has to do with modernisation, material advancement, industrialisation, scientific and industrial progress, improvement in standard of living, decrease in cost of social security, tribal and gender equality, decrease in unemployment and availability of job opportunities.

Economic development has to do with per capital income thus Charper (2003) argues that the most effective means of improving economic development in poor or developing countries is through industrialisation which cannot be possible without significant rise in literacy and skills levels investment and saving rates, which would stimulate entrepreneurship and productivity. This implies that supporting investment and accumulation of human capital are essential for economic development.

The Concept of Curriculum Implementation

Okebukola (2005) defines curriculum implementation as “the translation of the curriculum objectives from paper to practice”. To Doggoh (2007) “it is the process of putting into actual practice what has been planned in the curriculum document”.

This implies that the process of bringing the paper plan of what should be taught to learners and how it should be taught using specified materials and learning experiences to achieve set goals is what curriculum implementation is all about. When this is done appropriately and according to the curriculum plan, the implementation can be termed effective and it is the effective implementation that guarantees the actualisation of the curriculum objectives.

The Nexus between the Main Concepts

There exists a relationship between entrepreneurship education, economic development and effective curriculum implementation. As stated earlier, entrepreneurship education is concerned with training learners to recognise, take advantage and explore existing opportunities to enhance for themselves economic benefits. It makes them not only self-reliant but also employers of labour. An effective curriculum implementation will equip the learners with entrepreneurship skills and consequently guarantee economic development both of the individuals and the society. This means that it is the effective implementation of entrepreneurship education that will elicit the benefits there of in terms of economic development of the Nigerian society through the creation of employment, increased economic income and poverty reduction.

Provision for Entrepreneurship Education within the Basic Education (UBE) Curriculum

The Nine year Basic Education curriculum in Nigeria has adequate provision for the acquisition of entrepreneurial skills which will help the graduates to recognise the abundant opportunities in the country, take advantage of them, establish and nurture into fruition viable middle and small scale enterprises capable of yielding income for them and as well create employment opportunities for others.

According to Obioma (2007) cited in Dada (2011:4),

“The curriculum of basic education reflects depth, appropriateness and inter-relatedness of the curricula contents. Also emerging issues which cover value orientation, peace and dialogue, including human rights education, family life, HIV and AIDS education, Entrepreneurship skills e.t.c were incorporated into the relevant curriculum”.

A look at the curriculum of the Nine year Basic Education reveals that subjects like Business studies, Creative arts, Computer studies, Basic Science and Technology, Home economics and practical Agriculture are offered at this level (UBE, 2006). The content of these subjects also provides for practical aptitude which implies that the learners are trained to acquire practical Entrepreneurial skills capable of launching them into the practice of such skills for survival on graduation.

Unfortunately, the implementation of the curriculum does not promote the acquisition and practical application of entrepreneurial skills but rather as Akanbi (2005) said that, “Entrepreneurship skills acquisition as taught is more intellectual than a deliberate process or endeavour to provide opportunities and insight into the world of human and economic survival”. This scenario promotes the continuous under performance of the production industry in the country as well as unemployment and

retardation of economic development in “the land full of bright opportunities for all citizens” Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN, 2004).

Provision for Entrepreneurship Education at Senior Secondary School Level

According to National Policy on Education (NPE, 2004), the broad goals of senior secondary Education includes “To prepare the individuals for useful living within the society” in specific terms, secondary Education is expected among other things to:

- a. Offer diversified curriculum to cater for the differences in talents, opportunities and future roles,
- b. Provide trained man power in the applied sciences, Technology and commerce at sub-professional grades,
- c. Develop and promote Nigerian languages, art and culture in the context of world’s cultural heritage, and
- d. Provide technical knowledge and vocational skills necessary for agricultural, industrial, commercial and economic development.

To achieve the above goals of secondary education, subjects have been drawn with relevant content to expose students to the acquisition of the needed vocational and entrepreneurial skills for the individual and socio economic development.

Under the new Senior Secondary School Curriculum arrangement, students are expected to offer all the five core/compulsory subjects and choose 3 to 4 subjects from their field of interest in order to specialize in such areas as Humanities, Science, Technology and Business studies. It is also expected that they offer at least a trade subject from the list of 35 trades. In all they are required to offer a minimum of 7 examinable subjects and maximum of 9, five core/ trade (entrepreneur), 3 to 4 from specialised field of interest and 1 elective subject.

Entrepreneurship Skills at Senior Secondary School Level

It can be seen from the list of subjects that entrepreneurship skills and opportunities will abound if entrepreneurship Education Curriculum at this level is effectively implemented; for instance:

- i. In the core/compulsory subjects, computer studies/Information and Communication Technology (ICT) can create opportunities for computer literacy and establishment of business centres where the graduate can employ and train others. This can make the recipient self-reliant and an employer of labour.
- ii. Science and mathematics: A student who masters this group of subjects can be self employed as an operator of a remedial centre. Such a centre will take responsibility of teaching those who are deficient in mathematics and illiterate

adults who decide later in life to take advantage of the UBE programme and continue with education. With physical education knowledge, he can also train people in exercises that help them to keep fit and reduce weight, regulate their blood pressure etc. He can equally recruit others to work for him in his remedial centre thus reducing unemployment.

- iii. Senior secondary school business studies can impact entrepreneurship skills to learners to enable them start and run small business outfits such as provision stores, boutique, bookshop etc. This he/she can do not only to earn a living but to create jobs for others as well using his/her rudimentary skills of management, financial accounting and commerce.
- iv. Senior secondary school technology: The courses offered at this level can impact the learners with rudimentary skills that will enable them draw building plans for people, as well as engage in electrical installation and wiring, repair of cars and electronics, carpentry/furniture construction/repair, dying of clothes, tailoring, establishment of restaurants/cake making etc. All these can provide an income to the graduate and make him/her self-reliant and enable him/her contribute his/her quota to economic development of the country.
- v. Senior secondary school trade subjects: The subjects listed in this category are basically the core entrepreneurial subjects. They require more practical skills than theory and are supposed to be offered in all senior secondary schools to prepare them for self employment. The graduate of this level is expected to be able to establish business outfits that can generate employment.

Entrepreneurship Skills at Tertiary Education Level

The education and training of entrepreneurs at the tertiary level of the Nigerian education system was necessitated by the high level of graduate unemployment in the country, the low growth of gross domestic product (GDP) and the inability of the economy to absorb the products of the ever expanding tertiary institutions in the country (Inegbenebor, 2005). As a result, when National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategies (NEEDS) was established, one of the cardinal issues was the education and training of entrepreneurs in Nigeria. Thus, the teaching of entrepreneurial skills/course is made compulsory in all tertiary institutions in Nigerian in addition to the establishment of entrepreneurship centres in all federal universities in the country and as such, irrespective of one's area of specialisation entrepreneurship studies is now mandatory.

The unfortunate thing is that in most of these institutions, the course is not properly handled for it is either taught by incapable hands or taught theoretically.

Despite the fact that Stevenson (2001) as cited in Inegbenebor (2005) opined that, “to stimulate rapid economic development especially in developing countries, it is important to focus on preparing the entrepreneurs who would start new business or expand existing ones” .

The Need for Effective Implementation of Entrepreneurial Education Curriculum

The Educational curriculum of any nation does not yield its gains to the nation without the effective implementation as stated by Eddie (2000) that “it is at the stage of curriculum implementation that the actual consummation of what the National Policy on Education covers are brought to focus” This implies that if entrepreneurship skills are going to be effectively applied in Nigeria to aid economic development, there is the need for effective entrepreneurship Education curriculum implementation.

- (i) **The high rate of poverty and increasing youth restiveness in Nigeria** today calls for effective implementation of the entrepreneurship education curriculum so as to create jobs, reduce poverty and engage the youths in productive ventures so as to disengage them from societal vices/crime. This will no doubt pave way for bumper economic development in the country.
- (ii) **Scarcity of government jobs:** The rate of unemployment in Nigeria is very high. National Bureau of statistics (NBS, 2013) put it at 23.9 percent while the World Bank report on economic development in Nigeria observed that “Job creation in Nigeria has been inadequate to keep pace with the expanding working-age population. The official unemployment rate has steadily grown from 12 percent of the working age population in 2006 to 24 percent in 2011. Preliminary indications are that this upward trend continued in 2012”. This calls for effective implementation of the entrepreneurship education curriculum which is targeted at job creation, self reliance and poverty reduction as well as increased/economic productivity and development.

According to Mkpa (1987), “curricular are not drawn up as ends in themselves, but as means, the ends of which are solutions to specific problems”, entrepreneurship curriculum is also drawn as a means to the end of unemployment problem in the country and if effectively implemented can solve the problem and aid economic development in Nigeria.

- (iii) **Population of Nigeria:** Nigeria has the largest population in Africa and about the largest economy in the continent. This calls for effective implementation of entrepreneurship Education curriculum in Nigeria so as to ensure adequate job creation and poverty reduction bearing in mind that this will help reduce poverty in the African Continent and create more jobs for the Africans both within

Nigeria and outside. It will also lower the poverty rating of the continent worldwide and facilitate their economic development.

- (iv) **The rapid transformation of the Asian countries** like India, Malaysian, Indonesia and Taiwan has proved that entrepreneurs are a major catalysts to economic development (Ojukwu, 2006) Also United Kingdom and Canada recorded accelerated economic development due to the activities of entrepreneurs. In Canada for instance, entrepreneurs and SMEs generate up to 60 percent of the country's GDP, 80 percent of national employment and creation of up to 85percent of new jobs (Net Impact Study Canada, 2002). In the case of United Kingdom, 99.8 percent of all businesses are owned by entrepreneurs, they employ about 56.6 of the labour force and yield up to 52 percent turn-over in the country (ODMP, 2005).

This means that if Nigeria effectively implements the entrepreneurship education curriculum, these benefits can also be afforded Nigeria and hence rapid economic development can be achieved.

Challenges of Effective Implementation of Entrepreneurship Education Curriculum in Nigeria

- A. **The wage-earner culture/mentality:** Many people in Nigeria still hold the erroneous notion that any educated person is suppose to be employed by the government. Thus the idea of educating people to be self employed and creating jobs for others looks odd to such people. This leads to a situation where people graduate from the nation's institutions with the wrong mentality compared to the prevailing realities in the nation. They graduate with the hope of getting government jobs that are nonexistent. Unfortunately with that misconception they are never prepared to take up entrepreneurship training opportunities at their disposal.
- B. **Educating people out of context:** According to Yesufu (2000) in Inegbenebor (2005) "Most Nigerians are being educated out of context" This refers to situations where people are trained in fields that may not be really relevant in terms of employment or job creation. In essence some people just go to school to read any available course regardless of the realities in the labour markets, global trends or innovations. Inegbenebor (2005) observed that "the university system in Nigeria seems to assume a production orientation oblivious of the needs of the economy" This situation applies to the other levels of the education system as well.

- C. Ignorance on the part of Administrators:** Many school administrators in Nigeria are ignorant of the relevance of entrepreneurship education in the present day Nigeria and as such do not give it the deserved attention to make it acceptable to students and staff and to ensure that it's curriculum is effectively implemented to enable it unleash its benefits to the people and the nation.
- D. Lack of teachers to handle the course:** Since the course is relatively new in the country, many schools have problem of qualified teachers to handle the course. Moreover, the nation's education system is bedevilled with the problem of shortage of teachers at all levels (Sam-Ugwu, 2009) this has led to a situation where the teaching of entrepreneurship is an all-comers affairs in some Nigerian Educational Institutions.
- E. Inadequacy of teaching materials/facilities:** Generally there is a dearth of teaching materials in most Nigerian educational institutions especially public schools while most private schools lack or have insufficient for the population they admit. This leads to inappropriate exposure of the learners to the required/skills to grasp and be able to practice on graduation. This is one of the reasons for the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) strike since July, 2013. The support given by the government in this regard has not been adequate as seen in the low or under funding of education in the country (Murtala, 2005), in arguing along the same line, Olugbuyi and Tyokase (2013) say Nigeria has remained noncompliant to the UNESCO recommendation of 26 percent of annual budgetary allocation to education. Okecha (2008) points out that "Nigeria spends less than 7 percent of her budget on education", in the words of Inegbenebor (2011), the problems of dilapidated structures, facilities, equipment and staff remuneration are linked with inadequate funding.
- F. Population explosion in schools:** Entrepreneurship education is a practical oriented course that requires close monitoring and assessment of learners. In Nigeria however, the population of students in schools outweighs the available resources for teaching and learning, (both material and human). This makes it difficult to achieve effective teaching and evaluation. The high population also creates unsuitable learning environment due to overcrowding in the classrooms and laboratories leading to ineffective teaching and learning of entrepreneurship skills.

Conclusion

Entrepreneurship education is an antidote to the perennial problems of unemployment, youth restiveness, poverty and low economic development in Nigeria. The introduction of this course in Nigerian education system is therefore a step in the

right direction. However, effective implementation of the curriculum is required for it to produce the result for Nigeria that is already obtained in countries like United Kingdom, Canada and the “Asian Tigers”.

The Way Forward

In line with the discussed challenges for effective implementation of entrepreneurship education curriculum, the following have been suggested for the way forward:

Effective teaching of entrepreneurship skills should begin at basic education level and should continue steadily to tertiary levels; this will equip the learners adequately with entrepreneurship skills enough for effective practical application for self reliance and job creation. This can be achieved by teaching the skills as enshrined in the curriculum and the National Policy on Education (NPE, 2004). There is also the need for entrepreneurship education to have a promotional content that is practical oriented in order to capture and sustain the interest of students.

Nigerian educational institutions should always carryout needs analyses before introducing courses and curricula; this can also apply in admission policy. People should be trained in the national man power needs and economic/global realities so as to make them relevant and better positioned to contribute their quota to economic development of the nation in particular and the continent at large. As asserted by Nwangwu (2007) “growth and development can only be guaranteed when the citizens of that nation acquire the skills needed for economic and technical development”.

The Federal and State Governments should take some practical steps towards the education of school administrators on entrepreneurship education programme; its benefits and why the programme must be supported to succeed. Seminars and workshops can be organized for school administrators and their staff at all levels of the education system in Nigeria.

The bodies charged with maintaining minimum standards at all levels should ensure that all students participate fully in entrepreneurship education.

There should be adequate training and retraining of entrepreneurship teachers especially at the NCE, graduate and postgraduate levels. Also the institutions can share resources (both human and material) where possible so as to achieve the goals of entrepreneurship education. Seminars, workshops and conferences can be organized to help the teachers share ideas and be refreshed in the handling of the course.

The government should provide the lead and encourage the private sector to provide teaching materials in schools for the purpose of effective teaching and learning of entrepreneurship education. Teachers of entrepreneur should also improvise and

produce teaching materials to enhance their efficiency in the teaching of the course at all levels of Nigerian education system.

There should also be an expansion of facilities in schools as well as establishment of new schools with qualified teachers recruited to teach entrepreneurship education. Special schools for this purpose can as well be established to cope with the population explosion in the country generally and the schools in particular.

The schools should revive the culture of trade and craft or handiwork which in the past was taught practically with students learning different trades of their environments such as knitting of mats, ropes, caps, pots, etc. This, it is hoped will revive interest in crafts and boost the learner's appreciation of crafts and practical skills. The idea of schools receiving money from students and awarding marks should be strongly discouraged because students learn no entrepreneurship skills when they pay money that in most cases come from their parents/guardians.

The government should also make available some proactive measures to encourage the graduates of entrepreneurship education to establish and run small and medium scale enterprises. This could be by giving them some soft loans of up to five hundred thousand naira or more to enable them take off. It should be given to entrepreneurship graduates that are able to provide evidence of available opportunities they wish to explore and which looks promising.

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