



Indigenous knowledge Development as a Way-Out of Unemployment in Nigeria: A Case Study of Ondo, Ekiti and Osun States.

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ABSTRACT

Indigenous knowledge is otherwise known as African science and knowledge. It was conceived, born, processed, disseminated but preserved through natural inheritance from succeeding generations without written document. This study was done to discover the various indigenous knowledge jobs available, the employment status, the challenges they encounter and suggest what government can do to help. Out of four hundred and fifty (450) copies of questionnaire that were distributed, four hundred and eighteen (418) copies (92.9%) were returned with usable responses, while thirty two (32) copies (7.1%) were not returned. Descriptive statistical method was applied for the study, Questionnaire, and observations were the research instruments used for data gathering. Data were analysed using the use of frequency counts and percentages method. Findings revealed that indigenous knowledge is the pivot of Nigerian economy. If indigenous knowledge is better funded by the three tiers of Nigerian government, it is capable of reducing unemployment syndrome that besieged the country. The various levels of government should intensify efforts to improve the adult literacy programme, public orientation and enlightenment, accreditation of indigenous knowledge practitioners, grant interest free loans and establish more indigenous knowledge skill acquisition centres nationwide.

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1.1 Background to the study

Indigenous knowledge started since the existence of early man till date. Furthermore, indigenous knowledge remained as the most reliable, secured source of employment in Nigeria. About 70% of the total employment population in the three states under this study were gainfully employed in indigenous knowledge jobs. The practice of indigenous knowledge has been seen by lots of people as another way of stimulating development in poor rural communities in many parts of the world (Briggs, 2005).

abidogun (n.d) defined indigenous knowledge to be

“a complete body of knowledge, know-how and practices maintained and developed by peoples, generally in rural areas, who have extended histories of interaction with the natural environment. These sets of understandings, interpretations and meanings are part of a cultural complex that encompasses language, naming and classification systems, practices for using resources, ritual, spirituality and worldview”.

Indigenous knowledge is used at the local level by communities as the basis for making decisions pertaining to food security, human and animal health, education, natural resource management and other vital activities. IK is a key element of the social capital of the poor and constitutes their main asset in their efforts to achieve control of their own lives. For these reasons, the potential contribution of indigenous knowledge to locally managed, sustainable and cost-effective survival strategies should be promoted in the development process.

To facilitate the integration of IK into operations, the African department of the World Bank launched the Indigenous Knowledge (IK) for Development Program in 1998. This paper reflects on the programme's experiences over the last three years and the steps that could be taken to further assist communities and governments in integrating indigenous knowledge into the development process.

Indigenous knowledge (IK) is any understanding rooted in local culture. It includes all knowledge held more or less collectively by a population that informs interpretation of things. It varies between regions. It comes from a range of sources, is a dynamic mix of past 'tradition' and present invention with a view to the future. People in different regions have unique cultural traditions and histories, which critically shape their views of their environments, livelihood choices, health and illness, social behaviour and so on. Indigenous knowledge research seeks to incorporate these views more into development (Sillitoe, 2006).

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The study becomes imperative at this period of the Nigerian economic imbalance characterized with unemployed menace of able bodied people of Nigeria. Jain (2008) stated that, indigenous knowledge has long been misinterpreted or frowned upon Africa which Nigeria is an integral part. It was only recently that it now begun to gain attention.

Unemployment problem in the southwest geopolitical zone of Nigeria is not a zonal problem but a nationwide problem. Trading economics (2012) reported that unemployment rate in Nigeria was last reported at 23.9% in 2011.

In the African continent, the importance of indigenous knowledge led to the attainment of Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by 2015. Kashweka and Akakandelwa (2005) stressed that Indigenous knowledge (IK) is a significant resource which could contribute to the increased efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability of the development process in Africa, for centuries, local needs and constraints on daily challenges drove mankind to seek desired solutions in order to sustain livelihood. Scientific approaches to knowledge generation as they are known today were a recent phenomenon. However, it should be recognized that these modern approaches have brought about tremendous improvement in the mankind lives and interacting with the environment.

1.3 Purpose of the study

The general objective of this study is to appraise the existing indigenous knowledge in Nigeria and recommend them as means of reducing unemployment in the country. Other specific objectives are;

- 1.To identify the various categories of indigenous knowledge jobs that were available in Ekiti, Ondo and Osun states of Nigeria.
- 2.To ascertain the percentage of the employable people of each state.
3. To determine the total population and percentage of people employed through indigenous knowledge skills.
- 4.To know the challenges confronting people engaged in indigenous knowledge jobs
- 5.To offer useful suggestions on the identified problems of unemployment in the three states and Nigeria as a nation.

1.4 Research Questions

1. What are the various categories of indigenous knowledge jobs available in Ekiti, Ondo and Ogun State?
2. What is the employment status on indigenous knowledge jobs?
3. What are the challenges confronting people engaged in indigenous knowledge jobs?
4. What can you suggest to alleviate the challenges?

2. Literature Review

Provides guidance for action. Knowledge when utilized in decision making results to wisdom. Malhotra (2002) enumerated knowledge as tactic and explicit. He opined that knowledge conversion is achievable to social interactions and identified three components of knowledge management as knowledge generation, knowledge codification and knowledge transfer.

Briggs (2005) stated that, by reviewing plethora of recent work on indigenous knowledge, he suggested Knowledge, according to Kalseth and Cumming (2001) sited that knowledge is information that that a number of problems and tensions has resulted in indigenous knowledge not being useful as hoped for or supposed.

Aina, Mutala and Tiamiyu (2008) asserted that indigenous knowledge has long be misinterpreted or frowned upon in Africa. Indigenous knowledge has been defined in various ways as cultural knowledge, environmental knowledge, community knowledge, local knowledge, traditional knowledge farmers or pastoralist knowledge, folk knowledge, traditional wisdom, traditional science, people knowledge and also as a sub-set of traditional knowledge. According to UNESCO, MOST and Nuffic-CIRAN (2001-2002), it is

“the local knowledge that is unique to a given culture or society. It is the basis for local- level decision making in agriculture healthcare, food preparation,

education, natural resources management, and a host of other activities in rural communities”.

Indigenous knowledge is been generated from oral archival, acculturation oral tradition, oral history, culture which is the collection of the past. It is a testimony that is passed from generation to generation.

Kashweka and Akakandelwa (2005) opined that, African traditional society has a knowledge system through which knowledge is passed from one generation to generation; the system has enabled Africans to understand and integrate the various aspects of the environment into their lives. In recent years, the knowledge which the traditional society in Africa and other developing countries possesses has come to be recognized as an important resource in development. IK is a valuable resource for development, which under certain circumstances can have advantages over scientific knowledge. Raseroka, (2002) defined indigenous or local knowledge as a knowledge that is unique to a given culture or society and communities. It is a local know-how and cultural practices that belong to a community and are transmitted orally between generations.

Bajpai (2010) opined that youth has emerged recently as a distinct social category, not because they form the majority of a nation’s population but due to reasons of their specific characteristics needs, psycho-social traits and pattern of behavior. Youth are the human property of the nation, they represent strength, vitality and vigorous and are the hope for the future of a nation. Youth are carriers of culture, custodians, of national honour and trustees of the freedom of the country. They occupy a vantage position from where they immensely influence the Government, as well as society at large.

Fajana (2000) stated that unemployment is a state of wordlessness experienced by persons who as members of the labour force perceived by others as capable of work. They are actively looking for paid employment without success under the prevailing economic circumstances. Dreze (1991) submitted that unemployment rates among the young are alarmingly high. The social cost of letting one out of three or four young adults out of work for a prolonged period is hard to assess. To economics of my generation, it is a disappointing fact that serious attention was not placed on the development of indigenous knowledge. Perkins (1982) asserted that unfortunately, during the 1970’s when almost all countries began to suffer from simultaneous unemployment and inflation (‘stagflation’) governments have generally adopted a combination of macroeconomic measures namely, higher levels of taxation and low or negative real post-tax returns to the holders of financial assets that has held up the rate of inflation at any given level of unemployment.

Ojeifo and Azelama (2007) upheld that it is also the duty of the personnel staff to maintain record of employment tests of variations, indigenous knowledge globally and in African continent.

Indigenous knowledge had started since the cradle of early man’s existence. Reich et.al. (1984) stated that life was very difficult for the earliest people. They faced many dangers and hardships in hunting animals for food. During the Old Stone Age, people learned to make tools and weapons, fire also was very important in the lives of early people. When and how did early people first learn to use fire? No one really knows perhaps early people learned to use fire when they saw a tree burn after it was struck by lightning, At first, they know only how to keep such a nature fire going. Later, they learned how to make their own fire by rubbing sticks of

dry wood or hitting stones together, prehistoric people then learned to use fire for heat, for cooking, for light, and to frighten away dangerous animals.

American Societies of Information Science see information as opinions expressed, processed data and even the knowledge emanating from instruction, The emergence of knowledge management started in 17th century and the pioneer of knowledge management was poor knowledge definition in an organization in society is the knowledge and expertise skills the personnel possess in the organization and society,

Today, indigenous knowledge had been developed covering all occupational works and skills with the combination of using animal tools and modern technologies to derive its goals and objectives. Indigenous knowledge in the 21st century is playing a pivotal roles in the fields of medicine, agriculture, arts and crafts, engineering, Education, Manufacturing, custom and culture, Humanities, Religion e.t.c.

Economic Commission for Africa (2005) had been busy developing, harnessing and coordinating serious of enlightenments through seminars, workshops, symposium and conferences to meet up with the (2015) Millennium Development Goals (MDGS) target goals and objectives. and practical experimentation. It is not easily condifiable for fear of loss of some essential properties. Indigenous knowledge through direct or indirect employment, many able bodied Nigerians are gainfully employed. However, the latter part of the 20th century saw a growing interest in Indigenous knowledge Indigenous knowledge is unique to a given culture or society, it is dynamic and based on innovation. The generation, growth and utilization of scientific knowledge are seen as critical for human development, the “problem” of the knowledge explosion in general and its management and effective utilization in particular, have been exacerbated by the increased recognition of the equally important role that Indigenous knowledge can and should play in the development of the wider local and global communities.

Table 2. Indigenous Skills available in Ekiti, Osun and Ondo States.

| S/N | Names of IK Jobs | Very High | High | Moderate | Low | Not Available |
|-----|-------------------------------|-------------|------------|----------|-----|---------------|
| 1 | Blacksmith | 11 (2.6%) | 20 (4.8%) | | | |
| 2 | Tying and Dying | | | | | |
| 3 | Africa Trado Medical | | | | | |
| 4 | Hunting | 196 (46.9%) | | | | |
| 5 | Fermentation of Farm Products | | 70 (16.7%) | | | |
| 6 | Local Breweries | | | | | |
| 7 | Tanning & Leather Prod. | | | | | |
| 8 | Textiles & Weaving | | 40 (9.6%) | | | |
| 9 | Bead-Making | | 21 (5%) | | | |
| 10 | Local Hair Branding | | 60 (14.4%) | | | |

Table 3. Employment status on Indigenous Knowledge Job.

| S/N | Names of IK Jobs | Fully Employed | Adjunct Worker | Civil Servant | Apprentice | Not Employed |
|-----|------------------------------|----------------|----------------|---------------|------------|--------------|
| 1 | Blacksmith | 21 (14.6%) | 10 (5.2%) | | | |
| 2 | Tying and Dying | | | | | |
| 3 | Africa Trado Medical | | | | | |
| 4 | Hunting | 60 (41.7%) | 90 (46.4%) | | 30 (54%) | 16 |
| 5 | Fermentation | | 47 (24.2%) | | 23 (31.1%) | |
| 6 | Local Breweries | | | | | |
| S7 | Tanning & Leather Production | | | | | |
| 8 | Textiles & Weaving | 13 (9%) | 20 (10.3%) | | 7 (9.5%) | |
| 9 | Bead-Making | 10 (6.9%) | 11 (5.7%) | | | |
| 10 | Local Hair Branding | 40 (27.8%) | 16 (8.2%) | | 4 (5.4%) | |

Table 3. above table explains the low percentage of employable youths that are engaged in indigenous knowledge jobs. Countries like China, Canada, U.S.A and host of others had developed indigenous knowledge skills to a level that 85% of their population is gainfully employed on entrepreneurship business that emanated from indigenous knowledge jobs

3. Methodology

Questionnaire which was administered to artisans of some selected states: Ekiti State, Osun State, Ondo State. The questionnaire is focused on various categories of IK, employment status of IK, challenges confronting IK Descriptive research method was applied for this study, data were generated through the use of and suggestion on how to alleviate the challenges of IK. The use of frequency counts and percentages method of data analysis was adopted for this research work.

4. Results

Received the table below represents the comprehensive analysis of data and results based on the responses from the respondents through the use of questionnaire. Four hundred and fifty (450) copies of questionnaire were distributed, four hundred and eighteen (418) copies (92.9%) were returned with usable responses, while thirty two (32) copies (7.1%) were not returned.

The table 1. above presents results on the distribution of the respondents by states and gender. 35.9% of the respondents were from Ondo, 23.9% from Osun while the remaining 40.2% were from Ekiti. From Ondo 33.8% of the respondents were male and 38.9% were female, 22.7% of the respondents from Osun were male and 23.7% were female, from Ekiti, 43.5% were male while the remaining 37.4% were femel

Table 1.

| State | Frequency | Male | Female |
|-------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Ondo | 150 (35.9%) | 70 (33.8%) | 82 (38.9%) |
| Osun | 100 (23.9%) | 47 (22.7%) | 50 (23.7%) |
| Ekiti | 168 (40.2%) | 90 (43.5%) | 79 (37.4%) |
| Total | 418 (100%) | 207 (49.5%) | 211 (50.5%) |

Table 2. above indicates that the availability of indigenous skills and jobs in Ekiti, Osun and Ondo States. It could be realized that the low availability of these skills could be responsible for unemployment of Nigerian youths that roam about the streets in our society

Table 4. The Challenges Confronting Indigenous Job.

| .S/N | Names of IK Jobs | No Loan Access | Lack of Fund | Low Patronage of Local Products | Epileptic power supply | Lack of spare parts | Lack of raw materials | Lack of Government Training | Lack of market |
|------|------------------------------|----------------|--------------|---------------------------------|------------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------------|----------------|
| 1 | Blacksmith | | | 10 (11.8%) | 7 | 4 (9%) | 3 (13%) | | 7 (14.9%) |
| 2 | Tying and Dying | | | | | | | | |
| 3 | Africa Trado Medical | | | | | | | | |
| 4 | Hunting | 30 (32.6%) | 40 (46%) | 20 (23.5%) | | 40 (91%) | 20 (87%) | 33 | 13 (27.7%) |
| 5 | Fermentation | 30 (32.6%) | 20 (23%) | 20 (23.5%) | | | | | |
| 6 | Local Breweries | | | | | | | | |
| 7 | Tanning & Leather Production | | | | | | | | |
| 8 | Textiles & Weaving | 20 (21.7%) | 10 (11.5%) | 10 (11.8%) | | | | | |
| 9 | Bead-Making | | | 10 (11.8%) | | | | | 11 (23.4%) |
| 10 | Local Hair Branding | 12 (13%) | 17 (19.5%) | 15 (17.6%) | | | | | 16 (34%) |

Table 4. above focuses on some challenges confronting the self-employed people in Ekiti, Osun and Ondo State of the southwest Nigeria. The indigenous knowledge practitioners are experiencing a lot of challenges that are militating against the development of their traditional methods of production. The micro level of productivity still persist thereby discouraging Nigerian youths to go into such enterprises

Table 5. Assistance of Government to Indigenous Jobs.

| S/N | Names of IK Jobs | Govt. Training & Workshop | | Interest Free Loan | | Fund Intervention | | Equipment Infrastructure | | Electricity | | Products Exportation | |
|-----|------------------------------|---------------------------|------------|--------------------|------------|-------------------|------------|--------------------------|------------|-------------|------------|----------------------|------------|
| | | High | Low | High | Low | High | Low | High | Low | High | Low | High | Low |
| 1 | Blacksmith | | 6 (8.2%) | | 2 (3.3%) | | 2 (2.7%) | | 2 (3.6%) | | 2 (3.6%) | | 17 (35.4%) |
| 2 | Tying and Dying | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 3 | Africa Trado Medical | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 4 | Hunting | | 30 (41.1%) | | 26 (42.6%) | | 37 (49.3%) | | 33 (52.4%) | 17 | 23 (41.1%) | 20 (80%) | 10 (20.8%) |
| 5 | Fermentation | | 10 (13.7%) | | 10 (16.4%) | | 23 (30.7%) | | 7 (11.1%) | | 17 (30.3%) | | 3 (6.3%) |
| 6 | Local Breweries | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 7 | Tanning & Leather Production | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 8 | Textiles & Weaving | | 7 (9.6%) | | 3 (4.9%) | | 7 (9.3%) | | 13 (20.6%) | | 5 (8.9%) | | 5 (10.4%) |
| 9 | Bead-Making | | 5 (6.8%) | | 7 (11.5%) | | 2 (2.7%) | | 1 (1.6%) | | 3 (5.4%) | | 3 (6.3%) |
| 10 | Local Hair Branding | | 15 (20.5%) | | 13 (21.3%) | | 4 (5.3%) | | 7 (11.1%) | | 6 (10.7) | 5 (20%) | 10 (20.8%) |

The table 5. above explains the low financial interventions of the federal, state and local government in assisting the indigenous knowledge job practitioners. The nonchalant attitude of the three tiers of government is largely responsible for Nigeria economy to attain the 2020 millennium development goals of the country. The major economic set back of the country revolves around the lukewarm attitude of the economic policy of Nigeria to be realized.

The table above shows that the sampled population and responses collected from the questionnaire. The number that responded positively was recorded alongside with the percentage. The research result generally indicated the low level of government interventions to the funding and promotion of indigenous knowledge skills in the three states selected for the research. Indigenous knowledge skills remained the largest employer of labour in the Ekiti, Ondo, and Osun states, if it is funded regularly, it can take Nigeria out of recession

The research results revealed that the endemic state of unemployment was still rampant amongst the employed adults in Ekiti, Ondo and Osun States. Indigenous knowledge still maintained the lead in employment provisions of the three

States compared with the people that were engaged in white-collar-jobs. The indigenous knowledge practitioners were poor and remained as stack illiterates still practicing with archaic tools.

5.1 Conclusion

It could be concluded that Indigenous knowledge till date remained the largest employer of labour in the selected states i.e Ekiti, Ondo, Osun. Practitioners of IK in the three state were still utilizing manual old tools to achieve production which was responsible for low output. The literacy standard of the indigenous knowledge practitioners was very low and not encouraging. The level of poverty was conspicuously written on the faces of the practitioners when the tools and the physical appearance of the people were observed.

Unemployment has become a global problem but the magnitude differs from one country to the other. The Nigerian unemployment situation is worrisome simply because every literate person wanted a white collar job .The main reason for the study is to create awareness about indigenous and job provision through entrepreneurship training had been found to be thee panacea to solving unemployment menace in Nigeria.

Kashweka and Akakandelwa (2005) submitted that African traditional society has a knowledge system through which knowledge is passed on from one generation to another the system has enabled Africans to understand and integrate the various aspect of the environment into their lives. Peter et.al (2005) opined that the Kenya Ngo(s) strengthening information training and enterprise (site) ran the Juan kali project from 1996-1998 to improve traditional apprenticeship training. The objective were to upgrade the technical and managerial skills of master craft people ,to enable them diversify their production, strengthen their capacity building to provide quality training to the apprentices , and improve the selected vocational institutes to provide the much needed master crafts people. The three states from western geopolitical zone of Nigeria's (Ekiti, Ondo and osun) unemployment is high which could be seen from table 2, where types of indigenous skills available were indicated.

Although, the roles of science and technology in employment provision in Nigeria could not be undermined because science and technology application are the constituents of African or indigenous knowledge, science and technology has made tremendous impact in modernizing indigenous knowledge skills. The current national directorate of employment has embarked on establishing entrepreneurship skill centers nationwide, training unemployed youths in various skill centers, but the fact still remain that indigenous knowledge skill acquisition is cost effective, promoting indigenous technical capabilities, creating more employment opportunities and for the preservation expansion of African traditional technology globally

5.2 Recommendations

It could be recommended that the Federal, State and Local government in Nigeria should improve more the funding, development and assistance of local indigenous skills that could attract the interest of employable people.

Many indigenous knowledge skills are moribund due to lack of successors. Small scale *entrepreneurship skill acquisition centers should be established in each local government headquarters* nationwide for Nigerian youths who are ready to learn a trade.

Furthermore, the federal government should intensify more effort in the promotion of made in Nigerian goods. Foreign equipment, tools, materials, food etc. should be banned from the country

With the results, it was imperative that the three tiers of government should amend their economic policies to promote, development and increase their financial budgeting to fund indigenous knowledge development or direct more attention to the provision of social amenities, bank loan with lowest or non-interest rate, organizing adult literacy education to reach remote communities where indigenous knowledge practitioners reside, provide subsidized tools and equipment to facilitate mass production.

Finally, the Federal Ministry of Education should include in the primary and post primary education curriculum more technical skills for all students.

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