

Acquisition of entrepreneurial skills for economic growth and development for persons with special needs

(overview essay)

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Abstract: *The paper discussed that economic development and growth are made possible by different groups of entrepreneurs including persons with special needs. Persons with special needs are individual who deviate in the negative direction from the large majority of the members of the society in either physical appearance physical function, intellectual functioning and behavior. The paper also discussed that they should be encouraged on how to maximize their potentials through entrepreneurial skills training through various stages such as: Referral, assessment, placements and follow up. This is necessary to ensure that the persons with special needs matched well with the job. Entrepreneurship for a person with special needs can be through vocational training and rehabilitation services. Generally in Nigeria, persons with special needs are very much disadvantaged in job market and employment opportunities. Entrepreneurship training and development is most welcome for the special people as this will prepare them for self employment as well as enhancing the positive self esteem of the individual, fostering movement towards independent and self actualization etc. The paper concluded that special persons must learn to be independence, hard working and willing to accept responsibilities and should have an exceptional strong desire to achieve success. It was recommended among others that job opportunity should be created on the open labour market for persons with special needs. Government should support vocational training centers and sheltered workshops run by NGOs*

Key words: *Entrepreneurs, persons with special needs, self employment, self esteem, self actualization*

1 Introduction

Economic development and growth are made possible by different groups of entrepreneurs such as government, individuals and groups of individuals including persons with special needs. You can become an entrepreneur when you set to exploit any opportunities in an economy to the benefits of people around you.

People have different ways of setting up businesses that are needed to keep their economy going. Specifically it could be the opening of private schools, workshops of different types, setting of supermarkets and shops of different types etc.

Who are persons with special needs

Individual With Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) (2006) expressed that persons with special needs includes: children with mental retardation, hearing impairments, speech and language impairments, visual impairments, seriously emotionally disturbed, orthopedic impairments, autism, traumatic brain injury, other health impairments or specific learning disabilities.

It focuses on those who deviate in the negative direction from the large majority of the members of the society in any of the following areas:

1. Physical appearance
2. Physical function
3. Intellectual functioning and behavior

Obi (2004) advised that persons with special needs should be encouraged to use every bit of their existing senses to maximize their capabilities. They should be taught how to maximize their potentials through using of specialized tools and materials. Entrepreneurial skills training can help them to take pride in those things they can do well. For example, it has been observed that wherever they are employed they are more dedicated to their jobs on the basis that nothing draws their attention than their jobs.

Who is an entrepreneur

Etuk and Mbat (2010) described an entrepreneur as a person who organizes and manages business undertakings, assuming the risk for the sake of profit. An entrepreneur sees an opportunity, makes plan of starting the business, manages the business and receives the profits.

According to Solomon (2012) entrepreneurship is a process through which individuals or government either on their own or jointly exploited available economic opportunities without being scared by associated risks or inadequate resources under their control.

2 Training of special persons for entrepreneurship

The successful training of persons with special needs normally goes through various stages or processes:

1. Referral: this is the stage where the persons with special needs are referred by another person either relative or any other person.
2. Assessment: this has to do with gathering of information about persons with special needs. The information can be about strength and weakness.
3. Placements: persons with special needs should be helped to develop job seeking skills and how to complete application forms, make great impressions at interviews.
4. Follow up: This is necessary to ensure that the persons with special needs matched well with the job.

National Policy on Education (NPE) (2004) specified equal educational opportunity to all persons irrespective of their disabilities. Individuals with special needs irrespective of the type and degree of impairment need love, assistance and acceptance from their families and the society. Based on the challenges they faced in their lives, special entrepreneurship training will help them to put in their best in a way that they will not feel rejected and have low self-esteem.

Entrepreneurship for person with special needs can be through vocational training and rehabilitation services.

There is a need for persons with special needs to be given adequate exposure to special entrepreneurship training through vocational and rehabilitation services to enable them fit into the world of work. Rehabilitation is the restoration of persons with special needs to develop to the fullest physical, mental, social, vocational and economic usefulness (Obi, 2010).

3 Special entrepreneurial process

Special entrepreneurship involved the provision of vocational services which include: vocational guidance, vocational training and selective placement. They are designed to enable a person with special needs to secure and retain suitable job and employment.

Success of entrepreneur depends on a number of variables such as:

1. Attitude of persons with special needs to himself and others.
2. Attitude to life in general and to the impairment.
3. Attitude of friends and families towards him.
4. Attitude within the vocational training agencies, their policies and philosophies.
5. Attitudes of professionals towards him.

4 Development of entrepreneurship skills for persons with special needs

Gone are the days when people taught lower skills in the name of handicraft to special children. Those skills perhaps were useful to these children but today the situation is different. For instance, teaching basket weaving to these children today will be meaningless as fewer people today patronize raffia basket dealers. Special children need to acquire modern skills that will keep them in self employment and self esteem. These may include;

Food and snacks: fruit juice, rice milling, coconut processing, dairy and milk, animal feeds, groundnut oil, palm kernel oil, fish sausage, cool room, production of food flavor, fufu powder, fish drying, production of cassava starch, bread making, garri processing, ice water, palm kernel cracking etc.

Others skills may include: toilet soap making, starch making, sisal twine cord, fish net brushes, tooth picks, leather, ply wood, photo frame, wooden toys, ceramic tiles, concrete blocks, polythene bags, laundry and dry cleaning, plastic containers, sanitary wares, asbestos cement, red and building bricks, matches, shoes, bags, telephone repairs and other electrical appliances, mosquito coils, fish nets, dusters, pencil sharpeners, insecticides measuring tape, shampoo, cream, pomade, perfumes, hat and bits making, success cards, singing, hair dressing, knitting, tailoring, foot mat, sponge, fire wood, bill board designer, chalk production, carpentry, fashion and bakery.

5 Importance of entrepreneurship development for persons with special needs

Generally persons with special needs are very much disadvantaged in job market and employment opportunities. Many of them after graduation roam the street for years without any hope for a job. It is because most private and government employers feel the special people have nothing to offer in their job place. Special attention should be given to them in the field of health, social services and employment opportunities.

The idea of entrepreneurship training and development is most welcome for the special people as this will prepare them for self employment.

1. Enhancing the positive self esteem of the individual and his contribution to his community.
2. Fostering movement towards independent and self actualization.
3. Helping them to manage their affairs, participate in day-to-day life of the community.

4. Fulfillment of a range of social roles and making decisions that lead to self determination and maximization of physical or psychological dependence on others.
5. Helping them overcome their limitations and be gainfully employed to earn a living.
6. Special entrepreneur is essential because it provides the individuals with skills that will enhance his or her work.
7. Special entrepreneur provides persons with special needs the opportunity for adjustment for example by helping them to discover their aptitude, work habits as well as practical skills in the vocation of their choice.

Nwafor (2007) also explained that entrepreneurship aimed at reduction of poverty, promotion and acceleration in economic development and growth through the following ways:

1. Acquisition of skills and job creation
2. Increasing output of goods and services.
3. Enhancing technological innovation.
4. Enhancing level of capital income
5. Enhancing the standard of living.
6. Increasing the level of government revenue through taxation.

6 Conclusion

It can be concluded that for entrepreneur to be successful, families, communities must recognized and accept that persons with special needs have the same right as other human beings to be trained, earn a living and be accepted and fully integrated in their communities.

A person who has the need to build and create something new must possess a strong need for control, independence and ability to simplify complex problems. He must be a hard working person who is willing to accept responsibilities. An entrepreneur should have an exceptional strong desire to achieve success.

7 Recommendations

In order to enhance entrepreneurship to persons with special needs Obi (2010) recommended that:

1. Job opportunity should be created on the open labour market for persons with special needs.
2. Government should support the establishment of various types of sheltered employments for those to whom access to open employment is not practicable.

3. Government should support vocational training centers and sheltered workshops run by NGOs.
4. Establish and develop small scale industry and other types of production workshops for the disabled in accordance with the competencies of individual with special needs.
5. International organization should be involved in disseminating information to people in developing countries like Nigeria about training of persons with special needs to develop their maximum capacities.

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