

THE ROLE OF ENTREPRENEUR IN NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract

The issues of corruption, culture of poor attitude to work, irregular electricity supply, etc., have been seen as great hindrances to the true development of entrepreneurship practices in Nigeria. For improving national development which should be the concern of all and sundry, the government has often called for cooperation on the part of all citizens. In response to this call, entrepreneur and entrepreneurship education has been identified to bring about the desired development. Thus, entrepreneur and its contribution to national development will be examined in this paper. Recommendations, such as reducing corruption to its barest minimum, streamlining the power generation system, cultivation of the right culture of hard- work and dedication to duty, etc., are made on how to foster entrepreneurship in our society.

Introduction

National development has been largely threatened in Nigeria, due to the prevalent vices that are common-place in our body polity, especially our nascent democratic dispensation. This is due to the unemployment rate which has been rising in recent times unabated, and this is being blamed on uncontrollable birth-rates, rising demand for education, and the creation of jobs not matching high level manpower production. In this regard and in trying to explain why achievement of full employment has been elusive, Salim (2003), said that high rate of graduate unemployment is due to lack of collaboration between employers of labour and manpower producers.

In an attempt to reduce joblessness, government in many of her programmes, packaged and tried the implementations of programmes like National Directorate of Employment (NDE), Better Life for Rural Dwellers, etc., but all failed to achieve the desired objectives because of uncoordinated implementation (Osagie, 2000). Recently, vocational education is seen as the way forward. Entrepreneurship has been identified as the goal of education. Consequently, entrepreneur, issues involved and their relevance to national development is the focus of this paper. Thus, concepts like "development" and "entrepreneur" shall be defined and explained for easy appraisal of this paper.

The Prevalent Issues in the Nigerian Socio-Economic

System (a) *The Issue of Prevailing Forms of Corruption*

Nigeria's long-standing socio-economic backwardness and under-development are attributable to the forms of corruption that were enunciated by Mahatma Gandhi of India, and which have been blown open by Utomi (2001:1) and Akpochiafo (2002:39), respectively, as follows:

1. Commerce without morality.
2. Knowledge without character.
3. Pleasure without conscience.
4. Politics without principles.
5. Religion without sacrifice.
6. Science without humanity, and
7. Wealth without work.

The above forms of corruption have continued to plague the Nigerian economic, political, social, financial, religious and spiritual value systems and may continue to do so for a long time to come if definite steps are not taken by every person living in the country to stop them. There is nothing like miracles, or some foreign people that would stop them for Nigerians. The only remedy is for every Nigerian to take the bull by the horns in truth and honest attempts to stop them.

In this regard, real entrepreneurship development will continue to elude Nigeria as a nation if the above forms of corruption are not checked by Nigerians themselves. As a flash back, many Nigerians have a great desire to achieve physical wealth without work, e.g., building houses, riding

expensive cars, embarking on uncontrolled traveling abroad, consumption of foreign goods in preference to home-made ones, etc. This is the reason why they indulge in advance fee fraud (419), money laundry, ritual killings, armed robbery, pen robbery (inflation of contract sums), etc. Many Nigerians also engage in

commercial or trade entrepreneurship without morality; hence, we have cases of trading in expired drugs, contraband goods, adulterated products (e.g. killer kerosene), expired food products, etc.

Many Nigerians also engage in pleasure without conscience, hence, they rape kids especially girls who hawk goods, and also engage hired killers or assassins to gun down citizens indiscriminately over minor issues that ought to have been settled in law courts or out of them. Some Nigerians also practice religion without sacrifice, and this is the reason why there are so many cases of religious clashes, hence, there are so many intolerant or separatist practices which see believers in other religious faiths as inferior, and not knowing that all religions originate from the same source. This is the reason why tolerance, forgiveness of each other's sins, the practice of right human relationships, etc., become new values to live by for good righteousness, goodness, beauty, freedom, inclusiveness, joy, etc., which are the main characteristics of the founders of religions over the ages.

(b) *The Issue of Good Electricity Supply to Support Entrepreneurship Practices*

The Nigerian economy is bedeviled with insufficient electricity supply to man the operations of small-scale business entrepreneurial efforts and industrialization. In fact, Aina (2005:9), opined that this singular factor is drawing back Nigeria's wheel of developmental progress since independence. This is the reason why small-scale businesses have not thrived as expected in the country when compared to what is obtainable in advanced countries like: USA, Britain, Germany, Japan, Italy, France, Canada, Russia, to mention a few of them, where electricity supply is "as constant as the Northern star."

In the Nigerian economy, artisans, electricians, technicians, saloon workers, iron workers, poultry owners, and other small-scale entrepreneurs, hardly use regular and good quality electricity supply, as many of them have purchased private generators to supplement their power needs, thereby, increasing the unit cost of production.

(c) *The Issue of Culture of Hard-work and Dedication to Duty*

In Nigeria, the culture of hard-work and dedication to duty is fast disappearing in every entrepreneurial effort in our national life. This aspect eventually produces incompetence work schedules. Adedoyin (2001), opined that the above factors have become a major hindrance to true development of entrepreneurship, vocational and technical education in Nigeria. He pointed out that "poor attitude to work" does not encourage entrepreneurial and industrial development. This is the reason why selection method into sensitive positions in entrepreneurial, vocational and technical endeavours in the country is very poor as practical interviews have been sidelined while outright employment to such sensitive areas have been either through the "back door" or through "kangaroo interview" to favour the candidates of the politicians or the people in management positions.

The Concept of Development

It is man's desire to improve on his status quo. And that is, to develop our economy, politics, social, technology and so on. Hence, at the individual level, Rodney (2000), observed that a society develops economically as its members increase jointly including their capacity to deal with and evolve creatively in the environment. This capacity for dealing with the environment is dependent on the extent to which they understand the laws of nature (science), and the extent to which they put that understanding into practice by devising tools (technology) and on the manner in which work is organized.

Thus, in explaining national development, the guidelines to our Fourth National Development Plan (1970-1975), said that "true development must mean the development of man - the unfolding and realization of his creative potential, enabling him to improve his material conditions of living through the use of resources available to him. It is a process by which man's personality is enhanced; and it is that enhanced personality, that is, creative, organized and disciplined, which is the moving force behind the socio-economic transformation of any society.

From the aforesaid, in understanding development, issues like organization, a good resource base, technology and creativity, and a disciplined body polity, and their relevance in this context should be understood.

Organization

Organization here means the effective coordination of a people to achieve the desired goals. Effective planning is a requirement of organization. This involves making right policy decisions, selecting the right and appropriate strategies and programme packages, setting the right targets, preferably, in some quantifiable terms; mobilizing, organizing and allocating resources, laying particular emphasis on the prime resources of man; by setting completion time frames; ensuring effective and efficient performance including monitoring and evaluation systems.

A Good Resource Base

A good resource base includes human, material, rational, mineral, financial, etc., which are available to a country. It also involves the systematic and maximum development of each resource and its exploitation. The human resource is the most important as it is the most active agent in the development process. Education, which aims to develop the skills and productive talents of a people and which orientates people towards innovation, creativity and work, remains the single most important instrument for developing and maximizing the human resource. Land and labour power are other resources that need to be maximized (Koingan, 1987).

Technology

Technology is the knowledge, skills and procedures for making, using and doing useful things as well as their embodiment in machines, equipment, tools, etc. Before our contact with Western civilization, we had more knowledge, skills and some procedures for making, using and doing useful things for ourselves.

A Disciplined Body Polity

A disciplined body polity reinforces social justice, and both enhance rapid growth and development. Nigerian body polity cannot be said to be disciplined as various forms of corruption, assassinations, armed robbery, drug pushing, child trafficking/slavery, smuggling, etc., mar it. Thus, real growth and development occur when a people, through the imaginative use of their creative talents and labour power, are able to transform, transmute and transfigure their human, natural, mineral, and other resources into goods and services which they need to progressively improve the quality of their lives and their standard of living. To do these, the people must improve their entrepreneurial and managerial skills.

Entrepreneur and Entrepreneurial Skills

Schumpeter (1939), Steinhoff and Burgess (1993), Nelson and Leach (1981), as quoted by Anyakoya (1995), see entrepreneur as a capitalist individual who recognize money-making opportunities, gather resources, assume risks through the initiation of actions, organizes and manages these resources to exploit the opportunities so identified.

From the aforesaid, it means that an entrepreneur has some skills. These skills are what Nelson and Leach (1981), called "occupational survival skills" which relate to problem-solving human relations, decision-making, effective communication, etc. Hodgett (1992) sees technical competence, mental ability, human relations skills, high achievement drive and creativity as the skills possessed by the entrepreneur. These skills are necessary ingredients for economy and national development.

Entrepreneurship Education and Vocational/Technical Education

The objective of vocational and technical education is to graduate individuals, who, in the absence of paid employment, can be self-employed, self-reliant and self-sufficient. Consequently, vocational and technical education, like entrepreneurship education, aims to equip the various groups of people who need the entrepreneurship education to be self-reliant.

Recommendations

Entrepreneurial skills are the skills needed to bring about technical, economic and national development generally. To this extent, the government is being called upon to:

- (a) Encourage entrepreneurship awareness and education in our tertiary institutions.
- (b) Supply enough facilities and equipment to students for effective entrepreneurial education.
- (c) Mount a campaign on entrepreneurial education as an effective solution to reducing job-seeking in our society,
- (d) Create an enabling environment for entrepreneurial effective take-off.
- (e) All forms of corruption should be reduced in Nigeria's national life. This entails a change of mind from the craze for material wealth to the detriment of spiritual achievement which is centred on selflessness. This means doing those things that would benefit the populace in favour of what each person stand to gain individually at the expense of a large proportion of the people.
- (f) Nigerian government should revamp the energy system in order to generate good supply of electricity to man both small-scale businesses and industries.

Conclusion

The issue of national development is nurtured on patriotism, faith and hope of brighter future. The entrepreneur possesses these features. Ray (1988), identified twelve significant contributions of an entrepreneur to the economic development of a nation. These are that the entrepreneur:

- (i) raises productivity through technical and other forms of innovation;
- (ii) is a powerful tool of job creation;
- (iii) facilitates the transfer of technology;
- (Jv) plays a strategic role in commercializing new inventions and products;
- (v) plays a critical role in the restructuring and transformation of economies;
- (vi) makes markets more competitive and thereby, reduce both static and dynamic market inefficiencies;
- (vii) helps to improve social welfare of a country by harnessing dormant, previously overlooked talent; and
- (viii) creates new markets and facilities expansions into international markets.

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