

ENTREPRENEURSHIP DEVELOPMENT AND NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT: A CRITICAL ASSESSMENT

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ABSTRACT

Entrepreneurship Development is fast becoming an important aspect of national development policy of all countries of the world. The objective of this paper is to assess the roles of entrepreneurship development in national development. It relied on secondary sources to generate information for the study. From the study, it was agreed that entrepreneurship development is a vital instrument for national development. Thus, Nigeria has put in place policies and programmes to stimulate its development in this direction. The paper also identified the problems which have retarded entrepreneurship development programmes and policies in Nigeria. These include political instability and insensitivity, corruption, inadequate finance, ethno-religious crisis among others. From the paper, it was concluded that transparency and accountability should be encouraged by the government, and the culture of impunity be discouraged. The government should encourage the use of indigenous technology, proper funding of entrepreneurship development policies and programmes as well as the encouragement of the purchase of made in Nigeria products. These will no doubt stimulate entrepreneurship development.

Keywords: *Entrepreneurship, Development, Policies, Programmes, Employment, Government.*

INTRODUCTION

The desire of all nations is to develop, and this cannot be achieved through only one source. One of the sources that engender national development is the process of entrepreneurship development.

In Africa and other parts of the world, various governments have seen the importance of entrepreneurship development in their quest for national development, and thus, formulated one policy or the other to ensure its sustenance. Entrepreneurship development is fast gaining special attention from every nations and governments because of the critical role it plays in sustaining national development. In Nigeria, for instance, one of the underlying philosophies of development programmes is to increase the supply of adequately trained entrepreneurs who will make success out of their skills. Entrepreneurship, thus, becomes the basis for innovation, creativity and industrial development in the face of scarce financial resources considering the dwindling oil prices.

This study seeks to examine the roles of entrepreneurship development in the efforts to engender national development. It equally identifies the challenges of entrepreneurship development in Nigeria.

CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATIONS

It is interesting to know that the concept “entrepreneurship”, is gaining much attention all over the world. Its conceptualization has made it a bit difficult. The concept has come to mean different things to different people. Gottschalk, (2009), defines entrepreneurship as the practice of starting new organizations or revitalizing mature organizations, particularly businesses in response to identified opportunities. Similarly, Akinlegba (2016), defines entrepreneurship as the process of identifying, developing and bringing a vision to life. The vision may be an innovative idea, an opportunity or a better way of doing something. The end result of this process is the creation of a new venture formed under the conditions of risks and considerable uncertainties. Contributing further, Afegbu (2008) conceptualizes entrepreneurship as a process of inducting an individual into the culture of innovation, production and creativity.

Collorary to this, Utomi (1998), in Onuaha (2011), says that entrepreneurship is about the persistent pursuit of opportunity. This is aimed at creating wealth through innovative creation of a product or service that meets the need of customers using scarce resources in a way that results in the growth enterprises which satisfy the expectation of stakeholders. Salo (2004), opines that

entrepreneurship is the acceptance of an individual to seek for new ways of doing things for the sole purpose of generating profit or reward.

Having regards to the foregoing definitions of entrepreneurship, the paper further sees entrepreneurship development as the process whereby the entrepreneurial and managerial abilities of the potential entrepreneurs are developed. It is the process of inculcating the culture and spirit of creativity and innovativeness into workers for the purpose of preparing them towards the conception, organization, and management of a productive venture. It simply means, teaching people to become self-employed (Otache, 2010). Accordingly, entrepreneurship is the process of developing the potential of an individual through the identification of business opportunities (Ihiediwa (2014). Similarly, Tijani – Alawiye in Ogah et al., (2014), asserts that entrepreneurship is the process of increasing the supply of entrepreneurs or adding to the stock of existing small, medium and big enterprises available to a country by creating and promoting many capable entrepreneurs who can successfully run innovative enterprises, nurture them to growth and sustain them with a view to achieving broad socio-economic development. In the same vein, Shepherd & Douglas in Ogah et al (2018), identifies that the essence of entrepreneurship development is the ability to envisage and chart a course for a new business venture by combining information from the functional discipline and the external environment in the context of extraordinary uncertainty and ambiguity which confront a new business venture.

On the other hand, scholars have seen the concept of development to be heavily value loaded and see its operational definition as a matter of what the writer cherishes as the goal or objective of the economy (Ali et al 2012). The controversy surrounding the operationalization of development has made it to be more interesting, exciting and expansive. Explicitly, Sapru (2010) observes that:

The concept of development is neither new nor old. Development is a continuously changing and dynamic concept. Since the beginning of civilization, it has been taking different shapes and dimensions.

According to Onah (2006), development means a high national income which is accompanied by a sound market economy. The

focus of this definition is that, development is seen in terms of the structure and growth of the national economy which is indicated by high income per capital and the average annual rate of growth in the national economy. Rodney (1969), sees development as a many sided process which at the level of individual, implies increased skill and capacity, greater freedom, creativity, self-discipline, responsibility and material well-being. This view of Rodney tallies favourably in consonance with that held by (Idakwoji, 2004). In his words, development is a constant process of transformation and it is a widely participatory process intended to bring social and material advancements, equality, freedom and other value qualities for the people through gaining of greater control over their resources. However, Seers in Sapru (2010), argues that development involved the realization of the potential of human personality and went on to suggest that this was best achieved through the reduction of poverty, unemployment and inequality. To this extent, Todaro (1982), opines that development is a multi-dimensional process involving changes in structures, attitudes and institutions as well as the acceleration for economic growth, the reduction of inequality and the eradication of absolute poverty.

In summary therefore, national development can be conceptualized as the quest by a country to achieve development for the betterment and wellbeing of her citizenry. It is against this backdrop that Udo (1984), and Agbakoba (2003), affirm their insight by asserting that national development is the growth, change and development which take place in a society. In addition, Seers (1999) in Patrick (2011), perceives development in terms of attacking widespread absolute poverty, reducing inequalities and removing the spectrum of unemployment. Oluwafemi (2012), submits that national development can be viewed as a multifaceted process of change, especially, structural changes towards the enhancement of the economic welfare of the people, self-fulfillment and actualization of such people. The gamut of these definitions will guide a comprehensive approach in discussing this paper.

Entrepreneurship Development in Nigeria

It is the paper's objective view that, entrepreneurship development is geared towards

teaching people to become self-employed. In Nigeria, for instance, the arrival and the subsequent activities of the colonial masters no doubt, negatively affected the entrepreneurial spirit of her citizens as manufactured goods were imported into the country. Moreover, the colonial economic policies did not give any room for Nigerians to develop their skills. Rather, they were incorporated into the middlemen system and were made to buy produce from farmers which served as raw materials for their industries in Europe. Otache (2010) however noted that with the establishment of formal education, most Nigerians who were educated were employed in the colonial civil service, and this made many Nigerians to abandon their entrepreneurial attitudes. With the independence in 1960, opportunities for employment in the civil service became difficult and the government of Nigeria decided to initiate policies and programmes that would encourage her citizens to develop the habit of being self-employed. It is this idea that quickly opened the road for the development of entrepreneurs.

The need for national development by the political system is essential and inevitable. The attainment of national development is anchored on policies and programmes (Ali, 2012). It is on this purview that programmes become derivative of National Development Plan (NDP), (Onah, 2006). Policy on the other hand, is a set of interrelated decision by a political actor or group of political actors concerning the selection of goals and the means of achieving them within a specific situation. This interrelated decision should, in principle, be within the power of those actors to achieve. Egonmwan (1991), and Anderson (1975), further see policy as a purposive course of action, followed by an actor or a set of actors in dealing with a problem or matters of concern. In Nigeria today, the government has rolled out many policies and programmes to engender entrepreneurship development in order to develop the nation. Among these policies and programmes as noted by Otache (2010) include; the establishment of National Directorate of Employment (NDE), Industrial Development Centres (IDCS), Centre for Management Development (CMD), Small and Medium Size Enterprises Development Agency of Nigeria (SMEDAN). There were other policies that encouraged or made it easy for entrepreneurs to acquire the needed funds like the establishment of People's Bank of Nigeria (PBN), Fund for Small

Scale Industries (FUSSI), Bank of Industry (BOI) and the establishment of Micro Finance Bank (MFB). Others were the Nigerian Investment Promotion Commission (NIPC), National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP), Skills Acquisition Programmes (SAPs), National Economic Empowerment Development Strategy (NEEDS) and many others which may not be accommodated due largely to limited space.

Importance of Entrepreneurship Development to National Development

The contributions of entrepreneurship development to national development cannot be over-emphasized. This is because no country can be regarded as being developed if there are no trained entrepreneurs. A country's economy can only be developed through the creation of entrepreneurs and the evolution of sound technical policies. National development cannot take place in the absence of sound entrepreneurship development policies which will serve as motivating factors in the march towards the realization of developmental vision. Moreover, entrepreneurship development helps to increase the number of entrepreneurs and entrepreneurial activities in the country which lead to national development.

Entrepreneurship development is a viable catalyst that reduces the problem of unemployment in Nigeria and which at the moment, is a serious challenge to the government. It creates the culture of self-employment, reduces redundancy and engages citizens in the productive activities which will help the economy of the country to grow. Entrepreneurship development has the tendency to mitigate rural-urban migration. It equally contributes to the development of the rural areas and in addition, decongests the urban centres. Entrepreneurship development further helps to facilitate and promote the use of indigenous technology, which in essence will help to transform the Nigerian economy to be one of the developed economies in the world. National development is a function of the development of individuals and corporate entities within the country. Entrepreneurship through its developmental impact on individuals plays a fundamental role in the development of nations and their economies.

Finally, it will help the country to fight poverty and social problems and thus, develop the country's industrial and social infrastructures as well as encourage investment in the development of

the abundant local resources especially, in rural areas. This is where over 70% of the citizens reside and it plays a significant role in the development process of Nigeria.

Constraints to Entrepreneurial Development in Nigeria

Generally, there is no dispute on the role of entrepreneurship development in national development. In Nigeria for instance, several factors have militated against the country's attempt to develop her economy through the process of entrepreneurship development. These factors are clearly discussed below:

Corruption

One of the endemic problems militating against the country's attempt to develop through the process of entrepreneurship development is corruption. This social malaise has eaten deep into the socio-economic fabric of Nigeria. It seems to be the very blood that pulsates in Nigeria blood.

In Nigeria, there is high level of corruption which comes in various forms. It takes the form of embezzlement of fund, bribery, nepotism, smuggling, price racketing, diversion of funds meant to implement policies and programmes into private pockets and many others. Corruption is freely practiced both at private and public levels in Nigeria. Egonmwan (1991), observes that fraudulent practices also affected policies such as entrepreneurship development, and this takes the form of payment for jobs not done, forging of receipts, payment of ghost contractors among others. Individuals connive with government agencies tasked with financing entrepreneurship development programmes to divert funds to other uses and that is why agencies like People's Bank, National Directorate of Employment and others have not done better.

Political Instability and Insensitivity

Political instability and insensitivity is another strong factor to be discussed. Consistent change of government is a hindrance to entrepreneurship development in Nigeria. This is most prevalent in the days of military rule. In this era, any change of government would definitely change her policies. The implication is that, no entrepreneurship development policy has been fully implemented. Moreover, in developing countries like Nigeria, most policies emanate from the

political system. Entrepreneurship development policies put in place by politically insensitive leadership is bound to fail or run into difficulties and the support and cooperation of citizens will hardly be attained for the successful execution of such policies.

Poor Policy Implementation

The problem of poor policy implementation shares a great impact in this direction. Poor policy implementation is a very big challenge to the development of entrepreneurship in Nigeria. Most policies and programmes in Nigeria suffer setbacks not because of the inadequacies of the policy or programmes, but due largely to poor policy implementation. Some policies which are aimed at improving entrepreneurial skills in Nigeria, suffer due to poor policy implementation, for instance, the National Economic Empowerment Development Strategy (NEEDS).

Finance

Another constraint to the entrepreneurship development in Nigeria is finance. Unexpected fall in the government revenue could frustrate a well-planned and articulated entrepreneurship development programme. The situation is severe when the country depends on only one source of revenue. In the recent time, the Buhari government suffered from this challenge which was made worst by the dwindling price of oil at the international market. Nigeria depends on this revenue and this has posed a challenge to the development of entrepreneurship in the country.

Ethno-Religious Intolerance

Ethno-religious intolerance has remained one of the greatest impediments to entrepreneurship development in Nigeria. The activities of Boko Haram in some parts of Northern Nigeria, have greatly undermined the quest to develop the country through entrepreneurship development. In addition, is the incidence of bandits, the Fulani herdsmen and kidnapers in the country. No meaningful development would take place in the areas characterized by these vices.

Moreover, the situation in the Niger Delta has made oil companies and the governments to groin in pains as oil facilities are constantly destroyed by the youths. The Eastern part of the country is also facing serious threats from Biafran agitators.

Poor Infrastructure

Infrastructural facilities in Nigeria are in a very bad state. Manufacturers in Nigeria face frequent interruption of publicly provided infrastructural facilities such as water, road, electricity, telecommunication, transportation, to mention but a few. These facilities are needed for any genuine entrepreneurship development programmes to take place. It was in the light of this that Ihonbi (2016), observes that there are no infrastructures to facilitate the attainment of development in Nigeria. Today, the country is having power challenge.

Over-dependence on Imports

Overdependence of Nigerians on imported/foreign goods is also another challenge. This is a Duche disease that has beclouded Nigerians interest on the local made goods. This attitude of Nigerians towards locally manufactured goods is not encouraging. Rather than encourage local entrepreneurs by patronizing them, they prefer to import goods and this has adversely undermined local entrepreneurs. For instance, most textile industries in Nigeria are in a serious crisis of lack of patronage. Some other local products are not patronized by Nigerians due to their preference for foreign goods. If entrepreneurs produce goods and nobody buys from them, what else do they do other than to wind up or liquidate?

CONCLUSION

The conclusions to be drawn from this study are two folds. Primo every nation, it is believed desires national development. Secondly, entrepreneurship development no doubt plays a critical role in national development. A country like Nigeria with a population of over a hundred and twenty million people (2006 Census) has no reason to remain undeveloped if entrepreneurship development policies and programs are executed successfully. Most importantly, is the fact that national development is the mission of all countries of the world and to attain this objective, there is the urgent need to start the actualization of this dream with the development of entrepreneurial spirit. The government has tried to put in place, policies that can help to transform the nation's dreams into reality. However, it is not just formulating policies alone but to ensure that such policies are positively implemented.

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