

BUSINESS EDUCATION AND POVERTY ALLEVIATION

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Abstract

The issue of poverty in any society is a worrisome situation that needs urgent attention. Many causes are associated with poverty; such as unemployment and the incessant rate of workers lay-off. There are increasingly fewer occupational opportunities for people who graduate from school. Business education therefore seeks to bridge the gap between poverty and acquisition of skills for a self-reliant development.

Introduction

No doubt, Business education has contributed and played a vital role in the manpower development of many countries. From their inception in the 19th Century, independent business schools offered evening and weekend instructions for adults. In so many ways, business education helps in manpower development for any nation thereby curbing the alarming rate of poverty. orchestrated by unemployment and other factors. Business education reflects previous education and experience; career needs, learning goals, and personal aspirations of students. It provides career needy learning goals, and personal aspirations of students. It provides career guidance to adult students in increasing their awareness of varied job opportunities and changing requirement for career entry and achievement.

Thus, every body needs a basic career or entrepreneur acquisition of business skills and competencies which business education offers in the poverty alleviation as well as curbing the problem of severe unemployment in our country. Business education thus has its focus on the development of occupational competency for attaining a job in business career (Calhoun. 19X0) Implied in this goal is that, it prepares its graduate for (he world of work and infusing self reliance in them with necessary skills and competencies.

Business education represents a broad and diverse discipline that is included in all types of educational delivery system, elementary and secondary, colleges and universities. Business education can begin at any level. Business education includes education for office occupations, distributions and marketing occupations, business teaching, business administration and economic understandings.

Need For Business Education

The Federal Government of Nigeria while establishing the discipline business education and other commercial outfits is primarily saddled with the enhancement from school to work such as the former 6-3-3-4 system and also provide skilled manpower in all facets of life for the total alleviation and subsequent eradication of poverty through exercising ones hands to work rather than being indolent.

For instance, many programmes have been established in the past, just to help tackle the issue of indolence, idleness and abject [poverty: The long vacation job offered an opportunity for graduates of the past to work and earn a living. Many others like the Industrial Training Fund (ITF) introduced in 1971 and the studies industrial works experience scheme (SIWES) introduced in 1976, these all give students and Young School Leavers ample opportunities to work. Also, the National Directorate of Employment (NDE) introduced in 1987, to stem the rising tide of youth employment as well as for entrepreneurship.

The National Youths Service Corps (NYSC) is also a programme put in place for national integration as well as directly or indirectly serving the same purpose. Presently, the democratic enthronement of 1999 has indeed witnessed the birth of several new' programmes geared towards alleviating, minimizing and eradicating the scourge of poverty, which has eaten deep the fabrics of the society. Worthy of mention by this present administration led by Chief Olusegun Obasanjo is the NAPEP (National Poverty Eradication Programme), Skills Acquisition programme (SAP) by the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) still under the presidency. The Adolescent Project (TAP) by the wife of the Rivers State Governor, Justice Mary Odili, and several other skills enhancement programmes for the alleviation of poverty in the land, and reducing the level of untold hardship and suffering of the masses.

Business education therefore, advocates against the age long saying of the

rich getting richer and the poor getting poorer but affords all and sundry the opportunity of exercising their hands to work with necessary acquisition of sellable skills.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to identify the indispensable role business education plays in alleviating as well as eradicating poverty in (the society).

Conceptual framework of Business Education

Poverty is deadlier than HIV/AIDS in its true sense. Only those who have been in abject poverty know the pains associated with it. It goes ahead to support the saying "He who wears the shoes, knows where it pinches".

Many still believe that poverty cannot be eradicated from any society, but that it could also be alleviated to an extent. However, a proper harnessing and execution of business Education will go a long way in alleviating and eradicating to the barest minimum the issue of poverty.

The concept of Business Education according to Tonne (1961). is the form of training, which helps to achieve all the aims of education at any level of training and also has its primary objective in the preparation of students for entrance into business career, or having entered upon such a career to render more efficient service (herein and to advance their present levels of employment of higher levels. Similarly, business education synonymous with any education for entrance into the business world at any level. Business education helps in manpower development for any nation. It provides training, which reflects changes in business brought about by technological advances. It meets the needs of the adults, including the handicapped, disadvantaged and gifted. It prepares individuals for work in Local business and other organizations as well as provides for wide ranging interest, abilities and goals of adult learners.

Therefore, the roles can be summarized as follows:

1. Educating individuals for and about business.
2. Providing a continuous programme of planned learning experiences designed to equip individual's to fulfill effectively three goals.
 - (a) To produce and distribute goods and services as workers;
 - (b) To use the result of production as consumer; and
 - (c) To make judicious socio economic decisions as citizens.
3. Providing career information that helps students relate their interest, needs and abilities to occupational opportunity in business.
4. Providing educational opportunities for students preparing for careers in fields other than business to acquire Business knowledge and skills needed to function effectively in those careers.

Therefore, business education has the capacity to develop programmes that respond to current societal issues such as education for improving basic computational skills for meeting the needs of the bilingual and bicultural population, for eliminating occupational stereotyping, for assisting people with special needs and for helping the ordinary consumers to function effectively in the private enterprise system thereby alleviating poverty.

The Culture of Poverty

The reality of poverty is better imagined than experienced. The issue of poverty is the direct consequence of under-development plaguing the African continent.

Poverty is described as the state of being poor or a lack of something, poor quality. Poverty is also described as a condition of being without necessary wherewithal or resources enough to sustain an acceptable standard of life.

It is the state of existing with possessions too little to live a good quality and

healthy life (Obiajulu, 2004).

Some observers believed that poverty exists because certain ruling class believed it has to exist in order to continue their class distinction and their hegemony over others. This goes ahead to support the statement of the rich getting richer and the poor getting poorer.

Classification of Poverty

- (a) **Structural Poverty:** This implies that poverty is a state policy carried out against the masses of the state for purposes of creating class system. Structural poverty is a situation where poverty is technically entrenched in the state policy.
- (b) **Exclusive Poverty:** This type of poverty is a show of power by the state in exempting a particular class of people from capital accumulation. In fact, they are classified as second class and third class citizens in their own country. For instance, is the salary structure of workers. The salary is structured to indicate junior staff and senior staff. Another vivid example is, the political class, where an illiterate and uneducated councilor in the local government earns far more than what the academic and other cadre are taking as pay. Imagine what a legislator takes home monthly compared to what a university Don is receiving.
- (c) **Marginalisation:** This is obvious in our country; where many parts suffer great neglect, especially the Niger Delta regions of the Country. This neglect has led to hostage taking, pipe vandalization and other dastardly acts by the deprived people. Here, the powers that be deprived a section of their due and value at the expense of others. Is like robbing Peter to pay Paul, this trend has caused more harm than good. The Nigerian situation is a typical example, where some tribes recently cried out against marginalization from the total sharing of the national cake while others enjoy its abundance.
- (d) **Exploitative Poverty:** This is a situation characterized by disempowerment with special regards to qualitative education in our system. The non-availability of free education is an indication of structural exploitative poverty. Worthy of mention here is, the irregular supply of electricity, water and other basic social amenities etc.

Causes of Poverty

Many reasons have been opined as causes of poverty, some of which are;

- (1) Sociologist, psychologists, as well as religionists have opined that one strong cause of poverty is the existence of the uneven distribution of wealth. This also manifests in the uncontrolled acquisition of property by privileged individuals in the society. The graze for materiality has led to stealing and embezzlement of public funds by our leaders.
- (2) Capitalism and materialism is another cause of poverty as believed by economists.
- (3) Monopoly of resources is another facilitator of poverty - Those high up; grab every thing before it comes down.
- (4) Incessant workers' lay-off-The rate of workers' redundancy is alarming and subsequently leads to unemployment.
- (5) Unemployment - Graduates roam the streets jobless in their count less number.
- (6) Laziness, idleness and indolence-Many persons are poor today because of their lazy disposition
- (7) Natural disasters - Earthquakes, whirlwinds, tornadoes, fire outbreaks, flooding etc, also lead to poverty.
- (8) Class system: The rich empower the rich and abandons the poor by classifying them as slaves and servants.
- (9) Illiteracy - This is another strong cause of poverty
- (10) Poor health
- (11) Low status and exposure to environmental hazards.

The Effects of Poverty

The resultant effect of poverty is the obvious under-developments of all sectors. The effects are belter imagined than real. As earlier asserted, only those who have truly seen, experienced and handled poverty can better understand its grievous and horrendous nature and pain. Poverty is deadlier than the HIV/AIDS virus. It docs not spear or pities its victims. Some of the devastating effects of poverty are as follows:

I. Under-development.

2. Untimely death through suicide.
3. Hostage taking and pipe vandalization.
4. Stealing and armed robbery.
5. Depression, anxiety, and low self-esteem.
6. Frustration.
7. Bribery and corruption.
8. Violence and wickedness.
9. Prostitution and child labour.
10. Incessant school dropouts.

The Role Business Education Plays in Alleviating Poverty

A Chinese adage says “ if you give me a fish, you have fed me for a day or two, but if you teach me to fish, you feed me for-a lifetime” The implication of this adage is what business education advocates. Business education is not interested in the excuses and alarming rate of unemployment looming at its citizens, rather affords its citizens the right skills for the right jobs. Possessing sellable skills that will put food on their tables. From the fore-going the following are inevitable:

1. Raise the mass consciousness level of the people b.yt this is not the task of the state, it is that of business education through the crusading media. However, a state with the welfarisl feeling of its people could engage in this task.
2. A sustainable Business Education will help to fully maximize the use of natural resources endowed by nature. The land could be agriculturally democratic for all to manipulate judiciously since it preaches against laziness and indolence.
3. Developing appropriate technology using our locally available resources to initiate technological breakthrough to the advantage of our people.
4. Each individual is expected to possess sellable, and necessary skills with competencies towards entrepreunering.
5. All individuals are required to possess or acquire domestic space to live in, time to work with at work and at home. There is also need for social networking facilities to be extended to families, friends and neighbours. There is the need to relate with civil and religious groups, sports groups etc. Also, there is the need to be endowed with knowledge and skills (academic and non- academic), etc.
6. An individual is expected to be exposed to relevant information with regards to recent technology.
7. Each member of the state irrespective of Caliber, class or status is expected to be given instruments of production such as good health, a portion of land, capital equipment, power supply and continued educational opportunities.
8. Financial resources and opportunities such as income credit, loan facilities.
9. To perfect poverty alleviation, there should be new social contracts in which the state must educate and provide facilities for citizens.
10. Affords all the opportunity to be gainfully engaged in paid employment as well as being entrepreneurs.

Recommendations

1. Government should adequately fund business education programmes in schools to foster the acquisition of sellable skills.
2. Government should empower and not relent in the sustenance of programmes that are specifically set out to eradicate poverty such as National Directorate of Employment (NDE), National Association for Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP), The Adolescent Programme (TAP) and other related directorates as well as NGOs with these basic tasks.
3. Citizens should be content with their predisposition and avoid indolence, which is the devil’s workshop, and exercise their hands to creative ventures capable of putting food on their tables.
4. Government should embark on regular and frequent campaigns, lectures workshops and symposia for the enlightenment of the masses on the need to be entrepreneurs (self employed) with the provision of aided grants at the end of every workshop to indigent participants.

Conclusion

Since Business education is an education geared towards capacity building, and the

development of specific skills required for economic and social changes. It is therefore, pertinent for (he government to empower the programme with recent and modern technology in facilitating the transmission of these sellable skills to its citizens. These sellable skills will make everybody to be gainfully employed in the labour market and also be entrepreneurs.

The acquisition of effective skills which Business education offers, that are marketable at all levels will satisfy the aspirations of the business community. Thus, poverty cannot only be alleviated but also eradicated in our society.

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