

AGRIPRENEURSHIP DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME AND EMPLOYMENT CREATION IN NIGERIA

¹CHIBIKE ONYIJE NWUBA, PH.D AND ²CHUKWUNONSO CHUKWUDI OKOLI

¹Department of Marketing, Federal Polytechnic, Oko, Anambra state, Nigeria

²Department of public administration, Federal Polytechnic, Oko, Anambra state, Nigeria

Corresponding Author's email: nonsookoli12@gmail.com

Abstract

Unemployment is known to be a global economic problem that hampers economic growth. This turns out to be one of the serious obstacles to the colossal squandering of a country's labour resources; therefore, it produces less output, resulting in lower income and sluggish economic growth. Recently, Nigeria's unemployment rate has risen to an alarming rate of 33%. A lot of studies reveal that neglect of Agriculture is one of the major causes of unemployment. The discovery of crude oil in commercial quantity accompanied by the oil boom in the early 70s led to the gradual abandonment of Agriculture which was the nation's largest source of livelihood. Individuals started migrating from rural to urban areas in search of white collar jobs. This trend accelerated the neglect of the agricultural sector making Nigeria a mono-product exporting nation which in turn heightened the rate of unemployment. Studies conducted by some researchers suggests that Agripreneurship development programme could aid in reviving the agricultural sector, enhance economic growth and reduce the unemployment rate. Agripreneurship refers to entrepreneurship in agriculture. Entrepreneurship is a concept that involves the transformation of an idea or vision into "a new business, or the creation of a new company, or the expansion of an existing company, by an individual, individuals, or an established company. This study explores Agripreneurship Development programme and its effects on unemployment rate in Nigeria.

Keywords: Agripreneurship, Entrepreneurship, Economic growth, Unemployment

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Introduction

Agriculture is by far the major sector of the Nigerian economy that engages about 70% of the employed. Though Farming is mainly practiced in subsistence. Farms are usually small and scattered; characterized by simple tools and shifting cultivation. The economic benefits of mechanized Agriculture are recognized by the government which led to the formation of cooperatives, policies and support Systems to boost industrial agriculture. However, Agriculture is still mainly practiced in subsistence level despite the favourable climate, wide arable land and some government support.

Government organizations and Landowners should be encouraged to provide land to poor Nigerians on a fairer basis for agriculture. Until this happens Agriculture will continue to be an unprofitable source of Employment and poverty alleviation for most Nigerians.

Unemployment is one of the major problems that face every developing economy in the 21st century. International statistics depict this industry and service Workers living in developing regions account for approx two-thirds of the unemployed. (Patterson et al., 2006). Unemployment has been a problem, especially in Nigeria since the 80s, when the country's economy took a turn for the worse when world oil prices fell, The Nigerian currency was devalued, corruption became widespread, and the population of Nigeria exploded at one breathtaking pace (Akintoye, 2008). The decline in the agricultural sector performance has brought with it horrible consequences, which include a skyrocketing increase in unemployment rate, food crisis inflation, corruption and bad attitude to work.

In recent years, Nigeria has been consistently marked on the negative side of difference human development reports in the world. These reports show that life expectancy in Nigeria has drastically shortened to 55.44 years (United Nations, 2022); Real income of most Families have declined pitifully, unemployment is scandalously high. The quality of health and Education in the country has deteriorated beyond imagination. The country is ranked the 20th on the list of countries with the greatest number of starving people in the world.

According to Sharma et al. (2010), Functional investments in all areas of agricultural sector will help solve the problems of unemployment and hunger and poverty in the country. In our study, we will consider the key concepts of Agripreneurship which could lead to job creation, improved standard of living, accelerated economic growth and sustainable development.

Literature Review

Causes of unemployment

Unemployment has many causes and is vital that we understand them in order to fight this social horror. People who lack skill, knowledge, tools, beliefs, Values for carrying out financially rewarding activities are not usually employable. This leads to a shortage of jobs Opportunities as employers tend to locate theirs Companies where suitable human resources are available. The vicious circle of poverty and Unemployment therefore continues unabated. Determination of employment opportunities for the masses is a means of ensuring the participation of all citizens in the national development process. Lack of employment opportunities for many Nigerians, a large number of have emerged Nigerians live in poverty. Poverty in turn leads to Alienation of poor people (who are often rural dwellers) from the political and economic functioning of their society. This The cycle is complete when alienation continues to decrease these citizens interested in developing skills, knowledge, Tools, beliefs and values to be financially rewarding Activities. Corruption and dishonesty of Nigerian leaders and citizens have caused unemployment to increase in alarming rate.

Another important cause of unemployment is economic recessions. If the economy doesn't grow, then jobs will not be created, leading to unemployment rises. Fighting the recession can be achieved by a prudent fiscal policy that includes incentives for investment, lower taxes and interest Prices. Recession is one reason conservatives want it sustainable growth with a prudent financial policy. Recklessness in public finances accelerates recession and does a lot more damage.

Over-regulation is a major cause of Unemployment. Too much burden for a company Shoulder and this business cannot afford to expand and with its expansion to create more jobs. There are too few Vacancies for the demand, a shortage that leads to poverty and chronic unemployment. It means that

Additional burdens on the economy will not create new jobs. Indeed, it will create a lot of new jobs Reduction. Other major causes of unemployment are as follows

Negligence of the Agricultural sector

Nigeria is blessed as a country with many untapped resources, enough to employ any unemployed person profitably. But the addiction to quick “oil money” has caused both government and individuals to focus all attention on the oil industry.

Back then, cocoa production was the mainly produced in large scale in western Nigeria (with the famous Cocoa House being built with the proceeds); Peanut production was then the mainstay in northern Nigeria with the fame of the "Peanut Pyramids". Coal from Udi in Enugu was the mainstay of eastern Nigeria while rubber and palm oil were the mainly produced in 1 as large quantity in mid-western Nigeria. Besides the aforementioned agricultural products; Nigeria also produces maize, cassava, guinea corn, yam, beans, millet, Onions, garlic, cucumber, carrots and rice etc. Nigeria has an arable land area of 34 million hectares which is highly underutilized.

Poor Power Supply

The lack of regular electricity supply is the biggest cause of unemployment in Nigeria. Speaking of how the lack of electricity has accelerated unemployment in Nigeria, the matter is multi-faceted. Many foreign companies that would have come to invest in this country (considering the great marketing prospects in Nigeria) and which would have provided Nigerians with many job opportunities to reduce unemployment have changed direction to other neighboring countries with constant power supply in order to avoid lossy operation with 24-hour operation of generators (which has become a tradition in Nigeria). The same problem affects many local businesses which could not cope with the high costs of running plants/generators (for electricity power) continuously and were therefore forced to collapse and throw their employees back to the labour market. What about self-employed Nigerians such as welders and welding-related tradesmen who require high level of electrical current that only public power

supply or larger generators can supply? Many of them were thrown into unemployment because (due to the lack of public electricity) they could not afford larger generators for their work.

Poor Educational Facilities/Teaching Conditions

Each year, many graduates from the Universities and other tertiary institutions in Nigeria come out with little or nothing to contribute to society.

According to the National Bureau of Statistics, more than 200,000 alumnae graduate from Nigerian universities annually, but very few of them secure jobs after years of graduation. This is because there are inadequate facilities, very poor teaching conditions and horrible learning environments these results in the production of half-baked graduates, with no practical background to make a difference in the society, nor are they able to defend their credentials. The result is that they increase the country's unemployment rate every year. This trend led to the recent industrial action by the Academic staff Union of the country.

Inadequate Skills

Another issue that is closely related to the problem of poor education as a cause of unemployment in Nigeria is the lack of skills. For many years, most Nigerian youth have scorned skill acquisition, believing the time spent on it is wasted and have opted for so-called 'clean shirts' and 'easy' ways of making money. With such a mentality, these youngsters have grown to middle age and even old age with no skill at all.

On the other hand, it's hard to see someone who is skillful unemployment. A skillful person can adapt to any situation and environment, and at least provide for himself and his household adequately. Unfortunately, facilities for skill acquisition is not provided by the government and a lot of youths in the country are not interested in skill Acquisition this has greatly enhanced the unemployment rate.

Corruption

Corruption can be defined as immoral activity, which may include bribery, embezzlement or misappropriation of public funds for personal use. A corrupt government can be described as a government that uses public funds for their personal and selfish (government officials) use.

Corruption is a cause of unemployment in Nigeria because when those in government who are supposed to be using public funds to develop more industries are busy embezzling the funds for their selfish use, it leads to a massive increase in the unemployment rate. Without going too far, Nigeria is ranked as the 8th most corrupt country in the world and hence has a high unemployment rate. Corruption in Nigeria causes the government to spend less on the welfare of the country's citizens. Corruption has become a normal routine, functions that are supposed to be performed by three or even four people are only performed by one person and that one person collects all the salaries intended for the three or four people.

Similarly, we often hear about "ghost workers" in some government institutions, where the names of imaginary workers are put on the payroll and a few corrupt bosses collect such salaries at the end of the month with no work done. The result of all these immoral accelerates increased unemployment for the masses.

Agripreneurship described

As an entrepreneur, it is essentially about recognizing opportunities and creating value in marketplaces. Entrepreneurship is a concept that describes the process of converting an idea or vision into a new business or company, or an expansion of an existing business or company, by an individual, a group of individuals, or an established company (Reynolds et al., 1999)

Agripreneurship has its roots in agriculture and entrepreneurship (Nwibo et al., 2016). Hence, it is coined from two different words: agriculture and entrepreneurship. Agriculture as defined by Rimando, T.J.(2004) is the systematic raising of useful plants and livestock under the management of man.

Entrepreneurship, on the other hand, consists of taking the initiative, organizing resources and accepting risk when exploring and seizing business opportunities (Kuratko, 2009). Therefore, agripreneurship can be defined as an individual's ability and willingness to identify viable agricultural business opportunities, gather resources, establish and successfully manage the resulting agribusiness. Agripreneurship development is therefore defined as the process of providing people with agricultural knowledge, skills and competencies needed to successfully start and run an agricultural business. In the context of this article, agripreneurship development is also referred to as agripreneurship training. Basically, the main purpose of developing agripreneurship is to create agripreneurs (Uneze, 2012). It helps inculcate the culture of agripreneurship in people and motivates them to choose agribusiness as a career. In other words, it influences people's intentions and behaviors to choose agribusiness as a career by making farming attractive. Developing agripreneurship equips people with the agripreneurial skills, competencies and insights they need to identify, research and capitalize on viable business opportunities in agriculture.

Agripreneurship as a key figure in the economic progress of agrarian and development societies refers to entrepreneurship in agriculture. The concept of agricultural entrepreneurship was introduced to support both farmers and agribusiness by improving means of production and increasing market exposure. An agripreneur is an entrepreneur whose activity is in or related to agriculture. A successful agripreneur must understand consistency, creative thinking, working smart, taking risks, communicating and finding market opportunities.

Today, the agricultural sector is faced with the challenges of globalization, market liberalization, demographic changes, climate change, fluctuating production and consumption patterns, the depletion of natural resources, rapid urbanization and food price crises, among others. Many of these challenges have directly or indirectly contributed to changing markets, creating both opportunities and risks for farmers, especially small farmers. With growing recognition of the important role of smallholder agriculture in economic growth and rural development, market-oriented agriculture is on the rise.

Benefits of agripreneurship development

The development of agripreneurship is beneficial for both the nation and the individual, particularly those who have been entrepreneurially trained and developed in agriculture (Mukembo and Edwards, 2015). Below are the benefits of agripreneurship development. The importance of agriculture goes beyond providing food for human consumption; it provides job opportunities for people. The purpose of agripreneurship development is to educate and develop people into agripreneurs. The development of agripreneurship therefore increases people's propensity to start agribusiness. This means that people who own and run agribusinesses have created jobs for themselves and in turn will have the opportunity to create jobs for others. Usually companies generate income for their owners and agriculture is considered a reliable livelihood. People who get into the agribusiness will make money from it. Likewise, employees will live off the salaries they receive. Thus, both the owners and the employees of the agribusiness will become more economically viable and their standard of living will improve. The development of agripreneurship contributes to poverty reduction (Lourenco et al., 2013). Agribusiness generates income for its owners and employees. When a larger percentage of a country's population is employed in agribusiness, poverty levels are significantly reduced. It guarantees food security. When people are trained in agriculture and entrepreneurially developed, their skills are improved and consequently agricultural productivity is increased. Increased agricultural productivity guarantees food security for individuals as well as for the nation as a whole. In general, agriculture contributes to a nation's economic growth. In particular, the agricultural sector is one of the economic sectors that contributes significantly to a country's GDP. When people in agriculture become entrepreneurially developed and their capacities increase, agricultural productivity increases. This indicates that there will be sufficient agricultural production for national consumption and export. Overall, the agricultural sector's contribution to GDP will increase.

Agripreneurship and job creation

To promote and increase economic growth and development, the Indian government sometimes ago initiates and pursues a growth and development Policy plan that promoted entrepreneurship and self-

employment Occupation. The Nigerian government has, in principle individually dragged the same way. However, the Initiative was full of inconsistencies, insufficient Articulations and frequent cuts in politics as a regime Come and go. Transition from employment to self-employment Employment was a major issue in the Economy of many developed nations. be yourself To sustain economically, individuals must get out Gainful employment up to self-employment (Palanivelu & Madhupriya, 2013). Nigeria is in a good position to do that encourage this transition with agriculture as a starting point Pad because a significantly large number of Population is engaged in agriculture beautiful. The transition must not pose serious problems if Agribusiness is able to take up the challenge. With the rise in unemployment and poverty in Nigeria and limited economic growth options in others Sectors where entrepreneurship needs to be developed Agriculture to create jobs, increase productivity and grow the economy, since agriculture is the main focus highest workload in the country and sustainable Opportunities outside of agriculture are limited. That Application and practice of entrepreneurship in Farming will generate a wide range of benefits such as: as increased productivity, development of new ones agribusinesses that lead to job creation, Innovations in product and service delivery and Wealth growth (Birwa et al 2014). agriprenurship can contribute to social and economic development the areas of poverty reduction index, good nutrition and food security in the economy. In addition, it will lead to diversify the economy and income bases, Creation of jobs and business opportunities. Ado (2017) noted that the ban when importing certain agricultural products Opportunities for additional private investment However, Nigeria still imports what it can produce conveniently and cheaply, which has a negative effect the country's employment status. Greater Opportunities are wasted in the crop sector where the Mixtures of products that can be created are limitless. According to the report, investors can produce for Special markets by simply changing the shape of a Goods before placing them on the market, change the packaging and labeling for the market etc. so; added value can create employment opportunities which is vital in tackling unemployment at this moment of economic recession.

Recommendation/Conclusion

Nigerian graduates should be trained and encouraged to choose agripreneurship as a career rather than allowing them to use their energy and time after graduation to look for jobs that are not available, they should be encouraged to enter the agribusiness. Consequently, the government should enroll Agripreneurship development programme in tertiary school's curriculum and also in the one-year compulsory programme i.e. the National Youth Service Corps to train and develop undergraduates and graduates into agripreneurs. For instance, graduates should have the opportunity to choose and be trained in any agribusiness of their choice. Besides endowing them with agripreneurial skills and competences related to the agribusiness of their choice, the government can encourage them by providing financial support at the end of the training programme to enable them to setup their own agribusiness. By engaging in agribusiness it means they have created jobs for themselves and in return will have the opportunity to create jobs for others. They will surely make a living from agribusiness and their standard of living will be greatly improved. This means that the unemployment rate will fall significantly. The implication is that when people are economically empowered, their demand for goods and services will increase. As a result, business organizations will increase production and hire more employees to meet increased customer demand. Eventually, economic activities are boosted.

In Nigeria, today, agripreneurship development programme is a necessity to make farming attractive and a lifeline for the economy. Nigeria's current economic experience requires diversification and a paradigm shift away from the petroleum-based economy and its attendant disadvantages. The growth of real sectors like the agricultural sector should be supported to promote employment, curb up poverty and food insecurity. Clearly there is huge potential for entrepreneurship in agriculture that can be unlocked. Agripreneurship will provide direct employment and income for a large part of the population. Agripreneurship outside of the offering job opportunities is also a necessity to improve agricultural productivity and stimulate growth in related sectors

Nigeria needs to make agriculture the lynchpin of industrial boom in pursuit of economic diversification, growth and sustainable development. Conducive environments need to be created by

the government, the impact and focus of which should be on alleviating the constraining factors on the development of agriculture and entrepreneurship.

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