

**POVERTY ERADICATION AND YOUTHS ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENTS THROUGH
ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION IN NIGERIA**

BY

**Saka-Alikinla Issa: Department of Technical Education, Kwara State College of Education, Ilorin;
E-mail:issasakaalikinla@gmail.com**

**Yahaya, Mohammed Ndagi: Department of Early Childhood Education, Kwara State College of
Education, Ilorin; E-mail: ayindeagan750@gmail.com**

**Kamalludeen, Salamat A.: Department of Business Education, Kwara State College of Education,
Ilorin; E-mail: salamatdeen01@yahoo.com**

&

**Salihu, Umar Olaitan: Department of Fine and Applied Arts; Kwara State College of Education,
Ilorin; E-mail: osalihu565@gmail.com**

Abstract

The paper examined poverty eradication and economic empowerments through entrepreneurship education. It lays emphasis on the importance of entrepreneurship education in tackling poverty in the society and the types of entrepreneurship training that can be introduced to reduce poverty in our society. The study considered the level of insecurity posed by unemployed of the teeming youths in Nigeria, and recommended that the government at all levels should; as a matter of urgency, facilitate the establishment of more entrepreneurship training centres. This will help to impact knowledge in the youth as they will be more willing to become entrepreneurs rather than seeking white collar jobs that may not be available.

Keywords: Poverty, Eradication, Development, Programme entrepreneurship education

Introduction

Entrepreneurship is the willingness and ability of a person to find out investment opportunities, establish and run enterprises successfully (Opara, 2007). He further stressed that entrepreneur is an individual who has the zeal and ability to find and evaluate opportunities, gather necessary resources and take sequential and systematic step towards utilising the advantages of such opportunities. Ganiyu and Ojeomogha (2017) defined entrepreneurship as a process involving creating time and something different and which has added value to human existence. The process requires investment of appropriate resource inputs and taking the responsibility for accepting both attendant risks (social, financial and physical) and rewards. Khanka (2014) defined entrepreneurship as the function performed by an entrepreneur in establishing an enterprise just as management is regarded as what manager does. Entrepreneurship may be regarded as what entrepreneurs do. He stressed further that entrepreneurship is the act of being an entrepreneur. Entrepreneurship is a process involving various actions to be undertaken to establish an enterprise. It is, thus a process of giving birth to a new enterprise. Innovation and risk-bearing are regarded as the two basic elements involved in entrepreneurship.

Consequently, Akeem and Olufunmilayo (2012) pointed out that in Nigeria youth are faced with myriads of challenges which are the focus of international discuss. At one of the recent opening meeting of the World Bank a high level round table meeting was organized for leaders from all over the world to share their views on the nature of the challenges that youth are facing and to suggest some possible solutions. They buttressed their points that at the regional level of the meeting, youth unemployment was identified as a pressing problem in Africa of which Nigeria is not excluded. However, poverty is the capability deprivation. Hence, poverty is the failure of some basic human capabilities to function productively. Thus, a poor person is one who lacks the opportunity to acquire the critical minimum level of these basic capabilities such as education skills, employment, income, participation in decision making and health (Nasiru, 2011). He further stressed that the poor are vulnerable because they are susceptible to large

fluctuations in real income over relatively short periods, coupled with the absence of synchronising mechanisms to stabilise purchasing power. Therefore, poverty eradication is the ability of the government to reduce the vulnerability of the citizens to effective and functional economic process. Therefore youth empowerment should be a priority in all economic policies to derive home a realistic and self-reliant economic system of the society. This will assist the youths to be viable and self dependent.

It is unarguably true that the whole essence of entrepreneurship, whether in trade or non-trade practice, is to give empowerment to the individual entrepreneur. Entrepreneurship is expected to facilitate individual's functionality, promote self-reliance and life times of socio-economic empowerment and willingness (Ganiyu, Afonja & Ojeoma, 2012).

Conceptual Clarification

It is a worthwhile effort to clarify the concepts of entrepreneurship education and poverty eradication so as to foster better understanding of how entrepreneurship education can influence poverty eradication and empower youth economic in Nigeria.

Entrepreneurship Education

Adeniran and Olugbuyi (2010) described entrepreneurship education as a way to seek in preparing especially youth to be responsible, enterprising individuals who become entrepreneurs or entrepreneurial thinkers and who contribute to economic development and sustainable communities. They stressed further that entrepreneurship education is an avenue for discovering, acquiring human and social skills which are relevant to participating development and change. Ogundele, Waidi and Hammed (2012) urged that entrepreneurship education is a purposeful intervention by an educator in the life of the learner to impact entrepreneurial qualities and skills to enable the learner survive in the world of business. They stressed further that training is the process of systematically acquiring job related knowledge, skill and attitude in order to perform with effectiveness and efficiency specific tasks in an organisation. They stated further that the acquisition of knowledge and skill during training is not desired for its own sake in industrial and commercial enterprises and that it is utility that predisposes an organisation to invest financial and material resources in it.

Ogundele, Waidi and Hammed (2012) highlighted three main areas of the skill required by entrepreneur as: (i) technical skills; (ii) business management; and (iii) personal entrepreneurial skills. Technical skill involves such things as writing, listening, oral presentation, organising, coaching, being a team player and technical know-how. Also, business management skill includes those areas involved in starting, developing and managing an enterprise. The personal entrepreneurial skill differentiate an entrepreneur from a manager skills included in this classification are inner control (discipline), risk-taking, being innovative, being change-oriented, being persistent and being a visionary leader among others. Ogundele (2004) stressed that for the success of National Economic Empowerment and Development strategy (NEEDS), Nigeria requires a new development approach which will release the best in the nation human capital for the economic development effort.

Therefore, entrepreneurship education can be seen as a training programme designed to equip individual skillfully in the field of business to become self-reliant and serve as an agent of economic growth and transformation for the benefit of all.

Poverty Eradication

In Nigeria, most of the poverty eradication measures or initiatives are embedded in entrepreneurship but have suffered several challenges culminating into their failure. Some of the schemes include National Poverty Alleviation Programme (NAPEP), Youth Empowerment Scheme (YES), Rural Infrastructural Development Scheme (RIDS) and Natural Resource Development and Conservation Scheme (NRDCS) (Ogundele, Waidi & Hammed, 2012). In the attempt of the Nigeria government to eradicate poverty, the

National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS) was developed. It was to strengthen economic and youth empowerments Nigeria. Nigeria has all it takes (human and material resources) to become the strongest economy in Africa and one of the leading economics in the world in the longer term. The goal of NEEDS is to mobilise the resources of Nigeria to make a fundamental break with the failures of the past and bequeath a united and prosperous nation of generations to come. Hence, the plan for prosperity must address a startling paradox that about two-third of the Nigeria people are poor, despite living in a country with vast potential wealth. Poverty levels vary across the country with the highest proportion of poor people in the northwest and the lowest in the southwest. Why are so many of our people poor, therefore poverty is dynamic and has many dimensions. People may move in and out of poverty as a result of natural disasters or health problems, lack access to credit, or the lack of natural resources. Poor people are more likely to live in rural areas, be less educated and have large families than the rest of the population (NEEDS 2005).

Therefore, poverty has many causes, all of which reinforce one another. One source of poverty is lack of basic service, such as clean water, education and health care. Other causes are lack of assets, such as land, tools, credit and supportive networks of friends and family. A third is lack of income, including food, shelter, clothing and empowerment (political power, confidence, dignity). Some of these factors directly affect poverty. Others contribute indirectly, by producing inequality by stifling the political power of certain sectors of the population. Consequently, to improve the lives of Nigeria people, particularly the youth, NEEDS include plans for creating jobs, creating affordable housing, improving health care service, strengthening the skill base, protecting the vulnerable and promoting peace and security. Hence, World Bank Development Report (2002) stressed that poverty is pronounced deprivation in well being, which subjects the poor to hunger without clothing and shelter. The poor are particularly vulnerable to adverse effects outside their control. Hence, it important that all hands must be undock to curtail the vulnerability of the poor society through vibrant and lucrative empowerment that will enable the youth to explore and function effectively in the society and equally contribute immensely to the economic growth and development of the nation.

The Importance of Entrepreneurship Education in Tackling Poverty in our Society

Adeniran and Olugbuyi (2010) enumerated some of the importance of entrepreneurship education. According to them, the usefulness of entrepreneurship education is education for self-reliance when it is fully implemented into education curriculum. It would assist the beneficiary in changing his orientation to be a job creator rather than a job seeker. Managing a business does not really qualify one as a successful entrepreneur. An entrepreneur must be an originator of profitable business ideas, must possess the ability to gain command of and combine resources in a new way that will be profitable. They further stressed that, to a greater extent, earning a living for oneself does not necessarily mean working for someone else. More people around the world are self-employed, engaged in supplying other people's needs. It is believed that the more people are into self-employment the more it definitely improves or raises the standard of living of the people. The role of entrepreneurship education in economic development involves more than just increasing per capita income and constituting change in the structure of business and society.

Consequently, entrepreneurship education has been recognised as the main way through which Nigeria economy can develop rapidly. Adeniran and Olugbiyi (2010) explained that, private enterprises especially indigenous small scale firms, have a vital role to play in promoting the social and economic well being of the nation. Entrepreneurship education is presently the most effective method of bridging the gap between science and market through the skills acquired. Hence, entrepreneurship education is expensive but wise investment in its significance to local, national and international growth, empowerment and development which will enhance the nation's continuous drive for self-reliance.

The Challenges of Entrepreneurship Education on Development in Nigeria

Despite the benefits that are derived from the establishment of entrepreneurship training programme in Nigeria, there are major barriers that affect the holistic implementation of the goals of entrepreneurship education in Nigeria. Bagudu, Joshua, Nnaji and Odesanya (2012) outlined the challenges as follows:

- * **Poor Development of Infrastructural Facilities:** The poor state of the facilities has thwarted the development of entrepreneurial ideas and activities. The issues of power sector in Nigeria have become a problem to both potential and prospective entrepreneur.
- * **Standard of Education:** Education is the critical factor that equips entrepreneurs with qualities needed in order to manage an enterprise successfully. The quality of education in Nigeria institution has continued to diminish due to lack of motivation and incentives for the teachers, which consequently leads to brain drain and half-baked graduants. Therefore, the issue of corruption has to be address to reduce indiscipline in the way people do things.

Table 2: Projected Sources and Means of Employment Generation under NEEDS

Source of growth	Nears of employment generation
Agriculture and rural development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Increased productivity of small farmers * New jobs in rural areas arising from improved rural infrastructural. * Increased employment from commercial agriculture.
Manufacturing and small and medium-size enterprise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Increased production through coordinated programme by the federal and state government. * Federal-state collaboration in the development of industrial clusters and parks.
Solid minerals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * New Investments. * Improved infrastructure at mining sites. * Implementation of national strategy for solid minerals (expected to create at least 500,000 reproofs).
Information and communication Telecommunication Service (especially tourism)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Expansion of Telecommunication industry and the coming on board of second national carriers. * Increased in distributive trade as a consequence of growth in the productive sectors and service. * New focus on tourism (which will lead to more direct and indirect employment at the obudu cattle ranch for example).
Oil and gas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Enforcement of local content policy. * Growth in gas sector.
Power	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Increases participation of independence power providers, which will expand productivity and lead to greater demand for both skilled and unskilled workers in all sectors of the economy.
Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Universal basic education and the increasing growth of private provision of education skill training.
Public works and housing construction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Use of public works in construction of roads and other public utilities, especially by state and local government. * New and continuing boom in housing construction all over the country.
Intervention scheme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Micro credit and concessional credit to provide start-up capital for new businesses.
Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Divestiture of responsibility for waste management to private sector (waste to wealth initiative). * Forest cottage industries (such as manufacture of care product). * Extraction, processing and marketing of non-timber forest

products, including fuel wood and medicinal plants.

Source: NEEDS 2005

Note: These sources of growth are not exhaustive.

The sectors usually associated with modern job creation, such as the financial sector (particularly banks), information and telecommunication technology and the hospitality, are not discussed. Also excluded is the informal sector, the largest employer of non agricultural mid-to-low-skilled workers. Specific measures will be taken to provide specialized skill development to retrain youth and to give employment preference to women and people with disabilities. It was concluded that under this programme, the government will build on these effort by:

- * Strengthening and modernizing the anti-corruption organization it has established.
- * Exposing unethical and illegal practices and publishing those who engage in them.
- * Encouraging organizations to adopt and publish formal codes of ethics.
- * Establishing formal training in ethnic and fostering leadership by example.
- * Enacting a fiscal responsibility pact and a right to information Act. The fiscal responsibility pact will require government agencies to publish annual audited accounts within six months of their financial year end and set up a revenue stabilization fund into which windfall revenues will be transferred.
- * The right to information Act will promote openness and feedback.

To reform the bureaucracy, the government has begun cutting civil service benefits. The government has monetised benefits such as utility service, domestic assistance and drivers and reduced the incentive for corruption by offering civil servants higher wages, houses and improved working condition. The framework will encourage all levels of government to adopt an annual budget strategy and guidelines. The guidelines will promote balanced budgets, implementation of priority programmes, budget discipline, cost effectiveness and the generation of internal revenues and savings. A peer review mechanism will enable heads of government agencies to compare their performance and nurture a common culture of excellence. Therefore, if the outlined facts are holistically adhered to, it will really assist in reducing youth vulnerability to natural disasters and economic mirage in Nigeria. They will become captain of industries and the utmost driver of the nation's economy.

Conclusion

The immense role played by entrepreneurship education in Nigerian society and youth economic empowerments will really enhanced and facilitate economic growth and development of the nation if entrepreneurship education is domesticated in all facets of educational structure particularly at the community level. Youth economic empowerment are critical steps in life for building both human and structural capital that allows young individual to escape poverty to a certain level and leave a meaningful and sound life that will make them be an efficient and effective members of the society. Education, on the other hand, assists everyone to be empowered skillfully and avoid poverty by providing themselves with the training and knowledge to raise their output, income and wealth. The skill is significant as under study in the overwhelming relationship between entrepreneurship skill and youths economic empowerment.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are made to further encourage the stakeholders in education to be more focused on entrepreneurship education:

1. Entrepreneurship education should be, as a matter of urgency, domesticated in Nigerian school curriculum to enhance youth empowerments.
2. Government should facilitate collaborations between small business enterprises and research institution to improve upon research findings of all this institution in improving entrepreneurship education in the nation's educational sector.

3. Entrepreneurship education should be introduced right from when a child is born to expose them to creativity in the business world so that as they grow they will be self-reliance, employer of labour rather a job seeker. This will equally assist to be able to explore their society effectively.
4. Good security network must be put in place to protect the lives of the entrepreneurial, the society and the business enterprise at large to enhance maximum productivity.
5. Government should always make available short term loan facilities to assist youth in exploring their intellect towards economic advancement and the process of repayment to the enhance to avoid corruption.

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