

Integrating Entrepreneurship Skills Acquisition in to National Youths Service Corps (NYSC) Programme in Nigeria

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Abstract

This article examined the need to integrate entrepreneurship skills acquisition into the National Youth Service Corps Programme in Nigeria. The paper traced the issues behind the establishment of the National Youth Services Corps to be purposely for national cultural integration, national unity and repairing of the damages that had been caused by the civil war. The paper however vision the need to integrate entrepreneurship skills acquisition into the programme of National Youth Service Corps in Nigeria and if well integrated, it will aid job creation, poverty alleviation, reduction in unemployment rate, developing youth enterprises and technological development and National and international recognition of Nigerian educational certificates. It was however recommended that for effective integration of entrepreneurship skills acquisition into National Youth Service Corps programme, every corps member should be registered in to different entrepreneurship skills of their interest; there should be improvement on the corps monthly allowance and the private sectors should be licensed to established entrepreneurship skills acquisition centers to train the youths in order to complement government efforts in the technological development of Nigerian youths and high rate of social crimes in the society will be reduced.

Keywords: NYSC, Skills Acquisition and Vocational Development

1. Introduction

Entrepreneurship is a french word meaning the act of being an entrepreneur (Ofuasia, Nwalado and Dele, 2006). According to Gana in Salami (2011), entrepreneurship is the ability to seek investment opportunities and persisting to exploit that opportunity. Entrepreneurship is more than simply “starting a business”. It is a process through which individuals identify opportunities, allocate resources, and create value (Anyadike, Emeh and Ukah, 2012). The issue of entrepreneurship education in not a new system in Nigeria educational system the entrepreneurial skills acquisition had been traced back to the period of African traditional education are Daramola (1995) observed that during the traditional education are average Nigerian parent will only hand over the baton of skills to his off springs. For instance, the children of farmers will be farmers; those of fishermen will train their children how to fish while carpenters would train their children how to furnish wood. However, with the advent of western education, the idea of technological and vocational orientation started to fade away. This is due to the fact that the mode of implementation of British Colonial government that brought western education to the country is theoretical and non-technological oriented. Abdulkareem (1994) noted that the schools then merely to train the indigenious African as clerks, interpreters, messengers, cooks and evangelists. Since then, the idea of entrepreneurial skills acquisition had become a problem for more than a century. Immediately after granting political independent to Nigeria

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in 1960, series of social problems started to spring up, prominent among the problems are killing, kidnapping, electoral malpractices., tribalism, thurgary, examination malpractices, prostitutions and financial mismanagement and embezzlement. Capacity development is the panacea for the problems of insecurity, poverty, youth restiveness and unemployment currently prevalent in the country. There is a great concern among the education stakeholders about how university education could meet the needs of the youth through entrepreneurship acquisition in Nigeria (Sofoluwe, 2008). To crown it all, the problem led to civil war. Olaniyi (1998) observed that the idea of the National Youth Service Corps came in to being during the administration of General Yakubu Gown in which the creation of National Youth Service Corps was to mobilize the youth towards the integration of Nigeria and to build a united Nigeria.

The decree that established the scheme was decree no 24 of May 22, 1973. The scheme however provided that graduates of universities, polytechnics and colleges of education should be posted to the states other than their own states of origin to serve the country. The rationale of the Federal Republic of Nigeria then was to post the youths to serve in a new state or community, so that they would be able to interact with the members of the new community, acculturate their ways of life, make friend and even marry. As such, there will be cultural integration; the problem of tribalism will reduce and the problems associated with the disunity would be adequately eliminated.

Also, the National Youth Service Corps was introduced to remove the idea and fact that individual members of one Nigeria were not interested in leaving their home land to other places outside their home land. The idea however compelled the government to enforce all the tertiary institutions in Nigeria to post the young graduate to other state for a year to go and serve. National Youth Service Corps was established purposely to develop communities among Nigerian Youths and to enhance National unity and promotion of free movement of labors.

The National Youth Service Corps in Nigeria had been fully established and had directly achieved her objectives of production of national integration and unity, they have also promoted movement of labour and cultural integration, inter marriage and acculturation of life of the common masses.

It should be noted however, that the National Youths Service Corps was relevant to the bases and problem by which they are established i.e. promotion of national unity and integration; free movement of labour and repair of all the social damages caused by the 1967 – 1970 civil war. Republic of Israel also adopted the style to solve problem of insecurity of life and properties that is the major problem in the land of Israel; secondary schools graduates are made to serve at the military barrack for two years to be trained and built for war. Today Israelites are security conscious.

What boarder the mind of the researchers is that, if National Youths Service Corps could be adopted to solve the problems of disunity, disintegration and lack of free mobility of labour in Nigeria and succeeded till today why is it that Nigerians can not use the system of National Youth Service Corps to solve the problem of high rate of social crimes in the society which was attributed to high rate of unemployment and poverty. The paper however called on the stakeholders of the National Youth Service Corps in Nigeria to integrate entrepreneurship skills acquisitions into the NYSC programmes in Nigeria.

2. Types of Entrepreneurship Skills for National Youth Service Corps Members

The focus of the Federal Republic of Nigeria is on Youths. According to Salami (2012), despite entrepreneurship recognition as a veritable tool for tackling unemployment, policy makers in Nigeria are yet to give it its deserved attention. Olaniyi (1998) observed that if any policy is to succeed in the country such policy should be penetrated through the Youths. However, the then military head of state in 1973 that introduced National Youth Service Corps was based on the need for socio-cultural integration among the people of Nigeria. This policy implementation called on the National Youth Service Corps' headquarter to post the young graduates to other state which is not of their own origin to serve for a period of one year. However, their post to the neutral areas will encourage inter-marriage, acculturation, employment opportunities etc.

However, in recent time, there is problem of unemployment, high poverty level, political disturbance, killing, Arson,

kidnapping, examination malpractices cultism, armed robbery, 419, cheating, frauds of different types. The social crimes in the society had been attributed to global high level poverty and high rate of unemployment in Nigeria. It is therefore imperative for the National Youths Service Corps in Nigeria to find a way of integrating the idea of entrepreneurship skills acquisition unto the youths corps service years.

Ogundele, Oduleke and Alade (2012) identified different types of entrepreneurship skills that could be acquired through National Youth Service Corps programmed as following:

1. Entertainment : Drama ,drumming
2. Essential services: These include Barbing, Hair Dressing, Cobbling, Typing, laundry, computer world processor, tailoring, photographing,
3. Agricultural skills; poultry, animal husbandry, orchard, plantation. fishery, piggery, market gardening.
4. Basic technical skills: Mobile phone repairing wood work, pottery, painting, web design.
5. Food processing: Bakery canton, bottling, canning

Ogundele, Oluwatola and Ogundele however called for the integration of entrepreneurship skills acquisition into any youth's programmes in Nigeria. This idea however called for effective integration of entrepreneurship skills acquisition into the programme of the National Youths Service Corps in Nigeria.

Familoni (2010) also identified different types of entrepreneurship skills that could be integrated into the schools. The programmed according familoni, should be the programme that will make individuals to be entrepreneur. Familoni therefore said if entrepreneurship skills are adequately acquired during the National Youth Service Years, it will aid poverty alleviation, job creations and national development in Nigeria. Familoni went further to state that the social crimes that are attributed to the high level poverty and unemployment will be adequately eradicated. That it will aid job creation self sufficiency, self enhance enterprise, youths empowerment and entrepreneur among the younger generation in Nigeria.

It is therefore important for the National Youth Service Corps to integrate entrepreneurship skills acquisition into

her programme so that objectives of national growth and development will be achieved.

3. Problems Militating Against Entrepreneurship Skills Among Youths Corps In Nigeria

Some of the problems that are likely to affect the integration of entrepreneurship skills acquisition are as follows:

1. Non-Technological and theoretical nature of Nigeria education system.
2. Inadequate markets for the finished products
3. High poverty level and low standard of living.
4. Frauds and corruptions
5. Misplacement of Value

4. Integrating Entrepreneurship Skills Acquisition to National Youths Service Scheme

Integration of entrepreneurship skills acquisition is inevitable for youths because of the following purposes:

1. Eradication of social crimes and evils in the society: the studies revealed that most of the evils perpetuated in Nigeria are seriously in the hands of the youths, it is generally believed that idle hand is the devil's workshop. For eradication of social crimes like prostitutions, killings kidnapping cultism, armed robbery, political thurgery and electoral malpractices which are highly perpetuated by the youth. It is however imperative to integrate entrepreneurship skills acquisition so as to start a business of their own immediately after their service years.
2. Industrial development: If all youths are trained in one skills or the other during their service year, they will be able to become producers instead of becoming consumers. More young generation will be able to benefit from their initiatives
3. Transfer of Technology and Innovation Diffusion: Since National Youth Service Corps headquarters post the young graduates to other states outside then own state during the service years, when they are trained and they finish and return to their state of origin, the knowledge gained will be transfer and use to produce things that will be of benefit to the society.

4. National Education Goals Achievement. Most of the social evils and crimes are attributed to the faulty educational training provided. Ogundele (2002) noted that most of Nigerian graduates are trained theoretically without practical orientation. Ogundele however stated that Nigerian educational systems produce many mechanical engineers that could not repair their vehicle, many medical doctors had ruined the lives of many innocent patients; unemployment is the bane of Nigerian education. In order to assist Nigerian educational system there is the need to integrate entrepreneurship skills acquisition into National Youth Service Corps.
5. International Recognitions: When many young graduates are made to be productive and higher percentage of the youths are developed technologically, the country Nigeria will be adequately recognized and the certificate will be respected both nationally and internationally.
6. Finally, it will aid job creation, youth employment, self reliant and sufficiency, reduction of youths in the labour markets and development of youth enterprises for the nation.

5. Conclusion

In order to enhance job creation, self sufficiency national and international recognition and eradication of the social crimes and evils in Nigerian society, there is the need to integrate entrepreneurship skills acquisition into the National Youth Service Corps programme in Nigeria.

Therefore it could be concluded that if entrepreneurship skills acquisition are effectively and practically integrated into the National Youth Service Corps programme, it will reduce job seekers and promote job creation among the youths and be able to train other Corps members for the society at large.

6. Recommendations

The following recommendations were made toward effective integration of entrepreneurship skills to the national youth service scheme in Nigeria:

Registration of Corps Members into different entrepreneurship skills of interest: Every Corp member

should be compulsorily made to register for an entrepreneurship skill of his/her interest to be acquired before the end of the service year. If done, the young graduate will use it to create job for himself and become an entrepreneur. As such the high rate of unemployment in the labour market will be adequately reduced in Nigeria.

Employment of both technical and vocational instructors to train corps members: The National Youth Service Corps offices should employ the technical and vocational instructors who will train the corps members on the chosen type of entrepreneurship skills.

Improvement on the salary allowance paid to the Corps members: The federal government of Nigeria should improve the corps member monthly salaries to that they can happily stay in their service and adequately acquire the necessary entrepreneurship skills during the service years.

Adequate procurement of entrepreneurship skills equipment for the youth corps: The National Youth Service Corps should assist the corps members to procure necessary equipment and facilities that could be used to establish their own business after their service years.

Enforcement of Entrepreneurship Skills acquisition on all corps members: Certificate of completion of service year should not be giving to any Corp members unless he has acquired at least an entrepreneurship skill. The National Youth Service Corps should adhere to this in the interest of encouraging job creation and reducing high rate of unemployment.

Construction of entrepreneurship workshop in all the Local Government Areas in Nigeria for all Youth Corps members: Well equipped workshops should be constructed in every Local Government Areas that will be used to train all the corps members in various skills needed for survival after the service year.

Allowing private sectors to establish entrepreneurship skills acquisition centers: the government should license them to be able to assist the government in the training of the youths.

Yearly National Youth Service Corps exhibition week: This exhibition week will encourage the youth corps to produce products of different kinds to be exhibited.

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