



# The Roles of Innovative Skill Acquisition in Creating Employment

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**Abstract** – This study examined the roles of innovative skill acquisition in creating employment. The objective of the study was to find out the relevance of skill acquisition and innovation in creating employment. To achieve this objective, the author attempted to determine the dependent variable which is skill acquisition and innovation and the independent variables are science integration, technology transfer, ease of production and entrepreneurial opportunity. The study employed the primary method of data collection. To obtain the required data, seventy three detailed questionnaires were prepared and distributed in person to the respondents in Osogbo. The respondents represent the sample size that was randomly selected among the population of one hundred and thirty three. These questions attempted to elicit information about the impact of science integration, technology transfer, ease of production and entrepreneurial opportunity on skill acquisition and innovation in creating employment. The binomial (Binary) Logistic Regression was used for this study. It is a form of regression which is used when the dependent variable is dichotomous in nature and the independent variable is of any type. The result of the empirical test revealed that the Nagel Kerke ( $R^2$ ) is 0.913. This shows that about 91.3% of these factors explain the success in employment generation. Enterprise opportunity with a sig value of 0.000 produced the most outstanding outcome. This simply puts enterprise opportunity as the potent contributor to the success of employment creation. It was concluded that skill acquisition is very important in the development of national economy. The study also recommended that individuals should go for skills acquisition because skills acquired can make ways where it seems there is no way.

**Keywords:** *Innovation, Skill acquisition, Employment, Skill output, Entrepreneur.*

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## 1. Introduction

Skill is very important in the life of every human being. The reason why many technicians earn more than some university graduates is because the technicians acquire more practical skills than the academic graduates who were fed with theoretical experiences while in the universities. Skill acquisition can take you to places you do not expect you will find yourself. Skill acquisition is the ability to be trained on a particular task or function and become expert in it. It is a pity that unemployment is being paraded in many parts of the world today especially in Nigeria. This is giving many youths in different parts of the world today a sleepless night. It is one of the causes of rapid growth in crime in many parts of the world. But can there be any relationship between someone who has acquired skill on how to perform a particular job and make money from it and unemployment? The answer is no, because the skill he has acquired can always speak for him/her (Onabajo, 2001).

Today, there are many unemployed graduates in the country. This is partly as a result of our long system of education that is more of theories and not much practical learning. It is evident that the highest number of unemployed youth is found in the African Continent. The truth remains that the major causes of unemployment among these vibrant youths is lack of skill to back up what they learnt from their institutions of learning. When these graduates were still in school, they did not border to learn at least one

single skill like graphic designing, typing, hair dressing, electrical maintenance and others. If they have learnt any skill at all, the rate of unemployment will be reduced.

Onabajo (2008) further asserted that skill acquisition is a specific form of learning. In order to understand this in relation to entrepreneurial innovation, it will be important to define learning. Learning is the representation of information in memory concerning some environmental or cognitive events. Thus, learning refers to an organism storing something about its past memory. Skill acquisition is the ability to be trained on a particular task or function and become expert in it. Entrepreneurial ventures start with basic skill acquisition which is followed by investment ability to develop the acquired skill through modern innovation. In this sense, mobility schemes between research and laboratories departments, institutions and firms may help scientists to understand the behavior of the market.

Technology transfer aids skills acquisition and innovation. Knowledge is more and more complex. Besides, it is not always transferable. Actually it is acquired through practice, experience and learning. At the beginning, innovative firms and startups do not have these abilities. They need expertise to acquire knowledge and technology which sometimes becomes difficult. Technology transfer programmes may contribute to achieve this. This concerns advisory services, technical experts support and support for commercialisation of outputs and also infrastructure and physical equipment availability that firms cannot afford by themselves. Based on the above background information, the researcher attempted to use this study to find out the influence of skill acquisition and innovation in creating employment.

### *1.1. Statement of the problem*

Today, a huge unemployment is being paraded in many parts of the world especially Nigeria. This mainly occurs because most of the unemployed youths lack innovative skills. Government's attitude to this problem is not also encouraging. Today's entrepreneurs find it difficult to establish the degree of influence being exerted on employment generation by science integration. It is evident that the level of technology transfer is low when entrepreneurial development is being required. It is also observed that production have continuously been found difficult for lack of innovation.

In the same vein, the society has not been able to adequately create entrepreneurial opportunities in order to provide employment. However, entrepreneurs can create more opportunities to reduce this trend of gross unemployment by investing in cottage businesses which can be used to develop skills in interested youths and build innovative tendencies to make ventures big.

### *1.2 Objectives of the study*

The general objective of this study is to find out the relevance of skill acquisition and innovation in creating employment. To achieve this objective, the author attempted to determine the following specific objectives;

- To access the influence of science integration on employment opportunity
- To determine the impact of technology transfer on entrepreneurial development
- To establish the ease of production attained through innovation and
- To evaluate the rate of entrepreneurial opportunities on employment generation

## **2. Theoretical Framework**

Helena de Preester (2008), presents a philosophy of innovation to further understand the nature of innovation. The role of the scientist or engineer presents a conundrum. Such individuals are often sources of innovation in both products and processes, yet routine science and engineering is typically carried out in an environment that stresses structure, order, and adherence to prescribed methods. Steiner believed that this exactly is the wrong setting for successful innovation.

To help explain the diminishing role of science and the burgeoning role of individuals in innovation, Helena de Preester suggested that unconventional individuals, rather than conventional science or engineering, are central to innovation success, this philosophy of innovation is derived from a philosophy of human nature formulated by (Heidegger, 2016).

Heidegger (2016) identified three elements of human nature: it is human nature to be practically involved in a complex world rather than rationally involved with a conceptually simplified world; it is human nature to be authentic that is, unconventional, uncommitted to one's paradigm at least some of the time; and it is human nature to be cooperative. In other words, the methods and organisational structures that characterise "good" science are in direct conflict with human nature. By examining things in isolation from their natural linkages, the scientist misses the holistic view of the big picture which is necessary for successful innovation. Central to this philosophy of innovation is individuality understood as authenticity as proposed by Standal and Vegard (2011) in his philosophy of innovation.

Standal and Vegard (2011) posits that the term authenticity refers to both an unconventional (i.e., unscientific) approach to the world and an openness to alternative viewpoints. This openness is the basis for cooperative rather than competitive interaction. The fundamental themes of this philosophy of innovation are the importance of individual experience which can be acquired through skill acquisitions. The importance of unconventional interpretations and the importance of respect for individual uniqueness lead to individualising the tendencies to acquire entrepreneurial knowledge which can result from skill acquisition. The magic moments of innovation arise when scientists or engineers assert their individuality, break free from the structured thinking of their traditional methods, and synthesise novel interpretations that move their projects in new directions.

This philosophy of innovation is not presented as a means for determining why innovation succeeds or fails. Instead, it provides a framework for assessing organizational or personal approaches to innovation. In other words, it gives managers and entrepreneurs a means for understanding and interpreting the human elements of particular innovation projects which incidentally assists creativity.

The term skill acquisition, as commonly used in traditional psychology, an philosophy, education, movement science and performance development literatures, has been seen as having a narrow perspective. In cognitive and experimental psychology, for example, it refers to the establishment of an internal state or representation of an act which is believed to be acquired as a result of learning and task experience. In this study, it is elucidated as an ecological perspective which suggests that the term skill acquisition may not refer only to an entity but rather to the emergence of an adaptive, functional relationship between an organism and its environment, thus avoiding an inherent organismic asymmetry in theorising. In this respect, the terms 'skill adaptation' or 'skill attunement' also mean the same as skill acquisition.

### *2.1 Empirical review*

The best opportunity to improve economic base of a nation is to ensure that technological changes open new possibilities of investment, of benefit and improvement of competitiveness. For investment to be carried out, then technological change through innovation must occur. Technological change is commercial exploitation of technological potentials, which can provide new opportunities of employment. The problem is that investment must be understood in a wide sense. Investment is more than financial capital (Onabajo, 2010; Uju, 2017).

According to Zlatan (2004) the focus on investment must not only be in tangible actions but also in intangible actions. This is manifested in technology transfer, development of new know-how, training and education that permit assimilation of new knowledge and utilisation of research results. Clearly, these

aspects demand necessary changes in current institutions. The onus lies in establishing more innovative industrial organisations and building more entrepreneurial, research institutions. In this wise, Begley and Boyd (1987) emphasised that coordination, cooperation and integration of objectives are imperative if entrepreneurial success is to be recorded. Firms will not survive in the market without useful ideas. This makes it necessary, to promote innovation and endogenous potentials of firms, like human resources, as new sources to grow employment (Onabajo, 2010; Desai, 2000; Krugman, 1991).

Nowadays, according to Onabajo, “the context of economic and production relationships has caused firms to become the promoters of change and the main vehicle of innovation diffusion in the market. Firms are the meeting point between science and knowledge, production and the market. Their significance in the innovation process is clear in their role as instruments of training, learning and exploitation of research results”. Technological change has made possible in some cases, production of goods and services at a small scale. This fact opens new possibilities for small and medium enterprises in a context of cooperation and interaction with other actors of the science, technology and industry system. In this way, enterprises find out new possibilities of business in the application of technology through innovation of technology (Krugman, 1991).

Burgleeman, Maidique and Hheeright (1996) posited that there must be the need to integrate science, technology and industry systems. Innovation and skill acquisition policy must be adapted to the specific possibilities and need of national industry so that synergies can emerge. In this way acquired skills and innovations can be introduced in production structures. This has implications in terms of research policy. However, Krugman (1991) retorted that research must therefore be oriented and planned in order to match industrial needs. In this way and with accurate support, spin offs may be possible.

## *2.2 Conceptual Issues*

One of the biggest difficulties in transferring skill and innovation is the commercialization. It is at this stage that added value is really generated, leading to exploitation (Drucker, 1992). In this sense, Burgleeman, Maidique and Hheeright (1996) affirmed that it is important for the anticipation of changes, new trends and the knowledge of the industrial needs and the market. Prospective activity and assessment to start ups must be provided in order to detect new market niches. Lack of relevant information on markets, technologies and financial instruments is often an obstacle in establishing a new firm (Onabajo, 2014; Hisrich, 1992).

According to Kurato and Hodgettes (2007) the access to skills and competences is a key element +for firms. Firms need human and technological resources. However, it is possible and probable that human competences in Nigeria have not been developed yet by new firms. This concerns entrepreneurial, managerial, marketing, financial and technological competences. This should be done through Technological Incubation Centers, attendance of seminars and workshops to facilitate innovative changes in all areas of the economy.

### *2.2.1 Roles of Innovation in Upgrading Skill Outputs*

In order to implement technological change, Onabajo (2009); Kao (1991) posit that there are six strategies described in order of the measure of risk and costs implications. Offensive strategy: This is adopted by firms that intend to achieve technical and market leadership through innovation. These firms are research and development (R&D) intensive and their research personnel are of the highest quality. These firms are rarely in inert economies like Nigeria.

Defensive strategies: This applies to firms that want to avoid the risk and cost of being a leader in the field but at the same time do not want to be left behind in the technological race. Efforts are more concentrated on the adaptive research, which is concerned with improvement rather than fundamental

advance. They take advantage of any mistake by the initiating firms and try to improve on the original technology. Most companies in the industrialised countries adopt this strategy and they exist in the inert economies of the world.

**Imitative strategy:** This entails that resources are invested to reproduce carbon copy of what is already in the market. The ambition is not therefore to improve on innovation but merely follow the lead given by others. R&D expenditure is normally low with concentration on scientific and technical services. These firms survive on low cost production and bear relatively low risk as they would normally sell known product, which would have been introduced into market by earlier producers. Firms in this strategy exist more in competitive industrial environment and a few of them exist in inert economies like Nigeria, Ghana (Onabajo, 2009).

**Dependent strategy:** This strategy subordinates firms to accept satellite role to other firms operating as sub-contractors to dominant companies. Normally, they do undertake research but whatever budget they have for R&D, is geared to the technical requirement of their customers. They do not even imitate products as this is normally specified for them by the firms they are supplying. They are usually small in size. These firms abound in industrial economies and in newly industrializing ones. **Traditional strategy:** Firms in the traditional strategy category engage mainly in crafts such as hand-weaving or pottery and the likes. The market for their products requires little innovation and therefore does not force the firms to adjust. Mere fashion and design changes are often enough to guarantee their survival. As peasants of industries, they do not undertake any R&D. these firms exist both in industrial and in developing economies.

**Opportunity strategy:** This strategy is adopted by companies that survive on their own ability to identify opportunities in the economy and are able to respond to them. Efforts are concentrated on excellent management control and the stocking and ordering efficiency. No one would expect therefore that firms in inert economies would be adopting offensive and defensive strategies and any policy that compels all manufacturing companies in poor economies shows a lack of good understanding by policy makers of the complex issues involved in the innovation process. Even in highly developed economies, many firms do not invest in R&D, some preferring to wind up instead of innovating. Because of the complexity, costs and uncertainty of the innovation process, it is probably only a threat to their survival in a competitive environment that would motivate them to innovate.

The present trend among firms in the competitive market is that of survival of the fittest, where firms are viewed as behaving like organisms constantly under threat and using whatever means available to perpetuate their existence. These firms now involve in what is known as innovative competition; a concept based on the notion of differentiation as the chief means by which firms gain market advantage over their competitors.

Firms spend resources on R&D to establish a competitive lead over rivals, take over other firms where this is their interest and diversify horizontally and vertically as the case may be, to insure against future risks. The firms are not just maximizing profits but profit seeking. In order to create a greater chance of success than failure in an innovation process, the control and supervision, in other words the management, are put in the hand of project champion (Stevenson & Grumpett, 1985). The Champion is somebody who by virtue of his senior position in the firm can convince decision makers that the new product is promising and should be developed and marketed. He could be the chairman or the technical director and should be prepared to stake his reputation to achieve acceptance of a new idea. It is now known that, of all the factors considered as favouring success in innovation, the project champion is the most common single factor representing on the average, about 25% in all the various types of industries. Innovation process is complex, costly and risky in nature. The project developers sometimes called the

top persons must have the courage, persistence and expertise specialisation in the process of generating innovations and building skills (Stevenson & Grumpe, 1985).

### *2.2.2 Problems of Innovating in Nigeria*

A number of reasons exist in Nigeria that militates against organisations' bid to innovate as enumerated by Onabajo (2014). Some of the reasons are:

The general unfavourable economic environment for innovation is one among several factors that discourage practicing entrepreneurs and potential ones from directly putting resources on innovation. There are not many opportunities to embody new ideas in expansion. The slow growth may be the consequence as well as a cause of a failure in innovation. The wrong balance of competition and safety which is demonstrated in too little competition leading to complacency and too much of short views remain unfavourable to a planned innovation policy.

Persistently depressed profits from ongoing ventures or the ones expected from a new venture makes ventures more difficult to launch. Exaggerated uncertainty about the pay-off on projects produced by high and varying rates of inflation and inadequate personal expectation of reward from taking the risk of innovation. An unfavourable environmental factor of social and educational context affects potential innovators or skill developers. It is appropriate to treat the educational defects, allowing shortages of essential skills as subsidiary to social attitudes. Any major innovation is liable to create demands for skills for which adequate training facilities do not previously exist.

An insufficiently supportive government constitutes a great concern for innovative skill acquisition. The interventions of government are numerous and complex. This makes it almost impossible to assess whether, on balance, one government is better than the other in its efforts at intervention. But there may be a chance that Nigerian government's interventions could be made more effective in supporting innovations. According to Onabajo (2014) inadequate government's responsiveness has led to the following problems;

- Inability to understand what an innovation is
- Lack of policy to draw in relevant information
- Unwillingness to take new knowledge on licence from outside
- Lack of resolution in developing ideas
- Poor assessment of markets and of needs for customer service
- Poor assessment of investment opportunities
- Tendency to run machines for too long a life
- Undue caution and readiness to seize excuses for delay
- Unwillingness to alter structures or to seek cooperatives arrangements to deal with problems of scale
- Lack of resolution in overcoming difficulties of government regulation, material supply, skill availability and others
- Poor labour relation policy
- Sluggish internal decision-making system

If measures can be put in place to rectify all these anomalies, Nigeria's innovation and skill development potentials will thrive and bring out the best in the Nation's entrepreneurial desires (Onabajo, 2014).

### *2.3.3 Importance of Skill Acquisition in the Society*

Skilled person can survive in any environment. Skill training and acquisition are needed in the life of every serious minded human being. Skills can do a lot of great work in the life of every living soul. Lack of entrepreneurial skills is one of major causes of corruption (Richard & Shapero, 1975). For these reasons, Development Education Centre (DEC) Enugu, during the past three decades engaged in the

provision of entrepreneurial skills acquisition programme which empowered over 3000 out of school female youths from 500 communities in the South East of Nigeria since its inception in areas such as; computer literacy, fashion & designing, cosmetology, catering and hotel management, bag/shoe making, hair dressing and bead making.

Equipment with free interest loans are needed to enable take off smoothly. DEC. has in the same vain introduced business education for youths, to empower them with the needed knowledge and understanding on how to do business in a tough economy like Nigeria (Nkamnebe & Ayo, 2003). The question of choice of job or the type of employer one would like after graduation is now thing of the old. White collar jobs are scarcely available. Hence many graduates are desperate to get any job to keep body and soul together. Indeed there is paradigm shift in the labour market (Onabajo & Abu, 2011).

Therefore, the need to acquire and develop specific entrepreneurial skills cannot be neglected because entrepreneurship is vital to creating employment and indeed a special form of employability for graduates. Empowerment helps individuals or groups to fully access personal/collective power through knowledge, skills and motivation for proper functioning in their society and contribution to the economy.

#### 2.3.4 The Importance of Acquiring Entrepreneurial Skills

According to Rodriguez-Pose (1975) the following are importance of acquiring entrepreneurial skill within an economy. Self-employment: A skill acquired man is a self-employed man. A self-employed person can never go hungry because the skill he acquired provides food for him/her on a daily basis. But one who lacks skill acquisition will find it difficult to be self-employed because he/she has nothing to offer. Therefore, self-employment helps the society not to depend on white collar jobs, helps youth develop a positive attitude towards work and labour, it reduces poverty and helps youth to be self-reliant and independent.

Diverse job opportunities: Those who have many skills stand the chance of gaining more jobs from many establishments. People who have many skills are being searched for by many companies. Where several companies stand in a queue fighting over one person, they are searched for because they can do many functions due to the series of skills possessed. Employment generation: Many governments are still finding it difficult to provide jobs for the citizens because the citizens are lacking important skills they need. There will be a lot of jobs generated for the citizens of every country if the citizens are well equipped with skills. This is why it is necessary for government to organise skill acquisition programme for the masses as this will go a long way in providing jobs for others, for instance, someone who is well equipped on fashion and designing skill can train his fellow citizens. When these citizens mature in such field, they start earning from the skill they acquired. This is how the newly trained in that field will train other persons and employment generation keeps on growing in such circle.

Likewise, those who have good skills in business make good money in their businesses and generate employment for others by employing others to assist in the business. Effective function: Organisations that employ skilful workers to assist in their organisational duties lose nothing at all because there will always be effective functions performed by the employee. This is because the employee has acquired necessary skills needed for him to perform the work as desired by the organisation. The knowledge gained from the training on that specific job makes an individual to do the organisations work as desired by the management of such organisation.

Crime Reduction: Skills acquisition reduces the crime rate in our society. People begin to think on many dirty activities they will do to make money when they do not have anything to call job of their own. But with acquired skill by an individual he/she works and makes money from his/her acquired skill. This will make him/her to feel comfortable in life and do not disturb his/her life in any way. Also, the skills

acquired by the citizens who were indulging in crime before can be used to convert those who are still partakers in such bad practice. They can go after their old friends and teach them the new skills they acquired thereby making them useful to the society.

### 3 Methodology

#### 3.1 Population and Sample Size

A total of one hundred and thirty three (133) SMEs in vocational programmes and enterprises were identified in the study area. This forms the population for the study. Detailed questionnaires were prepared and distributed to selected entrepreneurs and vocational training centers in Osogbo metropolis. Simple random sampling technique was used to select the sample size of seventy three (73) persons. This was as a result of the relative homogeneity characteristic of the organizations involved. Eighty five questionnaires were distributed. Out of these eighty five persons, seventy persons three correctly filled and returned their questionnaires. The questionnaire is on the impact science integration, technology transfer, ease of production and entrepreneurial opportunity in skill acquisition and innovation for creating employment. This represents a response rate of about eighty six percent.

#### 3.2 Data Collection

In this study, the primary method of data collection was employed. The choice of this method is to increase the commitment of respondents. To obtain the required data, a detailed questionnaire was prepared and distributed in person to the respondents. The questions drawn were to elicit information on the impact of science integration, technology transfer; ease of production and entrepreneurial opportunity has in skill acquisition and innovation for creating employment.

#### 3.3 Data analysis

The binomial (Binary) Logistic Regression was used for this study. It is a form of regression which is used when the dependent variable is dichotomous in nature and the independent variable is of any type. The dependent variable is skill acquisition and innovation. The following independent variables; science integration, technology transfer, ease of production and entrepreneurial opportunity were tested to determine the extent of their relationships to skill acquisition and innovation. The indices of the dependent variable is employment which results from the level of skill acquisition and rate of innovation. The method applies maximum likelihood estimation after transforming the dependent into a logic variable (the natural log of the odds of the dependent occurring or not)

### 4 Results and Discussion of Findings

The aim of this section is to show the analysis of the data that was collected by the use of the primary method of data collection. From Table 1, a total of 20 respondents, representing 27.40 per cent of the total respondents were of the opinion that science integration is the greatest contributory factor in creating employment. Also, 30 respondents, representing about 41.10 per cent believe that enterprise opportunity has contributed more to the rate of employment in the organisations.

**Table 1.** Greatest contribution to success of employment

Factor	Frequency	Percent
Science integration (X1)	20	27.40
Enterprise opportunity (X2)	30	41.10
Ease of production (X3)	10	13.70
Technology transfer (X4)	13	17.80
<b>Total</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Researcher's survey, 2016

However, a total of 10 respondents representing 13.70 percent of the total respondents believed that ease of production will assist the organisations in meeting employment objectives. Only 13 respondents representing about 17.80 percent of the respondents were of the opinion that technology transfer will also determine the rate of employment in the organisations.

From Table 2, the outcome of the empirical result revealed that the Nagel Kerke (R<sup>2</sup>) is 0.913. This shows that about 91.3% of these factors explain the success in employment generation. Enterprise opportunity with a sig. value of 0.000 produced the most outstanding outcome. This simply puts enterprise opportunity as the potent contributor to the success of employment creation.

**Table 2:** Variables in the equation

	B	S.E	Wald	Df	Sig.	Exp
X1	0.692	23.656	0.000	1	0.985	0.453
X2	0.001	00.000	18.478	1	0.000	1.001
X3	0.826	12.427	0.003	1	0.065	0.060
X4	2.034	9.868	0.095	1	0.958	0.441
Constant	25.869	253.030	0.010	1	0.918	1.7E+11

Source: Researcher's SPSS Output, 2016

$$\text{Logit (p)} = \beta_0 + \beta_1x_1 + \beta_2 x_2 + \beta_3x_3 + \beta_4x_4 + U_1$$

Where;  $\beta_0$  = Constant term,  $\beta_1 = \beta_1 \dots \beta_4$  = Regression Coefficient, X1 = Quality, X2 = Cost, X3 = Time, X4 = Delivery.

$$\text{Log (p)} = 25.87 + 0.692X_1 + 0.001X_2 + 0.826X_3 + 2.034X_4 + U_1$$

$$\text{S.E} \quad (253.030) + (23.656) + (00.000) + (12.427) + (9.868)$$

$$\text{Nagel Kerke } R^2 = 0.918$$

#### 4.1 Interpretation of result

Among the four factors that contribute to the organisations' objective, enterprise opportunity produced the domineering outcome. Science integration, technology transfer, and ease of production, although, are all significant in contribution to achieving employment objectives but enterprise opportunity produced the most outstanding result. All these are in tandem with Burgleemann, Maidique and Hheeright (1996) submission that concluded there is need to integrate science and technology and industry system with skill acquisition. The results of the tests also corroborate the position of Zlatan (2004) that also affirm that technology transfer permits assimilation of knowledge and utilization of research results.

### 5 Conclusion and Recommendations

Skill is very important in the development of national economy. Technology transfer aids skills acquisition and innovation. Government interventions and supports are needed in order to integrate innovation into skill acquisition. Entrepreneurial skills builds individual self-esteem, engender growth processes and changes that are never ending.

In line with the above , it is therefore recommended that, individuals, learned or not, are hereby encouraged to go for skills acquisition because good and lucrative skills acquired can make ways where it seems there is no way. The government at all levels should make concerted efforts to support entrepreneurial growth thereby creating favourable atmosphere for innovation and skill acquisition and development.

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