



Youth Empowerment through Entrepreneurship /Business Education: A Gateway to National Growth and Self Reliance in Nigeria

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Abstract

The role played by youth empowerment through Entrepreneurship/Business Education in promoting national growth and self reliance in Nigeria cannot be overemphasized. Entrepreneurship Education and Business Education have common goal of helping the recipients acquire functional skills in terms of vocational business, technical, technological and other forms of skills which could empower them to be self reliant without necessarily waiting for government employment before they can contribute their quota to national development. The youth forms the greatest percentage of the workforce in Nigeria. Business Education with its interwoven connectivity with Entrepreneurship Education on their parts, equips the youths with skills and competencies needed for national growth and self reliance. This paper is therefore aimed at assessing the benefits of youth empowerment through Business and Entrepreneurship Education; and exposing curriculum content of these two courses for recipients towards achieving self reliance and national growth in Nigeria. The following recommendations among others were made; the introduction of Entrepreneurship/ Business Education programs should be made compulsory in the school systems from secondary to higher institutions. Youths should also see school attendance as an avenue to make them creators of job and not seekers of jobs.

Keywords: youth empowerment, Business Education, Entrepreneurship Education, skill acquisition, self reliance and self sufficient.

Introduction

Nigeria as a country is plagued by a plethora of various developmental challenges; chief among these developmental challenges is the problems of youth unemployment, resulting to youth restiveness and violence by vulnerable youths in the hands of corrupt politician and other interest groups. One of the sure ways of addressing these challenges is through youth empowerment through the acquisition of functional skills through Entrepreneurship/Business Education in our school system. Youth empowerment according to Ugochukwu (2015) is the means through which the youths of any country are assisted to succeed in life through the provision and acquisition of functional vocational skills to make them self sufficient and reliant. A youth is any individual within the age of eighteen (18) and thirty five (35) years, irrespective of sex. Youth empowerment can be seen as a gateway to national growth and self reliance for individuals and the nation at large. No nation can really exploit its resources without the youths being involved. Hence, youth empowerment should be given its place in the Nigerian economy and other economies of the world. In other words, if the usefulness of the youths must be fully harnessed, there is therefore, the need for proper development of their potentials. This can only be achieved if they are timely and adequately empowered skill-wise, morally and financially (Awogbenle & Iwuamadi, 2010).

Studies around the world have suggested that the demand for skilled workers in the knowledge economy has created hindrance for a large portion of world youth, especially in developing countries, where higher education system has not been able to realize sufficient value addition in terms of enhancing the employability in the new age in the labor market (Fonchingong & Fonjong, 2003; Lam, 2007; Abdullahi, 2012). Other studies suggested that a staggering 400 million young people around the world are unable to find decent work. Worthy of note is that, today's youth find themselves in an era, where for the first time in the modern civilization, purely economic value of higher education has reached an unprecedented low proportion (Abdullahi, 2012). Ruhl, (2009) observed that adults engaged in self-employment more than the youth, especially in developed countries. This is notable in countries whose economic growth rate is slow or stagnant.

However, it is disheartening that when youth empowerment is mentioned, most people think that it is only the duty of the government to empower the youths. This is not so as individuals and groups can empower the people around them. This is why individuals, government and non-governmental organizations award scholarships especially to the youth. There are some youths with apprenticeship skills while others are also youths who have acquired vocational educational training in various schools.

It is worthy of note that, these ones neither have government employment nor are self employed. This means that even though they have the "First Place" empowerment (skill acquisition), they also need the "Second Place"

empowerment (putting learnt skills to practice to earn a living). This can be achieved either by providing fund for self entrepreneurship or employing the trained youths.

There are some youths who neither have apprenticeship skills or vocational education training skills, but they have funds for investment. This group of youths has the “Second Place” empowerment but lack the “First Place” empowerment. The authors of this work see this condition as an “Improper Fraction” yes, having investment funds and going into business without the requisite skills needed. Indeed, it is just like turning a tree upside down and such a tree will definitely not survive. The third group of youth casualties are those who do not have any vocational training skills in any profession; any school and worst still do not have funds for investment as sole proprietors and are not employed by the government or individuals. The three groups of youths described above need either the first place empowerment, second place empowerment or both. If this is not done, the society cannot expect anything good from the youths, except various social vices such as drug abuse, increased armed robbery, kidnapping for ransom, political thuggery, prostitution, trafficking in persons among others.

The Need for Youth Empowerment

Ogunomi and Oginni, (2013) found that the challenges of keeping youths engaged meaningfully has been a major concern of governments and other stakeholders in the developing nations. In their research, the authors reviewed major challenges confronting the youths apart from unemployment. These challenges include but not limited to inequality, corruption, poverty, cultism, human trafficking, emigration, drug addiction and trafficking, environmental disaster as well as HIV/AIDS, kidnapping and other endemic situations. The authors advanced the urgent need to encourage youths to engage in entrepreneurship development through Business Education which has been seen to be capable of providing self reliance and meaningful living to the teaming youths in the country. The authors also highlighted the benefits of youth self-reliance such as development of entrepreneurial and managerial skills, even distribution of national wealth, exploitation of untapped industrial opportunities, moderation of rural-urban migration, high value added to the economy, promotion of indigenous technology, and improvement in balance of trade. Hence, the authors recommended institutional support for youth self-reliance; inclusion of entrepreneurship studies in high school and undergraduate curricula; tax incentives to young entrepreneurs; and financing of sporting activities to check social vices among youth were recommended (Awogbenle & Iwuamadi, 2010; Ogunyomi and Oginni, 2013).

Ogbondah & Nwogu, (2017) holds that the justification for Business and Entrepreneurship Education which translates into empowering the youths cannot be over-emphasized, therefore the rationale for entrepreneurship education according to Nwangwu (2007) include but not limited to:

- a. Produce youths who are job creators and not job seekers.
- b. Reduce unemployment among youths.
- c. Inculcate in the youths the spirit of entrepreneurship which will enable them to be creative and innovative to exploit business opportunities.
- d. Inspire and encourage these youths to establish career in small and medium scale enterprises.
- e. Expand economic activities to rural and less developed areas.
- f. Equip the youths with the skills that will enable them compete favorably in a technologically driven society.

In similar development, Olorumolu and Agbede (2012) highlighted the following objectives of Business and Entrepreneurship Education as stated below:

- i. To provide meaningful education for youths which could make them self-reliant and subsequently encourage them to derive profit and be self-independent.
 - ii. To provide graduates with the training and support, necessary to help them establish a career in small and medium size business.
 - iii. To provide graduates with training skills that will make them meet the manpower needs of the society.
 - iv. To provide graduates with enough training in risk management to make uncertainty become possible and easy.

- v. To stimulate industrial and economic growth of rural and less developed areas.
 - vi. To provide graduates with enough training that will make them creative and innovative in identifying new business opportunities.
 - vii. To provide small and medium size companies with the opportunity to recruit qualified graduates (manpower) who will receive training and tutoring in the skills relevant to management of the business centre.
- A further critical look at the need for youth empowerment could suffice here thus:

Poverty Eradication

According to Adegbenjo (2004) youth empowerment helps to reduce poverty standard of any nation or individual. The question may be how? When youths are empowered financially, they use the profit they make from the business they do to sustain themselves and their household. Such an empowered youth may start-up businesses for their relations who were poor before and if this continues to grow to some extent, poverty will be eradicated from that home. Empowering the youths with skills can go a long way in reducing poverty percentage of many societies. When a youth learns skills, he can use the skills learnt to feed, assist others, and even invest for future use. One kind of long lasting empowerment is skills empowerment. The skill one learnt can assist him till the end of his life. A youth who is empowered on how to repair automobiles can earn from it till he dies. Other areas of establishment of business centres could be GSM business, sale of equipment and machines etc.

The educational system has not adequately equipped young people with the relevant skills, knowledge and cultural values needed to face the challenges of after school life. As a result, young people cannot find placement in the white-collar job market; neither are they able to create economic opportunities for themselves in the informal sector. There is therefore the need to relate the educational system to the job market. According to the United Nations Organization (1995) cited in Awogbenle & Iwuamadi, (2010), young people in all countries are both a major human resource for development and key agents for social change, economic development and technological innovation. Their imaginations, ideas, considerable energies and visions are essential for the continuing development of the societies in which they live. The problems that young people face as well as their visions and aspirations are essential components of the challenges and prospects of today's societies and future generations (Ruhl, (2009; Awogbenle & Iwuamadi, 2010). Mobilizing the creativity and passion of young men and women, and recognizing the unique perspective of youth on their current and future needs are quickly becoming national and international priorities. Globally, youths are eager to contribute their quota through investment of their energies in the socio-economic development of the societies. In addition, they desire to be absorbed into the socio-economic systems in order to change the old order.

Good Education Standard

Studies have shown that from 2000 until 2011, the unemployment rate averaged 18.82 percent, reaching an all time high of 23.90 percent in December of 2011, representing about 20.3 million Nigerian youth who are currently unemployed. The situation is compounded daily as institutions of higher learning churn out fresh graduates to add to the already saturated labor market. The percentage would have been higher save for the governments' efforts to reduce the unemployment rate among graduates from the nation's universities through various programs such as National Directorate of Employment (NDE), National Poverty Alleviation Program (NAPEP), Youth Enterprise With New Innovation in Nigeria (YOUWIN) to mention but a few.

One of the problems that many nations are facing in their education sector is that the youths are not empowered with vocational, technical and entrepreneurship skills. But when the youths are empowered with the necessary skills, they will support the education sector of their nation. Oviawe and Anarberokhai, (2008) in their study found that the empowered youths is an ambassador of his alma mater, such youths can be self employed and become an employer of labor, accommodating his colleagues and other graduates. Such empowered youths can donate educational facilities to primary, secondary and even to tertiary institutions. The challenges many tertiary institutions in Africa are having today is lack of practical background. The machines and other equipment needed for this practice can

be provided by youths who were empowered by the government. They do this in appreciation to what the government and the institutions did for them. Ojeaga and Owolabi, (2011) found that empowering the youths academically accelerates the spirit of patriotism in the education sector, but empowering youths skilfully and vocationally makes them self reliant and self sufficient. The empowered youth know the importance of education. This is why many individuals award scholarships to students because they understand the value of education, as a result of the empowerment given to them academically (Alonge, Ige and Osagbare, 2014).

Okoli and Okoli, (2013) in their study observed that entrepreneurial development using Business Education is a field that saddles its recipients with skills on how to be employable and useful to themselves and the society at large. Their study emphasized youth empowerment which is orchestrated by the prevailing unemployment of our youths after higher education, yet each year, all the higher institutions in the country keep on churning out graduates in thousands into the labor market for jobs that are non-existent. Hence the needs for entrepreneurial skill development as a way of equipping them with the necessary skills that will enable them start up something on their own. The authors found that most graduates of Nigerian higher institutions lack the basic skills for making them self reliant and self sufficient. This study therefore concluded that it is very necessary amongst others to take a closer look at the objectives of entrepreneurship development, support organizations for entrepreneurship skill provision and development in Nigeria. The authors recommended that entrepreneurship skills should be introduced right from the very formative stage of child development, school curriculum should be skill-based and not just knowledge based (Obadan, 2010; Adeyemi & Adu, 2012).

Good Government

Good governance is attainable with youth empowerment. An empowered youth stands to empower the masses. Any youth who was empowered in his time of hardship will lead his people through the right path. Such youths can do anything possible to see that he meets up with the demand of the society. Oborah, (2006) further posited that empowered youths on leadership skill will do well in leadership positions. This is because they have been trained on how to lead people. They apply what was learnt and makes the government acceptable to the citizens. Unlike those leaders who do not know their left from their right, a well empowered youth on leadership skill gives “first class” leadership to his nation. With youth empowerment on leadership, embezzlement of public fund by top government officers becomes faced with dire consequences. Through empowering the youths on leadership skills, they understand the danger of fund embezzlement (Oviawe, and Anarberokhai, 2008; Isike and Ovekaemo, 2008).

Crime Reduction

Crime is an offensive act against individuals or states. Many people indulge in unlawful transactions because they lack empowerment when they were youths. Government spends a lot in the name of fighting crime without understanding that the formula or solution is in youth empowerment. If any nation wants to fight crime, she should start with youth empowerment. Many youths take part in illegal activities because they are not empowered morally, academically as well as financially. For example, when youths are taught well on the dangers and punishments behind armed robbery or dealing in drugs, there is every possibility that they will not take part in them or it will reduce at least. What concerns an empowered young man who does well in his business with carrying gun and standing on the high ways to rob people? Therefore, youth empowerment reduces social vices (Oborah, 2006; Isike, and Ovekaemo, 2008).

National Growth

When individuals are empowered, especially the youths, these youths will on their own accord readily volunteer to meet their civic obligation of paying their taxes and contribute their quota to the development of the economy through their employment of other youths with the required skills into their business (Oborah, 2006). Growth is the irreversible increase in the size and economy of any nation. In this case, growth is the increase and improvement in many areas of the country. It is hard for banks to fold when the workers are empowered in their youthful ages. Furthermore, the financial management and other things that are needed to be put in place will be well organized. The

infrastructures of many nations are built with the tax paid by the citizens who earn incomes either from government jobs, or self employed entrepreneurs, because they have been empowered. When the taxes are gathered they are used in national development. The banking, education, agricultural and industrial sectors are developed with the money generated from these empowered youths (Isike and Ovekaemo, 2008).

In their study on youth empowerment in higher education for sustainable development of developing communities in Cross River State, Nigeria, Ekpiken & Ukpabio, (2015) observed that in Cross River State communities, youths are in the majority and form a very strong formidable force in the society, but are not empowered while in school nor after graduation. Hence, they rarely contribute to sustainable development of their communities. To address this problem, an ex-post facto research was carried out using a sample of one hundred and forty six (146) youths drawn out of a population of five hundred (500) youths in the study area. The authors used a self-developed research questionnaire comprising 30 items. Pearson product moment correlation analysis was used for data analysis. The result showed that when youths in higher educational institutions are empowered, they will contribute to sustainable development of their communities and the nation. The authors recommended that government, parents and stakeholders should address the issue of youth empowerment in our educational institutions to enable the youths acquire skills for empowerment. Once this is done, the empowered youths becomes self reliant and can contribute their quota to national development. Most authors found the same results where they posited that youth empowerment can bring about the needed technological, vocational and entrepreneurship skills for the optimum development of the individual and the society at large (Duke, 2007; Etuk, Etukudor-Eyo & Ekpo, 2009).

Security

The security sectors of many nations have the youths in their larger numbers a operators. This is because the youths are full of energy and ability. They are always ready to confront challenges. The truth of the matter is that the youths were empowered before they got security jobs. When the youths are empowered, the spirit of patriotism increases in them. Think of how the military of many nations will be without the youths. Youth empowerment results to national protection because when youths are trained on security skills, the affairs of nations are protected. Also, with the empowerment, law offenders are brought to book, (Duke, 2007; Etuk, Etukudor-Eyo & Ekpo, 2009).

Technological Development

Matsushita, (2008) observed that youth empowerment increases and improves technological standard. Development in machines and other important discoveries is because the youths are empowered. They take their time and dig deep into science, reason out some important things and make them real. Many inventions today came as a result of youth empowerment. They are encouraged to use their initiatives to bring out what will help the society. Surely cutlasses in their crude state are not sharp until they are sharpened with files. In the same way, youths when empowered makes technological development to accelerate (Hisrich and Peters, 2007).

Employment Creation

Nwachokor (2012) affirmed that vocational education has assisted graduates and non-graduates to get employment in either public or private sectors of the economy. This is another importance of youth empowerment. A youth empowered society will not seriously suffer from the problem of unemployment that many nations are battling with in recent times. A skill empowered youth is a job creator, this is because from the acquired skill, such youths got during their empowerment program through Business or entrepreneurship Education, can expand their business and employ more citizens which in return help in solving unemployment challenges in the country. Any nation that wants to typically solve unemployment challenge should understand the importance of youth empowerment through skill development. It is in view of this that Gaomab (2004), observed that in today's knowledge-based economy, part of an overall youth empowerment process will involve developing sustainable skills in young people. It has become increasingly difficult for young people to find work-party because they do not have the skills that are in demand in the

labour market. Currently, too few young people are given opportunities to improve their skills in areas that will enhance their employability.

Sam-Ngwu and Wilfred-Bonse, (2012) carried out a study to investigate Business Education or Entrepreneurship Education as a veritable tools for youth empowerment in Nigeria, the authors observed that the need to develop and empower particularly the youth for self-reliance in the contemporary society, calls for another dimension in teaching and learning; a change in paradigm towards the inculcation of values to promote skills, competencies for self employment, independence, youth empowerment and poverty eradication. The authors discussed the need and some strategies to empower the youths through entrepreneurship training (skills). The authors suggested some procedures of production that will help to empower the youth. The authors therefore recommended among others that creative centers should be established and the aims of education re-directed towards improving the skills, knowledge and attitude of the Nigerian youth in preparation for their future jobs, while making use of their heads, hands and heart wisely (Ihebereme, 2006; Egai, 2009).

Youth Empowerment through Entrepreneurship

According to National Business Education Association NEBA (2001), owning a small business encourages personal freedom and individual empowerment. It builds and perpetuates social and economic stability. It spurs the kind of innovation that creates gains in productivity thereby increasing local and national prosperity. Entrepreneurship focuses on recognising a business opportunity, starting a business based on the recognized opportunity and operating and maintaining that business. This is hard work, hence, government and educators and the youths themselves must play crucial roles in creating an environment in which entrepreneurs can flourish. Government can make and implement policies to reduce burdensome regulations and remove red-tape so as to create a small business-friendly environment that supports the perpetuation of business centres, telecentres, cyber cafes, computer training centres, provision stores, and local tailors etc. Without careful attention, government policies could crush the small business sector of any economy (Ihebereme, 2006). According to Agbamu (2005) business educators can make the self employment objective of Business Education a reality by focusing entrepreneurship education at the initiator level of the entrepreneurship pyramid (Ayeduse, 2011; Adebowale, 2012). Adewoye, (2015) in his study identified some examples of youth empowerment, this is so because different programs which are ordinarily not youth empowerment are being bandied to mean youth empowerments. According to this author, the different types of youth empowerment include but not limited to the following:

- i) Economic Empowerment , ii) Social Empowerment , iii) Political Empowerment , iv) Educational Empowerment

Economic Empowerment: Agina-Obu, (2008) observed that Nigeria is greatly endowed with human and material resources, the judicious utilization of these resources which is the bane of our economic growth and development requires managerial skills. To this end, Nzerem (2006) posited that as aspect of entrepreneurship or empowerment education is Business Education, which equips its recipients with managerial skills to harness available resources and to manage both human and materials resources. Nwokolo (2000) and Akanbi, (2002) stated respectively that the goal of Business Education is the provision of skills to the youths in an effort to fight unemployment, poverty and urban migration.

Ogbondah & Nwogu, (2017) posited that one of the greatest social challenges in Nigeria today is large scale youths unemployment due to non-empowerment of the youths through entrepreneurship education. The youths are the foundation of any society. The energy, vigor, inventiveness, character and orientation define the pace of development and security of any society, as such any neglect on the part of developing the youth will be devastating. Entrepreneurship education if fully implemented will become a panacea to curb societal menace perpetrated by the youths.

These authors examine the historical perspective of entrepreneurship development as prescribed in the curriculum content of both Business Education/Entrepreneurship Education in Nigeria, conceptual clarification of entrepreneur, entrepreneurship, entrepreneurship education and youth, and the rationale for entrepreneurship education in Nigeria. The authors also x-rayed Nigerian educational system and youth empowerment, Business and

Entrepreneurship Education for sustainable youth empowerment, the danger of non-empowerment of the youths, constraints to entrepreneurship education in Nigeria. Recommendations were then made among others that there is need to redesign school curriculum for practical youth empowerment. Once such is done, the youths will be better placed for the world of work and vocational development. Generally speaking, empowered youths are the youths who are self-reliant in terms of thinking, working, and can foot their bills and make independent decisions towards the development of the society. Empowered youth contribute both in ideas, resources, decision, innovations and manpower towards a collective control and decision making for the upliftment of the society (Oviawe and Anarberokhai, 2008; Ojeaga and Owolabi, 2011).

For this empowerment to be meaningful there should be the introduction and implementation of entrepreneurship education. In the same perspective, Ayeduse (2011) supports that entrepreneurship education will provide meaningful education for undergraduates which could make them to be self-reliant and provide them with creative and innovative skills necessary for identifying new business opportunities. Ivowi (2009) emphasized that educating an individual entrepreneurially makes him to be equipped with enabling skills to live peacefully and productively in a dynamic society. Entrepreneurship education as a program of study has been proved to be a useful and practical system of education that provides immediate employment for young school leavers. It will therefore, prepare undergraduates adequately to be resourceful and to have full initiative for managerial competencies (Olaleye, 2012).

The national goals of education in Nigeria are the attainment of a free and democratic society, a just and egalitarian society, a united, strong and self-reliant nation, a great, vibrant and dynamic economy, a land full of bright opportunity for all citizens. The National Policy on Education (NPE) outlines the national goals **Social Empowerment:** Onwueme and Ugbor (2004) found that sociology is interested in the study of man, his group and his activities in assisting other members of the society. There is the social empowerment which has to do with the education of the youth to be relevant and contribute their own quota to the growth and sustenance of the society through their social interactions with one another. Social empowerment does not only empower the youths to be socially matured or does not only imbue in the youth the interpersonal skills, but also help the youths to be socially acceptable in the society, right values, moral and civic responsibilities and other social values which are acceptable and obtainable in the larger society. In their dreams and hopes, a society finds motivation on their energies; the society builds her vitality and purpose, for this reason, because of their dreams and aspirations, the future of any society is assured (Agina-Obu, 2008).

The objectives of education in Nigeria, as spelt out in the National Policy on Education in Nigeria as designed by the Federal Republic of Nigeria (2013) include:

- i. The inculcation of national consciousness and national unity.
- ii. The inculcation of right type of values and attitudes for the survival of the individual and the Nigerian society.
- iii. The training of the mind in the understanding of the world around.
- iv. The acquisition of appropriate skills and the development of mental, physical and social abilities and competencies as equipment for the individuals to live in and contribute to the development of the society.

Based on the content of Business/Entrepreneurship education as a veritable tool for empowering youths, these types of empowerment therefore elicit sustainability and national development from the youths. The Nigerian educational system is aimed at empowering and developing the citizenry, especially the youths to acquire skills, competencies and knowledge for preparation for the world of work and self-reliance (Alimba, Momodu, Abba & Bello, 2010).

Political Empowerment

Political empowerment, just like other vocational and non-vocational empowerments equips the beneficiaries with leadership skills such as when to apply autocracy, democracy and laissez-fair styles of management. Political

empowerment therefore confers political power on the youths. Through this system of empowerment, individuals are empowered in terms of knowledge and in terms of resources, where they can make politically informed decision as to who to vote and be voted for, what and what should the electorate expects or require from their representatives. Jimoh-Kadiri, (2006) in his study found that political empowerment help in making people self reliant politically, thereby reducing the strength of using money to coerce voters to vote for the wrong candidates at the detriment of the entire society. Informed political elites hardly make political mistakes, by choosing the right candidates to run for public offices, the right person to vote in order to bring the dividend of democracy to the electorates and the development of the society (Nwangwu, 2007; OKorosaye-Orubite, 2008).

Educational Empowerment

Good (2003), opined that education is the aggregate of all the processes by means of which a person develops abilities, attitudes and other forms of positive behaviour or positive value in the society in which he or she belongs. The government and spirited individuals have from time to time given youths the opportunity to study in the various institution of higher learning. This has been achieved through scholarships and bursary awards. Therefore the education of the youths brings a positive attitude and values which translate into society's development (Oladejo, 2012). Education imbues in the learner all functional skills that make the recipients a functional member of the society where he comes or finds himself.

Moral Empowerment: Religious groups and churches have introduced moral empowerment, while most recently, civic education and national value as a subject has also stressed the need for moral empowerment. Religious and national, values, citizenship education and national values, are all geared towards inculcating in the learner, the right attitudes, values, morals and responsible citizenry, who is aware of and informed about citizens obligation to the nation (society) or government's responsibility to the citizens. Certificates awarded in entrepreneurship education takes into consideration both character and learning. Teaching moral values in most institutions are known for their sound moral standards. They do not keep cultists, armed robbers, exam malpractice offenders, rather such students suffer expulsion. This therefore shows that vocational education offers moral empowerment to it recipients (Olaleye, 2012; Olorumolu & Agbede, 2012).

Financial Empowerment

The economic, political and educational empowerment talks about various skills, but for the entrepreneur, skills are put to action when the financial resource is available. Acquiring skills without using them is like buying a vehicle without using it. Ogbondah & Nwogu, (2017) posited that for very entrepreneurship education is targeted towards self reliance through the skill acquisition for financial self reliance thereby enhancing sustainable youth empowerment through the following:

1. **Self-Employment:** The main aim of this program is to encourage and train graduates of universities, polytechnics, colleges of education and secondary school to take up self-employment through the study and participation in Business or Entrepreneurship Education (Jimoh-Kadiri, 2006).
2. **Ability to Overcome Obstacles:** It is obvious that only people with entrepreneurial capacities can bulldoze through the formidable restrictive bottlenecks in the way of effective foreign technology transfer.
3. **Acquisition of Right Attitude:** Through entrepreneurship education, Nigerian youths will be able to comprehend all activities and interest of the organization with the acquisition of right attitude, habits, saleable skills, entrepreneurial skills as well as managerial skill and evaluation of entrepreneurship performance. It exposes the recipient to imaginative adaptability and innovative abilities.
4. **Enthusiasm and Common Sense:** Entrepreneurship education will equip the youths with enthusiasm or zeal and common sense after establishing a business of their own and now looking forward to increasing their earnings and

the freedom of self-employment. This would make them to organize their time at work in order to make them perform their job according to plan.

5. Leadership: Business Education will enable the youths to induce subordinates to work in the realization of goals with confidence and keenness.

6. Competence and Skill-Based Hard work: Entrepreneurship education will inculcate into the youths competence and skill-based hard work for efficiency and flourishing of the business.

7. Morale and Discipline: Morale deals with the feelings of the individual while discipline ensures obedience to rules and conditions. Entrepreneurship education will achieve these in the youths to encourage high morale and discipline.

8. Time Management: Entrepreneurship education will consciously inculcate the ability to manage time effectively. Hence, the target set for the accomplishment of goals will be realized.

9. Keeping Financial Control: Business Education will expose the youths with the knowledge of financial accounting in order to eliminate drastically over-spending.

10. Secret of Staying in Self-Employment: Entrepreneurship education will teach the youths secret of patient and gradual growth for their businesses to thrive.

11. Appropriate Choice: Entrepreneurship education will assist the youths make appropriate choice of vocation or occupation.

12. Utilization of Technologies: To sustainably empower the youths, entrepreneurship education will enhance the utilization of information and communication technology for self-emancipation and development.

13. Utilization of Potentials: Business/Entrepreneurship education will enable the youths to fully utilize their potentials in diverse sectors of the economy.

14. Preparation for Useful Living: Entrepreneurship/Business Education will prepare the youths for useful living within the society.

15. Increased Productivity and Poverty Alleviation: Entrepreneurship education will empower the youths with essential and versatile technological skills for increased productivity and poverty alleviation.

Challenges of Youths Empowerment

According to National Economic Empowerment and Development strategy NEEDS (2006) and Oviawe and Anarberokhai, (2008), the following are factors constituting bottlenecks to youth empowerment:

- ❖ Excessive political interference: Politicians most often do not allow the programs of the youth empowerment to work according to plan. They are usually concerned with their relatives beefed up with many fictitious names to claim the fund meant for the general public.
- ❖ The near absence of sustainable mechanisms: Youth empowerment program are usually introduced today and they die tomorrow. This is because new government most often abandon programs for new ones to satisfy their selfish interests.
- ❖ Bribery and corruptions: Some of the coordinators of these empowerment programs often require the beneficiaries to offer bribes before they can allow them to benefit.
- ❖ Dysfunctional educational system in curricula-structure does not promote youth entrepreneurship, innovative skills and virile apprenticeship schemes. Instead, most graduates of Nigerian education system lack basic skills with which to enter into the labor market. Most graduates leave university with the thinking that they must seek employment in large organizations.
- ❖ Corruption has been the bane of development in Nigeria and it has impacted negatively in the industrialization process initiated by successive governments. It has attained an endemic level with public office holders paying lip service to its eradication because they are part of the beneficiaries

- ❖ Poor monitoring and evaluation mechanism: Most often than not, government programs are hardly monitored or evaluated to identify potential threats and hazards that can inimically hamper the achievements of the set goals. Most projects are not properly monitored, even when monitoring and evaluation plans are included in the programs or project plans, they are hardly done effectively.
- ❖ Poor state of infrastructure: There are problems of erratic power supply, poor road network and inadequacy of infrastructure in the country. Hence, even a financially empowered youth who uses electricity for his work may find it frustrating without a generating plant.
- ❖ Most often the beneficiaries are not involved in the project design implementation, monitoring and evaluation and hence the government may not know exactly what the challenges of the suffering masses are.
- ❖ Poverty of political commitment towards youth empowerment and innovative approaches at local, state and federal levels is another cause of youth unemployment. There are no verifiable statistics of actual labor shortages, employment, under-employment and vacancies analyses that can guide national planning.
- ❖ Most functionaries in public and private sectors are largely bereft of ideas of blending education, training and learning for resolving youth unemployment menace. This is why most government programs are yet to achieve the desired results of reducing youth unemployment.

- ❖ In addition, in Nigeria loanable funds that youth can draw from to invest are not accessible.

Other constraints to youth empowerment include attitudinal barriers, insecurity, inadequate experts, poor information network, hostile government policies, poor credit and financial system, perceived gaps in our educational system and its curriculum content between education and training, weak counselling services, and the craze for paper qualification as prerequisites for white collar job employment and epileptic power supply. These and many more have been the problems militating against effective youth empowerments in Nigeria and in most African countries.

Conclusion:

No nation can really achieve a high level of growth and development without effective and efficient youth empowerment. It saves the society from social vices such as drug abuse, armed robbery, rape, advance fee fraud (419), terrorism, violence and youth restiveness, Bribery and Corruption and kidnapping, thereby reducing youth dependence. Rather, it enhances economically viable, socially valuable and politically uplifted society.

This paper therefore concludes that youth empowerment through entrepreneurship education, where the youths can learn vocational skill, business development ideas; technical and other skill base training is a necessary tool for self reliance and national development in Nigeria. Despite all the challenges listed, with proper planning and monitoring, youth empowerment can be diligently achieved.

Recommendations

Based on the review so far, the following recommendations are therefore made:

- a. Government should encourage youth empowerment through Business/entrepreneurship Education and apprenticeship education at all levels of our educational system and in formal, non-formal and informal education system.
- b. Programs should have continuity so that they can be evaluated to know their potency. This can be done through political party's manifestos, philosophy and ideologies
- c. Government should provide infrastructure to help the empowered youth to succeed.
- d. Politicians should not use fictitious names to claim funds meant for empowering the youths.
- e. The two stages of empowerment: Skills and finance for practical should be seen as important strategies in government empowerment programs.

- f. Individuals apart from government should see youth empowerment as the duty of the general society.
- g. Public spirited individuals can also provide skill acquisition programs for the communities, thereby empowering them to be self reliant.
- h. Urgent overhauling of the curriculum content for Business and Entrepreneurship Education
- i. Finally, there should be government, private and public partnership arrangements to provide training for young entrepreneurs and also provide the needed capitals to boost the growth of cottage industries in the communities.

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