

Entrepreneurship Education: Panacea for Self-reliance and Job Creation in Nigeria

Beetseh, K.

Library Department

Federal University of Agriculture, Makurdi, Benue State, Nigeria

E-mail: beetsekwaghga@gmail.com

Ahima, S. E.

Sociology Department

Taraba State University, Jalingo, Nigeria

ABSTRACT

The present situation in Nigeria poses serious threats and challenges to both government and well meaning citizens. The problems facing the country centre on high rate of poverty; youth and graduate unemployment; over-dependence on foreign goods and technology; low economic growth and development; among others. The objective of this study is to emphasize the need and importance of entrepreneurship education which serve as Panacea for Self-reliance and Job Creation in Nigeria. This study, therefore, argues that entrepreneurship education will equip the students with the skills to be self-reliant. It also adopts psychological theories of the Refugee and Schumpeter effects as its frame work of analysis. The study recommends among others that educational programmes at all levels of education should be made relevant to provide the youths the needed entrepreneurial skills to function effectively in Society.

Keywords: *Entrepreneurship, Economic Growth, Self-reliance, Job Creation*

INTRODUCTION

Economic displacement is one of the external forces that influence the development of entrepreneurship (Kuratko, 2009). This is why Alam and Hossan (2003) see entrepreneurship as playing a key role in the process of economic development through creation of employment, increasing investment and consumption of a nation. In similar vein, Chigunta (2001) notes that entrepreneurship has received increasing recognition as a source of job creation, empowerment for the unemployed and economic dynamism in a rapidly globalizing world. Furthermore, Garavan and O'Cinneide (1994) in their contributions maintain that entrepreneurship is often used for developing enterprising people and inculcating an attitude of self-reliance using appropriate learning processes. In Nigeria before the advent of colonial government, unemployment was a rare phenomenon because the people were highly entrepreneurial and productively engaged. This entrepreneurial engagement is prevalent in western, northern and the eastern part of Nigeria. It is on record that Yoruba and Hausa ethnic groups are great entrepreneurs in pre and post independent Nigeria. The Igbo ethnic group particularly is recognized internationally for its culture of entrepreneurship and enterprise development (Dana, 1995). This is why Ananaba (1969) asserts:

"The economy of the various states which make-up modern Nigeria was basically a subsistence economy and customs had established the practice that people serve their parents, village heads and the community without remuneration. On a given day, people went and work for a particular individual. Through the day, the man they serve was responsible for their food and drink. On another day, the man returned the service and it went on until everybody in the group was served."

This method encourages communal wealth creation and productive use of human resources, thus forestalling unemployment. However, the emergence of administration in Nigeria introduced formal education which enabled people to have the opportunity of being employed in the civil service after graduation. As such, the system destroyed self-reliance, self-employment and entrepreneurial skills of Nigerians as they became permanently dependent on the colonial masters (Nicks, 2008; Raimi and Adeleke, 2010). This led to massive unemployment and craze in the contemporary times for ready-made jobs. It is on this breastplate that the study seeks for the development of entrepreneurship in order to sustain an economy of high level unemployment reduction.

In Nigeria and the whole world at large, entrepreneurship is being seen as a key to economic and developmental process. When people are exposed to entrepreneurship, it is evident that they would be opened to opportunities that will enable them to become creative and productive. This will enhance job creation and improve the standard of living of an individual in the society. Entrepreneurship education is an indispensable ingredient for job creation. Sanda (2010) asserts that Nigeria and other countries of the world are seeking to increase the entrepreneurship capacities of their citizens with the understanding that it will contribute to economic growth and development. Therefore, there is a need for Quality entrepreneurship education if the recipient is to acquire appropriate knowledge, attitude, abilities and skills that would make them to be job creators instead of job seekers. Quality according to Hornby (2000) is the standard of something when it is compared to other things like it. That is, to make the standard better so as to meet the targeted goals. The recipient should be able to acquire the essential knowledge and experience needed to meet life challenges.

Entrepreneurship education seeks to prepare people particularly the youths: to be responsible, enterprising individual who became entrepreneurs or entrepreneurial thinkers by immersing them in real life learning experience whereby they can take risks, manage result and learn from the outcome (Suleiman2010). Entrepreneurship education is teaching people that they can either take or create a job. This will enable them to be self-employed and not relying on other job security. Often, it creates new job for others at the same time. Entrepreneurship education training could be given to interested individuals both adults and students through workshops, classes, and conferences thereby learning basic ideas of starting their own businesses and keeping it running. Entrepreneurial education is a specialized training given to students of vocational and technical education to acquire the skills, ideas and managerial abilities and capacities for self-employment rather than being employed for pay. Osuala (2010) defines entrepreneurship education as a programme or part of a

programme that prepares individuals to undertake the formation 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 on social responsibilities, legal requirement and risks for the sake of profit involved in the conduct of private business enterprises. From the above definition, it is evident that entrepreneurship education could turn around the economic fortune of Nigeria by providing jobs and reduce the unemployment rate in Nigeria hence reducing the poverty level of Nigerians. It could also help an individual to identify investment opportunities and help them to harness untapped natural resources in Nigeria in order to produce the goods and services needed in the country. These will no doubt reduce or eliminate poverty and help to increase per capita income in the country which is one of the cardinal points of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

The theoretical foundation of this paper is based on the psychological theories of the Refugee and Schumpeter effects." These theories posit that the ability to make good judgment about the future leads an individual to become a successful entrepreneur. The need for achievement psychological approach of McClelland was particularly dominant in driving people for entrepreneurship. According to McClelland (1987), Arch motives seems to influence the individual to select entrepreneurial career. He opines that "the presumed mechanism by which achievement level translate itself into economic growth is the entrepreneurial class. If the need for achievement is high, there will be more people who behave like entrepreneurs" (Islam, 1989; Raimi, 2010).

The second theory is Richard Cantillon and John Stuart Mill's psychological theory of entrepreneurship, otherwise called risk taking theory (RTT). The theory considers entrepreneurship as a mentality to take chance or calculated risk, because people taking a very big risk also have a great responsibility (Alam and Hossan, 2003; Sexton and Bowntown, 1983). This fact can be observed in the avalanche of misplaced risky undertakings such as hostage taking, kidnapping, pipeline vandalism, economic sabotage and internet frauds of unemployed Nigerian youths. This fact was corroborated by Aduba (2011) who reports for the Akwa Ibom State government that one of the major factors of restiveness in the Niger Delta region is high rate of unemployment. The traits of creativity, risk-loving, innovation, strategic thinking and constructive engagement against the government by discontented Nigerians could as well be directed to entrepreneurship development (Raimi, 2010).

Objectives of Entrepreneurship Education: The objectives of entrepreneurship education clearly show that it is concerned with the development and survival of both the individual and society. In fact, it is a tool through which social, economic and political development could be achieved. If it is properly planned, funded and implemented. The objectives of entrepreneurship education are spelt out by Osuala (2010) as:

1. To provide meaningful education for youth which could make them self reliance and subsequently encourage them to drive profit and be self independent
2. To provide graduate with the training and support necessary to help them establish a career in small and medium size business.

3. To provide graduates with training skills that will make them meet the manpower needs of the society.
4. To provide graduates with enough training in risk management to make uncertainty bearing possible and easy.
5. To stimulate industrial and economic growth of rural and less developed area.
6. To provide graduate enough training that will make them creative and innovative in identifying new business opportunities.
7. To provide small and medium sized companies with the opportunity to recruit qualified graduates who will receive training and tutoring in the skills relevant to management of the business centre.

From the above objectives, it is evident that this type of education if it is given all it deserves and properly implemented will produce quality graduates that will foster job creation and reduce or eliminate poverty in Nigeria. This could be realized when the graduates are self-reliant by establishing their own business small/medium scale enterprises. Job creation is one of the cardinal objectives of Millennium Development Goals. When an ample job opportunities is created it will invariably help to reduce poverty and enhance better standard of living of an individual in Nigeria. Job creation is an act of making work in which one receive regular payment available to the citizenry. That is creating an enabling environment for ample employment opportunities in the society. This is done by establishing cottage, small/medium scale enterprises in Nigeria.

Entrepreneurship and Job Creation in Nigeria: The Nigerian government seems to have woken up to the reality that the country needs to break away from the vicious cycle of poverty, infrastructure neglect, corruption and other problems. The reason being that, after 52 years of achieving colonial independence, it cannot be argued that Nigeria has attained her optimum level of development. According to Kolawole and Omolayo (2006), many individuals have difficulties in translating their business ideas to realities and creating new business ventures because of lack of necessary information and skills to achieve their targets. To him, the university curriculum was in the past oriented towards making graduates suitable only for white-collar jobs. This underscores why millions of our youths and a lot of University graduates roam about the streets of the major cities and towns in search of white-collar jobs. It is necessary and possible to position Nigerian universities to stimulate economic growth through a deliberate agenda of production of entrepreneurial graduates.

In many countries, including US, high schools offer entrepreneurship education for life-long trade, and many of them offer courses that enable students to meet their general academic requirement while learning a trade. However, because of these recent challenges in world economy, many schools have shifted emphasis to training in computers, information technology, and related fields. Public schools work closely with willing industries to establish curriculum and programmes to meet their skill demand. Where is Nigeria in this history of entrepreneurship education? While career education has continued to thrive in many societies, it is unfortunately an area that is neglected in Nigeria (Emeruwa, 2004). The neglect of entrepreneurship education is robbing the nation of the contribution their graduates would make to the development of the economy. It is therefore socially injurious to neglect

this important area or look down on its graduates. The society needs competent auto mechanics, and truck drivers, plumbers, electricians, electronics and computers, database, web and network technicians, book-keepers and clerks, medical technicians, and nursing assistants, (and other personnel in this category) to function well. These are some of the skills in short supply in Nigerian. The half-baked roadside mechanics in the society often cause more damage to vehicles when they are contracted to service them and because of poor training some of the commercial drivers on the road and nurse assistants in the hospitals have sent many people to their early death. Given these facts, it is a disservice to the society to neglect entrepreneurship education. In Nigeria, graduates of vocational and technical institutions are highly skilled entrepreneurs, but the society does not seem to encourage the youths to have value for technical education. Unfortunately, those who influence education policy in the society (legislators, educators, the media, etc) feel that graduates of technical and vocational institutions are not equal to university graduates; hence there is need for effective strategies for entrepreneurship education in Nigeria.

Challenges of Entrepreneurship and Job Creation in Nigeria: Quality Entrepreneurship Education could played a vital role in equipping individuals with the necessary intellectual capacity, skills and right type of work habit and attitude to be able to create jobs for the growth of the Nigeria economy. However, what is quite essential is the extent to which the entrepreneurship Education programme can be implemented to realize these goals. The programme is confronted with a lot of challenges which brought a setback in the attainment of its objectives. These challenges have not enable Nigerian to enjoy the benefits of this programme as expected. This limits the achievement of the millennium development goals (MDGs) in Nigeria. Some of the challenges have been pointed out by eminent scholars such as Gana (2000), Aiyeduso (2004), Osuala (2010) and they include:

- Poor funding by government and non-governmental organizations.
- Poor or ineffective planning, supervision information and evaluation of the programme across the board.
- Inadequate teaching materials, equipment and infrastructure facilities.
- The challenges posed on globalization, information and communication technology (ICT) have effect on curriculum, methodology, facilities, staff and equipment.
- Inadequate qualified teachers and instructors as well as supporting staff at all level.
- Inadequate motivation for available teaching and non teaching staff which affects staff efficiency, retention, creativity and initiative.
- Emphasis on theoretical Knowledge rather than practical knowledge due to lack of entrepreneurship education centre.
- High level of corruption and very poor maintenance culture in the system.
- Poor enabling business environment, access to credit/ loan, infrastructural decay, mass poverty, inflation, technological infraction, political instability and insecurity of lives and properties which hamper economic and business activities.

Strategies for Effective Entrepreneurship and Job Creation in Nigeria: In order to achieve viable entrepreneurship that will enhance sustainable development in Nigeria,

the following strategies according to Ayodele (2006) will help to solve the problem of entrepreneurship education in the country.

1. There should be some form of genuine school- work based learning incorporated in some studies as part of the national economic development strategies. This implies enriching the curriculum to incorporate more vocational and technical training. The development of apprenticeship scheme would give new graduates some work skills and experiences.
2. There should be School-based enterprises where students identify potential business, plan, create and operate small business by using the school as mini incubators.
3. Government should establish small business schools where interested students and community members can participate. This will make students to be self reliant.
4. Government should develop entrepreneur internship programme by matching students with locally successful entrepreneurs with clearly established education programmes.
5. The Government should establish an enterprise college aimed at fostering the specific skills required for entrepreneurship. This will serve as skill acquisition centre for the youths.
6. Government should create an economic friendly environment. This centres on reduction of taxes on small scale businesses.
7. There should be enough incentives for students of vocational and technical schools. This will motivate them to establish their businesses after school.

CONCLUSION

This study has made an exposition on the vitality of entrepreneurship education as a potent tool for equipping beneficiaries to emerge as job creators in the crucial Nigeria's business and economic environment. The study however, is of the strong opinion that for the programme to attain this very critical objectives the challenges affecting a must be optimally addressed with a view of addressing them.

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