



## Entrepreneurship: A Viable Panacea to Socio-Political Unrest in Nigeria.

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**Abstract:** Socio-political unrest, being an endemic problem, has become a real threat to the stability of the country, Nigeria. Some of these problems can be seen in rise in the level of kidnapping for ransom, incidences of armed robbery, domestic, political, ethnic and religious violence. The introduction of entrepreneurship in the Western nations has led to increase in the level of employment, reduction in poverty and unemployment. The socio-political problems in Nigeria, which have been majorly caused by rise in the level of poverty and unemployment, need to be arrested in order to bring about the needed peace, stability and development in the country. The aim of this paper is to examine the positive roles entrepreneurship plays in reducing to the barest minimum the endemic problem of socio-political unrest in Nigeria. This paper therefore, made use of secondary source of data collection. The paper recommended that the government of Nigeria, as a matter of urgent national requirement, must provide the enabling environment for entrepreneurs to develop, with the needed social amenities such as power (electricity) and incentives such as tax relief.

**Key Words:** Entrepreneurship, poverty, unemployment, socio-political violence, unrest, panacea.

### Introduction

Over the years, Nigeria and many other developing countries of the world have been bedeviled with various forms of social, religious, political and economic

unrests such as have paralysed every facet of the entire life of the country. This has not made the country to remain the same again. These unrests have made it difficult for any form of

development- be it social, political or economic- to take place within the country. Most of these unrests, especially socio-political, are traceable to youth restiveness all over the country. These unrests have done so much damage to the image of the country within and outside such that it has led to the problem of capital flight, lack of the investment, brain drain among others.

The word “entrepreneur” is coined from a French verb *entreprendre*, which connotes ‘to undertake’. Thus entrepreneur refers to those who “embark on” the risk of new enterprises. An enterprise is formed by an entrepreneur. The process of creating a new enterprise is called “entrepreneurship” (Navale, 2013).

Entrepreneurship involves a chain of actions of an entrepreneur who is a person always in pursuit of something new and takes advantage of such ideas into gainful opportunities by accepting the risk and uncertainty with the enterprise. Entrepreneurial development in today’s business world has become very important in view of its being a key to economic development. The prospects of industrial development, regional growth and employment generation greatly depend upon entrepreneurial development (Carlen, 2016). Thus entrepreneurs are the forerunners of industrial development and the rewards of industrial development are greater employment opportunities to unemployed youth, increase in per capita income, better standard of living and increased individual saving, increased revenue to the government in the form of income tax, sales tax, export duties, import duties, and balanced regional development among other benefits.

Taking into consideration the introduction of free enterprise model in Western nations has led to increase in the level of employment, reduction in poverty and unemployment. This idea has been perfected in the developed countries such as the United States of America (USA), Britain, China, Canada and so on as well as developing countries such as South Africa, Egypt and Brazil. Nigeria, the so called giant of Africa, can also derive numerous benefits by integrating entrepreneurial development schemes into her various socio-political institutions. Hence, one of the key reasons for the introduction of entrepreneurship developmental model into Nigeria is the need to reduce to the barest minimum the endemic problem of socio-political unrest in the country, which is a real threat to the democratic stability of the country. Some of these problems include but not limited to kidnapping for ransom, incidences of armed robbery, domestic, political, ethnic and religious violence.

Consequently, the emergence of entrepreneurship developmental model in Nigeria is to herald a new beginning for the country with its attendant benefits such as economic development in the country. Graduates of tertiary institutions will become wealth and job creators, employers of labour instead of searching for non-existing white-collar jobs with various new innovations, initiatives and creativities, thus making them to become self-employed, self-empowered, self-reliant and self-relevant. Ultimately, the graduates of higher institutions will no longer be an easy prey in the hands of selfish sponsors to be used for various forms of socio-political unrest in the country. This will in the final analysis bring about the much desired national

development which will affect all sectors of the country. Consequently, the objective of this paper is to examine the positive roles played by entrepreneurship in ameliorating the problem of socio-political unrest in Nigeria.

### **Literature Review** **Entrepreneurship**

Cole (1959) cited by Ogundele (2007) asserts that entrepreneurship is used in two senses and that the context of each usage should make the particular meaning obvious. First, the concept may be employed to mean the task or activity. That is, the purposeful task including an integrated sequence of decisions of an individual or group of associated individuals undertaken to initiate, maintain or enhance a profit oriented business enterprise for the purpose of production or distribution of economic goods and services. On the other hand, entrepreneurship may occasionally be used to signify the commonality of entrepreneurs. This means the aggregate of individuals performing entrepreneurial functions or carrying out that activity in a given time.

Globally, entrepreneurship growth through education has been receiving considerable attention as efforts have been made through researches in both institutions of learning and entrepreneurship research centres for the purpose of developing both entrepreneurship spirit and culture (Abubakar, 2010). Entrepreneurship has gained recognition as an indispensable functioning of organization and economics (Dickson et al, 2008). It has tremendously contributed towards creating new jobs, wealth creation, poverty reduction and income

generating for both government and individuals.

Sequel to understanding the general roles of entrepreneurship in national development, it has become imperative to examine the different types of entrepreneurship.

Vivek and Ravindra (2017) have identified five different types of entrepreneurs. These are;

**Innovative entrepreneurs:** these entrepreneurs have the ability to think outside the box, in terms of economic ideas of business organisation and management. They are the business leaders and contributors to the economic development of a country. Major inventions like the introduction of making mobile phones available to the common man are through the innovative work of entrepreneurs.

**Imitating entrepreneurs:** These entrepreneurs are people who trail the pathway of innovative entrepreneurs. They replicate innovative entrepreneurs because the environment in which they operate does not permit them to be creative and innovative on their own. Such entrepreneurs thrive in countries and situations marked with weak industrial and institutional base which creates difficulties in initiating innovative ideas.

In Nigeria, a large number of such entrepreneurs exist in every field of business activity and they fulfill their need for achievement by imitating the ideas introduced by innovative entrepreneurs. Development of small shopping complexes is the work of imitating entrepreneurs. Most small car manufacturers are now the imitating entrepreneurs.

**Fabian entrepreneurs:** the dictionary meaning of the term 'fabian' is 'a person who seeks victory by delay

rather than by a decisive battle'. Fabian entrepreneurs are those individuals who show no initiative in visualizing and implementing new ideas and innovations. They wait for some development which would motivate them to initiate unless there is an imminent threat to their very existence.

**Drone entrepreneurs:** the dictionary connotation of the term 'drone' is 'a person who takes advantage of the labour of others'. Drone entrepreneurs are those individuals who are satisfied with the status-quo and speed of business activity and show no interest in gaining market leadership. In other words, drone entrepreneurs are die-hard conservatives and even ready to suffer the loss of business. They do not take risk; they believe that things should and will remain the way they are.

**Social Entrepreneurs:** social entrepreneurs drive social innovation and transformation in various fields including education, health, human rights, workers' rights, environment and enterprise development. They undertake poverty alleviation objectives with the zeal of an entrepreneur, business practices and dare to overcome traditional practices and to innovate. Farmers' bank is an example of social entrepreneur. The defunct Peoples' Bank of Nigeria is another good example of the social entrepreneur.

For the purpose of this paper, it is equally very important to clarify the functions of entrepreneurs.

Kumar (2018) has identified some of the most important functions that are performed by an entrepreneur to include:

**Innovation:** an entrepreneur is basically an innovator who strives to develop new technology, products, markets, etc. Innovation mainly involves doing new

things or doing existing things differently or in a new way. An entrepreneur uses his imaginative mind to do new things and exploit opportunities in the market. He does not believe in status quo and is always in search of change.

**Assumption of Risk:** an entrepreneur, by definition, is a risk taker and is not afraid of venturing into the unknown. He is always prepared for assuming losses that may arise on account of new ideas and projects undertaken by him. This willingness to take risks allows an entrepreneur to take initiatives in doing new things and marching ahead in his efforts.

**Research:** an entrepreneur is a practical dreamer and does his homework before taking a leap into an unknown business venture. In other words, an entrepreneur implements an idea only after considering a variety of options, analyzing their strengths and weaknesses by applying analytical techniques, testing their applicability, supporting them with empirical findings, and then choosing the best alternative. It is then that he applies his ideas in practice. The selection of an idea thus involves the application of research methodology by an entrepreneur.

**Development of management skills:** the work of an entrepreneur involves the use of managerial skills which he develops while planning, organizing, staffing, directing, controlling and coordinating the activities of business. His managerial skills get further strengthened when he engages himself in establishing equilibrium between his organization and its environment. However, when the size of business grows considerably, an entrepreneur can employ professional managers for the

effective management of business operations.

**Overcoming resistance to change:** introduction of new innovations are generally opposed by people because it makes them change their existing behavior patterns. An entrepreneur always first tries new ideas at his level. It is only after the successful implementation of these ideas that an entrepreneur makes these ideas available to others for their benefit. In this manner, he paves the way for the acceptance of his ideas by others. This is a reflection of his will power, enthusiasm and energy which helps him in overcoming the society's resistance to change.

### **Causes and effects of socio-political unrest in Nigeria**

**Lack of matured political culture:** the inability of Nigerians to develop the kind of political culture that can be regarded as the civic culture of participation abiding by the rules of the game is not to be found in what is regarded as 'the Nigeria factor', but in the colonial foundation of politics, which did not leave behind a legacy of tolerance, democracy and consensus building. Nigerian nationalists who inherited state power grew up under the colonial order which was marked by dictatorship and resorted to the use of naked power as a means of dealing with opposite views. With the crises and challenges of nationhood and addressing problems of material existence of a radicalized followership, they easily resorted to violence and force as a means of political survival (Osuji, 2013).

**Poverty:** As a result of poverty, prospective citizens with genuine interest for the country are easily disenfranchised by the political parties,

as they have to cough out millions of naira, to obtain the party forms for nomination. Furthermore, it has turned the citizens to easy tools in the hand of the political elites. More importantly, the prevailing economic situation which has aggravated the problem of mass poverty and unemployment due to the current economic downturn and recently, of recession, is affecting the basic means of livelihood for the majority of Nigerian people, hence they are more susceptible to manipulation and easily recruited as thugs or miscreants to perpetrate socio-political violence at any given time at the beckon of their sponsors (Oluwatusin and Abolarin-Egbebi, 2015).

**Militarism:** the military, according to the constitution, is meant to protect its citizens from any external aggression. It is meant to protect the geographical territory of the country. But in Nigeria, the military makes incursions into politics with impunity. Military takeover is in most cases marked by the suspension of the country's constitution as well as civilian rule. Human rights are abused through the imposition of state of emergency or curfews. Press freedom is restricted and detention of perceived enemies without trials becomes rampant. The military by its nature is run through a unitary system of control. After disengaging from politics, they end up imposing a unitary system of government on the people, which is against the pluralistic nature of democracy. Of the post-independence Heads of State in Nigeria, six were military officers who ruled the country for close to three decades. The state is seen as an extension of the military barracks and the civilians are often viewed and treated with contempt. For example, a police official, sent to ensure

that a former Governor of Rivers State did not pass through a particular route in Rivers state was quoted as saying “I do not take orders from civilians”. This was a state where a civilian (Mr. Rotimi Amaechi) was the executive governor (Akasike 2013).

**Patron-Clientelism:** the government is supposed to be funded by the public. This provision is enshrined in the constitution. But the government in Nigeria funds itself and the public. The government is the patron and the citizens are the clients. Thus, a situation of patron-client, master-servant and landlord-tenant relationship ensued. The commonwealth of the states is used to enrich a few. Another dimension to this is the patron-client relationship between the political fathers and their political sons and daughters (political godfatherism) which is such that the political father is willing to go to any length to impose his favoured candidate(s) on the electorate, even when there are better, more competent and more qualified candidates to occupy such positions (Osumah, 2010).

**Youth unemployment:** most of the youths are easily bought over with financial benefit in order to sway their votes. As a result of the by-product of poverty and employment, most electorates therefore end up voting for their pockets instead of their conscience. This has ensured the sustainability of the hegemonic oligarchic few in governance that continues to toy with the wealth and lives of the majority in a nation with the largest oil producing record in Africa and 8th largest oil producing country in the world (Idada and Alimi, 2014).

**Entrepreneurship as a panacea to socio-political unrest in Nigeria**

**Peace and security:** As a matter of state priority, there is need for a re-organization in the country’s security network. This is due to the fact that the security apparatus and formations are already compromised. Members of the national security outfit were arrested and court martialed for aiding and abetting the Boko Haram terrorist group (Vanguard, 2013). These are the same security outfits that are paid with the tax payers’ money to guarantee their security. The current spate of communal clashes, violent crimes and kidnapping for ransom must be dealt with more intelligence network and information gathering other than hard wares. The country is vulnerable to organized crimes; some Iranians were arrested with cache of arms and ammunition. Recently, there has been an upsurge in the Fulani herdsmen and farmers crises across the nation: from Benue to Nassarawa, Yobe to Taraba and Plateau States threatening the political stability of the country (Akinyemi, 2012).

**Employment:** entrepreneurship is an economic activity involving the creation of wealth with a view to adding values to wealth and ensuring optimum utilization of scarce resources. Since this value creation activity is mostly performed continuously in the midst of uncertain business environment like Nigeria, entrepreneurship is therefore regarded as a dynamic force in wealth creation, which is also in tune with employment generation. Employment also creates income, which gives one the opportunity to cater for the basic needs of life, such as food, shelter, clothing and the ability to pay the school fees of one’s children, hence being able to guarantee the future of the young ones from would be trouble makers who are ready to use them as

tools in formenting socio-political crises in the country. Therefore, the more employment is generated, the less the level of joblessness of Nigerian youth and the less the rate of socio-political thugs that are readily available as willing tools in the hand of the unscrupulous politicians (Adam, 2017).

**Innovation:** entrepreneurship revolves around the continuous exploration for new business ideas. Hence, entrepreneurship motivates individuals to continuously evaluate the existing modes of business operations so that more efficient and effective methods can be evolved and adopted. Consequently, entrepreneurship involves a continuous effort for synergy (optimization of performance) in organizations which will ultimately lead to innovation and a higher level of productivity. Consequently, the high level of productivity will have positive effects on incomes. The higher the income, the more industries will spring up. Hence, there will be gainful employment for the teeming unemployed youths in the country. They are also likely to be able to save for future needs and purposes, thus leading to reduction in the level of socio-political unrest in the country (Ihugba, Odii and Njoku, 2013).

**Profit:** profit potential is the reward or compensation to the entrepreneur for taking on the risk of developing an idea into an actual business venture. Furthermore, most of the manufacturing industries that are no longer in business today in Nigeria are hugely out of business partly due to the poor profit margin. Without profit potential, the efforts of entrepreneurs would remain only paperwork with nothing to show for it. Therefore, one of the objectives of entrepreneurship is high profit

margin. When this is achieved, the entrepreneur is given the leverage to increase the level of productivity (Idada and Alimi, 2014). Furthermore, profits also provide more capital for investment, which can be further used in generating more medium and small scale industries. Therefore, with more productivity, the more the citizens would be engaged. This will take their attention away from social vices in the society thereby reducing the incidence of socio-political crisis in the country.

**Risk:** one of the goals of entrepreneurship is the motivation and the ability to take risk which evolves out of the creation and implementation of new ideas. New ideas are always uncertain and their results may not be immediate and positive. An entrepreneur should therefore exercise great caution to see his efforts bear fruit. In the intervening period (time gap between the conception and implementation of an idea and its results), an entrepreneur has to assume risk. If an entrepreneur does not have the willingness to assume risk, entrepreneurship would never succeed (Macko and Tyszka, 2009). Therefore, the more the risks that are taken by the entrepreneurs, the more likelihood of success, and the success will ultimately translate to more resources for the people and bring about a reduction in the level of poverty. The implication of this development is that the number of people that will be available as social miscreants or nuisance variables to cause trouble or crisis in the society will be drastically reduced.

**Managerial skills:** One of the importance of entrepreneurship lies in the fact that it helps in identifying and developing managerial capabilities of entrepreneurs. An entrepreneur studies a

problem, identifies its alternatives, compares the alternatives in terms of cost and benefits implications, and finally chooses the best alternative. This exercise helps in sharpening the decision making skills of an entrepreneur. Besides, these managerial capabilities are used by entrepreneurs in creating new technologies and products in place of older technologies and products resulting in higher performance (McQuerrey, 2018). Simply put, the more the Nigerians that are able to gain the needed managerial capabilities, the increase in the level of prospective entrepreneurs and the potential in decreasing the number of people that will be available in creating a state of anarchy and anomie in the country.

**Wealth:** entrepreneurship translates into creation of organizations. When entrepreneurs bring together and coordinate physical, human and financial resources and direct them towards achievement of objectives through managerial skills, it ultimately creates wealth. Consequently, more money will come from income tax paid by workers and this is a veritable means of wealth creation. The availability of such resource will likely make more funds available for the entrepreneurs to set up more skill acquisition centres and embark on more wealth creation programmes (Opara, 2016). This will in the long run reduce poverty greatly, thus serving as checks on the growth of socio-political crises in the country.

**Standard of living:** by creating productive organizations or industries which add value to its customers, entrepreneurship helps in making a wide variety of goods and services available to the society which results into higher standards of living for the people.

Possession of luxurious properties such as cars, computers, mobile phones, rapid growth of shopping malls, etc. is a pointer to the rising living standards of people. These are due to the efforts of entrepreneurs (Adekoya, 2016). Furthermore; income that is generated from wealth created can be used to buy more goods that will increase the economic conditions of the citizens and reduce the cost of living. When this is achieved, it will have a spiral effect on the country thereby reducing the problem of socio-political crises, since the standard of living of a good number of the populace would have been well taken care of.

### Recommendations

In view of the foregoing, the paper hereby makes the following recommendations:

The government of Nigeria as a matter of urgent national requirement must provide enabling environment for entrepreneurs to develop, with needed social amenities such as power and incentives such as tax relief and removal of multiple taxes. This will not only help in creating employment for the teeming unemployed Nigerian youths, but also create wealth and improve the level of productivity in the country. This will lead to both qualitative and quantitative improvement in the lives of Nigerian citizens, particularly the vulnerable members of the society.

There is need for the educational institutions in the country to be transformed in such a way that they will have the capacity to offer entrepreneurship programmes within the formal educational arrangements and through extra-curricular activities. Such programmes must reflect the pressing need of the society. This will go a long way in preparing the young generation



in integrating with their communities, solve local problems and establish socio-economic equality, justice and solidarity in the country.

Entrepreneurship is a potent tool for capacity building as it provides high-quality support for entrepreneurs. In doing this, it can help in the creation job opportunities for the vulnerable members of the society such as the widows, the orphans, the needy and the poor. It can also help in developing high-quality services for the people such as solving societal problems by providing access to portable pipe-borne water in the rural areas and giving the local farmers, fishermen/women, craftsmen and other artisans access to urban and international markets. This will go a long way in reducing the rate of rural-urban migration and also drive development in the rural areas.

One of the greatest problems faced by entrepreneurs in Nigeria is access to capital, particularly in remote/rural areas. Fresh initiatives in these marginalized communities need serious funding in order to drive the needed growth and development. This will have a positive effect on the nation's economy. Funding of entrepreneurial initiatives is also a good business platform for corporations and governments alike. Companies that provide corporate social responsibility

(CSR) programmes increase leverage for social enterprises, equating to higher returns on investment. Consequently, when governments provide tax haven for social enterprises, they encourage citizens to create sustainable solutions and in turn, stability. Government can play a in addition to its regulatory role by supporting social enterprises from their start-up to scale up phase. This will create more job opportunities which will keep the teeming unemployed young Nigerians busy and help in our democratic sustainability.

### Conclusion

Socio-political unrest is a problem that has threatened the corporate existence of Nigeria as a nation. This problem has manifested in the form of ritual and political killings, kidnapping for ransom, armed robbery, ethno-political and religious/sectarian violence. One of the major causes of this problem is unemployment, especially when youths in the country cannot secure gainful employments/white-collar jobs coupled with lack of vocational skills by secondary and tertiary institution graduates, most of whom are unemployable. This paper provides a way out of the socio-political quagmire by presenting entrepreneurship as a veritable panacea to the problem in Nigeria.

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