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ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND MSME DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

The paper explores entrepreneurship and MSME Development as a veritable platform for the transformation of the Nigerian economy. The small enterprises are viewed as the oil required for lubricating the wheel of socio-economic re-engineering of the economy.

It x-rays the challenges and prospects of small enterprises in Nigeria. It highlighted the challenges of MSMEs development in Nigeria as access to affordable finance, access to market, access to modern technology, poor infrastructure, inadequate capacity, multiple taxation/levies and poor government patronage.

Entrepreneurship education and development are required for the sustainability and efficiency of micro, small and medium development in Nigeria. The Small and Medium Enterprises Agency of Nigeria (SMEDAN) is conceived as the midwife to nurture the small enterprises to growth and development through capacity building, access to market, equipment and finance, etc. The paper concluded that the MSMEs with appropriate entrepreneurship and managerial skills are strategically positioned to combat unemployment, create wealth, reduce the prevalence of poverty and sustain economic growth and development.

It can absorb up to 85% of jobs, improve per capita income, increase value addition to raw materials supply, improve export earnings and step up capacity utilization in key industries. It is also capable of diversifying the economy from a mono-based one (overly dependent on oil) to being broad-based and stable.

The paper recommended that adequate and adaptive entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurship development should be well rooted in the mindsets of the youths to bring about knowledge entrepreneurs that are required in today's global, digital, dynamic and information-driven market. This will in turn usher in vibrant MSMEs in Nigeria.

Keywords

Entrepreneurship, MSME, Education, SMEDAN, Development

Introduction

In a developing economy like Nigeria, Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises play tremendous role in economic and social development of the country. These enterprises largely represent a stage in industrial transition from traditional to modern technology. The variation in transitional nature of this process is reflected in the diversity of these enterprises.

Most of the small enterprises use simple skills and machinery as well as local raw materials and technology. Besides playing economic role for the country, Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises because of its unique economic and organizational characteristics also play social and political role in local employment creation, balanced resources utilization, income generation, utilization of local technology and raw materials and in helping to promote change in a gradual and peaceful manner.

The socio-economic factors affecting MICRO, SMALL AND MEDIUM Enterprises came into being during the industrial revolution with nations of entrepreneurial importance gaining favour by the mid-twentieth century. Towards the last quarter of the twentieth century, however, the behaviour of the individuals came to be highlighted as a major factor contributing to micro and small business entrepreneurship and therefore the supply of entrepreneurs came to be recognized as critical to socio-economic transformation.

There is growing realization on the part of the Government that instead of the promotion of large-scale enterprises, it should inceptively promote micro, small, and medium enterprises. Until recently, the micro, small and medium enterprises were virtually neglected in the Nigerian Development Plans.

The economic reforms being carried out by the present administration has however placed greater emphasis on micro, small and medium business enterprises development through entrepreneurship development. The Government is striving on the creation of an enabling and friendly environment in which entrepreneurship, small enterprises would flourish, and entrepreneurial instincts are aroused so that the entrepreneurs may get maximum output and rewards from their efforts.

Radical liberalization has been introduced to make the Nigerian economy progressively market-oriented and integrated with the emerging global economic structure in a sustainable way.

Overview of MSME in Nigeria

The introduction of the National Policy on MSMEs has addressed the issue of definition as to what constitutes micro, small and medium enterprises. The definition adopts a classification based on dual criteria, employment and assets (excluding land and buildings) as shown below.

S/N	Size Category	Employment	Assets (=N= Million) (excl. land and buildings)
1	Micro enterprises	Less than 10	Less than 10
2	Small enterprises	10 to 49	10 to less than 100
3	Medium enterprises	50 to 199	100 to less than 1 Billion

Source: National Policy on MSMEs

If there exists a conflict on classification between employment and assets criteria (for example, if an enterprise has assets worth three hundred million naira, but employs 8 persons), the employment-based classification will take precedence and the enterprise would be regarded as micro.

The total number of Micro, small and medium enterprises in Nigeria as at 2013 stood at 37.07 million (categorized into micro-36,994,578; Small-68,168 and Medium-4670) accounting for over 90% of the total business enterprises in Nigeria and have been noted to provide about 84.02% of employment, 48.47% to Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and 7.27% to export (SMEDAN/NBS, 2013).

General Constraints to MSME Development

MSMEs are necessary for the economic development and growth in Nigeria, certain peculiar constraints continued to militate against their optimal performance. Some of these constraints are internal while some are external. Among the internal ones are:

- Poor entrepreneurial capacity of operators in successfully running MSMEs.
- Aversion to joint ownership is a major setback in achieving the desired relevance of MSME operations.

- Family ties/interferences are major constraints in running personnel recruitment/placements, discipline, etc.
- Weak financial management.
- Non-recruitment of qualitative staff as a result of keeping running cost low usually affects the quality of output from such organizations.
- Poor record keeping especially accounting books makes evaluation either by the business owner or potential investors difficult.
- Lack of standardization of products has the capacity of reducing market share with negative impact on funding.
- Low capacity to invest in R&D have not allowed for new, cheaper and better methods of production.
- Low use of ICT in operations has a direct effect on cost of production thereby making MSMEs unattractive.

Among the external constraints are:

- Poor state of infrastructure: MSMEs need steady power supply, water, roads, markets, etc for effectiveness.
- Poor access to appropriate and affordable workspace.
- Inability to access affordable finance: Access to finance is a major constraint hindering MSMEs' growth. Most financial institutions tend to address the financial needs of large enterprises leaving MSMEs unattended to.
- Low synergy between various tiers of government: The absence of synergy between the different tiers of government has not allowed the growth and development of the MSMEs' sub-sector.
- Multiplicity of taxes: In an attempt to generate funds for their different levels of administration, governments at various levels have imposed all kinds of taxes/levies on MSMEs thereby hampering their survival.
- Inappropriate technology: The financial status of most MSMEs does not allow them to access appropriate technology.
- Dearth of business information/data bank: Most MSMEs operate with little or no business information or data. This does not allow them to make informed decisions necessary for optimal performance.
- Poor inter/intra sectoral linkages: The absence of linkages/cooperation between MSME operators and the large enterprises is a major problem affecting the growth of the sub-sector.

Entrepreneurship Development

Entrepreneurship is a driver of economic, social, and cultural development around the world. In Nigeria over half of the economy is driven by micro, small and medium enterprises and entrepreneurs create 80% of all new jobs. Entrepreneurship is the path towards poverty reduction and financial independence. It is about consistent pursuit of opportunity to create wealth through innovative approach that meets the needs of consumers using scarce resources in a way that results in enterprise growth. Entrepreneurship is a practice, a career, and a discipline, it is not an event. Like every career, it has a process. This process must be instilled into the people through entrepreneurship promotion, development, and youths and women empowerment to make them entrepreneurs.

The promotion and development of micro, small, and medium enterprises should be perceived in a wider perspective involving the Government, Entrepreneurs, and Financial institutions. Development cannot take place without the linkage and active cooperation and collaboration of these “three wise men” in entrepreneurship development. Very often, it is seen that government stops only at the policy formulation and implementation levels and the financial institutions assume the responsibilities of mobilizing and canalizing financial assistance and support, but the entrepreneur- the Change Agent is left to look after himself/herself once the project is cleared. However, recent experience from developing countries favours the hypothesis that entrepreneurship cannot be developed without deliberate and well-articulated plan of action. There has also been wide recognition that the entrepreneurial development is essential not only to solve the problem of economic development but also to solve the problem of unemployment, unbalanced area development, concentration of economic power and diversion of profits from traditional avenues of investment.

One can notice some attempts by the Government developmental agencies and other institutions to undertake the task of entrepreneurial promotion. Most of the promotional activities are directed around the financial and physical facilities with strong belief that there will be automatic flow of entrepreneurs, if such facilities are created in those areas. Nevertheless, the reality does not bear this out. Such experiences support the view that financial and physical facilities are not the only crucial inputs in the development of entrepreneurship. There

are other inputs, which has to be considered in developing any model for entrepreneurial development. One has to remember here that entrepreneurship is defined by attributes, which are associated with the personality of an entrepreneur, and entrepreneurial functions are defined in terms of activities, technology, investment decision, designing market strategies. Developing entrepreneurship is a crucial process and hence in doing so, we are confronted with several problems. They are of individual, group and on institutional nature. All these problems are stupendous and multi-pronged approach is required to find solutions to these problems. Therefore, the entrepreneur in Nigeria may not be an “innovator” but an “imitator” who would imbibe for his/her enterprise the organization, technology, and products of the innovators in other developed regions or districts in Nigeria. As far as policy support from the Government is concerned, it has tended to be rather non-conducive and unfavorable to the development of micro, small and medium entrepreneurship. However, the development of micro, small, and medium business entrepreneurship in the Northern Region like any other part of the country has only been quantitative and not qualitative which is more important aspect of the entrepreneurship development.

Qualitative aspect of entrepreneurship concerns with the effective performance of the entrepreneurs in varied economic and managerial fields. Most of the micro and small business enterprises are characterized by low productivity, uneven or poor quality of production, poor financial management, and inadequate marketing expertise. The main reason of the poor performance of the micro, and small business entrepreneurs are mainly due to lack of managerial competence and experience.

The entrepreneurs in the Schumpeterian model are “innovators” who depend on necessary social and economic overheads. These economic and social overheads are very poor in backward regions, which cause the short supply of entrepreneurs. In this connection, we can refer to David McClelland, who explained the development of entrepreneurship in terms of human motivation to achieve or need for achievement. McClelland hypothesis is that society with a generally high level of achievement will produce energetic entrepreneurs, who in turn produce more rapid economic development. Micro, Small, and medium Business Entrepreneurship has been the harbinger of change in the socio-economic development of Nigerian economy. It has contributed significantly to the total production, exports, and employment in the economy,

keeping in view its strategic importance in the socio-economic transformation of the people, which in turn satisfy the inspiration and aspiration of the people.

The policy makers and scholars in micro and small business enterprises usually assume that home-based enterprises and small business entrepreneurs are distinct categories, which require dissimilar types of interventions (Cinar, 1994; Dagg, 1995; Dangler, 1989; Allal & Chuta, 1982). The small business entrepreneurship continues to use the traditional Nigerian knowledge and techniques to produce their wares. As micro, small, and medium business entrepreneurs, they constantly adapt their products to demands from neighbors, tourists, and marketing groups. In many developing countries, craft workers are being organized by governments as well as by national and international non-governmental organizations into marketing cooperatives that provide assistance for improved products. Similarly, merchants also recruit active craft producers or train new ones to adopt traditional designs and colours for western tastes and organize this production as a subcontracting system (Littlefield & Reynolds, 1990; Berik, 1987; Perera, 1987; Allal & Chuta, 1982; Nash, 1983).

The secret of Japan's economic ascendancy and the recent wonders of our time as seen in the sudden emergence of China and India as radical forces in terms of industrialization can be unlocked by understanding the tremendous role of entrepreneurship and micro, small and medium enterprises development in these countries. Other emerging countries in the South East Asia are making innovative and remarkable achievements through the many micro, small and medium enterprises that spring up around these centres of innovations and inventions. It is therefore not surprising that micro and small-scale businesses have been identified as the most creative sector of these emerging economies. Micro and Small enterprises by the flexible nature of their operations provide more jobs than the large enterprises. MITI says that small businesses provide 70% of jobs in Japan in 2014. In addition, as the giant enterprises continue to reduce their workforce, small businesses continue to increase their labour force.

The enterprises in these emerging economies started out small, with support and inspiration of the ministry of industry (MTI), they fashioned products and services that provided solutions to problems and today through phenomenal growth have become global giants. These achievements facilitated possible by the inspiration and dynamic leadership exhibited by the ministry of trade and

industry and the small enterprises development agencies in these countries. They promoted and encouraged entrepreneurship and small business development with the core value that the promotion of production was the best way to challenge the economy's problems. They supported huge tax cuts and coordinating of efforts to industries sector with the primary aim of creating scale economies in which their entrepreneurs would be least cost producers. The growth and development of micro and small business enterprises offer an easy and effective means of achieving broad-based ownership of industry, the diffusion of enterprise and initiative in the industrial field and easy induction of new entrants from low and middle levels of society to take up industrial ventures and provides an extensive training and practicing base for entrepreneurial talents in various directions. In this sense, micro, small, and medium enterprises prove to be the seedbeds of entrepreneurship.

Entrepreneurship Education

The acquisition of knowledge which is a product of education is the most potent instrument for developing and empowering individuals, not only in achieving their potentials, but in particular to master their social and material environments, as well as compete for survival in the global economy. Education is therefore, central to one's ability to respond to the opportunities that development presents. Entrepreneurship Education is the foundation for developing the flexible skills needed to participate in knowledge intensive economic activity.

The significance of entrepreneurship in the economic transformation of any nation, particularly in a developing economic like ours, is aptly captured thus: "Entrepreneurship constitutes the ultimate basis for the wealth of nations; capital, land, and labour are passive factors of production; entrepreneurship is the active agent who accumulates capital, exploits natural resources, builds social, economic and political institutions, and moves forward national development. Clearly, a country which is unable to develop the skills and knowledge of its people, and utilize them effectively in the national economy, will be unable to develop anything else" (Daisi, 1999).

Education forms the bedrock of any meaningful development. Without adequate and functional education, the entrepreneur will be likened to a farmer without his/her farming tools. Education, as it is, forms the central point in

the management of scarce resources. Tomorrow's entrepreneurs need to be well educated in order to appreciate the challenges before them and take rational decisions that will help achieve stated objectives.

Qualitative and adaptive education should be the major concern of Government in the present reforms to make the students fit into the dynamic global challenges. Moreover, such education should be guided taking into custody science and technology.

Technology in this sense is the art of converting the natural resources into goods and services more beneficial to the society in general and consumers in particular. Thus, technological innovation brings about extreme social change and changing pattern of society in return creates congenial infrastructure for the rapid development and advancement of entrepreneurship in the country (Batra, 2003). A flexible educational system that will emphasis all vital areas of business management, economics, politics, marketing, accounting, psychology, etc, this is necessary because such knowledge will equip the would-be entrepreneurs with the dynamics of the management of human and material resources.

Entrepreneurship Education should focus on the following four critical principles as noted by (Perumal, 2003):

- I. To prepare individuals for assuming their roles as responsible citizens.
- II. To develop in them scientific outlook, awareness of the process of development.
- III. To sensitize them to ethical, social and cultural values which go to make an enlighten entrepreneur.
- IV. To impart to the local people training, knowledge, skills and attitudes that would enable them to be successful and potential entrepreneurs.
- V.

Consequently (Drucker, 1978) emphasized the importance of entrepreneurship education. He regards the emergence of knowledge as the new capital, as the central resources of an economy, and of the men of knowledge, that is the managers of institutions, as become central capital, the cost centre, the primary industry, the central factor of production, and the crucial resource of the economy of developed countries of the world. In these countries, knowledge industries, produce and distribute ideas and information rather than goods and services.

Today, knowledge is the foundation and measurement of economic potential and economic power. It has become a necessity that since we are living in an age of information technology, the place of computer education need not be overstressed. If our future entrepreneurs are to be abreast of modern business management, they must be integrated into the information superhighway as active participants and not as spectators.

The Universities, as training ground, should be committed to the promotion of the mental productivity of the man/woman. The educational curriculum should be designed to convert every student to an entrepreneur, by becoming intelligently conscious of his or her environment and knowing how to maximize their existence and potentials. To produce men and women who will change their generations through unparalleled ingenuity, creativity, and purposeful living.

The Nigerian tertiary institutions with flexible and adaptive educational system deep rooted on Entrepreneurship should be capable of producing students that are mentally resourceful, intellectually reinforced, enterprisingly self- dependent, futuristically visionary and responsibility- sensitive to the changes demanded for the leadership role of the entrepreneur. In accordance with the paradigm shift, the man will be developed to the needed depart from dogmatism to dynamism, knowledge to empowerment, and from form to skill.

The Importance of Entrepreneurship Education

The Nigerian economy should be private sector driven. In addition, these Drivers should be the Entrepreneurs. It therefore become imperative that these drivers should be well schooled in the business of entrepreneurship and the entrepreneurship of business to enable them face and meet the challenges of business ownership and management.

One of the most important factors in any economic development of a country is entrepreneurship. Entrepreneurship is the lifeblood of any economy and it applies more to a developing economy like Nigeria.

Consequently, the importance of Entrepreneurship Education in Nigeria need not be over stressed. Entrepreneurship accelerates economic development

through the establishment of micro and small enterprises in the development of the following areas:

- I. Taking to higher rate of economic growth and development by the creation of value.
- II. Speed up the process of industrial use of the factors of production.
- III. Creation of employment opportunities.
- IV. Dispersal of economic activities to different sectors of the economy and identifying new avenues of growth.
- V. Better social changes.
- VI. Improvement of the standard of living of the people.
- VII. Bring socio- political change in the society.
- VIII. Develop technology know – how.
- IX. Improve the culture and ethics of business and expand commercial activities.
- X. Act as a change agent to meet to the requirements of the changing market and customer preferences.
- XI. --Develop a culture and habits of achievement orientation and motivation, which stress standard of excellence.

Creating an Enabling Environment for MSME Development

The design of an enabling policy, legal and regulatory environment play a considerable role in the development of MSMEs. There are numerous policy and legal constraints and biases that can erode the capacity of MSMEs to create new employment opportunities, foster technological innovation, and produce wealth. Even when the policy and legal instruments themselves are supportive of MSMEs operations, their enforcement, and implementation may be inadequate and inefficient.

The respect for the rule of law, providing for justice, law and order, and domestic security, which is necessary for the achievement of individual goals, such as the pursuit of freedom and happiness and for the attainment of an environment conducive to economic activities. The strengthening of the legislative and judicial institutions and guaranteeing their independence is a necessary factor toward enhancing economic activities and the promotion and development of MSMEs.

The formulation and implementation of broad macro-economic policies to guide the direction of the economy and to remove temporary distortion. The establishment of the regulatory framework built on flexibility to support an enabling environment for sustainable development and robust entrepreneurial culture. The provision of public goods and services (health care, basic education, energy, basic infrastructure) as well as creating public value should be the new drive of the public sector towards providing an enabling environment required in the paradigm shift.

The enthronement and empowerment of the private sector as the engine of economic transformation is an elaborate policy for the development of entrepreneurship, which in its sociological and economic dimensions, transforms, releases the creative potential of the people, and makes them self-propelled agents of economic and social change.

Small and Medium Size Agency of Nigeria SMEDAN

SMEDAN exists to prepare and equip the Nigerian Entrepreneurs of today-and tomorrow- to meet the challenges and complex demands associated with the global dynamics and business environment. The significant way of achieving this is through the stimulation and facilitation of the development of entrepreneurship and enterprises in Nigeria.

Consequently, in its continued search for a solution towards a vibrant and virile micro, small, and medium enterprises sub-sector, and to entrench the-sector into the main stream of the Nigerian economy, the government established the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Agency of Nigeria (SMEDAN) in 2003. The Agency is a “one stop shop” for nursing and nurturing micro, small, and medium enterprises in Nigeria. Consequently, the Small and Medium Development Agency of Nigeria (SMEDAN) has since inception been in the forefront of promoting and developing Micro, small and medium enterprises and entrepreneurs.

The enterprises and entrepreneurs have continued to manage and grow their businesses. Through mind-blowing innovative concepts, they continue to stretch the frontiers and landscapes of their individual's enterprises, and accordingly,

they are capturing a bigger slice of their target markets and establishing themselves as points of reference in this sub sector. SMEDAN is now the voice of the MSMEs in Nigeria

The functions of the Agency as enunciated in the SMIDA Act, 2003 are listed below:

- I. Initiating and articulating policy ideas for micro, small, and medium enterprises growth and development;
- II. Stimulating, Monitoring and Coordinating the development of the MSMEs sector;
- III. Promoting and facilitating development programmes, instruments and support services to accelerate the development and modernization of MSMEs;
- IV. Serving as a vanguard for rural industrialization, poverty reduction, and job creation and thus facilitating enhanced sustainable livelihoods;
- V. Linking MSMEs to internal and external sources of finance, appropriate technology, technical skills as well as to large enterprises;
- VI. Overseeing monitoring and coordinating the development of the MSMEs sector;
- VII. Promoting and providing access to industrial infrastructure, such as layouts incubators and industrial parks;
- VIII. Providing assistance to MSMEs in marketing their products.
- IX. Mobilizing internal and external resources, including technical assistance, for the development of MSMEs;
- X. Promoting the familiarization, sub-contracting, networking, and crosscutting strategic linkages between MSMEs and other economic sub-sectors;
- XI. Creating beneficial linkages between MSMEs and research institutes/universities;
- XII. Providing extension services to MSMEs;
- XIII. Monitoring implementation of government directives, incentives and facilities for MSMEs development;
- XIV. Recommending to government required amendments to business regulatory frameworks for ease of enterprise development.
- XV. Working in concert with other institutions in both public and private sectors to create a good enabling environment of business in general, and MSMEs activities in particular

The Role of SMEDAN- The Intervention Strategy

The intervention strategy centre on the following areas:

- I. Sourcing, Processing and Dissemination of Business Information
The Agency creates and regularly updates databank on MSMEs, raw materials, markets, available local technologies/machinery, and prototypes.
- II. Policy Development
Formulate and ensure due approval and implementation of an MSMEs policy for Nigeria, conduct impact assessment studies and use same to recommend improvements in policy intervention and conduct regular stakeholders' fora.
- III. Establishing Business Support Centres and Business Information Services(BSCs and BISs)
The centres provide the following services:
 - Model business-planning skills
 - Mentoring Professional services such as Accounting, Financing, and Book-keeping
 - Industrial Dynamics and Technology Assessment
 - Legal and taxation advisory services
 - Demonstration models to private sector service providers
 - General business consultation
- IV. Capacity Building and Promotional Services
 - Vertical linkage of MSMEs with large enterprises
 - Organization of MSMEs into clusters and co-operatives to enhance their productivity and have easier access to factors of production,
 - Arrangement/facilitation of trade and technology exposition
 - Provision of market support information system
 - Encouragement and facilitation of new investments in designated priority areas in each state of the federation
- V. Establishment of Industrial Parks
SMEDAN, through public-private sector partnership, is facilitating the establishment of Industrial Parks and Regional MSMEs Development Centres. Each park comes with industrial buildings and offers MSMEs the following facilities on a cost-sharing basis- security, electricity, water,

buying centres, service providers, petrol station, and capital-intensive technologies.

VI. Enhance MSMEs Access to Finance

Liaise with financial institutions to harness and pool resources for utilization by MSMEs. Assisting in sharpening their business plans for possible financial assistance from Micro-finance banks and development banks. Constantly liaise with other institutions for the establishment and operation of MSMEs Credit Guarantee Scheme.

VII. Networking

We are collaborating with Trade Groups, NGOs, Government Ministries and Agencies, Research and Technological Institutions and Multilateral/Donor Agencies etc to create a dynamic network of stakeholders in the development of MSMEs sub-sector of the economy.

VIII. The National Policy on Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises

SMEDAN has recently emerged with a policy geared towards the development of MSMEs in Nigeria in a structured and efficient manner. The implementation is being awaited.

IX. Entrepreneurship Development Programmes

SMEDAN has trained many Entrepreneurs in our various programmes tailored towards the required needs of the beneficiaries.

- Faith base initiatives
- Corpers Entrepreneurship Development Programme
- Public Service Entrepreneurship Development Programme
- Cluster Entrepreneurship Development Programme

XX. Seminars, Conferences and Workshops

SMEDAN has over the years organized seminars, conferences, and workshops to sensitize the public towards being their own bosses as well as inculcating the spirit and culture of entrepreneurialism among the students, youths, and women.

XXI. Trade Fairs and Trade Exhibitions

The agency has since inception organized various MSMEs trade fairs and exhibitions to create markets.

Conclusion and Recommendations

An enabling environment and adequate infrastructural facilities that will usher in new entrepreneurs that are highly committed to the objectives and aspirations of the people should be created. Agriculture should be taken and seen as a business, value addition and value chain development should be effectively pursued, hence engendering a paradigm shift in employment generation and empowerment in Nigeria.

In the light of the above, therefore, the following are recommended:

The reinvigoration of ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION will be a catalyst for the revitalization of national educational systems, including primary and secondary institutions throughout the country. Entrepreneurship Education in the country is very weak, non-qualitative, and uncoordinated and calls for an urgent re-enforcement, re-strategizing, re-strengthening, and institutionalized coordination for strategic change to bring about an adaptive educational system that will lead the country to the needed industrial revolution and a private sector led economy. Adequate and adaptive entrepreneurship education should be well rooted in the mindsets of the youths to bring about knowledge entrepreneurs that are required in today's global, digital, dynamic and information-driven market. Nigeria should strive not to be left behind in the new economic order that is emerging in this century by entrenching and institutionalizing entrepreneurial culture and spirit through a viable and feasible entrepreneurship education that will usher in an effective and efficient MSMEs which will assist in the achievement of the SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS (SDGs) and the ECONOMIC RECOVERY AND GROWTH PLAN in the area of job creation and poverty reduction.

This Ministry of Industry, Trade and Investment and other stakeholders should emerge with short, medium, and long-term strategies of developing and promoting MSMEs as vehicles of economic development, social stability, and equity. The Nigerian Business Environment is today running largely on obsolete laws, weak governance framework, fragmented regulatory structure bogged down by inhibiting accountability mechanisms. Good political and corporate governance are very important, the progress towards the achievement of socio-economic development of the country can be accelerated through good leadership and the deliverance of the dividends of good governance. Ensure

transparency and accountability in the management of the public resources and the fight against corruption should be holistic.

Nigeria has abundant human, physical and other tangible resources necessary for rapid socio-economic development; these are however not sufficient due to the inability to synergize collectively individual leadership capabilities and capacities. SMEDAN as an Agency with the mandate to promote MSMEs should provide the platform and opportunity to synergize and strategize towards a vibrant and robust work plan for efficient and sustainable socio-economic development in Nigeria.

Industrial and Enterprise Cluster parks development concept is increasingly being recognized as one of the cost effective and sustainable strategies for the development of micro, small, and medium enterprises. The federal and state governments should vigorously pursue and implement this concept in partnership with the private sector to boost the establishment of MSMEs in Nigeria. Youth and Women entrepreneurship should be promoted to stimulate and encourage them towards business ownership. Financial assistance should be packaged through the micro-finance banks and other micro-credit schemes of both the federal and state governments to this category of entrepreneurs. MSMEs credit guarantee scheme should be put in place to strengthen and encourage the commercial banks to support this sector.

The long-term policy imperative of the country is to achieve inclusive growth. The current development problem confronting Nigeria is exacerbated by the changing demographic profile of the country. The number of unemployed is mainly within the age bracket of 18-35 years, of which the proportion of the educated youth is the largest. Therefore, the need for an efficient school entrepreneurship education and strong accelerated MSME development and promotion is now more acute than ever.

There is the urgent need to methodically deal with the economy, in terms of diversification and to create a new architecture for businesses to thrive in Nigeria. To enhance the ease of doing business and reform the business environment for greater national productivity and employment generation. The business environment should be friendly through the provision of both social and economic infrastructure. The power and energy problem should be urgently addressed. Policies that will attract direct foreign investment, awaken local

venture capitalists, reduce multiple levies, and install tax holidays to encourage the development of MSMEs.

Public-Private Partnership Financing Model should be embraced by the Government as infrastructure financing option and to close the huge infrastructure deficit. As this will fast track investment on infrastructure for MSMEs to thrive in Nigeria. One of the challenging hindering the development of MSMEs in Nigeria is poor infrastructure.

The on-going National MSME Clinics should be transformed into a functional One-Stop MSME Shop that will bring about the required synergy of all the government agencies required for MSME development in Nigeria. The National and State MSME Councils should be alive to their responsibilities.

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