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CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF YOUTHS ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS IN NIGERIA: CHALLENGES AND PROSPECTS

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Abstract

This study aims at unravelling the imbalance between education, unemployment and Entrepreneurship Education (EEd) and relating Sustainable Development Goals with youth entrepreneurship in Nigeria. It provides the imperativeness and analysed the challenges militating against entrepreneurial education among Nigerian youths, dissected SDGs, the potency of entrepreneurship education content in the Nigerian curriculum and the prospect of entrepreneurial education. The study elucidated on some of the programs Nigerian government has made for youth entrepreneur education and pin-pointed their weaknesses and strengths. Systematic literature review analysis and cluster review were the main style of presentation of the study. The study recommended re-visitation and revitalization of the SDGs operations in Nigeria especially Goal number 2 of the SDGs on education, provision of skill acquisition programs as attachment to all tertiary institutions in the country to propel the spirit of entrepreneurship among youths to serve as a catalyst in fostering the drive towards this goal.

Key words: Youths' Employment, Entrepreneurship, Education, Entrepreneur Education

Introduction

A popular saying by a onetime president of United States of America (Abraham Lincoln) says that 'if education is expensive, try ignorance'. Similarly, John Dewey, a renowned educationist had rightly pointed out that education is for the liberation of the mind. Today we live in a world that is characterized as scientific and digital owing largely to the technological advancement, information communication technology (ICT) and persistent scientific discoveries that have turned the entire universe into a global village. No individual, community or nation will experience meaningful development without deliberate empowerment of its youths, and the most active and productive sector of human population. Hence, this study explores the following subheadings for proper understanding: The problem statement, Concept of Education, Unemployment and Educational Curriculum Imbalance, Youths employment in Nigerian and education, Entrepreneurship education, Concept of literacy, Cost of illiteracy and lack of entrepreneurship education, Sustainable

Development Goals (SDGs) and Youths Entrepreneurial Development, Attempts at youths' entrepreneurship education, Challenges facing entrepreneurship education, and suggestion for way forward.

The purpose of this study include:

- 1.to state in clear terms the main problems with entrepreneurship education in Nigeria
- 2.to show the imbalance between education, unemployment and the EEd curriculum in Nigerian tertiary institutions
- 3.to highlight the cost of illiteracy as a result of lack or poor state of entrepreneurship education
- 4.to relate Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) with youth entrepreneurship in Nigeria.
- 5.to highlight the main challenges facing youth entrepreneur education and empowerment in Nigeria and to enumerate some of the attempts (programs) the Nigerian government has made for youth entrepreneur education.
- 6.to suggest ways of dealing with the challenges.

Problem of this Study

Human societies are progressing and developing at alarming speed using up-to-date technology and entrepreneurial skills which if not available, Nigeria as a nation may be found lagging behind. There are a significant population of Nigerian youths that are unemployed or underemployed while a significant proportion do not have functional education or entrepreneurship skills. This has resultant effect in producing high rate of street youths, rampant social vices in including armed robbery, prostitution, political thuggery, drug abuse and communal crises and more recently the almighty “kidnaping business”. The world poverty clock in 2018 stated that Nigeria assumed the ignoble position of being the poverty capital of the world after overtaking India, with about 86.9 million of her population in extreme poverty (Anuoluwapo, 2021). To corroborate this assertion, the National Bureau of Statistics in the 2012 National Baseline Survey, showed that more than half of the Nigerian youths' population in the country are unemployed.

Concept of Education

The National Policy on Education (2014) stated that education is

“an instrument par excellence for social and economic reconstruction of the nation”. This stresses the importance of education to human development. It is the human act of informing, forming and strengthening of the powers of the body and mind and a process for transmitting culture for the knowledge to ensure social control and guarantee rational direction of the society. This could have been why Offorma (2016) concurred that education helps individual to realize their potentials and thereby improve the society. .

Entrepreneurship Education (EEd)

Entrepreneurship according to Francis (2016) is derived from the French word 'entreprendre' which means to understand. It can therefore be defined as the process of understanding activities concerned with identifying and exploiting business opportunities while assuming attendant risks. Entrepreneurship has to do with been resourceful and creative while taking opportunities to meet human needs and demands by maximizing profit or gain for livelihood. Entrepreneurship is a key factor in promoting

economic development, innovation, competitiveness and job creation (Salau *et al* 2016).

Concept of Youths Entrepreneurship

The term 'youth' is defined variously and diversely based on location and purposes. No universally accepted definition of the concept is adopted by scholars except for intent and socio-economic benefits. But the United Nations' definition is widely applied in literary and academic works. It states that youths are those persons between the ages of 15 and 24 years without prejudice to other definitions by member states. Henze (2015) described youth as a period of life in-between childhood and adulthood.

Unemployment and Entrepreneurship Curriculum

Imbalance

Nigeria has a high rate as well as increasing and alarming rate of unemployment. It is a common believe among Nigerians that socioeconomic factors have canvassed on a host of policies responsible for the high and ever-rising levels of unemployment

(Worluet *al.* 2014). They agreed that rural to urban migration of young and educated people is at the very root of high unemployment rate at the urban centers. They suggested that one of the solutions to unemployment in Nigeria is the introduction of entrepreneurship education (Odu, 2009).

Entrepreneurship, involves the ability to set up a business as different from being employed. Sustainable development goals pursued with vigor will put Nigeria on a sound footing to achieving youth entrepreneurship growth. This will help generate assorted small and medium scale enterprises that will certainly mitigate the effect of unemployment, poverty and crime wave in the country. The foundation for any modern development can always be traced to education. Similarly, modern economies of the world are hinged on entrepreneurial acumen which are a product of education (Francis & Morebise 2016,). As a matter of fact, the most developed economies of the world have grown their entrepreneurship education which has succeeded in powering the private sector thereby creating innumerable jobs for their teeming youths. It is however sad to note that the contrary is the case in

Nigeria where the current educational curriculum seems to be training and producing graduates who are but white-collar-job seekers (Ediagbonya, 2013). This end up producing graduates who possess certificates but remain illiterates in entrepreneurial abilities.

Illiteracy in Relation to Entrepreneurship

Illiteracy remains wide spread despite the enormous (albeit incomplete) gains the world has made towards universal primary enrolment since the MDGs were announced (Sandefur 2015). This could have been the reason behind UNESCO position to sponsor a new definition for literacy that looks beyond the ability to read and write a simple sentence, and that captures the ability to identify, understand, interpret, create, communicate and compute, using printed and written materials associated with varying contexts (Momtayo 2018).

Meanwhile, Oghenekohwo (2013) advanced that literacy in capacity is factored by empowerment, engagement, experience and evidence, which represent the variables of education for development. The United Nations (2005) according to Oghenekohwo (2013) documented that literacy education can be a

major tool for reducing poverty, enlarging employment opportunities, advancing gender equality, improving family health, protecting the environment and promoting core democratic values.

Cost of Illiteracy and Lack of Entrepreneur Education Hinders Development

A review of World Literacy Foundation (2015) documents shows that Nigeria which is classified as a developing or emerging nation loses 6.18 billion dollars while the likes of South Africa and Egypt loses 3.88 and 3.42 dollars respectively annually as of 2015 due to illiteracy and lack of entrepreneurship drive among the youths. Poverty is the sole reservoir of illiteracy and lack of entrepreneur. In other words, where there is no entrepreneurship spirit, functional education and literacy are lacked. Some of the cost or effects of illiteracy and lack of entrepreneur are summarized as: Loss of business productivity, Loss of earnings, Loss of wealth creation opportunities for individuals and business, Lower technological skills capacity in future. Socially, the cost of illiteracy and lack of entrepreneurial abilities has significant

negative effects like; low health status and short life span, high rate of crime, poor welfare etc. Hence, the community of nations under the auspices of the United Nations had declared the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in order to mobilise nations to fight against common enemies of humanity. One of the emphases of the goals been entrepreneurial development of youths.

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Youths Entrepreneurial Development

According to Oghenekohwo and Frank-Oputu (2017), the 17 Goal includes: Poverty, Hunger, Health, Education, Gender equity, Water and Sanitation, Energy, Economic, growth, Innovation and infrastructure, Reduced inequalities, Sustainable cities, Consumption and production, Climate change, Water, Land, Social Justice and, Partnership as presented in Table 1:

Table 1. UN Sustainable Development Goals

S/N	GOALS
1	Poverty
2	Hunger
3	Health
4	Education
5	Gender equality
6	Water and sanitation
7	Energy
8	Economic growth
9	Innovation and infrastructure
10	Reduced inequalities
11	Sustainable cities
12	Consumption and production
13	Climate Change
14	Water
15	Land
16	Social justice and
17	Partnership

Source: UNDP 2016

However, in the evolution of the concept of sustainable development, UNESCO (2006) presents the seven milestones in the development of the concept and the project of sustainable development thus:

1.1972: UN conference on the human environment in Stockholm leads to creation of the United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP).

2.1987: “Our common future”, the report of the Brundtland Commission, popularizes the term sustainable development.

3.1992: Agenda 21 adopted at the earth summit in Rio de Janeiro as the basis for measuring progress in sustainable development.

4.1999: Launch of the global sustainability index tracking corporate practices.

5.2000: The millennium declaration, adopted by UN General Assembly; defines “respect for nature “as a fundamental value and commits” “to integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies.” 6. 2002: The world summit on sustainable development in Johannesburg promotes environmental protection,

economic and social development as interdependent and mutually reinforcing.

7. 2005: The UN decade of education for sustainable development (DESD) is launched to advance lifelong learning of knowledge, skills and values required for durable social transformation. (Oghenekohwo &. Frank-Oputu, 2017)

A study by UNIDO (2012) indicates that Micro, Small and Medium Scale Enterprises (MSMEs) have the capacity and potential to drive Nigeria's economy to sustainable growth if properly handled and sustained. A critical analysis of the 17 goals (Table 1) reveals that youths are cardinal in attaining the goals. Hence, youth education, empowerment and entrepreneurial skill is an indispensable tool that should be utilized.

Attempts at Youths Entrepreneurship Education and Empowerment in Nigeria

Entrepreneurial education (EEEd) was formally introduced in Nigerian education in 2006 by a government made policy to be taught as a course in Nigerian tertiary institution for all students

irrespective of their field of specialization (Agbonlahor, 2016). This policy aimed at producing self-reliant graduates and youths who will create jobs and become entrepreneurs thereby aiding the achievement of SDGs. Some of the programmes include:

N-power

N-power is a Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN) initiative introduced in 2016 to handle the challenge of unemployment and joblessness. It was created specifically for job creation and youth empowerment through human capital development (Odey and Sambe, 2019), a basic entrepreneurship drive. Its programs target the youths recognized as the most productive and active proportion of the Nigerian society. The core objective of the N-power is hinged on skills acquisition and development of the Nigerian youth. The programme is an attempt at improving the entrepreneurship acumen of the Nigerian youth, the provision of entrepreneurship education to enhance the ability of the youths to create jobs and provide employment for others. The goals of N-POWER, include:

1 To intervene and directly improve the livelihood of a critical mass

of young unemployed Nigerians;

2 To develop a qualitative system for the transfer of employability, entrepreneurial and technical skills;

3 To create an ecosystem of solutions for ailing public services and government diversification policies

4 To develop and enhance Nigeria's knowledge economy.

N-Power was created with the following categories: **1.**

Graduate Category which includes; a. N-Power Volunteer

Corps, i N-Power

Teach, ii N-Power Teach (STEM), iii N-Power Health, iv N-Power

Agric, v N-power Voids. **2. Non-Graduate Category include;** a.

NPower Knowledge, b. N-Power Build, c. N-Power Junior, d. N-

Power Innovation. The N-Power scheme specifically is the

employability and enhancement programme of the Federal

Government of Nigeria, aimed at imbibing the learn- work

enterprise culture in youth between the ages 18-34 (N-SIP 2018).

Odey and Sambe cited also asserted that the N-power has few

studies trying to assess its functionality and impact. This justifies

the fact that the programme's capacity and preparedness for real

skill acquisition training for youths is suspicious (Odey & Sambe

2019).

National Poverty Eradication Program (NAPEP)

The then government of President Olusegun Aremu Obasanjo (1999-2007) initiated the National Poverty Eradication Program (NAPEP) to alleviate poverty. NAPEP was established in 2010 as the primary agency of the Federal government to eradicate extreme poverty in Nigeria (Anyebe 2015). The core programme under the scheme includes the Youth Empowerment Scheme and National Resource development and Conservation Scheme. These programs were part and parcel of the goals of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which will later be declared by the United Nations first as Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Despite the huge financial implication of the schemes, poverty and youth unemployment continued unabated.

SURE-Program (SURE-P)

Another attempt was the Subsidy Reinvestment Scheme-program (SURE -P), designed and implemented by the then President Goodluck Ebele Azikiwe Jonathan's administration (2012-2014). The

core programme of SURE-P with regards to poverty reduction includes; the Mass transit Scheme, Vocational Training Scheme and Community Service/ Women and Youth Employment (CSWYE). Many Nigerian graduates benefited from this program and are still benefiting. (Odey&Sambe 2019; Nwaobi, 2019).

YOU-WIN Program

Furthermore, the YOU-WIN programme was also introduced to provide entrepreneurship education for Nigerian youths. Abu (2015) in a study on Subsidy Reinvestment Programme and Employment Generation in Nigeria (2012-2014) pointed out that the YOU-WIN and other programmes have not helped matters since their main objectives have not been achieved. This study believes that if more qualitative entrepreneurship education and training strategies were employed and with the help of United Nation SDGs the result could have been different.

Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) Covid19 Loans and Entrepreneurship Intervention

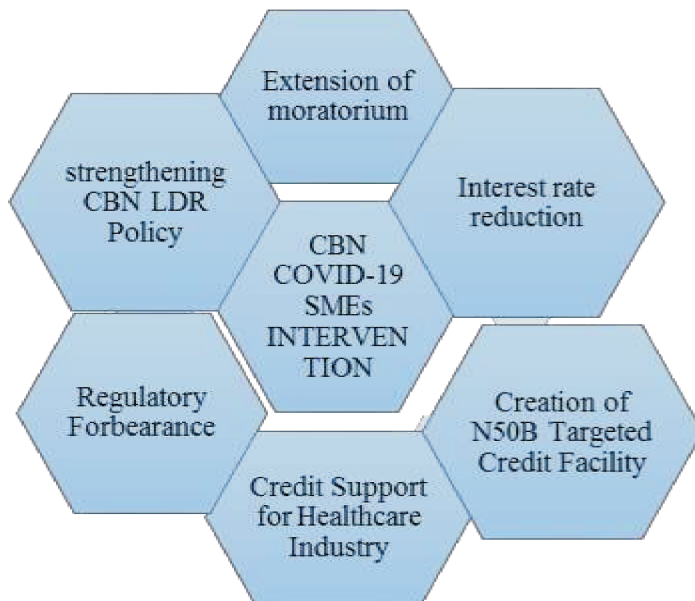
In the year 2019, a disease broke up in the People Republic of China tagged COVID-19 through a virus. This virus will grow to

become a huge challenge to the entire world. According to the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), the disease has created a global economic crises of monumental proportion. Nigeria being a global market player was hit hard with the drastic reduction of international crude oil prices. With this decline in the price of oil, the Nigerian economy suffered a great deal culminating into drastically declining revenues which in turn has negatively affected businesses and economic activities at large and hence affected entrepreneurial engagements involving youths of Nigeria.

In view of this, the CBN in furtherance of its financial stability mandate is committed to providing support for affected households, businesses, regulated financial institutions and other stakeholders in order to cushion the adverse economic impact of the pandemic. (FGN, 2020). The CBN therefore outlined policy measures in response to the COVID-19 outbreak and spill overs which by and large has much to do with empowerment of Nigerian youths and other business minded persons. These include; Extension of moratorium, Interest rate reduction, Creation of fifty billion (N50B) Naira targeted credit facility, Credit support for

healthcare industry, Regulatory forbearance and, Strengthening of CBN LDR policy. The intervention is graphically captured below in Figure 1:

Figure1: CBN COVID-19 intervention response policy



Source: Authors (2022) graphic illustration

As can be observed in Figure 1, the COVID-19 CBN intervention program is encapsulated into six wings; extension of moratorium, strengthening CBN LDR Policy, interest rate reduction, creation of 50billion naira credit facility, credit support for healthcare

industry, and regulatory forbearance. While this study is concerned with the analysis of the creation of the N50Billion naira Targeted Credit Facility, it is pertinent to check however, the third CBN policy on the response to COVID-19 (Creation of Fifty Billion (N50B) Naira targeted credit facility). This policy targeted Households and Small- and Medium-size Enterprise(SMEs) that particularly have been hard hit by COVID-19 pandemic which is relevant for entrepreneur education.

Challenges Facing Entrepreneurship Education in Nigeria

Entrepreneur education of youths is a laudable project that nations of the world use to propel economic development and improve the standard of living of its citizenry. Hence the challenges facing entrepreneur education of the youths must be surmounted. Some of these challenges as enunciated by Onyido and Duru(2019) include; poor students' zeal or passion for entrepreneurship, lack of proper orientation of School Administration on the imperativeness of youth entrepreneurship education and hence lack of priority, what to teach in terms of entrepreneurship curriculum at the appropriate levels of youth education. Other challenges include;

misplacement of priority and resources to areas that shouldn't have been considered, misappropriation of funds meant for entrepreneurship training.

Moreover, corruption is a major challenge against entrepreneurship in Nigeria. Corruption did not in any way spare the educational sector at all levels and sections. Sulaiman (2010) succinctly put it that “As corruption is everywhere in Nigeria and seem to be institutionalized, one cannot undertake a task without paying something to the person who is already paid for the job. Similarly, Agbonlahor (2016) elucidated on some of the challenges of entrepreneurial education in Nigeria to include: Poor capacity of teachers, lecturers and instructors; The inadequacy of the Nigerian school curricular to handle entrepreneurial education effectively; Inadequate and poor infrastructural base; Limited or non-existent favourable environment and poor support from the government; Too much emphasis on theory as against practical skills and values; and Little or no research support to link theory and practice.

Proffering Solutions

In view of the immense and invaluable benefits of entrepreneurship and education to youth development as highlighted in the course of this study, it is pertinent to make the following recommendations:

- 1.Provision of skill acquisition programs and development of Entrepreneurship Centers of Excellence (ECE) in all Nigerian post primary and tertiary institutions as attachment to all tertiary institutions in the country will go a long way to improving the spirit of entrepreneurship among youths.
- 2.Sensitization and information campaign should be launched by the government and ethnic association, religious organization and nongovernmental organizations in order to announce the benefits of education and entrepreneurship in the state, targeting the youths.
- 3.The governments should make more efforts in making education of the youths more useful and creative leading to functional education.

4. Curriculum planners like National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE), Nigeria Universities Commission (NUC), the Nigerian educational research and development Council (NERDC) and National Board for Technical Education (NBTE) should ensure the proper and practical implementation of entrepreneurship programs under their watch.

Conclusion

The study highlighted major issues affecting youths' Entrepreneurship Education (EEd) in the light of the Sustainable Development Goals particularly on education in Nigeria. It sees entrepreneurship education of the youths as a catalyst for sustainable development. Elucidating on the efforts of Nigerian governments in enhancing entrepreneurship skills, it provides the imperativeness and analysed the challenges militating against entrenchment of entrepreneurial education among Nigerian youths.

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