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MICRO SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES (MSMES): A PANACEA FOR POVERTY REDUCTION IN MINNA METROPOLIS, NIGER STATE, NIGERIA.

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Abstract
Poverty is one of the major challenges facing the world especially the third world nations. Different policies and programmes have been introduced to reduce the level of poverty, but it still remains alarming. Poverty in Minna an agricultural and mineral producing area has assumed a worrisome state resulting in hunger, poor health and malnutrition. The paper tried to ascertain the contribution of micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) in their capacities to reduce poverty in Minna metropolis of Niger State, Nigeria. The study is descriptive in nature and based on secondary data. Relevant information was collected from various research papers, journals, magazines of national and international publications, annual reports from MDAs, books, statistics, websites of both public and private sector. The paper found that MSMEs has been used as one of the strategies for reducing poverty in Nigeria. The strategies should be in collaboration with local, national and international organizations with universities, governments and industries.

Key words: Poverty reduction, Micro, small and mediums enterprises, Minna metropolis.

INTRODUCTION

Poverty is a serious problems bedeviling almost every nation in the world. The intensity and magnitude of poverty varies from one place to another. Globally, South-East Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa has the largest proportion of their citizens trapped by poverty. Within Africa, poverty in Nigeria is of such magnitude that the country was recently referred to as the "Poverty Capital of the World". The persistent rise in the level of poverty is increasingly becoming a great concern to governments and policymakers across the world. Thus, the reduction of poverty has formed the basis of discussions and policy formulation among world leaders, politicians, economists and development experts. This has led to the implementation of strategies and/or programmes from the perspectives of education, national output growth, employment creation, asset ownership, and management of macroeconomic variables, among others, in a bid to address the rising poverty level (Djamaluddin, 2017; Majumder and Biswas, 2017; Sakanko and David, 2018).

Past Governments has put in several measures in order to reduce the level of poverty in the Nigeria but still poverty high rate persists. In the resent years, the regime of President Mohammadu Buhari (2016 to 2023) introduced the Social investment programme designed to tackle the issue of unemployment and poverty in Nigeria. The scheme encapsulates home grown school feeding (HGSF), N-power for unemployed graduates, Government Enterprises

and Empowerment programme (GEEP), market moni, Farmer moni and Trader-Moni. The National Social Investment Programme of 2018 was created for graduating Nigerian citizens from poverty. A total of ₦500 Billion was provided for it in both 2016 and 2017 budget. The reduction of poverty is the most difficult challenge facing any country in the developing world where on the average majority of the population is considered poor.

Micro, small and medium enterprises is a very important sector in Nigerian economy and it is stipulated in the Nigeria strategy for Growth and Poverty Reduction as a crucial sector for addressing the concerns and aspiration of the Nigerian vision 2020 (Nwaba, 2011). Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSME) are able to alleviate poverty through their capacities in creating job opportunities and employment. Bruton, Ketchen and Ireland (2013) opine that, it is logical to state that if the number of entrepreneurs of any given country increases the poverty indicators will eventually decrease. The concept of small-scale business is not new. Micro, Small and medium scale enterprises have existed for quite some centuries and since then have taken or assumed so many names like cottage industries, small and medium scale enterprises, (SME) micro, small and medium scale enterprises (MSME), Small Business Firms (SBF), small scale industries (SSI), small scale enterprises (SSE) etc.

In most economies, Micro, Small and medium-sized Enterprises play a significant role, especially in emerging nations to National Development (Todaro, 2021). Micro, Small and medium-scale enterprises (MSMEs) have also played a significant role in opening up their goods to worldwide markets with growing globalization.

According to Parvin (2010), Micro, small and Medium enterprises significantly contributed to the creation of jobs, supply of products and services and overall improvement in the Gross Domestic Product (GDP). (Thomas, 2010). Micro Small and medium enterprises make up the industrial sector sub-sector that plays an important part in industrial growth (Ahmed, 2016).

The Millennium Development Strategy Vision 2020, International Agencies and Organizations like the World Bank, United Nations Industrial Development Organization, International Financing Co-operation (IFC), United Kingdom Department for International Department (DFID), the National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS), and a number of non-governmental organizations, have promoted the growth in MSMEs in Nigeria through advocacy and capacity building initiatives. In Nigeria there are approximately 57,836,391 million MSMEs (including over 36,994,578 million micro businesses, 94,669 business insurance companies, 68,168 Small and 4,670 medium-sized enterprises) (SMEDAN 2020).

According to SMEDAN, (2020) the subsector provides 48.78% of national GDP, accounting for 76% of total employment and 76.64% of total exports (SMEDAN, 2020). MSMEs are thus closely related to development in the Nigerian economy and employment level. In a country like Nigeria with an adverse balance of payments situation, MSMEs' increased contribution to the export portfolio of Nigeria contributing considerably to the creation of foreign exchanges and to the adverse balance of payments situation (Nwoye, 2010).

According to Ikherebon (2002), MSMEs constituted the basis of the national economy as regards local technology development, the promotion of indigenous enterprise, the mobilization and utilization of domestic savings, the creation of jobs, the structural balance of the small and large sectors of industry in the rural and urban areas and the delivery there of a high-quality intermediate product by force. Given the important role played by MSMEs as a growth promoter, it is important to ensure that MSMEs in Nigeria have access to the loans they need to expand and continue their investment, growth, innovation and employment

functions (Ariyo, 2015). MSME funding is important in fostering growth and reducing poverty through the creation of employment. Nigeria needs to support the sector in view of its potential growth and poverty reduction opportunities.

The role of Micro Small and Medium Enterprises cannot be overemphasized in poverty alleviation/reduction in Minna, Niger state and Nigeria in general. It has been observed that poverty involves more than money and income. It includes unemployment, poor shelter, illiteracy, ill-health, oppression and marginalization. Access to land, education, health, justice, family and community support, credit, and other productive resources, and a voice in institutions, are all important in developing sustainable livelihoods. The statement of problem for this study is that the successive governments and development community, including government agencies, banks, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) seek to improve the livelihood of impoverished citizens through poverty reduction strategies that address the root causes of poverty among the grassroots and its crippling effect on the people.

Different programmes and policies have been implemented to address the issue of poverty and yet have not performed creditably well in addressing the problems. This situation has been of great concern to the government, citizenry, operators, practitioners and the organized private sector groups. If Nigeria is to achieve an appreciable success, one of the sure ways would be to vigorously pursue the development of its MSMEs. This paper focused on one of such programmes SMEs - as a means of reducing poverty using Minna metropolis as a case study.

The questions arising from the fore going therefore are: is there any relationship between MSMEs and poverty; What are the contributions of MSMEs to poverty reduction? The objectives of this paper are to examine the relationship between poverty alleviation/reduction and MSMEs and contributions of MSMEs to poverty reduction. This study is divided into five sections. Section one is the introduction. Section two provides a concise literature review. Section three discussed the contributions of MSMEs to poverty reduction in Nigeria. Section four methodology and discussion of findings and section five summary conclusion and recommendations. This paper was limited to contributions of micro small and medium enterprises in poverty reduction in Minna metropolis of Niger state, Nigeria.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Micro Small and Medium Enterprise

The definition of Micro small and medium enterprises varies from country to country, industry to industry as well as financial institution to another. In Nigeria with the introduction of the National Policy on MSMEs the issue of definition as to what constitutes micro, small and medium enterprises has been addressed. The definition adopted by SMEDAN, (2017) is based on dual criteria of employment and assets (excluding land and buildings).

SMEDAN (2017) defines Micro Enterprises as those whose total assets (excluding land and buildings) are less than Five Million (N5,000,000) Naira with a workforce not exceeding ten employees. Small Enterprises are those enterprises whose total assets (excluding land and building) are above Five Million Naira but not exceeding Fifty Million Naira with a total workforce of above ten, but not exceeding forty-nine employees. Medium Enterprises on the other hand are those enterprises with total assets (excluding land and building) above Fifty Million Naira, but not exceeding Five Hundred Million Naira with a total workforce of between 50 and 199 employees.

The definition tends to ignore the fact that some firms are purely capital oriented with very few employees and still their sales turnover and profit may be relatively high e.g management consultant, audit, law and insurance firms etc. The European Union (E.U) defines Micro enterprises as those that meet two of the following three (3) criteria and have not fail to do so for at least 10 years: those enterprises with Fewer than 10 employees; those enterprises who Balance sheet totals is below 2 million Euros and those enterprises with a Turnover below 2 million Euros.

Generally, speaking in developed countries, Micro enterprises comprises the smallest and (by size) of the small business sector, whereas, in developing countries it comprises the vast majority of the small business sector as a result of the relative lack of formal sector jobs available for the poor. These entrepreneurs operate not by choice, but out of necessity.

The small and medium enterprises (SMEs) are supervised by various ministries Departments and Agencies depending on the nature of their operations. Some of these ministries include among others, Ministry of Trade, Industry and commerce, Ministry of woman affairs and social development, Ministry of Labour and employment, Ministry of Budget and National Planning, Nigeria Chamber of Commerce and Environment Council.

Nigeria's MSMEs account for 96% of the total number of businesses in the country and contribute about 50% to the national GDP. In terms of ownership structure, 73% of MSMEs are sole proprietorships while 14% are private limited liability companies. The balance of 13% are Partnerships (6%), Faith based organizations (5%), Cooperatives (1%) and Others (1%). In terms of gender, only 23% of females operate formal SME businesses in Nigeria. MSME owners in Nigeria are typically between the ages of 20 to 60 years old.

Over 41.5 million MSME businesses operate in Nigeria, according to a survey conducted by the National Bureau of Statistics and the SME Development Agency of Nigeria (SMEDAN) in 2018.

The micro, small, and medium enterprises statistics are highlighted below:

MSMEs Businesses	41,469,947	(99.8 %)
Small Enterprises	71,288	(0.17%)
Medium Enterprises	1,793	(0.004%)

Source: SMEDAN (2018)

POVERTY

Poverty is one of the major challenges facing the world, most especially, the third world nations. Poverty is multidimensional in nature and has continuously troubled the world for decade now.

The definitions of poverty vary widely among international agencies and countries, the most commonly used working definition for international poverty comparisons, and the poverty line is per capita expenditures of US $1 per person per day.

Poverty is a state of absolute economic deprivation in which the individual cannot independently have access to the basic human life-sustaining essentials such as food, clothing, protection, and shelter Adenutsi, (2009); Mohammed, and Ali, (2010). Poverty is the lack of income or shortage of assets; the lack of competence, confidence, disempowerment, etc.; it also has deprivation of national currency; it is also common to speak of a poor understanding, or culture, or spirit, Singer, (2006); Chen and Elston, (2013).

Poverty may arise from low productivity of the households, financial constraints and lack of other incentives of entrepreneurship Adenutsi (2009); Chen and Elston, (2013).

Luciano (2018) defines poverty as the failure of a person to reach the least standard of living which can be viewed from the inability to afford the basic things of life such as food, clothing, good health care, shelter, clean water, education and other fundamental infrastructures to live a normal life. However, to critically examine what the concept of poverty actually means has do to with who is asking the question, how is the question being understood and who is responding to the question and this can be explained from five different interrelated perspectives. According to Daouda (2015); Robert (2006), the first is income-poverty which can also be referred to as consumption poverty for ease of measurement, this is the perspective of the economists on what poverty is. The second is material lack or want. This refers to the inability to possess basic physiological needs including good food, shelter, clothing, television or radio, the means to move from one place to the other and means to quality services. The third is capability deprivation. This explains what a person can or cannot do and/or be. It bothers more than material incapability or desire to incorporate human accomplishments such as skills and physical potentials and self-esteem among the community of people. The fourth encompasses a predominantly complicated perspective of impoverishment with the three earlier discussed as physical yardsticks to measure the level of poverty. The Fourth explanation of the word 'poverty' is the proclamation of one's level of education, training, psyche, exposure, and ruminations. This underscores the intellectual capabilities to make judgments in line with one's knowledge.

The fifth perspective of the word poverty is being poor, marginalized, vulnerable, excluded or deprived. Therefore, being poor entails all the above and all efforts at alleviating poverty has yielded minimal results because even if people are provided the basic necessities of life, what about their level of reasoning, exposure, and judgments of issues? This means, any attempt to reduce poverty must be all- encompassing to incorporate all the above (UNDP, 2017).

According to Alan E. Singer (2006), the best cure for poverty alleviation in any region of the world lies in encouraging more on business activity and startup the new ventures through entrepreneurship development. Moreover, entrepreneurship provides a basis for economic change through new knowledge creation and application Singer, (2006).

Governments of the world have come up with different policies and programs in other to reduce the menace of this pandemic called poverty. Evidences have shown that a substantial number of the people are living below the poverty line in spite of the efforts made towards reducing the level of poverty by most nations (Ijaiya & Adesina-Uthman 2019).

The poverty situation in Nigeria is worrisome. It is high, widespread and pervasive consuming a huge part of the country's large population and has become a major feature in the country (Ajudua & Imoisi, 2017). Over the years the Nigerian government have come up with numerous policies and strategies in other to reduce the level of poverty in the country, despite this efforts, it is confirmed that the rate of poverty is still on the increase (NBS, 2014; Ijaiya & Adesina-Uthman 2019).

The statistics by Nigeria's National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) in 2020 illustrate that the percentage of the population living in poverty rose from about 30.3 percent in 2010 to more than 40 percent in 2019. It is not surprising therefore that in 2018, the country was accorded the status of "world poverty capital" due to the incidence of extreme poverty among over 90 million of its population (Sakanko et al., 2020). The prevalence of poverty incidence is higher in rural areas and in the Northern region of Nigeria (CBN, 2018; NBS, 2020).

It is widely accepted that, the micro, small, & medium enterprises (MSME) are able to alleviate poverty through their capacities in creating job opportunities and employment. It is also documented that MSMEs are able to stabilize the economic shocks in many of the countries during the recent economic crises. The new startups and the expansion of MSMEs can increase social wealth and income through their ability to create new markets, new industries, new technology, new jobs and net increases in real productivity and thus able to reduce the poverty level in one's country.

Contribution of Micro Small and Medium Enterprises in poverty Reduction in Nigeria

A. Improvement in Per Capital Income

MSMEs locate and exploit opportunities. They convert idle resources like land, labour and capital into national income and wealth in the form of goods and service. They help to increase Net National Product (NNP) and per capital income in the country, which are important yardstick for reducing poverty and measuring economic growth (Adelaja, 2003).

The contribution of MSMEs to Nigeria's GDP in 2010 is almost 46% of the total GDP. This contribution increased to 47.88% which is representing 3.93% increase in 2013 over 2010. The contributions of MSMEs to GDP increased to 49.78% in 2017 which is signifying an increase of 3.82% over 2013. However, the increasing trends of MSMEs contributions to national GDP was reversed to decreasing trend in 2020 as it fell down to 46.28% indicating a decrease of 3.5% compared to 2017.

B. Generation of Employment

One of the problems confronting Africa and Nigeria in particular is the issue of rising unemployment. Unemployment is a situation where people who are willing and capable of working are unable to find suitable paid employment. The data released by NBS for the first quarter of 2016 shows that out of the youth labour force of about 38.2 million, a total of 15.2 million were either unemployed or underemployed.

According to Abubakar and Yahaya (2013), an important feature of the MSME sector is its ability to create jobs. Abubakar and Yahya (2013) further asserted that since productive employment is the key to achieving sustainable reduction in poverty and the fact that SMEs have potential of creating mass employment, it is imperative that with a large employment creation potential any government efforts to reduce poverty could achieve more success if they are given the required attention they deserve. MSMEs is one of the sectors that can mitigate against this rising unpleasant phenomenon.

C. Creation of Jobs

Siyanbola, Afolabi, Dada & Egbetokun (2008), argued that SMEs create jobs, increase wealth and incomes within their host domains and promote industrial and economic development through the utilization of local resources, production of intermediate goods and the transfer of rural technology. According to a survey by SMEDAN in 2017, MSMEs provide employment to 59,647,954 people that is (76.50%) to the total work force in Nigeria. According to ILO (2015) analysis, it put the small businesses net share of job creation at 54% and that of larger firms at 46% in the low-middle-income countries of which Nigeria belong.

D. Education/Training Ground for Large Scale Businesses

Small scale businesses serve as a training ground for the large scale businesses. Through MSMEs, many successful entrepreneurs have been produced. Some have established their own businesses, ran and managed them successfully. In this direction, one should not forget people like Dangote, Mike Adenuga, Orji Kanu and a host of others, all started from small scale before attaining the height they are today.

The school/training ground provides the opportunity for the acquisition of knowledge skills for large number of workers. Aginah et al (2013) believed that through the establishment of manpower development support schemes, and their involvement in the training and retraining of entrepreneurs, small scale industries have provided a pool of potential entrepreneurs and business people who are well equipped to start and successfully manage industries whether small or large, not only in Nigeria, but overseas.

E. Rural Development:

The establishment and operations of MSMEs in the rural areas in Nigeria has given most of the rural communities a face–lift. MSMEs have stimulated rural development and achieved a meaningful level of economic, social and political development. The presence of MSMEs has attracted the provision of such social amenities like good access road, pipe borne water, electricity, health care centres, adequate communication facilities such as telephones and internets to the rural areas. Eru (2014) opined that MSMEs contribute to local economies by bringing growth and innovation to the community in which the businesses are established.

F. Mobilization of Saving and Utilization of Idle Resources:

MSMEs operating in the country have the capability of mobilizing domestic savings and absorb the local resources which would have been lying idle. Aginah et al (2013) held that MSMEs contribution to the mobilization of domestic savings and utilization of local resources is also a noticeable factor. Ugiagbe et al (2008) corroborated that small businesses are suitable for mobilizing savings for production purposes, which may not be readily available and they are still able to use-up the resources/raw materials that would have been lying idle. The large scale businesses often depend on small businesses for the completion of various business functions through outsourcing.

G. Provide Self Sufficiency

Aginah et al (2013) opined that MSMEs encourage self-employment for many youths both in the rural and urban areas. It has provided opportunity to a number of many successful entrepreneurs who have established their own businesses, ran and managed them successfully. The basic factors which become a cause of happiness may be liberty, monetary rewards and the feeling of contentment that one gets after doing a job.

H. Revenue Generation by MSMEs

Atawodi and Ojeka (2012) stated that the revenue generated from individuals and businesses is an essential stream of income for the government. Jojo, (2016) defined tax as a means by which government appropriate part of private sector's income and expenditure as its revenue for the purpose of meeting recurrent expenditure and creating public capital formation towards the development and growth of the economy.

Small scale businesses generate income/revenue to three distinct bodies of the economy. They generate income in the form of salary / wages to the employees, profits to the entrepreneur and tax and other statutory levies to the government. This helps to boost the country's national income. In this way small business ventures generate revenues and strengthen the Nigerian economy.

I. Less Dependence on Imported Goods:

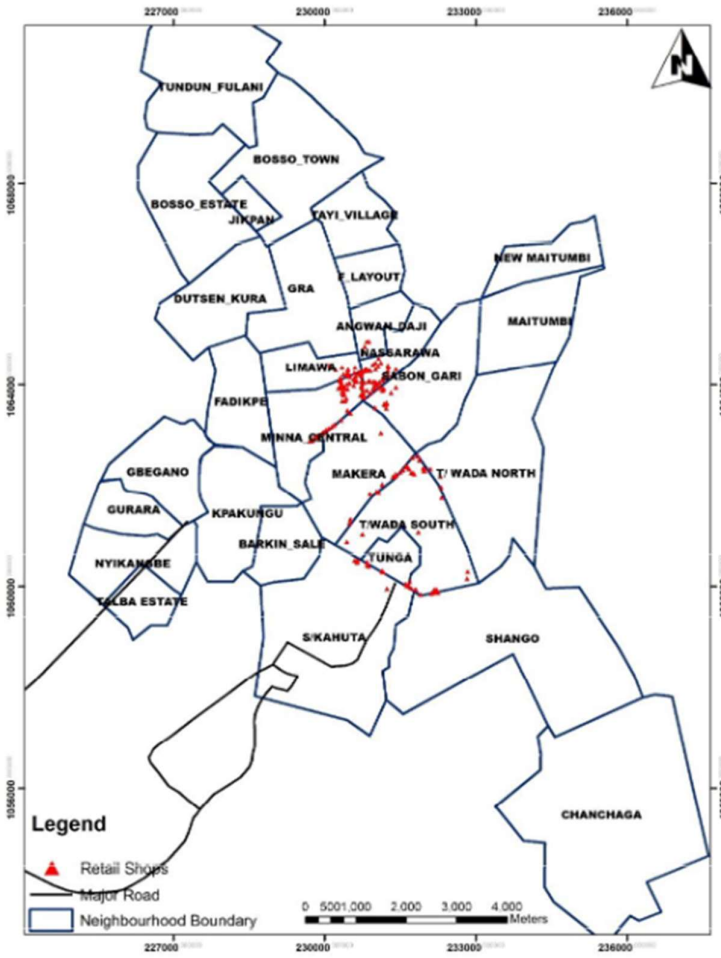
MSMEs made it very possible for firms to depend less on imported goods or materials. They depend on locally made machines and local raw materials as inputs. Oshagbenius (1985) as cited in Ogonu and Okejim (2018), stated that 'non dependence of the economy on imported raw materials has saved the foreign exchange earnings of a nation. It also makes a nation Less dependent on imported goods/materials. This helps in solving balance of payment problems which has an attendant blessing of creating an interest in the promotion of homemade products'.

J. Development of Local Technology:

MSMEs are able to develop local technology by copying foreign technology and adapting it locally (Ugiabe et al, 2008). Today many agricultural and other tools are locally produced. MSMEs have become a base for the development of appropriate technology and a veritable ground for skilled, unskilled and semi-skilled workers.

Minna Metropolis

According to Maxlock (1990), Minna is located on Latitude 9°37' North and Longitude 6°33' East and occupies a land area of about 884 hectares. It is about 145km by road from Abuja, the Federal capital of Nigeria. Minna metropolis has grown to engulf suburb settlements such as Bosso, Maitumbi, Dutsen Kura, Kpakungu, Shango and Chanchaga. The major roads comprise Mobile-Bosso road, Hospital road, Airport road, Keteren Gwarri road, Kuta road, Tunga, Western bye-pass and Broadcasting road.



Source: The Spatial Nature of Retail Property: Evidence from Minna, Nigeria.

Empirical Findings on Poverty Reduction through Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprise

Adeoye & Bhadmus (2015), discuss on the socio-economic contributions of cottage industries to rural livelihood in Nigeria. Their study introduces cottage industries as one of the panaceas to poverty alleviation with respect to substantial growth with evidence from most countries. Etuk, Etuk & Baghebo (2014), examined the influence of Small and Medium Scale Enterprises (SMEs) on Nigeria's Economic Development. The study revealed that Small and Medium Scaled Enterprises (SMEs) have been identified as being beneficial in alleviating poverty through wealth and job creation.

Another study by Sokoto & Abdullahi (2013) examined the role of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in poverty reduction in the North-Western Nigeria. The authors sampled 400 SMEs in both Sokoto and Zamfara and analyzed using the student T-test. Empirical findings from the study revealed that employment generated by the SMEs is small when compared with the large enterprises. The findings of this study contradict the appropriate expectation that SMEs contribute more to employment generation that large enterprises.

However, Smallbone (1998), Ayyagari et al. (WP 2011), IFC (2013) and ILO (2015) found that MSMEs is a major net contributor of job creator in the economy. Smallbone (1998) in

his work "SME, employment generation and regional development" concluded that there is a strong link between sales growth and employment growth, he therefore emphasis a strong case for linking policy support to a firm's growth orientation and performance. Ayyagari et al. (2011), in a unique cross-country database of 99 countries analysis, found that small firms with less than 100 employees and mature firms (firms older than ten years) have the largest shares of total employment and job creation ability with the young small firms standing out in job creation. IFC (2013) using World Bank Group Enterprise Surveys data for 106 countries, also found that small firms are the primary engine of employment growth in developing countries. ILO (2015) publication: "Small and medium-sized enterprises and decent and productive employment creation", found empirical evidence confirming small businesses to be the engine of job creation in the developing economies. The job creation or destruction dynamics is driven by births and deaths, expansions and contractions, and in- and out-migration of firms. This study analyzed the impact of MSMEs to job creation and destruction in Nigeria using World Bank Enterprise Survey Data. In other to revisit the Birch (1979) thesis vis-a-viz the conclusion drawn by Davis et al. (1996b), this work examined which of the two assertions is applicable in the Nigerian context.

Muhammad (2014) conducted a study on the role of informal self-employment and poverty Reduction in Sokoto metropolis of Nigeria: A case study of commercial tricycle and motorcycle taxi Business. The study used multiple regression analysis to investigate the relationship between the socio-economic characteristics of the riders and his income generation, consumption expenditure and wealth accumulation as proxy for poverty reduction. The result shows that experience, age, number of dependents and number of hours in business are the prime determinants of poverty alleviation of the riders in the metropolis.

THEORETICAL REVIEW

The level of poverty in Nigeria is peculiar and multifaceted. The cause of poverty ranges from low per capita income to low level of savings, low level of education and nutrition, lack of basic infrastructural facilities. Also, lack of transparency in government which is responsible

for high level of corruption by the few privileged public officials to politically motivated poverty in which the political class deliberately refused to provide the needed public amenities for the public good only to come every election year to use same as campaign slogan to sway the people to vote for them thereby keeping the larger proportion of the population in perpetual poverty. Therefore, the poverty theory that was reviewed for the purpose of this study is the:

Vicious Cycle of Poverty

This theory asserted that the fundamental basis for poverty is traceable to the level of the per capita income. According to Aseel, Madya, and Mashitah, (2017) poverty in the developing countries is a vicious cycle from inability to live on balance diet which results in health challenges and since the level of income is low that will lead to the inability to afford the basic medical care which will invariably affect the level of productivity and may ultimately lead to death. Also, looking at it from the educational angle, the inability to earn enough income to save and invest in education will lead to the inability to afford the cost for basic education which will ultimately lead to lack of employment and the final result will be poverty.

There is multiple poverty cycle in Nigeria as the same person who could not afford education whether at the conventional or technical level may also not be able to afford basic healthcare

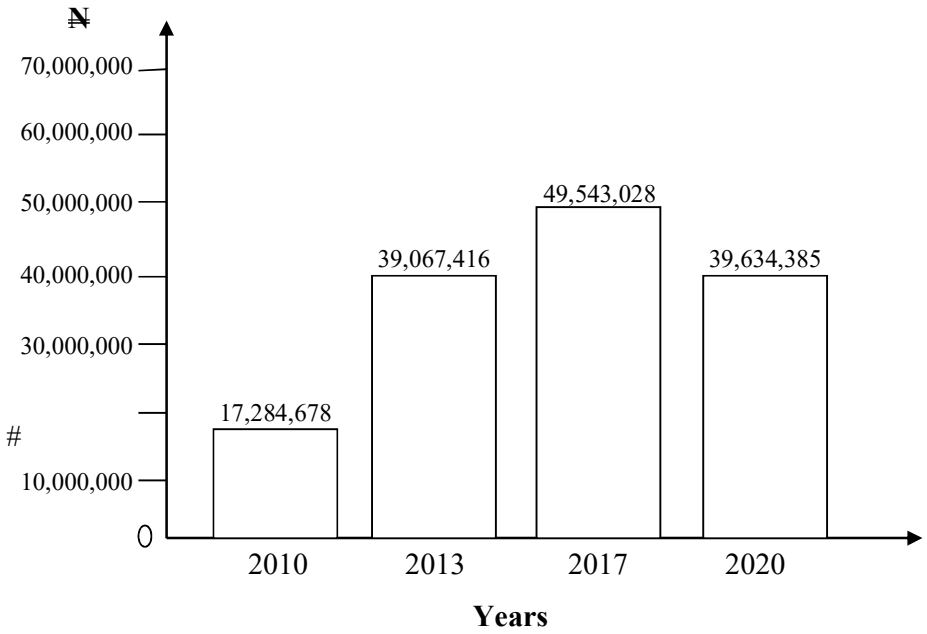
system as well as enjoy the basic infrastructures like good shelter, electricity, clean water and so on to live a manageably comfortable life. Therefore, in order for Nigeria to solve this problem of the vicious cycle of poverty in line with the recommendations by Rohima, Agus, Asfi, and Khusnul, (2013), the government should embark on huge investment or expansionary fiscal policies that are capable of creating employment opportunities as results of government spending. This deliberate attempt should be directed at increasing the purchasing power of the people with the target of breaking the vicious cycle of poverty. In achieving this there should be adequate measures put in place to curb corruption and as well as the level of insecurity in the country.

METHODOLOGY

This study review examined the contributions of MSMEs to poverty reduction from the flow of existing literature in different online database sources such as Google scholar, Science Direct, Emerald, JSTOR etc. A number of journal articles, conference papers, books and other generic works were read to determine which articles are needed to be included in the review of the paper. The most relevant articles collected were those found as best fit within the objectives of the present issue about how MSMEs can be used as strategy for poverty reduction. The objectives was examined on the basis of objectives, methods and findings

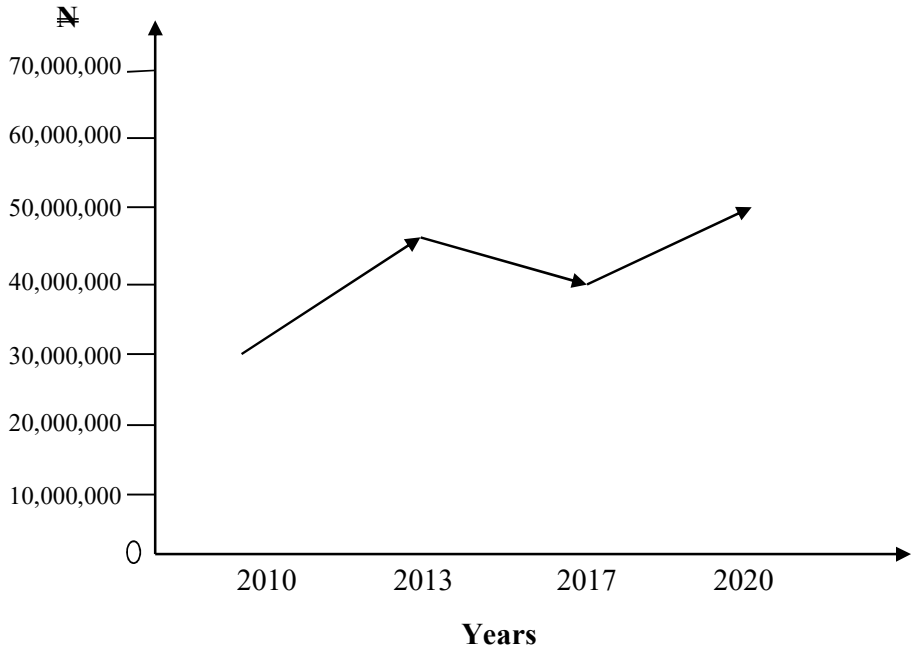
DISCUSSION OF FINDING

Figure I: Growth in the Total Number of MSMEs in Nigeria from 2010 to 2020



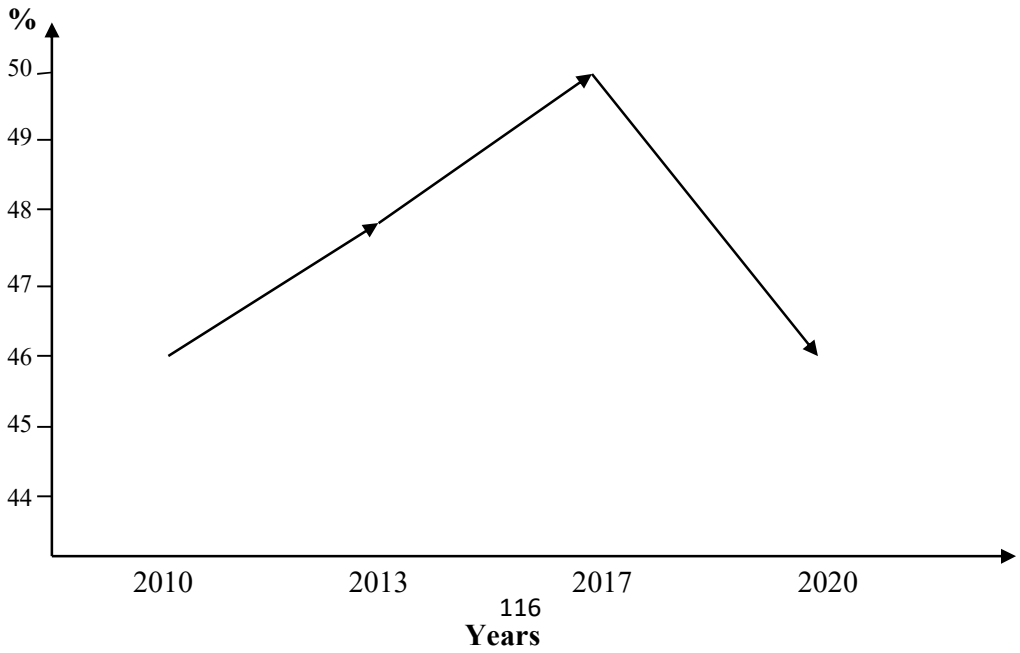
The total numbers of MSMEs in Nigeria in 2010 were 17,284,678 million. The number increased to 37,067,416 million in 2013 which indicates a 114% Growth in the number. The number of MSMEs showed further increase to 49,543,028 million in 2017 indicating 12.10% growth. However, the increasing trend showed a decreasing pattern in 2020 decreasing to 39,654,385 million indicating a 4.54% decline in growth. The growth of MSMEs in Nigeria showed overall increasing trends from 2010 to 2017. This trend was reversed to decreasing trend in 2020. This result is consistent with Akinyosoye (2018) that reported positive relationship between increase in MSMEs and increase in GDP.

Figure II: Number of Individuals Employed by Nigeria's MSME 2010 – 2020



The total number of individuals employed by MSMEs in Nigeria in 2010 are 32,414,884million which increased to 59,714,211million giving rise to 82.22% increase in 2013. The number of individuals employed by MSMEs slightly fell down to 59,647,954million thereby signifying 0.11% decrease in 2017. This slight decreasing trend is reversed to increasing trend in 2020 with rising of employment figure to 61,854,928million or 3.70% increase in employment figure of 2020 over 2017.

Figure III: Contributions of MSMEs to Nigeria's GDP 2010 to 2020



The contribution of MSMEs to Nigeria's GDP in 2010 is almost 46% of the total GDP. This contribution increased to 47.88% which is representing 3.93% increase in 2013 over 2010. Contributions of MSMEs to GDP increased to 49.78% in 2017 which is signifying an increase of 3.82% over 2013. However, the increasing trends of MSMEs contributions to national GDP was reversed to decreasing trend in 2020 as it fell down to 46.28% indicating a decrease of 3.5% compared to 2017.

The discussions of the findings presented above take the form of linking results with literature, theory and practice. The growth of MSMEs in Nigeria showed a fluctuating increasing trends from 2010 to 2017 which was reversed to a decreasing trend in 2020.The Fluctuating trends in the growth in number of MSMEs also results in fluctuating trends of GDP growth as indicated in Figure III which showed that when the number of MSMEs was 49,543,028million which is the highest in 2017 the GDP contribution was also the highest at 49.78% of total GDP. When the number of MSMEs fell down to 39,634,384 million in 2020, the GDP contribution also fell down to 46.28%. Results from Figure II also indicating fluctuating trends of employment by MSMEs 2010 to 2017. From the practical perspective, increase in number of MSMEs should normally be accompanied with increase in employment. However, this is not the case as year 2017 which has 49,543,028million as the highest number of MSMEs employed 59,647,954million people slightly lower than the 59,714,211million employed. This could be due to efficiencies in running the enterprises.

The above literature has been able to show that a correlation exists between MSMEs and Poverty. There are many businesses operating in the study area that serves as a means of livelihood. The stated objectives of the paper were used to present the discussions on the relationship between MSMEs and poverty alleviation. These MSMEs also generates employment opportunities, training and utilization of local resources most especially for the youth in and around Minna Metropolitan area of Niger state.

It was also found that the government has initiated policies and programmes to Assist in the development of MSMEs like establishment of SMEDAN, Training, funding of MSMEs by individuals, governments, institutions and religious organizations. In Nigeria, there are 17,261,753, registered MSMEs. These MSMEs account for 96% of the total number of businesses in the country and contribute about 50% to the national GDP. A study conducted by International Finance Corporation (IFC) in 2001, estimated that 96% of all businesses in Nigeria are SMEs compared to 53% in USA, 65% in European Union (EU) with SMEs in both places accounting for 50% of their respective countries Gross Domestic Product (GDP). MSMEs also provide employment to 59,647,954 people that is 76.50% to the total work force in Nigeria.

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION

This paper discussed the introduction to the studies, conceptually reviewed MSMEs, poverty, contributions of MSMEs to poverty reduction in Nigeria, Minna Metropolis, empirical findings and theoretical review.

Conclusion

Micro, Small and Medium Enterprise is one means of eradicating poverty and is a joint effort of local, national and international organizations with the collaboration of universities, governments & industries. Entrepreneurs have introduced innovations in a range of products, services, production processes, work practices, and marketing which have brought benefits to their firm. Entrepreneurship and human resource management were shown to be the most significant drivers of innovation and customer value. Micro, small & medium enterprise are a

key tool for poverty reduction; stimulating employment as well as fast-tracking realization of poverty reduction in the Minna Metropolis of Niger State, Nigeria.

Based on the results in this study, it could be concluded that the growth in number of MSMEs in Nigeria has been phenomenal from 2010 to 2020. Likewise, looking at overall results on increasing growth in number of MSMEs in Nigeria, it could be concluded that such increase has been impacting on increasing number of individuals employed by MSMEs.

Given the interest that poverty research has generated in the country especially in the last few years, there is need to ensure that this momentum is not only sustained, but should be used as a vehicle to meaningfully reduce poverty in Nigeria within the first decade of this 21st century.

Recommendations

1. To reduce/eradicate extreme poverty in the country, government and donor organizations should build up an effective data bank that would enable it to identify poor communities, as well as initiate measures to open the areas and give them access to social facilities and amenities
2. The government can jointly open a data bank with small and medium enterprises. The duty of this bank will be to furnish potential and prospective investors with information concerning the availability of factors of production and the existing market potentials in the economy.
3. The government should also protect these MSMEs by way of banning and increasing tariff on import of similar goods that these MSMEs produce so as to promote our indigenous entrepreneurs.
4. Stakeholders in MSMEs sector should endeavor to create more awareness of the numerous opportunities existing in that sector.
5. In order to achieve effective poverty reduction in Nigeria, we should first and foremost carryout mapping of poverty survey identify who the poor are and the nature of their poverty. Available evidence shows that the poor are located mainly in rural areas with increasing proportion of them found in the urban areas. The poor are mainly engaged in agriculture and petty businesses. Also, poverty incidences are not evenly distributed across the states/zones, hence poverty reduction must emphasize these differences in order to be effective.
6. Sustainable poverty reduction strategy should not focus narrowly on Social Welfare Measures. Rather asset redistribution and creation of incentive structures that can enhance the rate and pattern of economic growth should be seen as essential component.
7. That Cottage businesses if properly managed will serve as catalyst for industrial and economic growth of any Nation as most successful multinational companies and host of other started as a cottage firm in their home countries

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