

Youths' Sustainable Development in Nigeria: An Appraisal of the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) Scheme.

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Abstract

The National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) programme is an essential tool for Nigeria's entrepreneurial and national development efforts. With its primary goals being to promote unity, entrepreneurship, and national development, the NYSC has a great deal of potential to influence the socioeconomic climate of the country. This paper, however, identified important shortcomings and difficulties in its entrepreneurial curriculum. This article explored the possibility of combining the Community Development Service (CDS) program with the Skill Acquisition and Entrepreneurship Development (SAED) programme by using secondary sources as its methodology and the Resource-Based View as its theoretical framework. This kind of integration is suggested as a calculated move to rectify the current issues and optimise the effectiveness of the plan. There are many benefits to integrating SAED with CDS for both corps members and the communities they serve. Corps members can obtain more possibilities for real-world application of their entrepreneurial abilities and a wider support network by utilising the structures and resources already in place in the community. This mutually beneficial partnership not only makes the entrepreneurship programme more successful but also encourages grassroots development and genuine community involvement. This essay argues for a paradigm change in the NYSC entrepreneurship program's conception and execution. Utilising the opportunities for collaboration between SAED and CDS initiatives, the programme may more effectively carry out its mission of fostering the growth of young entrepreneurs and advancing national development. These suggested changes might greatly expand the NYSC's influence throughout Nigerian nation-building and entrepreneurship.

Keywords: Community Development, Economic Development, Entrepreneurship, Nation-Building, Youth Empowerment

Introduction

Entrepreneurship has a vital role in fostering economic development, particularly in emerging economies like Nigeria, by increasing economic growth, creating employment opportunities, and encouraging innovation (Afolabi, 2015). People can tackle societal problems and improve the overall well-being of their local communities by using their creative potential through entrepreneurship. In Nigeria, entrepreneurship has a significant impact on reducing youth unemployment and advancing sustainable development. Given the annual infusion of youths into the workforce, the demographic dividend and inclusive growth are dependent on fostering an entrepreneurial culture.

Nigerian youth can be encouraged to integrate into their country and work towards national development through the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) programme, which was founded in 1973. Graduates of Nigerian postsecondary schools are assigned to various states for a mandated one-year service period under the system. Corps members participate in a range of activities during this time, such as formal employment in government agencies, educational institutions, and other organisations, as well as community development initiatives and skill-building programmes. Currently, one of the biggest government initiatives in Africa and Nigeria for youth development and national integration is the NYSC Scheme. In 2017, it had a budget of approximately 72 billion naira, or over US\$195 million, and about 300,000 participants (Adeyeye, 2022).

Skills Acquisition and Entrepreneurship Development (SAED) was introduced into the NYSC in 2012 to enhance the entrepreneurial capacities of Nigerian youth graduates. The goal of the SAED programme is to help

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young, educated Nigerians gain practical experience in entrepreneurship through apprenticeships. It also aims to address some of the shortcomings of earlier interventions, such as their narrow scope, unworkable curricula, and inadequate sectoral collaboration. Additionally, SAED promotes public-private partnerships to help young Nigerians become self-sufficient and entrepreneurs (Adeyeye et al, 2022). Throughout their service year, the graduate youths give selfless services to their country in a variety of ways, according to NYSC Skill Acquisition and Entrepreneurship Development (NYSC, 2014).

The primary goal of the service corps, which was to promote unity and a sense of fraternity among Nigerians, has mostly been accomplished since its founding (Oriakhogba and Fenemigho, 2015). The NYSC system has lofty goals but several obstacles prevent it from fully advancing the country's growth. The mismatch between the skills corps members learn during their service years and the demands of the job market is one of the main challenges (Okpo, 2019). Many Corpsmembers leave higher education with academic knowledge but without the practical skills, particularly entrepreneurial skills that employers value in the workforce. Although the programme gives recent graduates the chance to acquire worthwhile experiences and skills, it places little focus on giving them the resources and information they need to start their profitable businesses. As a result, many NYSC members discover that after their service year is up, they are ill-equipped to handle the complexity of the corporate world.

Moreover, the present configuration of the NYSC programme fails to optimise the entrepreneurial goals of its members. The development of entrepreneurial competencies, such as company planning, financial management, and marketing strategies, is not given as much attention as nation-building and community service initiatives. Participants in NYSC's business endeavours are further hampered by the absence of sufficient resources and support networks (Premium Times, 2023). Because there are frequently barriers to networking, coaching, and funding options, it can be difficult for ambitious business owners to turn their ideas into successful ventures. According to Nwankwo (2014), Nigeria's economy also confronts several difficulties, such as high rates of youth unemployment, underemployment, and a lack of economic diversification. The country's overreliance on oil revenue makes it particularly vulnerable to external shocks and limits its ability to achieve sustainable development (Ologunde, Kapingura and Sibanda, 2020).

Given these difficulties, the NYSC programme must be reformed to provide corps members with the tools and resources necessary to succeed as business owners and engaged citizens. The NYSC can aid in stimulating economic growth, creating jobs, and reducing poverty by encouraging entrepreneurship and creativity, all of which will benefit Nigeria's overall development.

The information used in this paper was obtained from secondary sources, including government records, newspaper and magazine articles, scholarly analyses, and other research projects. The study included a thorough literature review that critically examined the current state, issues, and future directions of entrepreneurship development as a means of generating wealth, creating jobs, and lowering youth unemployment in Nigeria. The content analysis approach was used for the analysis. It lays out the guidelines for the growth of entrepreneurship as well as the essential steps to learning the skills necessary to launch a profitable business.

Literature Review

Anyadike et al. (2012) described entrepreneurship as more than just "starting a business." It's a method by which people find opportunities, distribute resources, and add value. The discovery of unmet needs or potential for change is frequently the first step in creating value. Entrepreneurs view "problems" as "opportunities," and act to find the solutions to those problems and find customers willing to pay to have those problems solved. The definition of an entrepreneur is "one who undertakes innovations with finance and business acumen to transform innovations into economic goods." According to Anyadike et al. (2012), the ability to recognise possibilities in the market, bring about change (or seize it), and add value through solutions is all that is necessary for an entrepreneur to succeed.

Entrepreneurship was described as "an unrehearsed combination of economic resources instigated by the uncertain prospect of temporary monopoly profit" by Binks and Vale (1990). Thus, the "instigator of entrepreneurial events for so long as they occur" is how Kanothi (2009) defined an entrepreneur. The process of creating and promoting a large number of capable entrepreneurs who can successfully run innovative enterprises, nurture them to grow, and sustain them to achieve broad socio-economic developmental goals is known as entrepreneurship (Tijani-Alawiye, 2004). This process also increases the stock of small, medium, and large enterprises that are already available to a country.

Schumpeter placed a strong emphasis on the part that entrepreneurship plays in the "creative construction" process. According to Schumpeter, innovators upend established markets, resulting in the emergence of new sectors and the decline of outmoded ones. He maintained that drastic transformations are what

propel economic development in entrepreneurship rather than just little, gradual gains (Schumpeter, 1934). Drucker emphasised innovation as a concept and how important it is to entrepreneurship. According to Drucker, entrepreneurship is about using innovation to create and capture value in processes, products, or business models. He emphasised that ongoing innovation is critical to the long-term viability of entrepreneurial endeavours (Drucker, 1985).

Shane (2003) concentrated on the unique traits and actions of business owners. He emphasised the need for risk-taking, perseverance and passion for entrepreneurship. Shane also underlined the need to seize opportunities and do so, as well as the necessity of being able to grow from mistakes and adjust to new situations. Shane (2003) asserts that entrepreneurs are motivated by more than just financial gain; they also want to add value and change the world.

On the notion of nation-building, Olusanya (2020) assumed it is a concept that is consciously changing. A deliberate attempt to unite people or people to accomplish shared goals is referred to as nation-building. It entails the psychological reconstruction of individuals, a process that instils a new feeling of shared identity and belonging among the inhabitants of newly independent areas who differ greatly in terms of language, religion, and values (Adekanye, 1991).

According to Egharevba and Iruonagbe (2015, p. 45), "the pursuit of liberty, social justice, progress, and prosperity for the people by the government and its institutions would be its hallmarks." Nation-building, then, is all about promoting the collective well-being of the people through meeting their needs, interests, and aspirations. This is where nation-building starts to seem like a sound government. The statement "nation building is about building a common sense of purpose, a sense of shared destiny, and a collective imagination of belonging" is quickly added by Egharevba and Iruonagbe (2015, p. 45), quoting Gambari (2008). Naturally, this implies an effort to combine several identities that were previously held in diverse ways.

Hobsbawm (1990) investigated how nation-building processes use manufactured traditions. In "Nations and Nationalism since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality," Hobsbawm explores how elites use historical narratives, symbols, and rituals to support national identity and legitimise their power. He contends that countries frequently create fantastical histories to defend current political structures and get support from the populace. Hobsbawm's notion of "invented traditions" emphasises how nation-building is dynamic and contingent, moulded by political conflicts and cultural shifts. Porter highlights the importance of competition in creating a nation. According to Porter's thesis on the "competitive advantage of nations," a country's capacity to establish and sustain competitive industries determines how prosperous it will be. According to Porter (1990), government policy, infrastructure, and trained labour are important components that determine a country's competitiveness.

The process of creating shared identities, cultural norms, and historical narratives is known as nation-building. Academics have provided insightful explanations of how diverse social, economic, and political forces shape the conception, creation, and upkeep of nations.

Several perspectives have been used by academics to examine the importance of entrepreneurship in promoting economic development. Adelaja (2012), referenced in Usman and Usman (2020), states that it is beneficial in that it reduces food insecurity and provides employment options for the unemployed population. Audretsch and Keilbach (2004) assert that entrepreneurship promotes innovation, employment creation, and productivity enhancement, all of which act as stimulants for economic growth. According to Schumpeter (1934), entrepreneurs are change agents who spot new opportunities, gather resources, and use innovation to produce goods and services with added value. Entrepreneurs create productivity improvements and encourage competition by introducing new ideas and technology, which raises economic production (Acs & Audretsch, 2010).

It has been discovered that entrepreneurial endeavours can have a favourable effect on a country's economy and populace well-being (Adejumo, 2000). For Ogbonifoh et al. (1999), entrepreneurship plays a crucial role in the economic development and prosperity of any country. Because entrepreneurs are born, not created, it is, therefore, true that a nation's ability to grow depends on its ability to support entrepreneurs, and that the success of entrepreneurs depends in large part on the intentional cultivation and harnessing of human capital. The number of commodities that are available for use in the productive process and the skill with which these available factors of production are combined are the two aspects that affect economic growth.

Any economy depends heavily on entrepreneurship; most employment and money are generated by small enterprises founded by people with an entrepreneurial mindset, many of whom go on to build large corporations. Those who are exposed to entrepreneurship have greater creative flexibility. The creation of jobs is one of entrepreneurship's most important contributions to economic development. According to Carree and Thurik (2003), the main drivers of employment creation in many economies are small and medium-sized firms (SMEs), which are frequently run by entrepreneurs. Entrepreneurship serves to alleviate poverty and minimise income

inequality by offering chances for a living. Additionally, by providing opportunities for economic engagement and social mobility, entrepreneurship strengthens members of marginalised groups, including women and young people (Bosma et al., 2012).

Innovation is a fundamental component of entrepreneurship and a major force behind economic advancement. According to Schumpeter (1942), entrepreneurs are change agents who introduce new technology and upend established market systems. Using their innovative pursuits, entrepreneurs not only augment efficiency but also facilitate the spread of technology throughout various sectors (Baumol, 2002). As a result of this process of technological spillover, productivity and competitiveness gradually rise through imitation, learning, and adaptation (Aghion & Howitt, 1992).

According to Kirzner (1973), the pursuit of profit opportunities by entrepreneurs promotes market coordination and the effective allocation of resources, which in turn drives economic progress. By being on the lookout for opportunities, entrepreneurs help the market adjust itself dynamically, which promotes growth and greater productivity. According to North (1990), formal and informal institutions that have a substantial impact on economic development and entrepreneurial activity include property rights, legal frameworks, and cultural norms. According to North, efficient institutions that lower transaction costs, minimise risks, and ease market transactions create an atmosphere that is favourable for entrepreneurship. On the other hand, ineffective or dysfunctional institutions can obstruct economic advancement and entrepreneurial endeavours.

The contribution of entrepreneurship to economic development is dependent on the existence of a favourable environment that includes active marketplaces, skilled labour, financial resources, and institutions that assist (Audretsch & Belitski, 2017). Through policy interventions targeted at lowering regulatory hurdles, expanding access to financing, and improving entrepreneurial education and training, governments play a critical role in fostering entrepreneurship (Wennekers et al., 2005). Furthermore, it takes coordinated efforts to highlight success stories, encourage taking risks, and offer networking and mentoring opportunities to cultivate an entrepreneurial culture (Shane, 2009).

Theoretical Framework

The Resource-Based View (RBV) was utilised in this work. The main idea of this theory is that firms can obtain a competitive edge by strategically managing their special assets and competencies. RBV contends that for entrepreneurship to use the NYSC scheme to effectively support nation-building, it is imperative to assess and make the most of the program's resources. This might comprise the young participants' human capital, the government-provided infrastructure, and any prospective collaborations with businesses in the private sector. Through the identification and utilisation of these resources, the NYSC programme can augment its influence on the advancement of entrepreneurship, thus promoting economic expansion and the advancement of the nation.

Scholars like Penrose (1959) were the first to propose RBV, and Jay Barney popularised it in the 1980s and 1990s. According to Barney (1991), businesses can obtain a competitive edge by holding and utilising resources that fall under the category of valuable, uncommon, unique, and non-replaceable resources (VRIN resources). RBV says that having the proper resources—which are difficult for rivals to imitate or replace—is more important than simply having resources. These resources can be divided into three categories: intangibles like organisational culture and brand reputation, tangible assets like machinery and technology, and human resources like qualified workers (Wernerfelt, 1984).

RBV provides insightful analysis of how the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) programme can be changed to better provide young people with the tools they need to succeed as entrepreneurs and make significant contributions to the development of their countries in the context of entrepreneurship and nation-building. RBV places a strong emphasis on locating and making use of resources that are special, priceless, uncommon, and challenging to replicate or replace (Barney, 1991). In terms of entrepreneurship under the NYSC programme, this entails identifying and utilising the various networks, abilities, and skills that recent graduates possess. For example, corps members may be purposefully assigned to industries like agriculture, technology, or education during their year of service if those industries most need their abilities. Through the process of assigning people to positions that best suit their skills, the NYSC programme may optimise the value that is extracted from its human resources.

Moreover, RBV emphasises how important it is to keep creating and expanding resources to preserve a competitive advantage (Peteraf, 1993). When it comes to entrepreneurship, this means giving recent graduates access to tools, training, and mentorship that will help them develop their entrepreneurial skills. The NYSC scheme can provide corps members with the skills, resources, and encouragement they require to launch and maintain profitable businesses through focused programmes and activities. This could entail collaborating with

academic institutions, business leaders, and industry specialists to provide hands-on training in market analysis, innovation, and business management.

RBV emphasises the use of networks and strategic alliances in utilising outside resources (Hitt et al., 2001). This means encouraging cooperation between corps members, local communities, governmental organisations, and private sector businesses in the context of entrepreneurship and nation-building.

Using the RBV framework in our journal would entail evaluating the NYSC scheme's current resources and capabilities, investigating how to use them to encourage youth participants to become entrepreneurs, and suggesting changes that make the most of these resources to produce the intended results. This strategy fits in nicely with our goals of incorporating entrepreneurship into the NYSC programme to support efforts to strengthen the nation. Top of Form

An Assessment of the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) Scheme

In a nation where there is ethnic and religious diversity and a strong emphasis on peaceful coexistence, NYSC, as an institution, provides young Nigerians with a pathway to the future rather than being a relic of the past (Ochogwu, 2023). The programme has been crucial in bringing Nigerians together despite the enduring political, religious, and ethnic tensions that keep them apart. The NYSC Scheme's applicability in addressing current issues and providing chances for youth involvement is an important factor to take into account. The NYSC Scheme, according to Okafor and Ani (2014), was created in 1973 to foster national unity among young Nigerians by implementing a year-long mandatory service programme. However, given the current environment, the programme must change to meet the changing requirements of young people in Nigeria, especially about entrepreneurship and skill development.

It is necessary to evaluate how well the NYSC Scheme encourages entrepreneurship among graduates. Through community development projects and skills acquisition programmes, the scheme offers young people a platform to acquire real-world experience and abilities. However, it is important to assess how much of these activities result in post-NYSC entrepreneurial endeavours. The study Ejiogu (2014) identified areas for development by highlighting the difficulties NYSC participants have in obtaining support for their business ideas and starting funding.

It is critical to evaluate the sectoral and geographic distribution of NYSC postings. Corps members' exposure to a range of entrepreneurial possibilities and experiences may be impacted by their dispersion among different states and industries. To guarantee that organisations such as corps members are stationed in areas with thriving entrepreneurial ecosystems and sectors linked with their interests and skill sets, Roundy and Fayad (2020) highlight the significance of strategic placement.

The NYSC program's capacity to unite young Nigerians from many origins and overcome racial, political, and religious barriers is one of its main advantages. Participants break through boundaries that could otherwise fuel strife and build a sense of unity and understanding through the shared experience of serving their nation. This plan's component is consistent with nation-building, which places a premium on creating a sense of unity and national identity (Arubayi, 2015). Without NYSC, the kids would not have been able to learn about the new languages and customs of their fellow Nigerians. They get a better understanding of how to interact freely with others as they pick up new languages and cultural practices. In remote places of Nigeria where the average Nigerian would not have had access to school, the programme has aided in the growth of education (Ochogwu, 2023). This is made possible by the corps members' construction of teaching centres and schools in the spirit of patriotism. Nigerians are united and trusting each other because of their sacrifices.

In addition, the NYSC programme offers young Nigerians a special chance to gain real-world experience and practical skills that are critical to their personal and professional growth. During their service year, participants participate in a variety of community development projects and activities, which helps them acquire important leadership, teamwork, problem-solving, and project management skills. Through these encounters, they acquire useful skills as well as a sense of social consciousness and civic duty (Olatokun, 2023). A crucial element in the personal and professional growth of corps members is the calibre of supervision and mentorship given to them during their service years. It takes proper training and assistance from NYSC officials and host organisations to help corps members develop their business skills.

The NYSC Scheme helps to advance socioeconomic development by providing labour for vital industries including agriculture, healthcare, and education. In rural and underserved areas, participants work as educators, medical professionals, and agricultural extension agents, promoting community empowerment and the development of human capital (Obasi, 2017; Fane, 2021; Ohwovoriole, 2023). Furthermore, the NYSC cultivates a culture of service and social responsibility in Nigerian youth by encouraging civic involvement and volunteerism.

Corps members support efforts to build nations and achieve sustainable development goals by participating in community development programmes (Tsanni, 2023). However, problems including low budget, deficiencies in infrastructure (Aremu, 2018), and a lack of coordination between government entities have made NYSC interventions less successful.

Analysis of NYSC Entrepreneur Scheme: Skill Acquisition and Entrepreneurship Development (SAED)

Nigeria boasts a sizable pool of highly qualified potential entrepreneurs who, with the correct environment and legislative backing, can help lower unemployment. According to Olofinyehun, Adelowo, and Egetokun's (2018) extensive survey, the majority of undergraduates in Nigerian higher institutions aspire to launch their businesses, but only a small percentage of them do so. Governments have invested heavily in programmes that foster entrepreneurship, usually by providing finance as well as non-financial assistance like business training and management consulting (Adeyeye et al. 2022).

Helping young people convert their entrepreneurial ideas into active entrepreneurial participation is still a feasible policy option to lessen the burden of unemployment and improper employment, as Adeyeye et al. (2022) pointed out. This is one of the main justifications for the 2012 introduction of the Skills Acquisition and Entrepreneurship Development (SAED) programme by the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) and the Small and Medium Enterprise Development Agency of Nigeria (SMEDAN). SAED is a practical entrepreneurship programme designed for recent college graduates who are completing the one-year national service requirement under the NYSC programme.

While Corps members are encouraged to start a business in any industry, the SAED programme gives priority to specific occupational skill areas. These included Power & Energy, ICT, Education, Agro-Allied, Culture & Tourism, Construction, Film & Photography, Food Processing & Preservation, Cosmetology, and Automobile when we started our study in 2019.

During the three-week Orientation camping exercise for Corps members, SAED incorporates an initial but required exposure to a desired skill. A voluntary enrollment in apprenticeship training is then required for the remainder of the service year. Essentially, the NYSC helps corps members participate in a variety of training programmes designed to improve their entrepreneurship skills. A wide range of subjects are covered in these programmes, such as idea generation, marketing tactics, financial literacy, and business management. Oladipo et al. (2019) claim that SAED has played a significant role in equipping corps members with the necessary know-how and abilities to pursue entrepreneurship. The project was planned to be carried out throughout the corps members' service year and as an in-camp camping exercise (post-camp).

The project's in-camp component would primarily concentrate on instilling an entrepreneurial and self-reliant spirit in corps members, assisting them in exploring potential sources of income to determine which one best fits their circumstances and personality, providing professional training, some sort of practical training, and assisting them in developing business plans (Ayansina, 2013). To equip interested corps members with the technical and vocational skills as well as the business acumen required to launch a business, the post-camp component would serve as a platform for a more rigorous training programme. This programme would be run by a variety of partner organisations that have relevant expertise and experience in the identified skill sets.

The NYSC works with public, private, and nonprofit organisations to provide mentoring and assistance to corps members who are interested in entrepreneurship. Corps members have access to financial support, business incubation services, and networking opportunities through collaborations with institutions such as the Bank of Industry (BOI) and the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Agency of Nigeria (SMEDAN). These collaborations significantly enhance the prospects of success for entrepreneurial ventures initiated by corps members (Aderinto, 2018).

The NYSC also encourages corps members to work on community development projects that support entrepreneurship at the local level. By recognising and meeting local community needs, corps members can create novel solutions and long-lasting businesses. For instance, programmes like the Community Development Service (CDS) allow corps members to carry out projects that are centred around agriculture, renewable energy, healthcare, and education, which in turn promotes entrepreneurship while addressing societal challenges (Olasunkanmi, 2020).

About 764,677 Corps members have been trained by the SAED programme since its start, but only 18,682 of them have gone on to become full-time entrepreneurs (Olorok, 2021). This amounts to a pitiful 2.3% success rate, highlighting a clear policy failure. This disappointing result implies that the programme has not successfully achieved its goals of fostering a significant number of entrepreneurs among young Nigerians.

According to Eguegu (2016), a significant factor contributing to this poor performance is the contradictory ideologies present in the SAED programme. Even though the programme promotes business and wealth creation, it frequently falls short of providing corps members with the tools and assistance they need to meet these goals. Addressing the nation's economic problems, especially the widespread problems of corruption, poor management, and economic stagnation, is the main goal of SAED. Unfortunately, the program's implementation has not produced the desired results, which has caused a gap between training and practical application.

The disparity between the number of corps members with training and those who effectively make the move to entrepreneurship highlights a structural shortcoming in the SAED initiative. (Eguegu, 2021) Even with large investments made in training initiatives—such as seminars, workshops, and skill development programs—the programme has not been able to support corps members' long-term business endeavours. Numerous reasons contribute to this failure, such as restricted financial resources, insufficient mentorship and support networks, and a dearth of promising markets for new businesses.

The infrastructure and resources of the NYSC Entrepreneur Scheme are sometimes insufficient to facilitate significant business and skill development activities. Many community service projects and orientation camps do not have the facilities and tools required for capacity building and training. Furthermore, aspiring entrepreneurs have limited access to networks of mentors and supporters, which makes it more difficult for them to turn their ideas into successful businesses (Afolabi & Ojulari, 2017).

Moreover, the SAED programme takes a one-size-fits-all approach to entrepreneurship training, frequently ignoring the varied needs and goals of corps members. This method ignores the particular difficulties and chances that exist in various geographical areas and economic sectors. Because of this, a lot of corps members discover that they lack the necessary skills to deal with the difficulties of launching and operating a profitable company in their industry.

Nigeria's socioeconomic environment poses additional difficulties. High unemployment rates, restricted financial options, and inadequate infrastructure present significant obstacles to business endeavours started by corps members (Okeke and Anyadike, 2022; Favour, 2023). Regrettably, the SAED programme may fall short in addressing these structural problems, which would lead to a low acceptance of entrepreneurship as a feasible career path.

A key organisation in Nigeria's entrepreneurial and nation-building scene is the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) programme. With its mission to advance national development, entrepreneurship, and unity, the NYSC has enormous potential to make a substantial contribution to the socioeconomic fabric of the country. However, as this study demonstrates, the program's entrepreneurship is hampered by several significant gaps and difficulties. The SAED program's brief length is among the main complaints made against it (Ndomewese, 2017). Numerous stakeholders contend that the program's efficacy is hampered by its short duration. For Ndomewese (2017), the NYSC entrepreneur scheme's short duration limits corp members' capacity to sufficiently learn and hone their entrepreneurial abilities. Consequently, this hinders their capacity to contribute meaningfully to economic development post-NYSC.

This problem is made worse by the entrepreneur program's exclusive emphasis on money creation. Adebayo and Olaleye (2019) claim that the focus on wealth creation pushes Corp members to put their financial interests ahead of community development projects. The larger objectives of the NYSC programme, which include advancing socioeconomic growth and national unity, are compromised by this strategy.

An increasing number of stakeholders agree that the SAED programme should be integrated with the Community Development Service (CDS) to address these problems. While addressing local needs and issues, community development projects give Corp members the chance to put their entrepreneurial abilities to use in practical situations (Adenekan, 2019). Members of the Corp can contribute to community development initiatives while also gaining real-world experience in entrepreneurship through the combination of SAED and CDS.

There are numerous advantages for communities and Corp members when SAED and CDS are integrated. First of all, it offers Corp members a more comprehensive educational experience that includes hands-on learning through community initiatives as well as entrepreneurship training (Ajayi & Akinbode, 2020). This method fosters social consciousness and civic duty in addition to improving their entrepreneurial skills.

Second, combining SAED and CDS encourages grassroots sustainable development. Community development initiatives started by Corp members can tackle regional socioeconomic issues like unemployment, poverty, and poor infrastructure, as mentioned by Muhammad et al. (2016). Corp members actively participate in communities, which advances the country's broader development agenda.

Implementing SAED with CDS successfully necessitates meticulous preparation and cooperation. First and foremost, the SAED program's curriculum has to be revised to include courses on social entrepreneurship and community development. By doing this, it is made sure that Corp members receive thorough training that equips them for both community service and entrepreneurial endeavours.

To effectively implement integrated SAED-CDS initiatives, partnerships between government agencies, non-profit organisations, and private sector entities are necessary. Through these collaborations, corp members may receive financial support, mentoring, and technical assistance, which will enable them to carry out sustainable community development projects.

Conclusion

The relevance of entrepreneurship as a pillar of modern society is rapidly increasing on a global scale. It is impossible to overestimate the role that entrepreneurship plays in promoting economic development and growth. The National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) project, Skills Acquisition and Business Development (SAED) presents itself as a potential accelerator for the development of business among corps members in this setting. However, it soon becomes clear from a closer look that the entrepreneur scheme's implementation falls short of its intended goals.

The entrepreneur programme appears to be a promising platform for providing corps members with the necessary knowledge and abilities to succeed as entrepreneurs in a cutthroat business climate. However, there is still a lot of room for improvement in the program's actual implementation. Under the pretense of knowledge transfer, the entrepreneur plan frequently becomes a vehicle for the spread of erroneous and sometimes contradictory ideas rather than offering a strong foundation for the development of entrepreneurship.

The entrepreneur initiative's efficacy as a tool for the growth of entrepreneurship is compromised by the disparity between its theoretical foundations and its actual implementation. The entrepreneur plan tends to promote a rhetoric devoid of substance and overlooks the actual obstacles faced by aspiring entrepreneurs, instead of providing a cogent and thorough curriculum catered to the interests and goals of corps members.

Given these results, a thorough redesign of the NYSC entrepreneurship effort is necessary to bring it into compliance with the program's goals of encouraging corps members to improve their entrepreneurial skills. To fully realise the potential of the NYSC scheme in fostering a new generation of entrepreneurs who can significantly contribute to the economic development of the country, the inadequacies found in this research must be addressed.

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