ENTERPRENEURSHIP EXCLUSION AND THE FAILURE OF MILLENIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS (MGDs)IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

This research survey attempts, on the part of the promoters of the millennium development goals, to bring to limelight the fundamental issues militating against the attainment of MDG objectives especially in relation to poverty eradication on the target date in Nigeria. It discusses conceptual issues of definition, structure and role of entrepreneurship idealising the working experience in the light of the Nigerian factor. An examination of the evolution of poverty in Nigeria is also examined with a view to ascertaining the extent to which they approximate to reality. In the process, both successes and failures of the millennium development goals are highlighted. The research ends with suggestions as to how the scope of the various government policies could be enlarged to allow continuity and enable it meet the target date for the achievement of the millennium development goals in Nigeria. Entrepreneurship, Poverty, millennium development goals.

Keywords: Entrepreneurship, Poverty, Millennium Development Goals, Sustainable, Eradication

Introduction

The achievement of Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in any economy depends, amongst other things on the flexibility and continuity of government policies. However, political rivalry and bias termination of government policies by opposition takeover has been identified as a fundamental problem facing Nigeria in connection to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). It therefore leaves the MDG vision to the mercy of various government ideologies to establish the institutional framework necessary for the mobilization of funds and the situation of government projects targeted at the upliftment of the general living standard of their teeming population.

Research is very vital in any socio-economic environment. The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) are integral parts of the world agenda and plays a prominent and crucial role in shaping governments focus in any economy. The appreciation of this propelled to the forefront the need to make an enquiry into the structure and trend in relation to poverty eradication in Nigeria.

According to the Nigeria Federal office of statistics (1980-1996), the level of poverty in Nigeria is 65.5% of the nation's population. In the1999 United Nations report Nigeria is ranked among the 25 poorest nations in the world with a human development index (HDI) of 0. 416. Those

figures are buttered with other statistics which indicate that Gross Domestic product (G.D.P) declined continuously from 4.7% in 1991 to 3.00 % in 1992 but rose again to 3.8% in 1995 through 1999.

While per capital income dropped from U.S \$850 in 1982 to U.S \$370 in 1995. Furthermore, the rate of inflation rose from 13% in 1991 to 72.8% in 1995, later to 29.3% in 1996 and 1997 respectively. Unemployment is becoming increasingly alarming; in the year 2000 80% of the average 120,000 graduates produced annually by our local universities and other tertiary instructions were unemployed. In the same year over 50% of about the 500,000 school leavers produced annually were unemployed. Added to these figures are retrenched worked thrown into the labour market.

The oxford Advanced learners dictionary of current English defines poverty as a state of being poor, to live in or lack. The World Bank defines poverty as a state of living on less than US \$2 a day. It went further to describe poverty as a state of abject lack of opportunity and empowerment and the subjection to bad quality of life in general. It is the mental and psychological deprivation of goodwill occasioned by the physical realities of lack of infrastructural services such as safe and accessible drinking water, basic sanitation or solid wastes management, access to basic education, health services, adequate shelter and balanced diet.

The government recognizes the importance of poverty reduction over a long period of time. According to Prof. Chukwuma Soludo (financing the Nigerian economy towards 2020), he stated that 1 out of 2 Nigerians is in real poverty and that poverty is becoming a way of life for the affected teeming population. Children of the poor are likely to become poor due the widening gap in access to quality education and other social infrastructure and amenities.

Zone	1980	1985	1992	1996	2004
South-south	13.2	45.7	40.8	58.2	35.1
South –east	12.9	30.4	41.0	53.5	26.7
South –West	13.4	38.6	43.1	60.9	43.0
North-central	32.2	50.8	46.0	64.7	67.0
North-East	35.5	54.9	54.0	70.1	72.0
North West	37.7	52.1	36.5	77.2	71.2

Poverty level by Zones 1980 -2004

Source: (*Financing the Nigerian Economy towards* 2020)

Though poverty is as old as man and it has now, more than ever, become such a topical issue and a matter of global concern which necessitated and propelled the goal of the international community to refocus on the menace called poverty. This was expressed by the united nations in its "Millennium Declaration" adopted in New York in September 2000 at the largest ever gathering of world leaders at the instance of the United Nations (UN). The goal is to reduce

poverty at least by 50% by 2015. This in agreement with Francesco Frangiali, whose opinion is that that "the reduction of poverty has become one of the most compelling challenges. It is now the responsibility of all governments of developing and developed countries to strive to meet the challenges of attaining these goals. The eight goals brought together are the responsibility of developing and developed countries it was founded on a global partnership endorsed at the international conference on financing for development in Monterey, Mexico in March 2002, and again at the Johannesburg world summit of sustainable development in August 2002.

Before the adoption of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), successive governments in Nigeria have at one time or the other introduced various strategies aimed at reducing poverty of the citizenry. These strategies include: Austerity measures, Directorate for Food Roads and Rural Infrastructures (DFRRI), Family Support Programme (FSP), Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP), Rural Infrastructural Development Scheme (RIDS), Family economic Advancement Programme (FEAP), National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP), Agricultural Credit Guarantee Schemes (ACGS), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the National Economic Empowerment Development Strategy (NEEDS).

The United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) tends to create a more articulate vision as against the trial and error policy adoption and rejection of previous governments. In 2004, the administration of President Olusegun Obasanjo developed a strategic blueprint towards addressing the nation's development challenges. This blueprint was called the National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS). It was an attempt to achieve a comprehensive reform strategy addressing economic and social, political and institutional issues at the same time and in a multi-faceted way. NEEDS promised to implement a priority action plan of wealth creation, create seven million new jobs, alleviate poverty and eliminate corruption during its first four-year implementation circle (2004 - 2007). The preceding administration of President Umoru Musa Yar'adua proposed to provide a solid footing to the NEEDS foundation and build on the platform that will catapult Nigeria to become one of the top 20 economies in the world by the year 2020. He tagged this ambitious long-term perspective plan Vision 20-2020. To further drive home this desire, the president inaugurated the National Council and the National Steering committee on Vision 20-2020. It was observed that during the first year of the administration, there has been virtually no civil society engagement by the Yar'adua administration on neither its poverty eradication programme nor an economic policy direction. We recall that in his campaign manifesto entitled "End Poverty, Develop Nigeria", President Umoru Musa Yar'adua promised Nigerians that "the United Nations Millennium Development Goals is our guide" and committed his administration to "confront poverty and develope Nigeria" if elected into office. He articulated a seven-point agenda to do this by pursuing the following:

- i. Energy emergency
- ii. Agricultural and food security
- iii. Wealth creation and poverty alleviation
- iv. Land reform
- v. Security of lives and property
- vi. Human capital development including compulsory education for children
- vii. Transport revolution including improved mass transit system

Up till the demise of President Umoru Musa Yar'adua on 5th May 2010, Nigerians were yet to feel the pulse of the economic agenda of the government. Nigeria has a population of over 140 million people, which makes it the most populated black nation on earth. There is the need therefore to move beyond plans and policies to taking practical steps towards achieving developmental gains. In this regard, we are optimistic that the collaboration between the entrepreneurs and the government is crucial in creating the necessary synergy to ensure that we achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) over the next five years and redefine economic priorities and strategies in a way that it will impact convincingly on the majority of our citizens. It is in this context that this research work propelled.

Problems of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in Nigeria

The problem of development has occupied the attention of scholars, activists, politicians, development workers and international organizations for many years with an increased tempo in the last decade. Even though there are different perspectives to development, there is a general consensus that development will lead to good change manifested in increased capacity of people to have control over material assets, intellectual resources and ideology; and to obtain physical necessities of life such as food, clothing, shelter, employment, equality, participation in government, political and economic independence, adequate education, gender equality, sustainable development and peace. This is why some people have argued that the purpose of development is to improve people's lives by expanding their choices, freedom and dignity.

Limitations of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in Nigeria

The limitations of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and its targets are well documented. First, they risk simplifying what development is all about by restricting the goals to what is measurable. Many aspects of development cannot be easily measured. Secondly, some of the goals are very modest. For example, the goal to half the proportion of people living on less than US\$1 a day by 2015 and the target to achieve a significant improvement in lives of at least 100,000 million slum dwellers by 2020. Finally, some of the targets do not address some problems holistically. For instance, the MDG on education talks only of a full course of primary schooling with no reference to secondary school and tertiary education.

It is important to point out that there are limitations of utilizing the MDGs as a framework for delivering or measuring development because they risk simplifying what development is about by restricting the goals to what is measurable. Despite the limitations mentioned above, it is necessary for us to engage the millennium development goals (MDGs) for many reasons. First, the MDGs draw together in single agenda issues that require priority to address the development question. Secondly, the MDGs have received a tremendous endorsement and backing by world's governments. Thirdly, the MDGs have the advantage of being more or less measurable because they are mostly concentrated on human development and focused almost on a single date, which is 2015. Another advantage of the MDG is that it adds urgency and transparency to international development. Finally, explicit resource commitments have been made to achieve the MDGs. In the Nigerian context, the civil society consultative forum on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) held in Abuja, Nigeria on 20th April 2004, provided the following three reasons why we need to engage the MDGs:

- i. MDGs provide additional entry point to engage government on development issues.
- ii. MDGs affect all segments of the society and entrepreneurs serve as the link between government and the grassroots.
- iii. MDGs provide the link between local and international actions towards human centered development.

Various scholars have stressed that the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) depends largely on the statistical variable applicable to each participating country with total commitment from the government as regards policy formulation, implementation and monitoring. For the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) to take root, the desired growth and indices must be visible among the citizenry. Another basic pre-condition is that there must be justice, stability and continuity that will motivate the determinant forces towards free interaction and bring to reality the opinion achieved of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

The Theory of Entrepreneurship

Entrepreneurship is the art of being an entrepreneur. It is a French word meaning "one who undertakes innovations, finance and business acumen in an effort to transform innovations into economic goods". This may result in new organizations or may be part of revitalizing existing and mature organizations in response to a perceived opportunity. The most obvious form of entrepreneurship is that of starting new businesses. However in recent years, the term has been extended to include social and political forms of entrepreneurial activity. When entrepreneurship is describing activities within a firm or large organization, it is referred to as entrepreneurship and may include corporate venturing, when large activities spin-off organizations.

According to Paul Reynolds, an entrepreneurship scholar and creator of the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM), "... by the time they reach their retirement years, half of all working men would probably have a period of self-employment for six or more years. Participating in a new business creation is a common activity among workers over the course of their careers." And in recent years has been documented by scholars such as David Audretsch to be a major driver of economic growth in both the United States and Western Europe.

Entrepreneurial activities are substantially different depending on the type of organization that is being started. Entrepreneurship ranges in scale from solo projects to major undertakings creating many job opportunities. Many high value entrepreneurial ventures seek venture capital or angel funding (seed money) in order to raise capital to build businesses. Angel investors generally seek annualized returns of 20 - 30% and more, as well as extensive involvement in the business. Many kinds of organizations now exist to support intending entrepreneurs, including specialized government agencies, business incubators, science parks and some Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs). In more recent times, the term entrepreneurship has been extended to include elements not necessarily related to business formation activity such as conceptualizations of entrepreneurship have emerged.

The Concept of Poverty in Nigeria

Poverty is defined as the condition of not having the means to afford basic human needs such as clean water, nutrition, healthcare, education, clothing, shelter, etc. this is also referred to as absolute poverty of destitution. In another definition, poverty is viewed as the quality or state of being poor or indigent, want or scarcity of means of substance, need or any deficiency of elements or resources that are needed or desired. On a more compact scale, poverty is a certain level of material deprivation below which an individual suffers physically, emotionally and socially. Finally, the World Bank defines poverty as the state of living on less than US \$2 a day; lack of opportunity and empowerment and a bad quality of life in general.

No one common definition of poverty is accepted by all countries. Poverty is generally categorized as material deprivation. Generally, poverty is defined as a state of being poor or deficient in money or means of subsistence (Baker, 1995). Increasingly, the concept of basic subsistence is measured by the availability of infrastructural services such as safe water, sanitation, solid waste management and access to basic education, health services, adequate shelter, access to balanced diet, etc. the plight of the poor people throughout the world continues to be much the same as what was described by the Brandt Commission in1980 which quotes ". . . many hundreds of millions of people in the poorer countries are preoccupied solely with survival and elementary needs. For them, work is frequently not available or, when it is, the pay is low and the conditions often barely tolerable. Homes are constructed with impermanent materials and have neither piped water nor sanitation. Electricity is luxury and health services are thinly spread and in rural areas only barely within walking distance. Primary schools, where they exist, may be free and not far away, but children are needed for work at home or on the farm and cannot be speared for schooling. Permanent insecurity is the condition of the poor.

There are no public systems of social security in the event of unemployment, sickness or death of a wage earner in the family. Floods, draught or disease affecting people or livestock can destroy livelihoods without hope of compensation. The poorest of the poor will remain outside the reach of normal trade and communication. The combination of mal-nutrition, illiteracy, disease, high birth rates, underemployment and low income closes off the avenues of escape." These words sound haunting but it true in the lives of the people living in today's global poverty.

Poverty and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in Nigeria

The reality of the world is that many countries are under-developed with precarious development indices. More than 1.2 billion people or about 20 % of the world population survive on less than US \$1 a day. Wealth is concentrated in the hands of a few people. The UNDP in its 1998 report documented that the 3 richest people in the world have assets that exceed the combined Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of the 48 least developed countries in the world. Nigeria, which is one of the richest 50 countries in early 1970s has retrogressed to become one of the 25 poorest countries at the threshold of the 21st century. It is ironic that Nigeria is the 6th largest exporter of oil and at the same time host the third number of poorest people after China and India. Poverty in Nigeria is in the midst of plenty. Nigeria is among the 20 countries in the world with the widest gap between the rich and the poor.

In Nigeria, one major failure in the economic reform agenda is that government policies are not making any impact on poverty alleviation. Government at all levels in Nigeria have not properly

addressed the issue of poverty and thereby condemning the majority of Nigerians to a life of misery. six years after the target date of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), Nigeria is still far from achieving the set MDG target.

Even these basic four target items are still highly problematic. Though enrolment in primary education is certainly growing at a high rate, the quality of teachers is not improving significantly, especially in the northern Nigeria and the schools are not well equipped. Indeed, in some northern states, growing enrolment is proceeding with growing illiteracy. It means that we not on course to meet the key Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) that are the most critical namely:

- i. Eradicating extreme poverty and hunger.
- ii. Achieving gender equality in our primary schools and empowering women.
- iii. Reducing child mortality with under 5 mortality for 197 for every 1,000 live births.
- iv. Improving maternal healthcare given our mortality rate of 800 for every 100,000 live births.

We clearly need a major policy summersault to get us back on the road map to achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) even though we have passed due date. We need a policy shift that will prioritize and significantly increase social expenditure to include the poor in public budgeting. Recognizing the pivotal role of entrepreneurs in mobilizing concentrated effort for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in Nigeria is crucial in the roadmap to realization of this feat. Entrepreneurs need to explore the opportunities for the Millennium Development Campaigns to eradicate poverty in Nigeria, share the experiences of other countries that have entrenched the entrepreneurs in the blueprint for the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), review the Nigerian context and progress made towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in Nigeria and map out strategies for the campaigns in Nigeria. It is agreed that the Millennium Declaration is a very important milestone to addressing the issues of human rights, peace, justice, gender equity, environmental sustainability and challenges of globalization. It is the lack of political will that is the stumbling block to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in Nigeria.

Poverty can be described as a situation where a person or the people lack access to the basic necessities of life. People are said to be poor when their per capita income is below what is considered to be the poverty level, when hunger, diseases and short life expectancy are common features in the land. Poverty has been the lot of most Nigerian homes over the years. It has eaten deep into the fabrics of our nation that any government that comes into power formulates policies aimed at arresting the hydra headed monster called poverty.

Towards this end and in order to fulfill the promises made to the people which always centers on ways to eradicate poverty, government came up with some policies like; PAP, NAPEP, NEEDS, etc. As a matter of fact, in order to illuminate these policies which often emanate from either the top or bottom level of government, it will be good to treat them one after the other. In other words, our concern here was to x-ray vividly some of the steps which government had taken towards the eradication of this phenomenon.

The Poverty Alleviation Program (PAP)

This was an interim measure introduced early in 2000 to address the problems of rising unemployment and crime wave, particularly among youths. It was ultimately aimed at increasing the welfare of Nigerians. Essentially, the primary objectives of PAP are three-fold: reduce the problem of unemployment and hence raise effective demand in the economy; increase the productiveness of the economy; and drastically reduce the embarrassing crime wave in the society. The orientation of the PAP is holistic in nature, and if properly planned and managed could tame the menace of poverty in Nigeria. But in spite of the broad feature of the programme, emphasis seemed to have placed more on the creation of jobs through public work system instead entrepreneurship.

However, in implementation, the programme appeared to be ad-hoc in orientation with little attention paid to the policy framework. The emphasis on massive construction and other public work projects made it look like a one-off affair rather than making it a revolving one. The framework of allocation of funds, sustainability aspect of the PAP and the needed collaborative arrangements for its success. The political connotation of the PAP served as an important threat to the success of the programme. The programme was portrayed as the ruling party's programme and hence had met with resistance from the chief executives of the states controlled by other political parties.

The National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP)

NAPEP was the program which focused on the provision of "strategies for the eradication of absolute poverty in Nigeria" (FRN, 2001:3) NAPEP was complemented by the National Poverty Eradication Council (NAPEC) which coordinated the poverty-related activities of all the relevant Ministries and Agencies. It had the mandate to ensure that the wide range of activities are centrally planned, coordinated and complement one another so that the objectives of policy continuity and sustainability are achieved.

Upon consideration of the Joda Panel and Abdullahi Committee Reports, fourteen (14) core poverty alleviation Ministries were identified as follows: Agriculture and Rural Development, Education, Water Resources, Industry, Power and Steel, Employment, Labour and Productivity, Women Affairs and Youth Development, Health, Works and Housing, Environment, Solid Minerals Development, Science and Technology, Finance, and National Planning Commission. Similarly, thirty-seven (37) core poverty alleviation institutions, agencies and programmes were identified. The poverty reduction-related activities of the relevant institutions under NAPEP were classified into four, namely:

- i. Youth Empowerment Scheme (YES) which deals with capacity acquisition, mandatory attachment, productivity improvement, credit delivery, technology development and enterprise promotion.
- ii. Rural Infrastructure Development Scheme (RIDS) which deals with the provision of potable and irrigation water, transport (rural and urban), rural energy and power support.

Social Welfare Service Scheme (SOWESS) which deals with special education, primary health care services, establishment and maintenance of recreational centres, public awareness facilities, youth and student hostel development, environmental protection facilities, food security

provisions, micro and macro credits delivery, rural telecommunications facilities, provision of mass transit, and maintenance culture; and

i. Natural Resource Development and Conservation Scheme (NRDCS)Which deals with the harnessing of the agricultural, water, solid mineral resources, conservation of land and space (beaches, reclaimed land, etc) particularly for the convenient and effective utilisation by small-scale operators and the immediate community.

In effect, the current poverty eradication programme of the country is centered on youth empowerment, rural infrastructure development, provision of social welfare services and natural resource development and conservation.

National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS)

The National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS) 2004 – 2007 is Nigeria's reform based medium-term plan for economic recovery, growth and development. NEEDS was conceptualized in 2003 and launched in 2004, as a response to the numerous challenges facing the nation. Some of the challenges include the following: Near collapse of social and economic infrastructure;

iii. Natural Resource Development and Conservation Scheme (NRDCS)Which deals with the harnessing of the agricultural, water, solid mineral resources, conservation of land and space (beaches, reclaimed land, etc) particularly for the convenient and effective utilisation by small-scale operators and the immediate community.

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- Near collapse of social and economic infrastructure;
 1999 Per capita GDP remained stagnant prior 1990; Grew at 2.2% 2003Total GDP 2001 \$45 billion;
- a. Per capital income was \$300 a year;
- b. External and domestic debt 70% of GDP (difficult to service debt, domestic debt rose by 200% between 1999 and 2002 about \$9.0billion);
- c. Real sector dominated by primary production sectors: Agriculture 41%, crude oil 13%, manufacturing 5-7 % of GDP.
- d. High macroeconomic volatility (exchange rate, inflation rate, budget deficit, GDP growth rate, GDP per capita are among the worst in the world).
- e. Finances at all levels of government in poor shape (pension crisis, arrears of salaries, huge debt misallocation and mismanagement).

- f. Nigerian urbanization rate -5.3% (one of the fastest in the world);
- g. High level of poverty (about 70%);
- h. Dysfunctional education system (low standard, institutions decay, youth militancy etc).

Unfriendly business environment (public sector dominance, rent seeking, weak

- i. institutions, corruption, high cost of doing business).
- j. High unemployment rate (urban 12.4%, rural 23.2%).
- k. General insecurity of life and property.

Given the porous state of the economy, an integrated and coordinated development approach was adopted, with the sub-national governments, developing complimentary medium term plans: State Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (SEEDS). The conceptual issues on NEEDS/SEEDS are based on four goals:

- 1. Poverty reduction
- 2. Wealth creation
- 3. Employment generation
- 4. Value re-orientation

The framework for actualizing the goals of NEEDS is anchored on three pillars:

- 1. Empowering people and improving social delivery.
- 2. Fostering private sector led growth through creating the appropriate enabling environment.

Enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of government, by changing the way government does its work

Conclusion and Recommendations

It can be concluded that meaningful and rapid development occasioned by total eradication of poverty and treatable diseases in Nigeria, amongst other Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) is not feasible in the current dispensation. Diversification by way of adopting the institutional use of entrepreneurs has thus become sine qua non for the realization of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in Nigeria even after due date. However, corruption has been identified as a fundamental problem facing Nigeria hence it therefore behooves the players in the entrepreneurial sector to diffuse any traces of corruption amongst them and position themselves at an advantageous position to tackle the challenge of spare-heading the new race against time for achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in Nigeria post-deadline.

It was therefore, recommended that: there should be effective long-term planning management in establishing continuity of government's policies especially those directly relating to focuses of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in Nigeria and in taking advantage of the relevant entrepreneurs to achieve permanent diffusion from the dysfunctional centralized system of policy implementation currently prevalent in Nigeria. Facilitating empowerment, the government can achieve this by laying the political and legal basis for inclusive development by creating enduring partnership with the private sector through the instrumentation of the entrepreneurs to foster growth and equity, promote inclusive decentralization of policy formulation and implementation. It is the core responsibility of every government to provide and maintain basic infrastructures such as ports, roads, water, power, communication, security, etc for its citizens. These basic infrastructures, when provided, will reduce the risk and cost of doing business and

help the entrepreneurs to overcome avoidable hindrances to doing business in Nigeria. The government should initiate a formidable industrial policy that nurtures entrepreneurial activity and helps diversify the economy away from heavy dependence on primary export commodities such as crude oil. This will pave way for an active role for entrepreneurs in small, medium and large scale enterprises. If the industries are revitalized, Nigeria will increase its export capacity and improve the balance of trade thereby impacting the GDP ratio of the economy. In this regard, the contribution of the entrepreneurs in mobilizing the dormant resources into productive use can hardly be over emphasized.

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