

# ADOPTING AGRIPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION FOR NIGERIA'S QUEST FOR FOOD SECURITY IN VISION 20:2020

By

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## **Abstract**

*The paper aims to advocate the adoption of agripreneurship education as a special form of entrepreneurship education for the enhancement of the potential of agriculture sector to ensure food security. It argued that food security is necessary for supporting the dream vision of Nigeria to be among the league of 20 largest world economies by 2020. Accordingly, agripreneurship education should be compulsory from basic level to tertiary level of our educational system. In order to support this, agripreneurship mentoring for young graduates must be carried out by successful agribusinesses and a tax regime put in place for agripreneurship education. Further, the paper showed how such model could translate into increased economic opportunities and food security for the household and the nation. Finally, a policy to support access to international markets for agricultural commodities, endowment for research in agripreneurship, national merit award to successful agripreneurs and increased support to the study of agricultural based courses were recommendations.*

Entrepreneurship education has become increasingly taught in our colleges, polytechnics and universities. This emphasis is because of the envisaged role of entrepreneurs in creating jobs and wealth and infact promoting economic growth. While the explosion of interest in entrepreneurship education is relatively recent, the concept of entrepreneurship has long been linked to Schumpeter's theory of economic development (1934); Knight's (1921) explanation of profit and firm; Kizner's (1979) account of the market process and Schultz (1979, 1982) theory of technological adoption and diffusion. Entrepreneurship is generally defined from many strands that incorporate insights from economics, psychology and sociology. We can condense these aspects to define entrepreneurship as a process that can lead to creative solutions to social problems or the formation of new and innovative enterprises (University of Illinois Academy of Entrepreneurial Leadership 2013). Accordingly, three aspects – opportunity recognition, resource acquisition and innovation become identifiable from the definition.

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Entrepreneurship is an innovative process of vision, change and creation. It requires an application of energy and passion towards the creation and implementation of new ideas and creative solutions. Essential ingredients include willingness to take calculated risk in terms of time, equity, or career, the ability to formulate an effective venture team; the creative skills to marshal needed resources; and fundamental skill of building solid business plan and finally the vision to recognize opportunity where others see chaos, contradiction and confusion (Kuratko and Hodgetts 2004).

The potential of Nigerian's agriculture and its dwindling fortune places urgent need to develop arrangements that can support agricultural development that is presently constrained by inappropriate technologies, institutional weaknesses, and problems of organization and management of research, education and extension systems. For our agriculture to remain competitive in the global economy there needs to be injection of new ideas and creative processes for value creation in a sustainable manner.

Agripreneurship as a concept specific to agriculture and drawn from wider entrepreneurship is very critical and urgent. The peculiarities of the country's agriculture sector provide further compulsion to the dire need for agripreneurship. Agriculture is the mainstay of Nigerian economy because it supports high share of employment and livelihood creation. Agriculture employs about two third of Nigeria's labour force and contributing about 42% to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP). It is also an important source of raw materials. However, growth in the sector has not met the needs and expectation of Nigeria (National Planning Commission 2009). Agripreneurship is necessary for the socio-economic upliftment of the greater population through creation of new agribusinesses, agricultural commodities value chains and overall economic growth.

Sudharani (n.d) defined agripreneurship as generally sustainable, community oriented, directly marketed agriculture. Sustainable agriculture denotes a holistic, systems oriented approach to farming that focuses on the interrelationships of social, economic and environmental process. The need for agripreneurship stems from:

- i. increasing demand of organic and quality food.
- ii. competitive advantages for many primary production activities in agriculture. e.g. rainfed farming, livestock and wild craft production through low cost production technologies only
- iii. private sector willingness to enter into agribusinesses at all levels of operation.
- iv. need to reduce malnutrition in women and children
- v. need to ensure household and national food security

The aspects of agriculture that could be opened up for entrepreneurship include both the on-farm activities and off-farm ventures. The on-farm activities may involve production, processing, farm input manufacturing, and agro service ventures. Off-farm agripreneurship ventures may include activity such as agric-tourism entrepreneurship.

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An agripreneurship education program is necessary to increase the amount of entrepreneurship being taught in local agriculture programmes across the country. This way, students will be prepared to become entrepreneurs and then begin to pursue agribusiness as viable career choice.

In order to situate aptly the import of agripreneurship education in the quest for food security in the vision 20-2020, this paper would be organized into: review of food security situation in Nigeria; Overview of vision 20-2020 agenda; benefits of adopting agripreneurship education model; strategies for implementing the model. Finally, relevant conclusion and recommendations will be drawn from the exposition.

### **Food Security Situation in Nigeria**

Food security has been defined as access by all people, at all times to sufficient food for an active and healthy life and includes at a minimum the ready availability of nutritionally adequate and safe foods, and an assured ability to acquire acceptable foods in socially acceptable ways (Food and Agriculture Organization FAO 1997, Sarah 2003).

Food access has three components: (1) physical access to food (2) economic access to food and (3) sustainable access to food. Availability of food, stability of food supplies and access are the 3 essential determinants of food security. Physical access implies food availability or food supply to the household, as there might be food available at the national level yet may not trickle down to the household level. In Nigeria, many factors can affect food security. Lack of food security referred to as food insecurity, hunger, and poverty are closely linked. However, due to lack of storage facilities and processing techniques that would aid value addition to the primary agricultural commodity and also preserve its shelf life, producers end up selling excess farm produce during harvest. This scenario creates condition of food insecurity for most rural farm producers and households. In this manner, agricultural commodities value chain processes become a needful intervention of the agricultural sector.

Food security is currently both a fundamental objective and an expected outcome of development policies in Nigeria, since the country currently faces a challenge in meeting the basic food needs of its population. The majority of Nigerians depend largely on subsistence agriculture which is hardly sufficient to meet the food needs of our population. However, notwithstanding many policies, programs and investments of governments, local and international donor agencies operating in the country, food security and the nutrition situation are worsening (Famine Early Warning System Network FEWSNET, 2007). Inconsistent food security has resulted into inadequate dietary intake, which leads to malnutrition. Malnutrition is the most serious consequence of food insecurity. Adult malnutrition results in a lower productivity on farms and in the labour market. In women, it also results in fetal malnutrition and low birth weights. Fetal and infant undernutrition lead to lower cognitive development and poor schooling performance. In fact, the food security situation in Nigeria has been

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gory and requires urgent organizational and institutional arrangements that would alleviate its current status.

### **Nigeria Vision 20:2020**

Vision 20:2020 is Nigeria's long term developmental goal designed to make Nigeria one of the most 20 developed economies in the world by the year 2020. It is an 11 year long term economic transformation agenda (2009-2020) geared at moving Nigeria to the league of top 20 economies of the world by the year 2020 with GDP of \$900 billion and per capita income of \$4000. The vision is just 7 years away and we are just 1 year from the second tranche of its implementation plans scheduled to run from 2014 – 2017. The 2 broad objectives are to make efficient use of human and natural resources to achieve rapid economic growth and translate the economic growth into equitable social development for all citizens (National Planning Commission, NPC, 2009).

This development aspiration essentially cut across social, economic, institutional and environmental aspirations. Abdullahi (2008) traced the history of the vision to a research conducted by economists at an American investment Bank, in which it was predicted that Nigeria would be in the league of 20 top economies by year 2025. This was based on assessment of its abundant human and material resources and the assumption that the country's resources would be properly managed and channeled to set economic goals.

In order to achieve the goals of vision 20:2020; knowledge; innovation and new ideas must propel the dire need of economic growth. Such economic opportunities would be harnessed through creative decision making, educational re-focusing and management of research and development. In this direction therefore, entrepreneurship in agriculture becomes critically essential.

### **Benefits of Agripreneurship Education in the Context of Ensuring Food Security**

Teaching of innovative problem-solving and creative thinking for agricultural opportunities recognition and development through a systematic educational process could result into the advantages that have implications for Food security at household, sectoral and national levels. These benefits include:

1. Increased identification of existing opportunities and creation of new ones in agriculture leading to development of novel agribusiness concepts with process systems that lead to improved efficiencies and lower costs for agricultural food commodities.
2. Agripreneurship results into value creation for agricultural commodities that offer opportunities for wider access of providing socially and culturally acceptable agricultural commodities to consumers.
3. Agripreneurship will widen the job creation space, providing income to people thereby economically empowering them to have access to sufficient food.

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4. A pool of entrepreneurship – minded producers will become conscious to the effects of their business activities on their environments (social responsibility).
5. Agripreneurship fosters the aspiration of youth empowerment in various dimensions.
6. Enhanced agripreneurship activity could result to improvement of rural infrastructure which may in turn encourage the growth and development of non-agricultural business activities of the rural economy.

### **Strategies for Implementation of Agripreneurship Education Programme**

The agripreneurship education model envisaged would focus on teaching the mechanics of running agribusinesses and identifying opportunities for creating new sources of value in agricultural system. These opportunities identification and analysis will focus learners on increasing capacities to launch of new ventures. Agripreneurship education other than dwelling only on economic profit must also encompass the broader notions of value. The model for operating the advanced agripreneurship education programme will centre on the following conceptions:

- i. Compulsory agripreneurship education at all levels from basic to tertiary levels of education. This thinking recognizes the present entrepreneurship education programme in our tertiary level, but since access to food is fundamental right and need of citizens, any approaches that will bring the achievement of this goal should be encouraged. Hence, agripreneurship education as a way to make citizens start thinking critically of ideas in agricultural businesses that could be turned into entrepreneurial opportunities to help bring food on the table.
- ii. Agripreneurship mentoring for young graduates of our institutions should be instituted and for at least three months post graduation. Under this arrangement, graduates of higher institution will be compelled to go for an agripreneurship mentoring under a successfully established agribusiness entrepreneur. This would be considered compulsory for every prospective graduate.
- iii. Fallout from the above will be the need to sustainably fund the programme. To this extent, a given percentage of the education tax in the current regime should be devoted to sustenance of the agripreneurship mentoring programme for young graduates.
- iv. Such programme would be implemented directly under a duo-partite relationship of the school and agribusiness.

However, for simplicity the model so envisaged is illustrated in Figure 1

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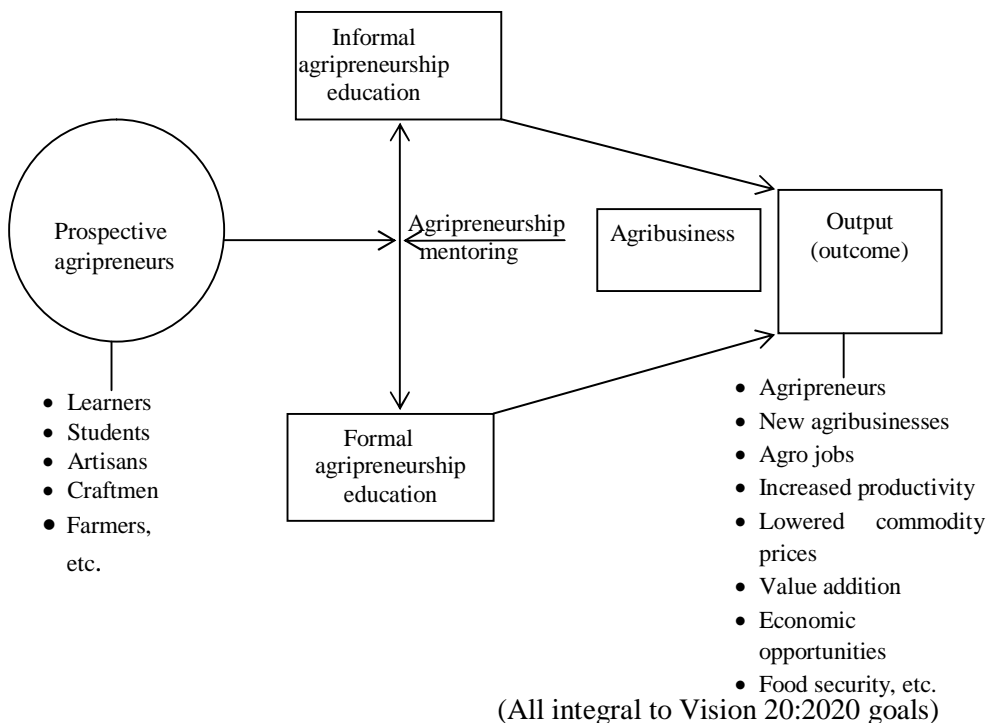


Figure 1: Agripreneurship education model for Food Security in Vision 20:2020 of Nigeria

The entrants into the agripreneurship education will include learners from the post basic, students of secondary and tertiary education, artisans, craftsmen, farmers etc. who may acquire the education from either the informal setting or the formal setting. Again, the agribusiness clusters include established agribusinesses that have sustained entrepreneurial successes overtime and will serve as the students’ agripreneurship mentoring centres prior to graduation. In this model, such mentoring can be offered to trainees at the formal and informal settings before graduation and certification. The output generated from the agripreneurship education programme results into production of agripreneurs, new agribusinesses, jobs, increased productivity at farm level, lowered prices of commodities, value addition, economic opportunities etc. These resultant outcomes translate into economic growth and food security which are integral thrust of achieving the Vision 20:2020 in the country.

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## **Conclusion and Recommendations**

The model as envisaged for agriprenurship education for food security recognizes the need for necessary infrastructure for teaching and learning in an educational process. It does not propose any shift away from the present educational resources (curriculum, personnel etc) for learning at the affected levels; but what is advocated here is an additional step-up onto what is presently obtainable. In any case, it is believed that the urgent integration of this model will provide quick attainment of food security in our country. Moreso, helping bring the country to a greater economic prosperity and hence the attainment of vision 20:2020. The recommendations advanced in this paper include:

1. Policy that would support targeting agricultural export market will be needful to sustain any resultant increases in commodity levels occasioned by agriprenurship activities.
2. Part of the agriprenurship tax as proposed should be used for training and research support for agriprenurship studies.
3. Successful agriprenurs operating small scale agribusiness should be recognized by government through instituting special merit awards for them in the current national awards which have largely been dominated by politicians who had barely contributed very little to the economy.
4. To further support the entrepreneurial effort on agriculture, students should also be encouraged to take up vocational skills in agriculture.

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