
ENTREPRENEURIAL DEVELOPMENT: A PANACEA FOR THE MENACE OF POVERTY IN NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

Poverty remains a major canker-worm that has eaten deep into the fabric of Nigerian society. This hydra-headed monster defies all solutions proffered by various experts and professionals. Besides, government at various levels introduced measures to reduce poverty, such includes: Green revolution (GR), Operation Feed the Nation (OFR), Poverty Eradication Programme (PEP), Poverty Alleviation Programme (PAP), National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP), Better Life for Rural Women (BLRW) among others. All these failed, instead they wide the gap between the poor and the rich, because the targeted population-the poor failed to benefit from the measures. This present paper contended that poverty can only be reduced in Nigeria through entrepreneurial development and education whereby the skill to reduce poverty will be ingrained in the poor themselves. The methods adopted by the paper are reviewing of articles, periodicals, newspaper, observation and group discussion on the subject matter.

Keywords: *Entrepreneurship, Development, Poverty, Menace*

INTRODUCTION

The entrepreneur in the context of this paper is the originator or creator of a profit seeking organ of the society

or economic organization established for the purpose of providing goods and services for the consumption of the society; in which such organization is located. The entrepreneur is often referred to as the agent of economic, technological and social systems (Ogundele and Olayemi; 2004). Entrepreneurship is considered as the processes of emergency, behaviour and performance of entrepreneur (Ogundele, 2004 a). The formal processes of equipping the entrepreneur with necessary insight and skill are through formal education, entrepreneurial training and development. Entrepreneurship is a dynamic and social process where individuals-solely or in cooperation with others-identity possibilities and utilize them to transform ideas into practical and goal-oriented activities in a social cultural or economic context. It involves inculcation of a range of skills and attributes, including the ability to think creatively, work in teams, manage risk and handle uncertainty. Entrepreneurship encourages and entices individuals to take risk of starting a business; leading to the establishment of micro and small enterprises that are the major drivers of growth in advanced and emerging economies. (Leitch and Harrison, 1999).

Development in the general sense is many sided process. At the individual level; it implies increase skill and capacity, greater freedom, creativity, self-discipline, responsibility and material well being (Rodney 2005). The achievement of any of those aspects of personal development is very much tied with the state of the society as a whole. At the level of social groups, development implies an increasing capacity to regulate both internal and external relationship Rodney, 2005 is of the view that the tool with which men work and the manner in which they organize their labour are important indices of

social development. Rodney 2005 notes further that development when used exclusively in economic sense refers to how members of a society increase jointly exercise their capacity for subduing the environment. This capacity is dependent on the extent to which they understand the laws of natural (science) and on the extent to which they put (technology) and on the manner in which work is organized. All these are assisted by the processes of formal education training and development in the society. Development is also the systematic process of training and growth and through it, the individual gains and apply knowledge, skills, insights and attitudes with which he/she manages profit seeking and other work organizations effectively.

Development as noted by (Hornby, 1974) is gradual advancement through progressive stages of growth from within. From this point of view development implies 'changes' and this is very important in any consideration of entrepreneurship education and development. From a broader perspective, the development approach to entrepreneurship considers the nurturing of the actual or potential entrepreneurs to become more effective in running their own organizations. Singh 1986 notes that this has to be done at various stages and in various training and development institutions. The development theory developed by (Singh, 1986), has its foundation in massive education, training and development of the entrepreneurs from childhood, on the need for achievement motive. Singh, 1986 notes further that entrepreneurial performance is influenced by three factors. First factor is his or her attitude towards his/her occupation. Second, the role expectations held by the sanctioning groups. Third factor is the operational requirement of the job. He

notes that society's values are most important determinant of the first two factors, education, training and development is crucial for the third.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Ekpo-Ufot (1988), provides an account of an entrepreneurship development programme that was carried out at the University of Lagos in which he came out with a list of seven variables that affect entrepreneurship response. These are (1) Society's value and need (2) family (3) schools, (4) work organization (5) Urbanization and industrial estates (6) availability of financial resources and (7) government.

Okaka, 1990 observes that entrepreneurial success depends on development. That to be successful, entrepreneurs need to possess certain qualities in addition to skills and knowledge concerned with the technical aspect of owning a business, such skills are acquired through organized education, training and development.

Rao et-al, 1990, notes that the focus of development approach is entrepreneurship skill. These skills include: (1) Development of entrepreneurial spirit, characteristics and personality (2) Development of technical, technological and professional competencies needed for productive work employment (3) Development of enterprise-building small business development, capabilities to initiate and start one's own business or self employment and (4) Develop of managerial capability to run the business and other self-employment activity successfully. Ogundele (2000) notes that the areas covered by the development theory involve both macro and micro level issues and determinants of

entrepreneurship. At the macro level it covers training in opportunity awareness, relating to relevant publics, technology, market and dealing with government agencies to mention only a few. The micro level issues include entrepreneurial personality in terms of attitudes, motivation, values education, and work experience. The approach emphasizes education training and development as important determinants of the processes of entrepreneurship. The development theory envisages the positive effects or consequences of education, training and development on several determinants that affect entrepreneurs and entrepreneurship.

Poverty on the other hand can be described as the state of living below human dignity. Poverty is relative, but in this paper, I define poverty as a state whereby the poor cannot afford the basic necessity of life - food, clothing and shelter. Over 75% Nigerians are living below poverty line (WHO 2001). The poor are those who cannot afford good and sufficient food, good clothing and shelter. They live in the slum and cannot afford good and qualitative education. In most developing economies such as Nigeria, poverty is as the result of corruption, which stemmed up from greed. Corruption and poverty are like siamese twins, which are not easy to separate. Corruption leads to poverty and poverty leads to corruption as argued somewhere (Olabode 2011)

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

There is now a very serious attention paid to entrepreneurship education in Nigeria tertiary institutions. The reason for this of course is obvious, Nigeria educational system has not been trained graduates to be self-reliant but

to depend solely on white collar job for sustenance. As a result, there are several graduates from Nigerian Universities and Polytechnics who are not gainfully employed and because they lack requisite skills to make themselves dependent, they cannot establish their own business. Besides, all government efforts to reduce poverty prove abortive in the face of high level corruption by those saddled to implement various government programmes on poverty reduction. There is therefore the need to engage the youth who constitute about 60 percent of the population in meaningful engagement to avoid unhealthy alternatives for this group of people.

The 2010 Global Monitoring Report (GMR) of the United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) reveal that about 92 percent of Nigerian population survive on less than 2 dollars daily, while about 71 percent survives on less than 1 dollar daily - a condition many have described as inexcusable judging from the abundant natural deposits and high human population at the country's disposal. With an estimated population of about 167million people (2011) and crude oil selling as high as \$104 dollar per barrel in the global market, the high level poverty in comparison to the abundant resources available in Nigeria is highly unacceptable. There is therefore the urgent need for the government to address critically the issue of poverty in face of abundant resources. The problem of poverty alleviation has been one of the major programmes of Nigeria government starting from late 70s up till now yet; poverty is still on the increase. The contention of this present work is that the basic solution to poverty alleviation in Nigeria is through entrepreneurship development, which will provide

employment for the teaming unemployed youth by making them self-dependent.

Entrepreneurship Thoughts and Philosophy in the Developing World

Entrepreneurship thought is concerned with all thoughts relating to the process of starting and operating business as well as getting results in modern enterprises by innovators thought and with subordinates. The two major types of thoughts are: evolutionary and comparative (contemporary) thoughts. Evolutionary thought details the general ways of thinking characterize of a particular period or class to date e.g. entrepreneurship development evolved from the Universal thought through linear stages, systems and quantitative thought to the present day contingency thoughts (Tijani 2004).

Evolutionary thought comes about as a result of man's persistent search for solution to problems of any particular period. This type of thought is historical longitudinal, cumulative and absolute rather than relative in nature. On the other hand comparative are absolute rather than relative in nature. Comparative thoughts compare various ways of thinking zoned to various periods, classes or nations e.g. a comparative of traditional versus modern entrepreneurship thoughts. Comparative thoughts are analytical, distinct and relative. Entrepreneurship thought focuses the independent and dependent variables of organization. It also analyses the external and internal variables or statistics of any organization. Entrepreneurship philosophy is the reflective realistic thought and consummate wisdom of how to create, operate and sustain innovative ventures.

Entrepreneurial Development: The need for Formal Education

It must be stated that the levels of formal education will affect entrepreneurship (Ogundele 2000). In addition, the levels and types of technical, vocational, managerial and other forms of specialized education, training and development will equally affect entrepreneurship. However, lack of appropriate and necessary education training and development would adversely affect the pace of emergency, patterns of behaviours and consequently lead to a slow pace of performance of the economy thereby leading to poverty in all its ramifications. To ameliorate this, appropriate entrepreneurial educational training and development programmes must be provided for pupils and students of various levels in Nigeria educational systems and for the adult.

Objectives of Entrepreneurship Education

Entrepreneurship education is oriented towards different ways of realizing opportunities. Entrepreneurship education seeks to provide students with the knowledge skills, and motivation to encourage entrepreneurial success in a variety of ways. Entrepreneurial education according to Paul (2005) is structured to achieve the following objectives:

1. To offer functional education for the youth that will enable them to be self-employed and self-reliant.
2. Provide the youth graduates with adequate training that will enable them to be creative and innovative in identifying novel business opportunities.
3. To serve as a catalyst for economic growth and development.

4. Offers tertiary institution graduates with adequate training in risk management to make certain bearing feasible.
5. To reduce high rate of poverty.
6. Create employment.
7. Reduction in rural-urban migration.
8. To inculcate the spirit of perseverance in the youths and adults which will enable them to persist in any business venture they embark on.
9. Create smooth transaction from traditional to a modern industrial economy.

Challenges of Entrepreneurship Education in Nigeria

The following are the most important obstacles facing rapid entrepreneurial development as enumerated by Ojeyo S. Aide (2012).

- a) Rampant political and bureaucratic corruption together with the absence of social consensus on important macro economic policy issues.
- b) Poor access to vocational and skills-development training for rural and urban youths involved in the informal economy.
- c) Absence of regulatory mechanisms for effective oversight of enterprise development initiatives.
- d) The presence of administrative and trade barriers that curtail capacity building and inhibit access to technical support.
- e) Significant infrastructural deficits (especially with regards to roads and electricity) and systematic irregularities inimical to small business.

- f) Absence of a pro-active regulatory environment that encourages innovative enterprise development at the grass roots levels.
- g) Inadequate access to capital.

Strategies for Effective Entrepreneurship Education

In order to achieve viable entrepreneurship education that will enhance sustainable development through poverty reduction in Nigeria, the following strategies according to Ayodele (2006) will help to alleviate 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. The development of apprenticeship scheme would give some work skills and experience.
2. Pool local public and private funds to create a small venture capital fund.
3. School based enterprises where student's identity potential business, plan, create and operate small business using the school as mini-incubators.
4. Provide small business schools where interested students and community members can participate.
5. Develop entrepreneurship internship programmes matching students with locally successful entrepreneurs with clearly established education programmes.,
6. Establishing an Enterprises College aimed at fostering the specific skills sets required for entrepreneurship to serve as skill acquisition centres for the youths.
7. Creating an economic friendly political environment.
8. Improving on the government taxation on small scale businesses.

CONCLUSION

Since early 80's, Nigeria economy has become stagnant which consequently has led to decline in white collar jobs. The inclusion of entrepreneurship course in all disciplines will to a great extent, assist in solving the problems of high unemployment, underemployment and their consequent social dilemma - poverty. The changing demand of the new knowledge societies for versatile, multi-skilled, workers and entrepreneurs has stimulated interest in entrepreneurial culturing of formal education globally. This has called for the restructuring of curricula and teaching techniques in formal education to promote internship, fieldwork, and learning-by-doing.

In Nigeria, while there is broad acceptance that entrepreneurship is required for promoting self-employment and enhancing business start-ups, little has been done to incorporate entrepreneurship into formal education despite the introduction of Entrepreneurial Skills Development Programmes (GSDDP) for Nigerian's tertiary institutions by the Federal Government. Commentators and researchers on entrepreneurship education in Nigeria either attempt to restate the importance of entrepreneurship, or analyze different aspects of the entrepreneurial deficits and how they were created; few studies attempt to conceptualize entrepreneurship culturing of formal education in Nigeria. Inadequate focus on how to engraft entrepreneurial competences into formal education, particularly at the tertiary level has made it difficult for regulatory agencies like the National Universities Commission (NUC) to design appropriate standards and benchmarks for accessing how well universities have complied with the Federal Government's

directive on compulsory entrepreneurship education. Consequently, what obtained currently are a set of taught entrepreneurship courses with one form of practical embellishment or the other. The curriculum for most academic programmes have generally remained the same for decades, making thousand of graduates entrepreneurially deficient for self-employment and those who are lucky to get paid jobs most often need to be re-trained. Most often many graduates roams in the street, hence there is recycling of poverty due to increased in unemployment rates.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- It is recommended that the scope of general studies courses be broadened to include music, fine arts, world religions, and international relations. Equally the tendency to overload the undergraduate programme with specialized courses that are more appropriate to higher degree studies should be checked. Students should be constituted into working groups to promote team spirit and sharing of mental models.
- Universities and Polytechnics should commercialize their research findings instead of learning them in the shelves.
- The National Universities Commission (NUC) should as usual get the minimum benchmark of the courses in Nigerian Universities. This development should not be politicized rather, the entire policy frameworks needed for its sustainability and improvement be provided so as to salvage Nigeria from clutches of poverty.

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References to this paper should be made as follows: *Olabode Bashir Olakunle & Muslim N.A. (2018), Entrepreneurial Development: A Panacea for the Menace of Poverty in Nigeria. J. of Arts and Contemporary Society, Vol. 10, No. 1, Pp. 37-50*
