



## **PUBLIC POLICIES ON ENTREPRENEURSHIPS: THE IMPLICATION FOR POVERTY REDUCTION: A QUALITATIVE APPROACH**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The identification of entrepreneurship as a veritable tool for poverty reduction in developing countries has accelerated economic growth and development. This study applied qualitative research design and collected data from fifteen informants; we analyze the data using Nvivo software and assess entrepreneurship public policies on the paucity of resources. The cardinal objectives of our study are to identify entrepreneurship potentials to moderate multidimensional economic challenges such as poverty, youth unemployment and suggest laudable strategies to policy makers in the Nigeria context. Findings from the study revealed that policy thrust, capacity building and provision of capital resources was discovered in concrete terms to revamp the illness of small and medium scale enterprises. We equally found that strengthening government commissions, agencies and directorates will unlock the multifarious challenges confronting entrepreneurship culture to lessen poverty. Finally, this paper passionately recommended for establishment of cooperatives, proven financial policies, expanding SMEs projects to the local governments, legislations and vigorous political will. Future research direction suggested for a quantitative research approach from the beneficiaries and participants of poverty alleviation programs in the study area.

**Keywords:** Entrepreneurship, poverty reduction, public policy, qualitative design, Bauchi state.

### **INTRODUCTION**

The contemporary efforts to reduce poverty led to the establishment of different policies and programs across the globe, yet, the phenomenon is still a threat to the most underdeveloped countries (Bruton, Ketchen, & Ireland, 2013). This is due inadequate international mechanism from the World Bank, International Monetary Fund and MDGs strategies anchored by the UN; to mitigate the phenomenon and to provide remedies to the underprivileged especially in the less developed countries of Africa, Asia and Pacific. The effects of unfavourable economic policies by the IMF and World Bank; the Structural Adjustment Program in Nigeria led to the devaluation of Naira and external borrowing and unfavourable atmosphere for entrepreneurial policies in Nigeria (Sola & Joachim, 2016). The governments at the federal and state established Programs to strengthen entrepreneurship, small and medium scale enterprises. Notable among these include: National Directorate of Employment (NDE); the Small and Medium Scale Enterprises Development Agency, (SMEDAN), National Poverty Eradication Program NAPEP; Micro finance institution (MFIS), among others. Studies reveal

that corruption, economic instability, bureaucratic holdup, policy inconsistencies, poor management, financial impediments, structural and cultural factors; inadequate patent law, low science and technological skills yield these programs ineffective and led to high rate of poverty in Nigeria (Edoho & Li, 2016; Eze & Nwali, 2012; Garba, 2010). Studies abound that the north-eastern Nigeria and Bauchi state in particular, faces categorical economic downturn due to the activities of insurgents (Ogbaekirigwe, 2015). Studies were conducted on entrepreneurship and indicated mixed findings; conversely, entrepreneurship has been discovered to be imperative for economic development. For instance Obi, (2015), studied entrepreneurship development and revealed that the implementation of entrepreneurship education faces inadequate finance, skilled manpower and poor infrastructure among others. Therefore, this study uses a qualitative approach to explore entrepreneurship policies to alleviate poverty and established recommendations to policy makers. This paper is structured into introduction, literature review on the concepts of poverty, entrepreneurship and public policy. It further explain the research questions, objectives of the study, methodology, data collection, data analysis, scope of the study, profile of the informants, results, discussion, conclusion, recommendations and references.

## **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

This study involves the following research questions:

- I. What are the entrepreneurial policies that mitigate poverty?
- II. What are the ways to develop entrepreneurship?

## **RESEARCH OBJECTIVES**

Accordingly, the objectives of this study are as follows:

- I. To identify the entrepreneurship policies that mitigate poverty.
- II. To utilize the entrepreneurship potentials for poverty reduction.

## **METHODOLOGY**

This study applied qualitative research design and non-probability sampling design was used through semi-structured interviews. Data were collected between the 10th of August to 13th of October, 2015 from fifteen informants, who were purposefully selected from ministries, agencies and commissions in Bauchi state, particularly from the Ministries For Cooperatives And Poverty Alleviation; The Ministries Of Social Welfare and Community Development; the Bauchi State Commission For Women as well as Youth Rehabilitation Agency. The population of this study comprises of the stakeholders, participants and beneficiaries of the Bauchi state poverty alleviation programs (2010-2015). Purposive sampling design was applied, in which the researcher selects the informants according to convenience of access and suitability (Palinkas *et al.*, 2013). Thematic data analysis was applied in the study using Nvivo 10 software.

## **THE SCOPE AND STUDY AREA**

The study covered selected ministries and commissions in Bauchi state, the federal republic of Nigeria. Bauchi state was created on 3rd of February, 1976. It is located in the north east geopolitical zone of the federal republic of Nigeria. It has 20 local government areas and three senatorial districts of Bauchi south, Central and North. It covers a land area of

49,119 km<sup>2</sup> (18,965 sq mi). The population of Bauchi state stand at 4,653,066 according (2006 census) and density of 95/km<sup>2</sup>/(250/sqmi). It is located at latitudes 9° 3' and 12° 3' north and longitudes 8° 50' and 11° east. It has two unique span of vegetation zones, the Sahel and Sudan Savanah. Agriculture is the main occupation of the people in Bauchi state. The home to famous Yankari National park. The state shares boundary with seven states, Jigawa and Kano to the north, Taraba and Plateau states to the south, Yobe and Gombe to the east and while it shares a boundary with Kaduna state to the west respectively. It has a total of 55 ethnic groups which include Hausa, Gerawa, Fulani, Jarawa, Sayawa, Badawa, Kirfawa, Karekare, Kanuri and Zulawa among others (Akinyele, 1996; Mofoke, Adewumi, Babatunde, Mudiare & Ramalan, 2006; Osaghae, 1991)

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Poverty

The World Bank (1999), defines poverty as hunger, inadequate shelter, incapacity to attain school, insufficient portable drinking water, unawareness, poor expression, insecure future, idleness, powerlessness, unsatisfactory freedom and representation (Foli & Béland, 2014). Literature indicated that the trend of poverty, passing through the denial of medical services, illiteracy, uncertainty, low income, pitiable basic right, which exaggerated productivity and economic improvement. Poverty is a multidimensional phenomenon with different phases of manifestation. To these effects, the World Bank also identified phases in describing poverty, these include; if the people accessed the resources to met up with their basic needs, if there is disparity of take home between the people, whether there is significant differentiation on consumptions habit between the rich and the poor people. Subsequently, the social assessment of poverty encapsulates the feelings of mediocrity, low esteem, little recognition, weaknesses and isolation. The political phase of poverty is related to lack of political power, exclusion in decision making and denial of natural rights and low political participation (Jerome, 2011).

### Entrepreneurship

The concept of entrepreneurship is originated from French, *entreprendre* or undertaker. Entrepreneurship refers to a person or group of persons who manage a business with resourcefulness, confident and adopt change by invention and ensures optimum social good. An entrepreneur improves private business, profitable and human capital development. The entrepreneur is motivated by the expectation, dream, imagination, practical, prudence, wisdom and overwhelming leadership qualities (Duval-Couetil, 2013). Entrepreneurship on the other hand, is the process of recognizing a new business opportunity and the management of resources economically to establish marketing opportunities, with the situations of unidentified after effects, uncertainties and doubt, for revenue generation usually privately owned (Alvarez & Barney, 2014; Hussain, Bhuiyan, & Bakar, 2014).

Basically, literature has identified different types of entrepreneurship categories, these are accomplished, determined, research entrepreneur, copycat and skeptical business operators. These classification cuts across manufacturing of textiles, food products and chemicals respectively. Equally, wholesale, distributors, services, construction, engineering, medical,

the retail and online business were all identified to be viable ventures to mitigate the effects of poverty in the society. To these effects, professional business culture had been instituted in some countries such as China, India, Malaysia and United States of America amongst others (Eze & Nwali, 2012). While others are yet to realize the crucial need for entrepreneurship skills. A review of entrepreneurship policies in Nigeria revealed that unemployment, inequality, poverty, economic instability as well as inadequate political have all contributed to the sluggishness of entrepreneurship in the country (Obi, 2015).

Similarly, the contribution of formal sector on entrepreneurship development uncovered that preceding regimes in Nigeria have executed different policies for the general development of SMEs these include; financial intervention and infrastructural development. Consequently, the formal entrepreneurship sector is bedevilled with glaring weaknesses such as inadequate finances and bureaucratic bottlenecks. The study attested that entrepreneurship is a mechanism for employment generation, poverty reduction, capacity development and capable of promoting the economies of developing countries (Adebayo, 2015). Paradoxically, preceding findings on social entrepreneurship in Saudi Arabia reveals that regulatory policies were established through corporate social responsibilities, non-governmental organizations and business ventures, these include King Khalid Foundation and US-Saudi women's forum on entrepreneurship development which provided better results on the kingdom's social entrepreneurship and economic emancipation (Alzalabani, Modi, & Haque, 2013).

Again, the survey on the impact of small and medium scale business on poverty alleviation in Ibadan city, Nigeria disclosed that entrepreneurship development is exposed to socioeconomic challenges such as derail financial support, poor basic facilities and inadequate management of the business. The study recommended among other things, the strengthening of young entrepreneurs, liberalization of public corporations, increased publicity and awareness to the public on business and provision of basic facilities (Adebayo & Moshood, 2010).

Consequently, a study on the challenges and constraints of SMEs in Nigeria, further revealed that poor financial support, cases of corrupt practices, poor entrepreneurial culture, insufficient infrastructure, lack of business skills and expertise were some of the barriers to entrepreneurship development (John & Okpara, 2011). The study recommended that SMEs operators should be given soft loans, capacity building, inclusion of entrepreneurial activities in the schools programs, initiating more chambers of commerce and support for non-governmental organizations. Other proposals include anti-corruption campaigns and provision of basic amenities for the smooth operations of businesses (John & Okpara, 2011).

### **Public Policy**

Public policy is defined as the engagement of governments and the aspiration to influence public actions. Public policy is the results of the struggle by public officials over who gets what and how (Birkland, 2014). Thomas Dye (1972) public policy as what governments do, why it is been done and what divergence it makes. To Michael Kraft and Scott Furlong (2009) public policy is a course of proceeding actions or inactions which deserved responses on particular social problems (Gerston, 2014). Basically, public policies consist of matters that affect public agenda; actors that presents it, clarify and react to those issues; resources

allocated to those matters; institutions that tackle those issues and order from the government that address those matters (Gerston, 2014)

Concurrently, public policy is classified into Distributive, Redistributive and Regulative policies. Distributive Policies are mostly economic in nature, that ensure the supplies and distributing goods and services to the citizens, groups and companies. These outcomes provide benefits, usually in the form of goods which are shared among the functional groups and geographical locations. These include tax reduction and subsidies to promote economic development and promote businesses. The redistributive Policies are usually economic in nature and promote equity in the society. The government has restructured the societal goods from one group to another group. Redistributive policies come into effects when government gives subsidies directly to the people through public programs such as welfare services. Similarly, most redistributive policies of status may also occur through civil rights legislation and deliberations to bring benefits to the people (Kohler, 2015; Sosnowski, 2015). Regulative policies are the actions of government to achieve some objectives through the applications of laws and other mechanisms to provide better social and economic outcomes in order to improve the life of people and commercial activities. The main objectives of regulatory policy is the maintenance of order and disallow some behaviors that threatening society. Restrictions are applied by the government on certain groups, or corporations that undertake some actions which have adverse effects on the social and political stability of a state. Another objective of the policy is protecting economic activities and markets by applying restrictions to monopolistic tendencies and establish a free market economy. Regulatory policy also takes forms of laws to safeguard the environment and places of work (Peters, Doughtie, & McCulloch, 1977). Therefore, entrepreneurial policies in can be categorized as an aspect of distributive policy.

**Profile of informants**

The informants of this study consist of a Permanent Secretary, seven Directors, three Deputy Directors, two participants/ beneficiaries of the Bauchi state commission for women and youth rehabilitation agency and two senior staff from the ministries and agencies responsible for poverty alleviation programs.

**Table A: General Profile of the informants**

S/NO	Informant	Gender	Age	Marital status	Educational Qualification	Working Experience
1	A1	Male	55 Years	Married	Master’s Degree	34 Years
2	B1	Male	47 Years	Married	Master’s Degree	30 Years
3	B2	Male	45 Years	Married	First Degree	26 Years
4	B3	Male	46 Years	Married	First Degree	25 Years
5	B4	Male	43 Years	Married	First Degree	23 Years
6	B5	Female	43 Years	Married	First Degree	22 Years
7	B6	Male	44 Years	Married	First Degree	23 Years
8	B7	Male	43 Years	Married	First Degree	21 Years
9	B8	Male	42 Years	Married	First Degree	30 Years
10	B9	Male	45 Years	Married	First Degree	22Years
11	C1	Female	44 Years	Married	First Degree	15 Years
12	C2	Male	43 Years	Single	First Degree	13 Years
13	C3	Male	35Years	Married	Diploma	12 Years
14	D1	Male	36 Years	Married	Diploma	3 Years
15	D2	Male	26 Years	Single	Secondary	None

Table A shows a general background of the 15 fifteen informants. The distribution was classified into A1, permanent secretary, B1-B9 Directors, C1-C3 other staff under the rank of Director and D1 and D2 are the beneficiaries of poverty alleviation and employment generation programs. As shown by the table above; the 15 informants, include a permanent secretary was interviewed, nine Directors, three other staff below the rank of director and two participants.

## RESULTS

Based on the interviews with the respondents, strategies for the development of entrepreneurship can be categorized into three important aspects namely policy thrust, capacity development and provision of capital resources.

### Policy Thrust

Policy thrust entails strategies adopted by the government to strengthen the provisions of social services, infrastructure and institutional development. Based on these the government of Bauchi state had established programs that address entrepreneurship development. Thus, informants asserted that there are various policies to boost the businesses in the state, these he establishment of ...?:

*The government established programs that provide unemployment and improve the income of the poor through the ministries of cooperatives and poverty alleviation. The ministry coordinated the entrepreneurship through the following sections; poverty alleviation services, small and medium scale industries and cooperative services. These departments were saddled with the responsibility of organizing activities related to poverty reduction in the state (informant 9).*

Informant 12 attested that the state policies in respect to poverty reduction, small and medium scale businesses and cooperatives introduced by the government required the support of private bodies and individuals in terms of financing:

*Both the governments, private organizations, business associates and individuals have roles to play in the expansion of small scale business in the state. To me the Government should provide a conducive atmosphere for entrepreneurs, skills acquisition centers and economic empowerment strategies. While private organizations and individuals should complement these gestures through financing policies that will boost small and medium scale industries (informant 12).*

Informant 14, declared that entrepreneurship can be better managed by having a good financing policies:

*Basically, the major challenges affecting entrepreneurial policies in the state are the massive rate of youth unemployment and insufficient of capital. However, I suggested that the government should initiate marvellous ways to accelerate entrepreneurship. Especially through the provision capital such as soft loans to increase wealth generation.*

Literatures indicated that entrepreneurial public policies are supported by private organizations, universities and individuals through the provision of finance. Therefore, in order to reduce poverty, entrepreneurship policy required the financial backing and conducive atmosphere (Ajagbe, Olujobi, Uduimoh, Okoye, & Oke, 2016).

### **Capacity Building**

Capacity building here means, entrepreneurship education and training which improves commercial endeavor. The informants suggested that training will improve business activities. For instance informant 11 supposed that: “Entrepreneurships will accelerate the income of the poor and unemployed, then regular training, refresher courses, entrepreneurship education and financial support.”

The informants equally suggested that trainings should be divided into skilled and unskilled trainings so that both the tertiary institution’s graduates and secondary school leavers will be trained, according to their ability.

“I am of the view that entrepreneurial education and awareness campaign should be emphasized. To achieve these the capacity development programs should be in the form of skilled and unskilled instructions”(informant 13). Likewise, “Provision of equipments, training and provision of social amenities are essential inputs for the proliferation of businesses” (informant 6). Furthermore, the roles of youth empowerment in relation to capital and marketing strategies were emphasized: “Youth empowerment, business education, the mobilization of initial capital and agribusiness are the ways to expand entrepreneurship” (informant 7). Informant 5 said thus: “the establishment of adequate training centers, mobilization of soft loans and expansion of small and medium scale business are the noble habits to develop entrepreneurship in our society.”

Previous studies indicated that human resources development via training in gainful skills, provision of funds and the required equipments are fantastic ways to intensify entrepreneurship particularly, in developing economies like Nigeria (Awogbenle & Iwuamadi, 2010).

### **Capital Resources Development**

Capital resources include money, tools, equipments and other forms of goods used in businesses. The significant contributions of capital resources in the expansion of the business are pointed out by the interviewees, for instance:

*To accelerate income for the poor and unemployed adequate sources of revenue should be established by the government to the entrepreneurs. I, therefore, further suggested that capital in the form of soft loans, entrepreneurship education and legislation through minimizing taxes to small scale business operators will increase business expansion (Informant 15).*

Financial support for businesses are important in refining the earnings of the poor.

Informants 8 declaimed that: “establishment of medium and small scale industries and the provision of goods and services will mitigate poverty. The disbursement of capital to entrepreneurs such as the soft loan or subsidy is another strategy to reduce poverty.” To him

the provision of capital, specifically, soft loan is a way to empower businessmen. The provision of capital to expand small and medium scale enterprises was emphasized by informant 4: “The categorical ways to increase income for the unemployed and poor are through employment generation, the institutionalization of small scale business and capital will encourage entrepreneurship.”

The crucial roles of capital in the expansion of small and medium scale business are also evident in the previous studies as funding is critical to economic growth, based on a survey carried in forty three countries between 2002 to 2012, the results authenticated an increased in economic growth and development through entrepreneurship policy (Urbano & Aparicio, 2016)

Development of entrepreneurship to reduce poverty are policies executed by Bauchi state either through national agencies or state own commissions. Based on these, the informants articulated their postulations as follows:

*The state government has established agencies and commissions such as BACYWORD; Bauchi agency for youth, women rehabilitation and development. The agency also collaborates with the private sector in the capacity development schemes and expansion of small and medium scale business in the state (informant 5).*

The provision of loans and other services were also articulated; informant 7, stated that:

“The provision of soft loans and establishment of small scale business in the state. So that the poor and unemployed people can be engaged and lessen the effects of poverty.”

Furthermore:

“I am of the view that small and medium scale businesses can be expanded if capital are provided, other ways include skills acquisition programs, the emancipation of the tertiary institutions graduate and unemployed for self-reliance.” (informant 8). To expatiate more:

“The superlative ways for the development of small scale enterprises are the reinforcement and re-capitalization of micro-finance banks. Other practical ways include enlightenment campaign and re-vitalization of the activities of cooperative societies” (informant 2).

Likewise, “Small scale enterprises can rebuild and established through the provision of soft loan schemes, setting up of allied industries, capacity building and refresher courses” (informant 14).

The need to enlighten the people was equally suggested by informant 3:

*Awareness campaign on economic challenges is very important in order to awaken the people specifically on the negative impact of unemployment, poverty indices and the shortage of social amenities, these will make the people to have mind set, thereby accessing government packages such as mobilization of capital resource for the poor and unemployed, wealth creation by the state and federal government. (Informant 15, said that:*

*The Bauchi state government had many policies that promote SMEs that cut across different stakeholders from all the local government, communities and the*



*unemployed. Furthermore, soft loans are issued to entrepreneurs from micro-finance banks, NGO`s, and international support from the World Bank to the poor.*

Furthermore, “Small and medium scale business can also be reinvigorated through government intervention, especially disbursement of soft loans, capacity building and inculcating an entrepreneurship culture.” (informant 1). In another view:

*The issue of expansion of small and medium scale enterprises is a collective responsibility, the government, Non-governmental organizations and citizens should come together, identify people`s capabilities and potentials to build them on it. Other ways base on my views include provision of capital for businessmen”* (informant 11).

## **DISCUSSION**

In respect of the first research question, the findings revealed that Bauchi state has established several policies which contributed towards the development of entrepreneurial activities. These include the establishment of ministries and agencies which facilitated the provision of capital resources, policy thrust, capacity building, skills acquisitions for youth and the poor to realize the potentials and entrepreneurship education. Other policies include encouragements for non-governmental organizations and civil society organizations in the state and the country at large, especially those that provides certain entrepreneurial and poverty reduction packages. Additionally, the state hosted some federal agencies and directorate, such as the National Directorate of Employment (NDE); and Small and Medium scale Development Agency (SMEDAN) amongst others.

The emphasis on entrepreneurship policies may result from the growing awareness of both public and government on the beneficial impacts of entrepreneurship in decreasing unemployment and as a method of poverty elevation. Studies discovered that entrepreneurship policy may pose as a sound strategy for poverty reduction (Naudé, 2010), employment generation, wealth creation and avenue for an increased income. Entrepreneurship is also a practicable venture for empowerment and economic development, a workable tool for tackling socioeconomic challenges related to unemployment and poverty (Gries & Naudé, 2010; Naudé, 2010). Additionally, research revealed that high-growth entrepreneurship policy initiative could double the growth rate of treated firms and public sponsorship could help boost organisational capacity for growth (Autio & Rannikko, 2016).

Answering to the second research question, findings showed that different ways may be used to improve entrepreneurship in the study area to reduce poverty. The results indicated that the strengthening of the ministries, commissions and agencies will provide employment opportunities and mitigate poverty. Again, advocacy and awareness campaign on the different business to the youth were also articulated to accelerate entrepreneurial activities. Similarly, provision of soft loans would also expand small and medium scale business in the Bauchi state and the federal republic of Nigeria. Other, strategies for the development of entrepreneurship skills are provision of training facilities, entrepreneurship education and legislation on tax incentives. Furthermore, there is also a need for the establishment of industries and provision of social amenities such as regular power supply, road network and transport facilities.

All these extra support for the development of entrepreneurship are pertinent in reinforcing entrepreneurship. The Pacific Islands government, for instance, has made various support services and incentives available to entrepreneurs while banks also play their role in providing easily accessible means of project financing to small businesses in order to create economic opportunities and new employment (Paleno & Kleiner2000).

## **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations have been advanced as ways to enhance Entrepreneurship towards overcoming poverty in Bauchi state. This study commended that entrepreneurship education should be integrated into school curriculum, institutionalization of vocational training centers, technical education, government at all levels should provide adequate resources for entrepreneurship development. There is also a need for strengthening the chambers of commerce and industry and continuous support from non-governmental organizations. Other proposals include anti-corruption campaigns and provision of basic amenities for the smooth operations of businesses. The entrepreneurial public policies established required reorganization in order to culminate the poverty and unemployment rate in Nigeria and the study area in particular. Furthermore, the informants postulated that policy thrust, capacity building and capital resources development while strengthening of the government institutions will upsurge small and medium scale businesses. We recommended that for entrepreneurship to be more effective, government should extend the services of SMEDAN and other agencies to the local governments, we proposed for the establishment of cooperative societies in which artisans, businessmen will be collective secure loans and articulate their grievances to the government. A vigorous political will to appropriate financial resources and legislations to apprehend corrupt public officials is hereby suggested. Our study was limited to Bauchi state due to the fear of attacks by insurgents; hence the remaining states of Gombe, Yobe, Borno and Adamawa are most affected. Future research should apply a quantitative design to examine the relationship between entrepreneurship and poverty reduction.

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