

Entrepreneurship Education: The Way Forward to Economic and Technological Advancement of Nigeria

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Abstract

The study examines entrepreneurship education as a way forward towards economics and technological advancement of Nigeria. It acknowledges the fact that management emerged as a result of the 18th and 19th century industrial revolution in Great Britain. This was predicated on the intellectual re-awakening, scientific and technological discoveries of the scientist like Galileo, Watts, Gilbert, Harvey and other geniuses, which gave rise to mass production of goods. And these consequently create management problems and challenges and problems that culminated in the emergency of various concepts, theories and principles, which could be studied in schools as management education. The study employed secondary source of data gathering and the observation method approach. The study took an in-depth survey of entrepreneurship education as a precursor for economic and technological take-off and advancement. The paper therefore recommends that entrepreneurship education be made compulsory right from the secondary level and in all tertiary institutions. The paper believes that this will ginger our economic and technological advancement.

Keywords: Entrepreneurship, Education, Forward, Economics, Technological, Advancement.

Introduction

It is over desire as a Nation to stimulate growth in the various sub-sectors of the economy. It is only when this is achieved that we can begin to record significant improvement in the living standard of Nigerians' indeed, during the pre-independence period, majority of Nigerians were farmers. Self-employment and self-reliance were the order of the day. Nonetheless, towards the beginning of independence, many Nigerians, particularly the educated elite took to white-collar jobs by taking over the post left by the colonial masters. These coupled with the oil boom of the 1970's which made our economy to depend solely on oil at the neglect of the other sub-sectors of the economy.

It was in an attempt to revive the battered economy that successive government had come up with different rolling plans; such as the austerity measures of the Muritala/Obasanjo's Administration (1976-1979) and the structural adjustment programme of Babangida's regime (1985-1993), the deregulated and partially regulated strategies of the Abacha's (1993-1998) and the Abubakar Abdulsalam's Administration (1998-1999) respectively.

Nevertheless, all these national policies fail to encourage the expected economic and industrial growth; rather the economy witnessed significant increase in our external portfolio. It is imperative to note that majority of these policies suffer from one reason to the other, ranging from policy contradictions, policy somersault, non-continuity to lack of purpose and vision.

It is on this backbone, that the Obasanjo's regime (1999-2007) made for restructurings of the Nigerian economy, her policy focus. Thus, his economic reforms were primarily centered on market orientation, private sector led, self employment, self reliance and technological driven.

To this end, one of the instruments that Obasanjo's regime used was the promotion of the small and medium scale enterprises (SMEs) and the development of creative and entrepreneurial ability of its citizenry.

Methodology

The paper is basically to bring into focus the policy instruments that may be pursued in the quest for the environment of entrepreneurship education in the country. In view of the descriptive presentation, data used were mainly of secondary nature. Articles on the various aspects of Entrepreneurship education were downloaded from the internet. Also consulted were textbooks, academic research journals, magazines, newspapers and periodical articles e.t.c. These materials were extensively analyzed. However, this paper attempts to contribute in its own small way, to that it may take for the overall development and promotion of entrepreneurship activities in order to reduce un-employed work force by generating economic prosperity for the country.

Evolution of Management Education in Nigeria

Management came into being as a result of technological advancement and industrial revolution of the 18th and 19th century in Great Britain. This led to the emergence of large corporation with its attendant management problems. Hence the need for various management thoughts and theories. It was this that was packaged into a systematic body of knowledge that could be learnt and studied as subjects in schools.

However, one distinguishing feature of successful organizations is that they are all proud of their past. Members of such organizations happily recount their history, trace their pedigree and worship their founding fathers. While management education in Nigeria cannot claim such a success yet, it is certainly not preposterous to start documenting the story of its development.

More so, one is not oblivious of the fact that management scholars are not likely to agree on how best this documentation could be presented. The University of Nigeria, Nsukka, is the first University in West Africa to offer a degree programme in Management. Its management programme was started in September, 1961. In its early stages, these departments faced the problem of all pioneer business schools. On campus, fellow undergraduates wondered on what could be learned in Business Administration department as, "OMATA" ----- Onitsha Market Amalgamated Traders Association.

Moreover, we have the institute of Administration, Ahmed Bello University, Zaria, Management education at this University was carried out at the institute located at "KONGO" Campus. This institute had been conducting in – service training courses since 1957. The institute later became one of the campuses of the newly created Ahmedu Bello University, Zaria. The West regional government equally established a similar institution in the early sixties.

Indeed the university of Lagos set a record in being the first University in Nigeria to offer, MBA programme. This programme started in 1973 after the university of Lagos was established in 1962 with the faculty of Business Administration and social sciences as one of its three primary academic units.

In addition, we have the institute of Management Technology (IMT), Enugu. It came into existence on July 1, 1973 by virtue of edit No 10 of 1973. This institute has made significant contribution to the development of management education; Its Higher National Diploma (HND) programmes could be compared to courses offered by those of the prestigious overseas professional bodies like the institute of marketing, London. It is important that one does not discountenance the role played by professional bodies in the development of management education in Nigeria. They include, the Accounting Association, The Nigeria Institute of Bankers etc.

However, it is pertinent to mention that the real development of Entrepreneurship education started with Joseph Ayo Babalola University, Ikeji-Arakeji, and a private University. This school set a record in being the first University in Nigeria to offer Entrepreneurship as a degree course. The school started the course as a fully fledged department in the college of social and management sciences in October, 2006 with its first set of students presently in 400 Level of its 5 (five) years programme with a full year of industrial experience outside the campus. However, all other undergraduate students must have a task of at least twelve (12) units course of entrepreneurship before graduation. This attempt is to position those students well to be a job creator rather than be a job seeker on graduation. What a good vision for rapid economic and technological advancement of this country, Nigeria.

ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION-A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK.

According to Cole (2005), an entrepreneur is an organisation builder whose entrepreneurship perception is not restricted sequence of decisions of an individual or group of associated individuals, undertaken to initiate and maintain a profit oriented business unit for the production and distribution of economic goods and services.

Similarly, Koontz and O'Daniel in Afolaranmi (2003) posited that an entrepreneur is a person who sees a business opportunity, obtains the needed capital, know how to harness the operation successfully and has the willingness to take a personal risk of success or failure.

In another dimension, Adebayo (2008), sees an entrepreneur as an individual who takes risk and starts something new "Briefly stated" the entrepreneur organizes and operates an enterprise for personal gain. He pays current prices for the materials consumed in the business for the use of the land, for the personal services he employs and for the capital he requires. He contributes his own initiative, skill and ingenuity in planning, organizing and administering the enterprises. He also assumes the chance of loss and gain consequent to unforeseen and uncontrollable circumstance. The net residue of the annual receipts of the enterprises after all cost have been paid, he retains for himself.

Also, O'ECO (2004), defines Entrepreneur as a central pillar of economic development, job creation and social inclusion and a catalyst for urban regeneration in deprived areas.

In the same vein, Drucker (1985) observed that an entrepreneur searches for change, responds to it, and exploits it as an opportunity.

According to Robert and Brush (1985) in Ayeni (2007), entrepreneurship is the process of creating something new with value by devoting the necessary time, effort, assuming the accompanying financial, psychic and social risks, resulting rewards of monetary and personal satisfaction and independence.

Ronstadt (1984) in Holt (2005) opined that entrepreneurship is the dynamic process of creating incremental wealth.

It is on record that the Nigeria Nation experienced the oil boom in the 1970-1975. However, rather than exploiting these opportunities to develop our entrepreneurship, and other sub-sectors of the economy, Nigeria concentrated on the development of white elephant projects.

Those have created a lot of economic and developmental problems. To this end, Fashoyin (2007) observed that after about a decade of unprecedented economic boom and a fairly low rate of unemployment, Nigeria in the 1980s faced with its worst period of unemployment, which is accompanied by serious economic crisis. Unemployment is undoubtedly one of the most debilitating social problems facing the economy today.

On this backdrop, it became clear that there is a need to revive the economy and this led to the inclusion of entrepreneurship education in many of our tertiary institutions. Infact, the new education policy is trying to retrench entrepreneurship, vocational / skills acquisition and computer literacy programme into our educational curriculum right from the Government believes will bring about economic independence and a culture of self-reliance. This is expected to lead to the generation of self employment.

Entrepreneurship education focuses on skills acquisition and development. These skills are entrepreneurial spirit, character and personalities, enterprises building skills and ability to start one's business technological and other professional competences needed for production work.

Furthermore, the Nigerian Polytechnics and Universities has played major role in entrepreneurship education in Nigeria. Apart from turning out graduate / man power for our industries, the polytechnics and the Universities promote the developments of entrepreneurship in the following ways: Training and development, whereby courses like entrepreneurship development programmes, small business management are introduced and taught to equip prospective entrepreneurs,

Indeed, the issues of whether entrepreneurship can be taught or learned have been a controversial matter for sometimes Casson (1992), Timmons (1985) and Manofi (1994) in Ajayi (2009), opined that some entrepreneurial skills are in fact acquirable and learnable, particularly creativity and innovativeness. Also, while it is true that are some entrepreneurial traits that are in-born such traits may be dormant and may never be recognized or exploited. A good entrepreneurship education programme can easily activate and stimulate such traits. Afonja (1997) in Ajayi (2009) observed that even when traits are active, good guidance through a good training programme could help a potential entrepreneur to avoid some of the expensive pitfalls and mistake, which often characterize new ventures.

Similarly, Ilesanmi (2000) said that education is the development of a person for the acquisition of all around efficiency of skills and knowledge, intellectually, socially, morally, culturally, physically, economically; with the sole aim of earning a living. In fact, education aims at developing the knowledge, skills, moral value and understanding required in all aspects of life. The attitude development is from employment seeker to employment creation.

Today, there are many business opportunities in the society Entrepreneurship education can contribute towards more youths taking advantages of this favourable situation.

Moreover, according to Iwuagwu (2007), the objectives of entrepreneurship education are to upgrade the status of self-employment as a career alternative in the society and to facilitate and accommodate the various components vital for enterprise culture.

Enterprise culture is an environment that prepares and initiates the population as a whole to take advantage of the abundant business opportunities by providing supportive measures for entrepreneurs at all levels of development to realize their potentials regardless of sex. Entrepreneurial education, which concentrates on present level of enterprise development, is a complement of other enhancement to an enterprise culture.

Furthermore, is the issue of entrepreneurial focus, which is critical in making entrepreneurship education different from other disciplines such as Business Students/Administration, Industrial Management and others. Hence, these focus should include the future rather than the past, creativity rather than critical analysis, insight rather than knowledge, active understanding/involvement rather than manipulation symbols, personal communication rather than written communication, personal influence rather than neutrality, opportunities and problems solving rather than partiality.

Nonetheless, entrepreneurship education has some specific roles to perform, such as provision of employment, rural-urban balance, industrialization, efficient use of scarce resources, improved productivity and labour utilization.

In a similar vein, the entrepreneurship trainer has significant roles to play such as portraying entrepreneurial behavior, credibility, highly motivated and innovative, able to formulate strategies for stimulating trainers towards self-employment, identifications of entrepreneurial skills in youth, provision of base skills. And as a resource person, he/she organizes training courses at various levels and institutions and evaluates their effectiveness and many more.

ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND TECHNOLOGICAL ADVANCEMENT - THE SIAMESE TWINS

It is evidenced that hardly can you talk of entrepreneurship without production. More so, Schumpeter in Holt (2005) posited that the entrepreneur seeks to reform or revolutionize the pattern of production by expecting an invention or more generally, an untired technological possibility for producing a new commodity or producing an old one in a new way, by opening up a new source of supply of materials or a new outlet for products.

Technology is the most distinctive ingredient of modern society. It does not only determines our standard of living, but also our way of life. More so, nowadays when societies are looked upon as primitive or advanced according to the level of their technological achievement.

Moreover, following the pattern of wealth created elsewhere by industrial means, the desire to consume more is aroused, and so more needs to be produced. However, according to Ifeanyi (2007), the traditional technologies are less suited to meet rising expectations of wealth. Hence, the urgent need for developing countries to develop their own appropriate technology. Technology countries to develop their own appropriate technology. Technology is the how of doing something. That is, the way an organisation transfers its inputs into outputs.

Nevertheless, technology can be classified into advanced technology, intermediate technology and indigenous technology.

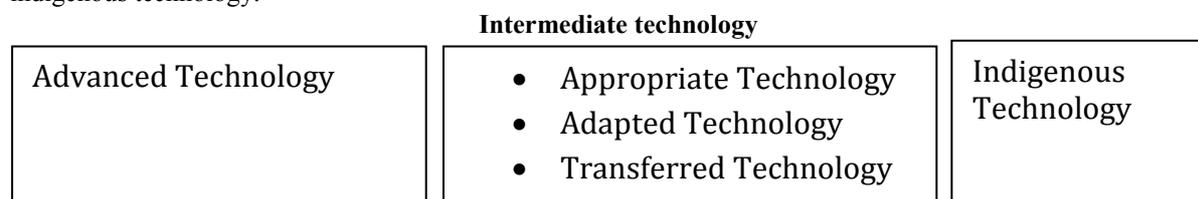


Fig 1: Types Of Technology: Adopted From Ajayi O., Entrepreneurship Development And Small Scale Business Management Lagos: Dangeno Biz World.

Advanced technology is the technology which is peculiar to technologically advanced countries. An indigenous technology is a Home-based technology that has been developed from modern scientific principle. Intermediate technology is a technology, which lies between the most primitive and the most advance. It contains the advantages of the developed while avoiding the pitfalls of the over developed.

An appropriate is that which is most economic in a given set of circumstances. To be considered appropriate, such technology must fulfill the following criteria:

- Raw materials used can be locally sourced
- Equipment and capital goods must be available
- Skill to operate the technology must be readily available
- The size of the market must be adequate
- There must be availability of utilities
- There must be availability of infrastructural facilities e.t.c.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

CONCLUSION

Management came into being as a result of the industrial revolution and technological advancement of the 18th and 19th century in Great Britain.

No doubt, the oil boom of the 70s has created socio-economic problems for Nigeria. This has emerged in form of unemployment. With this emanated problem, the Government is of the opinion that entrepreneurship education; with emphasis on skills acquisition could be a way out. Entrepreneurship education should have attitude development as its base rather than technical and managerial skills i.e. from employment seeker to employment creation. Entrepreneurship should be futuristic. Without any gainsaying, entrepreneur seeks to revolutionize the pattern of production by exploiting an invention or an untied technological possibility for producing a new commodity. It is therefore imperative to note that industrial production process cannot be divorced from the fabrication of machines and tools required for the manufacture of the desired products.

Therefore, developing countries must strive to have an appropriate and adaptable technology. Self employment of course suggests peace, unity and stability, which can be achieved using entrepreneurship education, which will ultimately enhance technological advancement.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the issues identified and discussed in this study, the following policy recommendations are proffered;

- The Government efforts on entrepreneurship development should move from the drawing board of dailies to concrete and practical steps, that are physical and graphical
- Government should encourage willing entrepreneurs to establish Small-Scale Foundries in various parts of Nigeria
- Government should sensitize the people through the re-branding campaign programme on the use of Locally Made Goods as a matter of urgency
- There should be a stable industrial policy on Small and Medium Enterprise (SME) devoid of party colorations.
- Apart from entrepreneur education, there should be entrepreneurship and vocational centres in our tertiary institutions-Universities, Polytechnics e.t.c

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