

Change Direction to Entrepreneurial Education and Skills as Panacea for Youth Unemployment in the Niger Delta Region of Nigeria

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Abstract

The paper examines Government changing directions of development to entrepreneurial education and skill as way out of youth unemployment in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. The idea became necessary in view of problems and harsh realities in the region which include abject poverty, youth unemployment, kidnapping, vandalism, insurgency, conflicts and diseases. These situations pose great challenges to the very existence of individuals in Niger Delta region calling for the training of the youths who can function effectively in the society. The method used in this study is secondary method of data collection and sociological entrepreneurship theories were adopted. Over the years, ineffective governance, corruption, poor service delivery among others has been the bane of the Niger Delta region in Nigeria. Past studies have attributed such failure to a range of factors such as infrastructure decay and deficiency leading to poor human development, lack of proper implementation of the master plan, lack of funds, inadequacy of the master plan etc. Although, the efforts of the past studies as well as that of the developmental agencies are commendable, however, they have failed to address one important issue which is the human capability aspect of the developmental program. Therefore, this paper explores the role of human capability approach on the effectiveness of the entrepreneurship development programs within the Niger Delta region and the political influence with a view proposing a framework to examine the relationship between human capability and effective entrepreneurship development programs. The paper is of the view that such societal ills as corruption, mismanagement of public funds, insurgency, destroying oil pipe-lines and extra judicial killings among others can be abated with engagement of youth in entrepreneurial education and skill as way out of youth unemployment. Finally, the paper made some suggestions on how to overcome the challenges so as to reduce unemployment and enhances job creation in Niger Delta.

Background to the Study

Education is the key to national development. This is because it unlocks the economic potentials of the people; empowers and equips individuals in society to participate in, and benefit from their national economy. It facilitates economic development and provides the basis for transformation. Education is the essential tool for sustainability. The present global economic crises suggest that the entire world is struggling for qualitative education (Aluwong,2010). Entrepreneurship education as part of the total educational system is the type of education that involves the acquisition of skills, ideas and management abilities necessary for job creation. An entrepreneur promotes employment rather than seeking for an employment. Therefore, there is a need to embrace this type of education and provide all the necessary resources needed to make functional. Quality entrepreneurship education could be used as a tool for fighting the war against poverty and unemployment in Nigeria.

The economic pre-occupation of the people of this region has been farming and fishing, salt making, hand-dug boat making and distillation of local gin. The availability of oil and gas in this region attracted several oil and gas Multinational Companies such as Chevron, Shell and Mobil producing (Exxon Mobil) to its major cities like; Port Harcourt, Warri, Yanagoo and the rest. Precisely, the oil and gas deposit in the Niger Delta region constitutes 97% of Nigeria's mineral exploitation and exploration (Iyayi, 2004). The region, due to its coastal location, and the exploration and exploitation activities carried out there, is highly vulnerable to both natural and man-made environmental hazards such as, flooding due to rise in sea level, land degradation, water pollution, desertification, fire disasters and frequent oil spill. In fact, the activities of oil and gas multinational companies in the Niger Delta is largely viewed to be a curse rather than a blessing as nature intended it to be (Turner and Brown hill, 2004). As a result of the identified factors viz; oil spillage, gas flaring, oil erosion and land degradation, all occasioned by the exploration and exploitation activities of the oil and gas companies, the environment has been generally rendered hostile and unconducive for economic activities such as: fishing, farming, salt making and distillation of local gin.

The Niger Delta region of Nigeria is made up of; Abia, Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross River, Delta, Edo, Imo, Ondo and Rivers States. They constitute the third largest wetland in the world (UNDP, 2006). The ecological status of the region is characterized by; rivers, creeks, estuaries and swamps, as well as other natural resources like; palm oil and kernel, fish, oil and gas. It is imperative and informative to stress that these economic and agricultural activities were hitherto the main stay of the Niger Delta economy, before the commencement of the exploitation and exploration activities in the region. In other words, the commencement and increase in the oil and gas exploitation and exploration activities, with its attendant environmental consequences, is directly and wholly responsible for the collapse of the hitherto viable economy of the Niger Delta people. It is a sub-set of the general condition of deprivation whose dimensions includes; physical weakness, vulnerability, social inferiority, powerlessness and humiliation. Basically, it is always easy to identify the poor: They have low income, they are uneducated and in bad

health. They live in abject lack of basic necessities of life such as; food, clothing and good shelter. They also lack skills, gainful employment and self-confidence (World Bank, 2006). The incidence of poverty in the Niger Delta has been on a steady increase in about the last three decades.

Unemployment simply means a situation in which people who are physically and mentally well and willing to work, cannot be gainfully engaged (Agba, 1994). The Keynesian economists generally view unemployment to be in categories and types, but however, the above definition should contextually suffice, irrespective of the types or forms. Underemployment describes the incidence of under-paid jobs. The Niger Delta region of Nigeria has been described in recent times as one of the most unsafe, insurgent, turbulent and violent regions in sub-Saharan Africa. It is imperative at this juncture to state pointedly, that the previously mentioned high level of poverty, unemployment and frustration amongst the Niger Delta people, occasioned largely by the environmentally destructive activities of oil and gas Multinationals, accounts colossally for the high wave of violence, and insecurity experienced in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria in recent times.

The Niger Delta youths in revolt and in an attempt to create equity, have diverted their energies to kidnapping and abduction of foreign (and sometimes local) oil workers for ransom as legitimate means of livelihood. Other vicious activities carried out by Niger Delta youths include; crude oil bunkering, pipeline vandalism and stealing, because of poverty and unemployment (Inyang, 2009).

Problem Statement

The general problem is that although the Niger Delta of Nigeria is a region rich in petroleum oil resources, it remains one of the poorest in the country with an alarming rate of poverty and unemployment among its youth (Chiazor, Ozoya, & Udume, 2017; Ozughalu & Ogwumike, 2015). Poverty reduction is one of the most difficult challenges facing the Nigerian nation, where more than 70% of the entire population lives at or below the poverty level. About 75% of the poverty-stricken people in Nigeria are concentrated in the rural areas like the Niger Delta where illiteracy prevalence is high, potable water and health facilities are rarely available, and road and electricity infrastructures are either unavailable or ill-managed (Oku, 2017). Various governments since 1960 have enacted poverty reduction programs, but most have failed, with the poverty level increasing from 27% in 1980 to 46% in 1985 and to 67% in 1996; by 1999 it increased to more than 70% (Ogwumike, 2001). Most Nigerians living in the Niger Delta regard government institutions and programs as ineffective in alleviating poverty (Oghiagbephan, 2016), yet recent research has indicated that young Nigerians from this region are indoctrinated by the education system to become government job seekers rather than job creators as a platform to combat unemployment and poverty (Maina, 2014; Oghiagbephan, 2016).

Overview of NDDC and Human Development in the Niger Delta

The creation of NDDC is one of the efforts of Nigerian government to promote development in the Niger Delta region (Paki and Ebiefa, 2011; Okolo, 2014). NDDC is an

acronym of Niger Delta Development Commission which was established by the former Nigeria President, Olusegun Obasanjo (Ahonsi, 2011). The body was established with the objective of ensuring the overall development of the Niger Delta region. In other words, its agenda is to promote not only infrastructural development but also human development which is paramount to the people of the Niger Delta (Okafor, 2011; Aghalino, 2012). The human development agenda for the Niger Delta is borne out of lack of confidence of the people in the government as a result of the past failures and lapses displayed by the various past and present agencies set up by the government (Akpomuvie, 2011). The proposed agenda by NDDC though might not be the final solution to the developmental problem of the region; however, it will go a long way to reduce the level of agitations and rancor going on in the region. The NDDC developmental agenda aims to accomplish two goals; first physical development while the second to address those constraints that tends to distort human development Nwilo and Badejo (2005).

Enshrined in the NDDC master plan are the various areas to be considered in this new agenda. Since then, the body has embarked on several human development projects and other developmental programs including entrepreneurial related programs such as empowerment programs and skill acquisition programs (Ndem, Michael and Awa, 2012). The NDDC agenda of human development is based on the belief that people are the most important and focal point of any development in the society. The human and capital resources invested in the establishment and operation of NDDC have made Niger Delta people to believe that their messiah has come to relief them of developmental pain being suffered for decades. The NDDC human development agenda has also directed attention to the provision of schools, scholarships bursary, skill acquisition programs to engender human developments in the Niger Delta region. It is in this view that Olley, (2011) suggested that NDDC human development program should not only focus on giving opportunity for education to the people but should also train people to be effective and functional in the society. However, a critical observation revealed that NDDC has concentrated more on physical development such as the physical infrastructures like roads and bridges rather than human development. Thus, the need to re-focus on development programs through the adoption of human capability approach leading to effective entrepreneurial education and skill development as panacea for youth unemployment within the Niger Delta region.

Conceptual Consideration

Concept of Youth

Youth is defined by Webster's New Oxford Dictionary in Adebayo (2002) as "the time of life when one is young especially the period between childhood and maturity of the early period of existence, growth or development" the word "youth", "adolescent", "teenager" and "young person's" are often used interchangeably. According to Jega (2012), 'Youth can be defined as a special group of people with strong stamina and passion for realizing certain set goals and objectives. The way in which a nation defines its youth is related to the objective conditions and realities that exist on the ground especially historical and

contemporary socio-economic and political issues that need to be addressed. For the purpose of execution of Nigeria's National Youth Development Policy; the youth comprises all young persons of age 18-35 who are citizens of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. This category represents the most culture, the most volatile and yet the most vulnerable segment of the population, socio-economically, emotionally and in other respect.

The Concept of Unemployment

Unemployment is a social issue that Nigeria as a nation must deal with decisively. Even the most advanced economies of the world still battle with the issue of unemployment. In fact, the classical economists averred that there can never be a situation of total employment in any economy. However, responsible governments must strive at all times to keep unemployment rate as low as possible. According to Fajana (2000), unemployment is a state of being out of work/idleness experienced by persons who as members of the labour force are perceived by others as incapable of working. Unemployment is a situation where those who are willing and able to work cannot find either full or partial employment.

The unemployment situation in Nigeria is unsettling. Statistic shows that almost 75% of those who are able and willing to work cannot find gainful employment, especially among young graduate/school leavers. Every economy is characterized by both active and inactive populations. The economically active ones are referred to as the population willing and able to work, and include those actively engaged in the production of goods and services and those who are unemployed (gundele, O. J. K., Akingbade, W. A. & Akinlabi, H. B. 2012). The International Labour Organization (ILO) defines the unemployed as numbers of the economically active population who are without work but available for and seeking work, including people who have lost their jobs and those who have voluntarily left work (World Bank, 1998).

According to Fajana (2000) unemployment refers to a situation where people who are willing and capable of working are unable to find suitable paid employment. It is one of the macro-economic problems which every responsible government is expected to monitor and regulate. The higher the unemployment rate in an economy the higher would be the poverty level and associated welfare challenges, (Fajana 2000, Alao 2005). Many studies have focused on unemployment (Dabalen and Adekoka, 2000), youth unemployment (Uwem and Ndem, 2012), higher education and the demand for manpower (Ugwonah and Omeje, 1998), Labor market distortions, (Godwin and Johnson, 2012). This study singles out the graduate unemployment in Nigeria for critical analysis and emphasizes on the socio-economic implications. Research studies including that of Folayan (1979) averred that, vocational education is on skill acquisition and sound scientific knowledge, which empowers an individual on the manipulations of machines and enables him to be self-reliant. Despite these well formulated policies, the Nigerian government is very worried on the increasing unemployment rate, poverty and generally bad economic condition. Importantly, different scholars are of the views that vocational

and technical educations have a missing link as was asserted by Ojukwu (1999) and Onifade (2002). To further buttress this point, Kazaure (2011) asserted that in spite of the existence of 100 universities and over 120 polytechnics and other similar institution as well as technical/vocational colleges, our educational institutions have been disconnected from our industrial and socioeconomic needs. According to the International Labour Organisation, (ILO Publication 2009) when global Economic recession set in about 8million people will lose their job and most affected will be youth, women and children. This prediction has registered its toll already on existing bad situation of Nigeria Labour market. This adverse situation has contributed negatively to the security report of the country, in terms of increase rate of religious riot, armed robbery, kidnapping, and disturbance of armed militants, etc.as was stated by (UNOWA 2005).

Entrepreneurial Concept

The word entrepreneur was developed from the French Language, which meant or denotes an organizer of musical or other entertainment. Oxford English Dictionary (1897) also defined an entrepreneur in similar way as tithe directors or a manager of public musical institution. In early 16th Century, it was used to mean those who were engaged in military expeditions. In the 17th Century, it was also extended to field of Construction and fabrication. But in 18th Century, the word entrepreneur was used from economic perspective. The development of the word entrepreneur has passed through Centenaries of transformation before it came to its present meaning. According to Fapohinda (2006) entrepreneur is an Economic leader who possesses the ability to identify successful introduction of new idea, techniques and new source of supply and to assembly the necessary equipment, human resources and organise them to its set objective, while Damachi (2001) referred to an entrepreneur as an organiser of factors that add value to resource in production process. In addition, Schatz (1990) refer to entrepreneur to consist of (artisan, housewives and labourers) who efficiently allocate their resources in producing goods and services to create an equilibrium and dynamic economy. Nevertheless, Oluntunla (2001) referred to entrepreneurship as being self-employed or owning a scale enterprise or organisation in agriculture, manufacturing and service industry. In clear terms, entrepreneurship can be defined as the ability to convert an idea to an enterprise, which includes creativity, innovation and risk taking. In addition, it is the ability to plan and manage projects in order to achieve objectives.

Entrepreneurship Development

In an attempt to describe entrepreneurship development, Ogundele, Akingbade & Akinlabi (2012) described entrepreneurship as a process that involves entrepreneur recognizing opportunities within the environment, mobilizing resources to take advantage of such opportunities in order to provide improved goods and services for the consumers and awarding reward for risk taken. This demonstrates that entrepreneurship is all about environmental opportunities waiting to be utilized and harnessed by entrepreneurs. Also, Alvarez, Barney and Anderson, (2013) described entrepreneurship as a process whereby individuals independently discover, evaluate and exploit

opportunities within their immediate environment. In the view of Rebecca and Benjamin (2009), entrepreneurship development entails a creative process of organizing, managing enterprises and assuming the risk involved in the enterprise.

Entrepreneurship Education

Entrepreneurship education serves as a panacea to social economic problems. The present situation in Nigeria posed serious threats and challenges to both government and well-meaning citizens. These socio-economic problems call for different strategies and action for it to be ameliorated. Entrepreneurship education has been embraced by almost all the developed countries and its capabilities and efficacy in springing up economies is not in doubt. It is believed that refocusing Nigerian educational system with much emphasis on entrepreneurship education will immensely contribute in the reduction of unemployment, extreme poverty and crime. It was discovered that the current educational system is deficient in providing the necessary impetus for development. It also finds out that same problems keep escalating despite various efforts by the government to review policies and programmes in the past. The uniqueness of this paper is the presentation of the entrepreneurship education framework as an explanation of what and how it should be rather than what it is. It also challenges policy makers on the need to refocus their policies in problem solving rather than maintaining the status quo. The problem of unemployment is particularly pathetic as the number of those coming out from various institutions looking for employment opportunity is increasing day by day. The situation in Nigeria is of such concern that hundreds of unemployed university graduates mounted a demonstration in front of the presidential offices to express their concern. They demanded that government provide them with jobs for them to cater for their essential needs of life (Dabalén, Oni and Adekola 2000). It is pertinent to note that education can be a means to an end.

It can simply be a tool for securing employment and emancipation of people through the provision and acquiring of necessary knowledge and skills to make lives more flourishing. The objective of this paper is to emphasize the need and importance of entrepreneurship education, which will serve as a panacea to some social economic problems. The history of Niger-Delta region in Nigeria education system could be traced back to the colonial period, the educational policy then was geared toward serving the interest of the colonial masters in term of supply of manpower for their effective administration of Niger-Delta region in Nigeria colony and protectorates (Aladekomo, 2004). The policy was aimed at producing Nigerians who can read and write to hold certain positions such as clerks, interpreters, and inspectors, etc. without any entrepreneurial or professional skill to stand on their own or even establish and manage their own venture. The Niger-Delta region in Nigeria industrial policy that came immediately after independence places emphasis and concentrated attention on the establishment of big companies by completely neglecting the development of small-scale sectors (Aladekomo, 2004).

This neglect invariably means killing entrepreneurship at the micro level in Niger-Delta region in Nigeria at the very beginning, which is considered to be very essential for economic growth and development. The over pressing demand for white-collar jobs for majority of graduates is just an upshot of colonial educational policies. However, later in the 1970s, the government because of perceived importance of small-scale industries to the economy decided to focus attention on small and medium sector. Thirteen industrial centers and some institutions were set up to support the activities of entrepreneurs in the small and median industries in the country. Institutions set up were; Nigeria Industrial Bank (NIB), Nigeria Bank for Commerce and Industries (NBCI), Nigeria Agricultural and Cooperative Bank (NACB) etc. In the 1981 National Policy on education attempt was made by the government to link the policy with the issue of self-employment and the industrial policy. But then, the main focus was only on primary and secondary schools.

The Higher education policy was deficient in the sense that it failed to tackle the issue of self-employment at the tertiary level. The Higher education policy was mainly concerned with the development of both higher and middle manpower. Thus, higher education policy as stipulated was expected to cater for the production of new scientists and technologists and not graduates that could achieve self-employment (Aladekomo, 2004). In an attempt to ascertain the way forward and in response to the current socio-economic problems of the country as earlier mentioned, numerous questions have been raised by people as to what is the right education for Niger-Delta Nigeria and what kind of education may be suitable to stir up development in the country? so many positive suggestions were made in favour of refocusing the current Nigeria's educational system to reflect the present realities. It would be recalled that in Niger-Delta region Nigeria, technical and vocational education has received a lot of attention at both state and federal levels.

Different institutions were established to offer technical education. These include technical colleges, polytechnics, colleges of technical education, vocational centers and schools etc. The National Policy on Education of 2004 described technical education as "aspect of education which leads to the acquisition of practical and applied skills as well as basic scientific knowledge". The technical education aims at:

1. Providing trained manpower in applied science, technology and commerce, particularly at sub-professional grades;
2. Providing the technical knowledge and vocational skills necessary for agricultural, industrial, commercial and economic development;
3. Providing people who can apply scientific knowledge to the improvement and solution of environmental problems for the use and convenience of man;
4. Offering a basis to professional studies in engineering and other technology;
5. Giving training and impact for the necessary skills leading to the production of craftsmen, technicians and other skilled personnel who will be enterprising and self-reliant;
6. Enabling young men and women to have an intelligent understanding of the increasing complexity of technology. Technical and vocational institutions were designed largely to prepare technicians at occupational levels.

Fakae (2005) asserted that “emphasis is on skill-acquisition and sound scientific knowledge, which gives a hands-on experience of the use of machine for the purpose of production, maintenance and self-reliant”. Despite these well-articulated policies, the problem remains very conspicuous. However, with the growing number of students coming out from various institutions into the labour market, if positive steps are not taken there is every tendency that the situation will escalate the rate of poverty, hardship, unethical practices and other social crime especially among the youths will sky rocket. Hence, it is hoped that the government should encourage a diversification of the economy through adequate support for private establishments and practical acquisition of skills in all higher institutions. It is against this backdrop that the need to redefine and refocus the current system of education with a view to creating and enhancing the supply of entrepreneurship Initiatives and activities (Akpomi 2008; Adejimola and Olunfunmilayo, 2009). It is expected that our educational institutions will become centres for inculcating the spirit of entrepreneurship rather than the spirit of passing exam to get white-collar job. The best way to do this is to create a curriculum that is all encompassing in developing that spirit and culture of entrepreneurship in the youth through educational programmes in universities and other institutions of higher learning. The optimism about Nigeria's potentials to be among the top 20 global economies by the year 2020 was confirmed by the economists at Goldman Sachs, a leading United States (US) Investment Bank (Peters, 2009). In other to achieve this goal, government intended to use education and technical education in particular as a tool towards developing the nation. Apparently, it is generally believed that the delivery of the right type of education in Nigeria has suffered years of neglect, compounded by inadequate attention to policy frameworks within the sector. For example, findings from an ongoing educational sector analysis confirmed the poor state of education in Nigeria.

Theoretical Framework

Despite the number of published papers that might be considered related to the theory of entrepreneurship, no generally accepted theory of entrepreneurship has emerged. Papers have been contributed to the existing body of research by a diverse set of scholars with disciplinary backgrounds in agriculture, anthropology, economics, education, finance, history, marketing, mass communications, political science, psychology, sociology, and strategy. These have appeared in at least 31 separate academic journals (Low and MacMillan 1988; Woman 1992). Despite the potential for richness and texture that such a diverse mix of disciplines brings, a major weakness is that, in many cases, researchers from one discipline have tended to ignore entrepreneurship studies by researchers in the other disciplines (Wortman 1992).

Sociological Entrepreneurship Theory: The sociological theory is the third of the major entrepreneurship theories. Sociological enterprise focuses on the social context. In other words, in the sociological theories the level of analysis is traditionally the society (Landstrom, 1998). Reynolds (1991) has identified four social contexts that relates to entrepreneurial opportunity. The first one is social networks. Here, the focus is on building social relationships and bonds that promote trust and not opportunism. In other

words, the entrepreneur should not take undue advantage of people to be successful; rather success comes as a result of keeping faith with the people. The second he called the life course stage context which involves analyzing the life situations and characteristic of individuals who have decided to become entrepreneurs. The experiences of people could influence their thought and action so they want to do something meaningful with their lives. The third context is ethnic identification. One's sociological background is one of the decisive "push" factors to become an entrepreneur. For example, the social background of a person determines how far he/she can go. Marginalized groups may violate all obstacles and strive for success, spurred on by their disadvantaged background to make life better. The fourth social context is called population ecology. The idea is that environmental factors play an important role in the survival of businesses. The political system, government legislation, customers, employees and competition are some of the environmental factors that may have an impact on survival of new venture or the success of the entrepreneur (Otokiti; Awodu and Ajombadi 2010).

Additionally, two major theories were adopted to underpin the present study. These theories include the theory of human capability and the psychologist perspective of entrepreneurship theory by McClelland (1961). Human development and capability building define the process by which society appropriates the natural demography to its advantage for development (Nussbaum, 2001). The theory of human capability posits that without capability of people, no meaningful development can be achieved (Alkire, 2002). This is because it is only human capability that trains and loosens the mind, develops mental capacity and provides vocational training which at the long run enables individual to achieve freedom in a society (UNDP, 2013). Capability of any person can be enhanced through several means such as education, training, skill acquisition and rehabilitation (Edyburn, 2013; Schwarzer, 2014). If capability is adequately enhanced and incorporated into the Niger Delta people entrepreneurial developmental program, then it may enlarge their opportunities in all aspects of human endeavor that would equally lead to effective entrepreneurial programs (Wodi, 2012).

Furthermore, according to the psychologist perspective of entrepreneurship theory by McClelland (1961) which is also referred to as heredity or traits theory, it emphasizes the traits or attributes that an individual possesses that enable them to function properly in the entrepreneurial activities or engagement. Thus, psychologists concentrate on the characteristics and personality of an individual that form a business. This study associated successful entrepreneurship development with certain individual characteristics or traits or attributes of a person. Among these individual traits or attributes is capability. According to Timmons (1999), individual must possess the capability and ability to create and build a vision from practically nothing. The trait theory which posits that individual performs well due to their internal traits which are viewed as hereditary Petrides and Furnham (2015), McClelland (1961) is of the view that the key to entrepreneurial behavior lies in achievement motivation perhaps propel by capability. The need to achieve is a drive to excel, to achieve a goal in relation to a set of standards. A person endowed with a need to achieve, will spend time considering how to

do a job better or how to accomplish something important to them and this is called capability which needed to be incorporated into Niger Delta region entrepreneurial program for better effectiveness. Therefore, sustainable entrepreneurship development among the Niger Delta regions is a function of their personal characteristics or traits. The Psychology Theory assumes that there are some distinguished psychological and demographic characteristics individuals should possess for effective performance (Cherry, 2012). An effective entrepreneurial development program would require a situation where the Niger Delta people can take personal responsibility to find a solution to their problem, avoid what they perceive to be very easy or very difficult task and prefer to strive to achieve target, which is challenging and is not beyond their capabilities.

Causes of Youth Unemployment

Youth's unemployment in Nigeria is a consequence of several factors. One major factor is that of population growth. Nigeria has continued to experience high rate of population growth. This increasing population growth has produced an overwhelming increase in the youth population thereby resulting in an increase in the size of the working age population. Lack of employable skills due to inappropriate school curricula is another factor contributing to the rising of youth unemployment. Analysts have argued that in Nigeria generally, the skills that job seekers possess do not match the needs and demands of employers (Mcgrath, 1999; Kent and Mushi, 1995). According to them, the education system in Nigeria has its liberal bias which indeed over supplies the labour market with graduates who do not possess the skills required by employers. Many graduates in Nigeria lack entrepreneurial skills to facilitate self-employment (Oladele, Akeke and Oladunjoye, 2011).

Another factor is the perception of policy makers and the youth themselves about employment. To the policy makers and the youth, employment means a job with salary and working for someone else. It is this perception that has continued to influence the institutions in Nigeria that provide skills and training. Based on this, curricula and training programmes are generally tailored towards preparing young people for formal sector jobs. Since these jobs do not exist, there is often a mismatch between the skills possessed by the job seekers and the available jobs. Among other factors responsible for youth unemployment are poor governance, ineffective targeting of the poor resulting in resources being thinly spread among competing projects, overlapping of functions, poor coordination and lack of sustainable measures (Musari, 2009).

War/Presence of Militias in Niger Delta Regions

Nigeria and most Africa countries had been be-deviled by insecurity in all facets of life by different insurgent groups/ militia arising from mismanagement of the central economy and negligence of the youth through unemployment and generally wide spread poverty in cities and villages. Therefore, Coalition's and militia groups are formed along ethnic thinking to compete for economic resources and recognition. In many countries, individual and group's identities have profound consequences for physical safety, political status, sustainable and national security. Absences of these or deprivation of

some groups has often led to violent confrontation along ethnic lines; this has been seen in the Balkans, Rwanda, Burundi, Sudan, Indonesia, Kenya, Zimbabwe, Congo, Nigeria, Liberia, Algeria, Chad, and many other underdeveloped and developing countries.

Most conflicts occurring in Africa and other developing countries are as a result of educational, and socio-economic deprivation. Stewart (2005) noted that most conflict occurring in Africa are mainly propelled by the impulse of the deprived group to resist the injustice and oppressive tendency of the dominant group or the ruling elite. Sierra Leone and Liberia have substantial earnings from export of mineral resources since the 1950's however this has rather inhibited than promote their economy. There was widespread rebellion engendered by crave for iron ore and diamond. In Sierra Leone, as a result of bad governance, decades of corruption, and a patrimonial economic which is based in the capital city free town which benefitted only the elites and their families, was seen in the collapse of both infrastructure and the education system, leading to environmental degradation,

In Liberia, there was the failure of increased export earnings to speed up socio-economic development. This was exacerbated by socio-political and economic discrimination against the indigenous population by the affluent Creole's descendants of black settlers who are in the minority. In 1980, with this negation of majority rule, and with the lots of the youths not improving under the new military regime of Samuel Doe, with a large army of literate but unemployed youths, riots and political violence broke out. With the worsening economic and political situation, a group headed by Charles Taylor took up arms against Samuel Doe which lasted for 14 years. Recently the Central African Republic (CAR) and the Youngest Sovereign State-South Sudan. Thus, according to Encyclopedias Americana (2004) the emergence of rural slums in diamond-rich districts and fall in agricultural productivity were the consequences of an urban and mining-biased development policy. These various examples of mismanagement of national economy, the neglect of the youth in the scheme of things, leads to unemployment and poverty which have devastating impact on the socio-political and educational development of a nation as its bounders on security.

The consequences of these various crises, wars, agitation and protests are enormous. Children and youths constitute those who suffer from such conflicts, which made them refugees. They become abused and easy prey to military and criminal recruitment and abduction. They miss out years of education. According to Aboribo and Umukoro (2008) 43 million children leaving in conflict-affected areas do not have a chance to go to school. Without education victims of war, and crises (refugees) often lack funds for school fees, uniforms, books etc. as they struggle to support themselves and families.

Skill Demonstration and Entrepreneurship Development:

Based on D'Amico, Tucker, Miles, Zhou, Shih and Green (2012), there is no consensus on what the definition of skill should be. However, Kelley, O'Connor, Neck and Peters (2011) described skill as the ability and capacity to do something. Wickham (2006) also defined

skill as the knowledge that is best described by an action. Also, business dictionary.com describes skill as the ability and capacities obtained via deliberate systematic and sustained effort to smoothly and adaptively execute compound and difficult tasks which required technicalities. Holding on these descriptions above, this paper therefore conceptualized skill demonstration as the application of acquire skill and knowledge to achieve the desired goals. It is also the platform whereby those who acquired the entrepreneurial skills through the various skill acquisition centers showcase their knowledge and skills they have acquired in their training. Previous authors on entrepreneurship development have affirmed that individual skills generally predict entrepreneurial activities.

For instance, Ahmad and Seet (2010) in their study claimed that entrepreneurial skills are strongly related to the entrepreneurial intention of the foreign students in Malaysia. Kuratko and Hodgetts (2004) have long identified skill as a key factor to successful and meaningful entrepreneurial development. Also, Metzler and Woessmann, (2012) found that skill is significantly related to the teacher's performance. They concur that skill plays a significant role in the development of qualified teaching profession. This paper goes beyond previous studies by discussing on the demonstration of entrepreneurial skills. It is the belief of this paper that it is not just enough for people to acquire skills but must demonstrate these skills. Therefore, Al-Rabeei, H. (2003) argued that there should be a platform where people with the acquired skill should be given the opportunity to exhibit and practically use the skills, and by so doing, the skills be acquired can become part of them for live and also make them productive and useful to themselves and society. Therefore, there is need for NDDC to engage in practical skill demonstration through the provision of appropriate channel and environment to enhance entrepreneurship development in the Niger Delta region.

Entrepreneurship Empowerment and Gainful Employment

It has been established from the afore outlined discussion that the collapse of the hitherto viable economy of the Niger Delta region was directly induced by the oil and gas exploration and exploitation activities of Multinational Companies, evidenced by the high incidence of poverty, unemployment, insecurity and violence that is easily identifiable in the Niger Delta region. These oil and gas exploitation and exploration activities have rendered the general environment agriculturally and economically unproductively, hence, compelling an alternative means of livelihood to combat the poverty and unemployment menace. One of such possible alternatives and potent remedy is for the government and oil and gas multinationals to collaborate and embark on an entrepreneurship empowerment scheme and create opportunities for gainful employment for the Niger Delta youths to avoid nefarious activities (Ebegbulem, J., Ekpe, D. & Adejumo, T. O. 2013)

An entrepreneur is a person who pioneers new business ideas, bears risk and sources human, financial, natural and technological resources to produce goods and services and managing them profitably to the satisfaction of customers. Entrepreneurs usually need

only a moderate amount of capital to start and meticulously nurture its growth to maturity. This is the reason they are usually referred to as small and medium scale enterprises (SMEs). SMEs are potent catalyst in the economic growth and development of their host communities and countries in general. To state pointedly, there is a strong correlation between economic growth and development and the viability of SMEs (entrepreneurs) in a region or country. This is owing to the fact that SMEs are labour intensive with the potentials of creating several thousands of job opportunities yearly. According to official Chinese estimates, SMEs contribute over 60% of exports, growing to 68% in 2005 (USD 518 billion), a figure almost twice the GDP of Greece and about a quarter of the GDP of France. In the EU and USA, SMEs account for 23 million (99%) of enterprises and over three quarters (3/4) of total jobs (100 million job annually) (Alvarez, S. A., Barney, J. B. & Anderson, P. 2013).

The huge returns recorded by SMEs in these countries was largely facilitated or enhanced by the easy access of aspiring entrepreneurs to credit facilities at moderate interest rates (World Bank, 2006). In Nigeria however, the experience of SMEs is very different from what obtains in other parts of the world, especially Asia, Europe and USA. Álvarez, S. A., Barney, J. B. & Anderson, P. (2013) posited that The number huddles SMEs encounter in Nigeria range from; stringent collateral benchmarks imposed by banks, to unreasonably high interest rates, the lack of relevant entrepreneurial and management skills by aspiring entrepreneurs and the gross non-compliance of bank in making available the 10% of their net profits to SMEs as clearly stipulated by the central Bank Nigeria (CBN). Entrepreneurship empowerment and development, contextually, would entail, giving the Niger Delta youths an opportunity to acquire relevant entrepreneurial and management skills in desired commercial or business undertakings and ultimately making capital or funds available for them to start, manage and own their SMEs. Capital or funding may come in form of access to low interest loans whose collaterals benchmarks are affordable and negotiable, or as financial aid.

Acquiring relevant entrepreneurial and managerial skills could be packaged in form of on or off the job training, through workshop/seminars and through apprenticeship schemes. The youths could also be encouraged to form cooperative societies and trade associations to easily get support from collaborating agencies and from each other. The chamber of commerce and industry would certainly be of importance equally. On the other hands, gainful employment should be made available for the skilled and educated Niger Delta youths. Possession of relevant skills and education are often viewed as key factors in the suitability for a job. To this end, government in collaboration with oil and gas Multinational Corporations could set up vocational and technical centers or sponsor vulnerable youths to short- or long-term courses or training (as the case may be), in order to acquire relevant skills and knowledge to make them employable.

A few contrary observations however have been made, describing the Niger Delta youths as irresponsible, unproductive and unwilling to work or be engaged in any legitimate means of livelihood. Their argument was premised on the fact that the youths resorted to

kidnapping and abduction and sometimes even killing of foreign oil workers, as well as, even Nigerian's who do not have any business with the oil and gas sector. They maintained that, violence is unproductive and therefore is not a responsible and legitimate means of fighting any form of injustice (Okojie, 2009). Based on the foregoing, there is need therefore to find out the readiness or willingness of the Niger Delta people (youths) to engage in legitimate business undertakings and gainful employment as well as their readiness or willingness to accept any form of vocational training, apprenticeship schemes and other forms of relevant trainings to acquire skills to make them skillful and employable. It is therefore the readiness or willingness of the Niger Delta people or youths to be transformed into entrepreneurs or employable personality that this study seeks to investigate and establish.

The Way Forward to Entrepreneurship Development in Nigeria

It is strongly believed that entrepreneurs in Nigeria are faced with numerous challenges and problems; notwithstanding every identified problem most has a solution. The solution to the challenges faced by entrepreneurship development in Nigeria lies in both the hands of government and the up- coming and future entrepreneurs who wish to venture into business. The future entrepreneurs have a very serious role to play to see that the challenges faced by entrepreneurs is reduced or totally eliminated. The researcher strongly believes that the following points will serve as a solution to the challenges and problem of entrepreneurship development in Niger Delta region of Nigeria.

- a. Future and upcoming entrepreneurs should concentrate during their period of studies in higher institutions of learning so as to acquire the required technical skills which will help them to identify business opportunities, take advantage of such opportunities, venture into business and become a successful entrepreneur which will result to national development.
- b. Strong patent law should be provided by the government of the federation so that local entrepreneurs will be protected from foreign producers. Government should encourage the production and consumption of local products made in the country; in this way, the indigenous entrepreneurs will be encouraged to venture into business.
- c. The government should give loan to entrepreneurs as at when needed. The interest rate of such loan should be such that is affordable by the entrepreneurs, commensurate directives should be given by the C.B.N to commercial banks, the C.B.N should encourage the commercial banks to give loan to entrepreneurs at a lower interest rate.
- d. Finally, government officials should discourage corruption tribalism, religious bias and favoritism and ensure that every individual is treated with equal right and respect in terms of giving loan, issuing business certificate, signing of patent law as well as issuing certificate of incorporation.

Conclusion and Summary

The issue of graduate unemployment has caught the attention of policymakers, parents, educationist as well as media commentators. In fact, the situation is almost certainly

worse than expected as over 2.5 million graduates from Nigerian universities are presently roaming about the streets looking for unavailable employment. In sheer desperation, many universities graduate travel to foreign countries searching for job. Unfortunately, this attempt has not yielded positive result as reported by Punch of 15th October, 20-07. The Nigerian High Commissioner to India, Ambassador Dutsina Lawal has warned all job seekers particularly university graduates from travelling to India in search of employment. Hear him: "You can't go to India and get a job because they have about 1.3 billion people to take care of. Half of them is educated and qualified. Every one of them is trained in one skill or another. So, don't go there and think you will get a job, there is absolutely no job.

The first panacea to solve graduate unemployment is the need for higher institutions in Niger-Delta to respond to the current challenge through a thorough and complete restructuring of their curriculum content in order to make future graduates more relevant to their prospective employers. Entrepreneurship should be taught to students in all disciplines in the institution. It is not out of place to say that many business ideas emerge from non-business disciplines but are often waved aside or ignored because students are not sufficiently educated or do not possess the required knowledge and skills. Entrepreneurship education is very important that there is urgent need for all higher educational institutions in Niger-Delta to comply with the presidential directives that entrepreneurship education be made compulsory for all students of higher education institutions in Nigeria, irrespective of their areas of specialization. This policy decision was based on government awareness of the crucial role of entrepreneurship education and training in fostering employment generation among the teeming youths, economic growth, and wealth creation. Thus, entrepreneurial skills development according to Anho (2011) goes beyond training and education.

It involves a process of human capacities building through formal and/or informal training, inculcating the entrepreneur basic skills such as financial skills, technical skills, creative skills, managerial skills, intellectual skills, marketing skills, communication skills and technological skills. Thorough consideration and possibly mandating the various regulatory and accrediting agencies responsible for higher education programmes planning to compulsorily enshrine entrepreneurship education in the curriculum should be a welcome development. Entrepreneurship is essential for rapid and sustained economic growth and development. It creates the required man power and skills necessary for accelerated growth, reduce unemployment and poverty. It is therefore strategic and wise for Nigeria government to assign a significant and increasing role to entrepreneurship in Niger-Delta as their effort to revamp the economy in the creeks.

Findings and Recommendations

The findings of this research conduct have unveiled hopes of potential changes to occur, from the chance to improve the standard of life in Niger Delta communities for economic restoration, through a profound entrepreneurship education, and its implications for

combating poverty and unemployment in Niger Delta regions (Agwu et al., 2014); because from this research finding, the Niger Delta needs economic restoration in their Niger Delta regions (Adetola et al., 2016). The following paragraphs illustrate the steps to achieve economic restoration in Niger Delta regions:

1. Impart effective chances of having positive social change in the lives of the youths' characters, create chances of improving families' perceptions on sensitive issues, create chances of business improvement in business organizations/operations, attain the societal levels of responsibilities that can contribute to build area's economy; on the knowledge and understanding the importance of building factors of economic development in Niger Delta regions (Thomas et al., 2015).
2. Impart on the youths of Niger Delta regions the motivation and the benefits of implementing entrepreneurship education in their region, for the spirit of education to grow in their community, be motivated to attend institutions of higher learnings, colleges/universities, encourage small and medium-sized business developments in their regions, since these factors are the key factors that build wealth in a nation, establish business units in their regions to create employment opportunities, invest on factors of economic restoration, which was found lacking in their communities prior to this very moment (Ukwueze & Nwosu, 2014)

Individual level. In my qualitative multiple-case analysis, the study and the implications create wild opportunities that may accommodate individuals' assessments of different attributes and participations to further expand the scopes of their individuals' levels of contributions in their society that may affect positive social change towards building factors or strategies that may impact economic benefits among the youths social involvements; and also to the entire Niger Delta communities and beyond (Chiazor et al., 2017). Irrespective of the direction or method of approach, individuals can create own peculiar strategies or investment strategies, designed for accomplishing a designated task as deemed right and worthy to lead to achieve economic purpose or viable contributions towards developing, expanding and improving the factors of economy, which will actual aide in growing the economy of their communities, the Niger Delta regions (Agwu et al., 2014).

Family level. Families believe, create, respect and observe a special pattern of behavior in their lines of family's traditions, or family lineage in most cases. For decades, most families in Niger Delta region have been either fishermen or agricultural famers (Babalola & Ayuba, 2015). These two occupations are common in Niger Delta communities today, as the indigenes traditionally and superstitiously believe and willingly concentrated on such traditional/family heritage; or the passing of title, occupation or line of trade from the parent (father or mother) down to the offspring (children) (Neuman, 2011; Yin, 2017). This system of life upkeep created a major obstacle that led the indigenes of Niger Delta region away from believing and knowing that education has been and will always be an indisputable factor of civilization and economic development of any society, including their region – the Niger Delta (Ogwumike, 2001).

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