

ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION FOR POVERTY REDUCTION AND ENHANCED CITIZEN PARTICIPATION IN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

Dr. Melvins Enwuvessi Hanachor and Dr. Rex A. Needom

Department of Adult and Non-Formal Education, Faculty of Education
University of Port Harcourt Rivers State, Nigeria.

ABSTRACT: *Poverty has been identified as a major set-back to any economy. Poverty had become endemic to many nations of the world especially the less developed. To treat the scourge of poverty, proactive actions and plans, such as equipping citizens with entrepreneurship skills and knowledge must be put in place. This paper therefore, presents entrepreneurship education as a cure to poverty and its curriculum, a frame work for poverty alleviation programmes. The concepts of entrepreneurship education, poverty and participation are fully discussed. The objects of entrepreneurship, goal and the curriculum context of effective entrepreneurship education were also discussed. The relationship between poverty, entrepreneurship and participation were highlighted. The paper concludes that given the immense benefits crewing from entrepreneurship education, and its role enhancing community development activities, the nation should channel its efforts to improve the economy and better the lives of the citizens.*

KEYWORDS: Community Development, Entrepreneurship Education, Poverty Reduction, Citizen Participation, Poverty

INTRODUCTION

All over the globe, the progress of any nation depends on the productivity of the citizens of the nation. The citizens on the hand will not be able to a live up to this responsibility of been productive, if they are not gainfully engaged in economic venture. The provision of economic ventures will largely depend on the available gainful employment and creation of jobs. These challenges the paper believe could be addressed through entrepreneurship education. In the past, training programmes, irrespective of the level and structure have concentrated more on teaching knowledge and skills in principle, devoid of practical experience in the various fields. Entrepreneurship education enhances the mastery of skills through practical application of knowledge and exposure to variety of activities that could change lives and make become self-reliant and self-employed, there by promoting small scale enterprises.

The present system of education is unable to create employment opportunities developing countries as Nigeria, therefore there is need to develop a special entrepreneurial culture for the acquisition of relevant skills to become wealthy and self-sustaining in the society. It is on these premise that the paper advocates for the application of entrepreneurship education for a sustained reduction of poverty and enhanced participation in the development of our communities.

Concept of Entrepreneurship education

Entrepreneurship is a critical factor to economic development of any nation because it enhances the development of small, medium and large scale enterprises. Entrepreneurship education is one way of addressing poverty reduction since it aids economic growth. Entrepreneurship education increases self-efficiency, self-employment and risk-taking attitude, create business opportunities for starting new business activities.

Entrepreneurship is the ability to turn ideas to action. It includes functional creativity and common orientation. In the views of Commission of European communities in Mbara, Anurugwo, and Alatare (2015) entrepreneurship support individuals in their daily activities in society. It goes beyond ability to set up business to the manifestation of critical thinking and promotion of self-worth.

Sanchez (2010) in Mbara, Anurugwo and Alatare (2015) maintain that entrepreneurship education which should result to reduction of poverty, should include;

- Ability to recognize opportunities in life.
- Ability for generation of new ideas and needed resources.
- Ability to create and operate new firms.
- Ability and capacity to think in creative and critical manner.

Apart from the creation of ability, knowledge and skills in business, entrepreneurship also build in the recipients the values, beliefs and attitudes that enhances success in both individual and corporate life of people.

Thomson business information (2012) reported in Mbara et al. (2015) categorized entrepreneurship education into three; creativity, innovation, and entrepreneurship. To them, creativity has to do with the ability to create all kinds of ideas, which forms the basis for decision making. Innovation they said involves the ability to find value in the process of selecting ideas. Entrepreneurship to them is the development of business from the innovative idea.

The concept of entrepreneurship education have been seen by authors in various ways. This may have informed Hisrich and Peters in Nosike (2012) who maintain that entrepreneurship means different things to different people. In the view of Ghana (2001) in Nosike (2012) it is the willingness and ability of an individual to seek out investment. Opportunities in an environment and be able to establish and run the enterprise successfully based on the identified opportunities. The entrepreneur is an inventor, who sees the gold that is neglected by others. In whichever way entrepreneurship education is viewed, Paul (2015) in Ossai and Nwalado (2012) outlined certain objectives that must be achieved to enhance entrepreneurship education;

- Provision of functional education, for self-employment and self-reliant.
- Reduction of high rate of poverty.
- Creation of adequate training that will enable people to be creative and innovative in identifying novel business opportunities.

- Creation of employment opportunities.
- To build the spirit of perseverance in youths and adults to enable them persist in any business of their choice.
- Provide enabling environment to upgrade from traditional to modern industrial economy.
- To serve as catalyst for economic growth etc.

Taking into cognizance the ways to achieve these objectives, Agi (2012) highlighted the OSLO Agenda for entrepreneurship curriculum in Europe as follows:

- Basic academic skills.
- Economic concept.
- Personal interest and investment.
- Business planning
- Partnership/merger formations
- Risk management
- Ethical behaviour
- Concept development
- Resourcing
- Management information
- Technical know-how
- Market profile
- Social environment
- Economic environment
- Physical resource management

The primary purpose of entrepreneurship education is the development of people who will demonstrate the ability and capacity to innovate business ideas in all sectors of the economy.

Concept of Poverty

Poverty as a concept, mean different thing to different people. So many authors had approached the concept from so many dimensions. The economist perceives poverty as a state of inability to acquire basic goods and services as a result of low income. The sociologist will attribute inability to participate effectively in activities of the society to poverty. Some are of the opinion that when a person is rich the person is in heaven, but if poor, the person is in hell, thereby

association poverty with suffering and deprivation. These views may have influence the perception of world summit (2005) to see poverty as a multi-faceted concept which do not only have economic dimensions but also means lack of access to education, shelter, health care, basic needs of life. However UNICEF (2016) maintained that poverty includes such basic needs such as food, clothing and shelter.

In the same direction, World Bank (2013) identified different categories of poverty; such as income and material poverty. The United Nations (2001) defined poverty as denial of choices and opportunities which violates human dignity.

World Bank (2011) presented a more embracing indices of poverty to include; low income, inability to acquire basic goods and services needed for survival, low level of health and education, inadequate physical security, poor access to clean water and sanitation, lack of voice and insufficient capacity and opportunity to better one's life. Poverty in all of its spheres has a devastating effect, as the poor do not see anything around him existing. Because they do not have the world's good, they are not interested in participating in any activity around him.

The level of poverty of a person determines the extent to which he or she will participate in the development of his environment. Consider someone who is able to have three meals per day, what kind of development activity will he or she be willing to identify with. This situation is better explained with the need hierarchy of Abraham Maslow.

At the physiological level, the interest of the poor people are only on the basic needs of life. They will only be after the basic needs for existence. The level for participation is found at the peak of the pyramid. At this point the individuals are already made and they in turn will want to give part of what they have to the community and environment. The more wealthy a person becomes, the more likely he or she will participates in development activities in the community. This fact is further portrayed in Word Bank (2013) report, which defined poverty as state of deprivation of basic opportunities needed to live a decent and standard life, live long, live healthy and participate in gainful employment, political, social and cultural life of the community.

Entrepreneurship and Participation

The concept of participation is very important in the success of development activities, be it for projects or programmes. For community projects, participation often involves financial contributions, as in the case of community self-help projects. When such is the case, members of the community are required to show some level of financial commitment for the project to succeed. According to Oyebamiji and Adekola (208) community participation is a resource in the empowerment of people and enables them to initiate opportunities of developing themselves without depending on external interventions. In the views of Barikor (2015) participation is a process of involving people in delivering development in which they are to benefit. Participation in general, could be seen as the involvement of individuals in an activity, the level and capacity notwithstanding. The United States environmental protection agency (2017) identified five levels of participation thus:

- Information
- Consultation
- Involvement

- Collaboration
- Empowerment

No matter the level of participation an individual may desire in the community, according to Oyebamiji and Adekola (2005) for local people to participate meaningfully, they need to acquire skills, talents, wisdom, passion to identify their needs, take collective actions in initiating programmes to solve such identified needs. They maintain that external intervention should be de-emphasized and where possible, the government should be collaborators and not initiators and implementers.

Going by the above assertion, the people's participation will involve the application of these skills and it is only entrepreneurship education that would prepare people with this skills. Also, their ability and capability in participation has to do with their financial stand. It is the link between entrepreneurship education and poverty reduction that will result in purposeful participation. The fact remains that a man who is not gainfully employed and does not possess the relevant skills and training for self-employment cannot participate in community development activities.

Relationship between poverty, entrepreneurship education and participation.

Poverty is an undesirable experience of life. The concept centres on the failure of a person, so classified as poor, to meet the basic requirements of a decent life. Poverty is a living condition in which an individual, community, or nation is subjected to economic, political, cultural, and environmental deprivation of the basic human need. This could be because of lack of skill and attitude for survival. The process of poverty alleviation requires the acquisition of skills and attitude to handle challenges and uncertainty in our society.

According to Okoroafor and Nwadiaro[2011] , Poverty emerges from the lack of financial and physical necessities of life and inability to create a suitable environment for sustainable standard of living.

The poor is in a state of dilemma and cannot make any meaningful contribution to change his environment, therefore cannot participate in any activity that requires finance for community development activities.

For this situation to change, there is need for acquisition of livelihood skills, and this is the specialty of entrepreneurship education. Entrepreneurship education prepares citizens to develop skills and innovative thinking, which will make them take advantage of business opportunities in their environment to start their own businesses, equipping people and creating motivation for being self-reliant there by enhancing community development activities.

According to Ojiugo (2016), the goals of entrepreneurship education are training of people who will take advantage of business opportunities in their environment, equipping people with skill to develop initiative drive, creativity, and general motivation for being self-reliant. Besides knowledge and skills in business, entrepreneurship education also develop in citizens certain beliefs, values and attitude which provide alternative to paid employment. Entrepreneurship creates job for citizens of any nation thereby resulting to economic growth.

According to Vyakarnam (2009), entrepreneurship has been historically, the key driver of economic growth in the United States. This is because of the number of emergence of new

dynamic businesses created to replace old ones. Entrepreneurship is a means of creating jobs and enhancing economic growth in a nation.

With increased availability of jobs and increase in enterprises, be it small, medium or large scale, the economy will be improved and the citizens will be meaningfully engaged in economic activities which in turn will increase their income and raise their ability and capability to participate in community development related matters. Entrepreneurship education enhances personal development and increases the chances of living a dignified life and able to contribute more towards community development activities. Once a person's disposal income increases, the tendency is that he will become interested in the affairs of his community. This will manifest in quick response to donations and contribution to support existing projects and initiation of new ones that will impact positively on the lives of the members of the community.

For development to take place in a community there is the need for collaboration between the government and the community members. In most cases, community members set the ball rolling through self help projects. Self-help projects, no matter the magnitude, serve a pointer to the government and outside donors to know the felt needs of the people. Besides self help projects, there are development projects that requires counterpart funding, where the donor agency or government will require the community members to contribute a certain percentage of the total cost of the project, like the case of Micro Partnership Project (MPPI), (MPP2), (MPP3) in Nigeria. Often time, some communities are not able to meet their financial obligation to the project donors. This may be as a result of poverty. Poverty negates community development efforts. In a community were a greater number of the members are poor, community development projects via self help and counterpart funding will be difficult to achieve. The aim of the paper therefore is to present entrepreneurship education as a sure way to reduce poverty and entrance development. The government, through many programmes have made attempts to reduce poverty in our communities, but the situation is yet to change. Cash payment to the poor as a way of reducing poverty is not fundamental. This paper is of the view that giving the poor skills and attitude of been self reliant through entrepreneurship education will go a long way in reducing poverty and enhancing the peoples participation in development activities in their community.

The entrepreneurial approach to poverty reduction is a new wave which if adopted will develop the capacity of the citizens and increase their ability to generate income and liberate themselves from the circle of poverty. The paper believes that the utilization of entrepreneurship education in all its forms will reduce poverty and enhance participation in development activities in our communities. The failure or neglect of this approach will imply that the people will remaining in poverty, hence will not have the capacity to participate in development activities and the communities will also remain without the basic necessities of life which members could afford without the aid of the government or other agencies.

CONCLUSION

Nigeria and other countries of the world have made attempts to alleviating poverty, but the attempts have not yielded the desired result, probably because of their policy framework and nature or the method of operation.

Most poverty alleviation programmes were institutionalized, with several bottlenecks which diverted objectives from the individuals or citizens for the programme. If the war against poverty will produce the needed results, programs which will impact directly on the citizens should be considered, and one of such programs is entrepreneurship education which has the potential of not only concerned with business but acquisition new skills, development of attitude, wealth creation for enhanced participation in community development activities.

REFERENCES

- Agi, U. K. (2012). Self-Reliance and Empowerment: The Imperative of Entrepreneurship Education *Journal of resourcefulness and Distinction* 1(1) 70-77.
- Barikor, C. N. (2015). *Management: With emphasis on adult education*. Owerri, Gabesther Educational.
- Ghana, J. S. S. (2001). *Entrepreneurship*: Kaduna Jofegan Associates.
- Mbara, K. U., Anurugwo, A. O. & Musa, A. S. (2015). Promoting Women Empowerment through Entrepreneurship Education in Nigeria. *Journal of Nigerian National Council for Adult Education*. 20: (1) 190-200.
- Nosike, E. C. (2012). Entrepreneurship education, a lead to Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) for sustainability *Journal of Resourcefulness and Distinction* vol.1:1.
- Okoroafor, C. U. & Nwadiaro, E.C. (2011). Gender and poverty in Nigeria : A sociological explanation. *European Journal of Social Sciences*. 18(3).
- Ossai, A. G. & Nwalado, E. N. (2012). Entrepreneurship Education: A Panacea for Sustainable Development in Nigeria. *Journal of Resourcefulness and Distinction* 1(1) 78-86.
- Oyibamiji, M. A. & Adekola, G. (2008). *Fundamentals of community development in Nigeria*. Port Harcourt Rivers State. University of Port Harcourt Press.
- United Nations Children’s Emergency Fund (UNICEF, 2017), support to water sanitation and hygiene (WASH) sector in Nigeria. Retrieved from <http://www.unep.org.jp>.
- United State Environmental Protection Agency (2017). Public participation guide: setting the right level of public participation. Retrieved from <http://www.epa.gov>.
- World Bank (2013) poverty overview. Retrieved from <http://www.worldbank.org>. 20th May 2018.