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## ENVIRONMENTAL INFLUENCES AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP DEVELOPMENT: THE NIGERIAN ECONOMY PERSPECTIVE

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### ABSTRACT

*The effect of environmental influences in entrepreneurship development has been recognized in literature. Most of these studies have been fragmented focusing attention either on roles of government in entrepreneurship development or identification of environmental factors affecting entrepreneurial growth. Most of the literature has neither paid attention to the explicit link between these variables and opportunities for new start-up enterprises which are a function of the propensity to enterprise and ability to enterprise. This study evaluates the environmental variables using mean value descriptive statistics to assess the extent of impact of these constraints on entrepreneurship development in Nigeria. The paper develops a framework linking opportunity – propensity to enterprise – ability to enterprise to the likelihood to enterprise in new enterprise creation. The core elements of the dimension identified were hub on government pivotal roles in ensuring economic stability. The study outlines some propositions of the integrated framework or model and offers guidelines for formulating and implementing government policies and programmes to develop entrepreneurship.*

### KEYWORDS

Environmental factors, Entrepreneurship Development, Opportunity, Propensity and ability to enterprise; and New set ups.

### INTRODUCTION

Entrepreneurship activities are pervasive to all sectors and have been found to be key factor in economic growth and development of world economies; and capable of making positive impacts on the quality of life of the people (Abimbola and Agboola, 2011; Adejemo, 2001). For any economy to be vibrant, entrepreneurial activities has to be stimulated and enhanced. Every organisation (Small, medium or large) operate in an environment, and been affected by environmental factors. These environmental factors in most cases present challenges and prospects to the operators. The term “entrepreneurial environment here refers to a combination of factors that play a role in the development of entrepreneurship (Fogel, 2001). Empirical studies on the entrepreneurial environment of various countries show that countries that keep rules and regulations at a minimum, offer tax and other incentives, and provide assistance such as training and counseling services to start-up entrepreneurs increase the likelihood of new venture development (Fogel, 2001; Dana, 1987, 1990). Moreso, factors such as the availability of financial resources and the presence of training and research are also found to be very important in increasing the rate of new venture creations (Pennings, 1982; Fogel, 2001). Studies also show that entrepreneurs face several obstacles including lack of financial assistance, lack of information on various aspects of business, excessive or multiple taxation, and high rates of inflations (Etim, 2010; Adewale, 2007; Onuoha, 2012; Young and Welsch, 1993). While a growing body of literature exists on entrepreneurial environments, they are highly fragmental. Some authors have prepared a list of environmental conditions that may play a role in developing entrepreneurship in a country or region (e.g. Atojoko, 2007; Bruno & Tyebjel, 1982; Gartner, 1985; Manning, Birley, & Norburn, 1989; Gnyawali & Fogel, 1994). Others have a more descriptive approach and focused on only a few aspects of the environment (e.g. Davidson, 199; Inyang & Enuoh, 2009, Ogunsiyi, and Ladanu, 2010); and yet others on theories of entrepreneurship. Thus, while the effect of environmental influences in developing entrepreneurship has been recognised, gaps exist as to establishing explicit links between the needs of entrepreneurs and how environments can fulfil them, induce or reinforce their desire to go into business, and thus facilitate the process of new venture creation. This study is an attempt to bridge these gaps through integrated model or framework explicitly linking the environmental dimensions to the process of new venture creation or entrepreneurship development.

### LITERATURE ON ENTREPRENEURIAL ENVIRONMENT

In this study, we refer to the definition of “Entrepreneurial” as the process of creating something new with value by devoting the necessary time and effort, assuming the accompanying financial, psychic, and social risks, and receiving the resulting rewards of monetary and personal satisfaction, and independence “Entrepreneurial Environment” is a combination of factors that play a role in the development of entrepreneurship. First, as used by Gnyawali and Fogel (1994), it refers to the overall economic, socio-cultural, and political factors that influence people’s willingness and ability to undertake entrepreneurial activities. Second, it refers to the availability of assistance and support services that facilitate the start up process.

The literature in entrepreneurial environment can be group into three broad streams: (a) general environmental conditions for entrepreneurship; (b) descriptive studies of the environmental conditions of a particular country or region and (b) the role of government in shaping the entrepreneurial environments (See Gnyawali & Fogel, 1994).

Studies on general environment condition discussed in most literature include legal and institutional frameworks for efficient functioning of private enterprises, presence of experienced entrepreneurs, presence of skilled labour force, accessibility of suppliers, accessibility of customers or new markets, high degree of competition among firms, favorable government policies, provision of training and support services, and supportive infrastructure (Onuoha, 2008; Ogunsiyi & Lahanu, 2010; El-Namaki, 1988, Manning, Birley, & Norburn, 1989; Gnyawali and Fogel, 1994).

Empirical studies linking entrepreneurial development with environmental factors abound in literature. Studies have established its positive relationship with stimulation of economic growth, employment generation; and empowerment of the disadvantaged segment of the population (poverty alleviation), which include women and the poor (Thomes and Mueller, 2010; Reynolds, 1987; Shapero, 1981, Onuoha, 2012; Eke, 2007). Thus, empirical studies of entrepreneurial environments of various countries show that giving positive relationship between entrepreneurship and economic stabilization variables, most countries tend to keep rules and regulations at a minimum, offer tax and other incentives, and provide training and counseling services to start-up entrepreneurs to increase likelihood of new venture start-ups as well encourage existing ones (Dana, 1987; 1990; Onuoha, 2011). Also, factors identified in studies as obstacles to entrepreneurial development include lack of financial assistance, lack of information on various aspects of business, excessive and / multiple taxation, and high rate of inflation (Onuoha, 2012; Young & Welsh, 1993; Abimbola & Agboola, 2011). Other studies that identified impediments to entrepreneurial development having direct or indirect link with environmental conditions include: planning problems (Etim, 2010), high production cost; poor infrastructure; finance;

competition from imported goods; limited scope of operation (Onuoha, 2008). Obitayo (2001) listed restricted access to finance (including working capital) difficulties in input procurement weak infrastructural facilities; poor demand of finished goods; inadequate collateral securities; delay in the disbursement of approved funds; distress in the banking sector, couple with inconsistent government policies as major environmental factors hindering entrepreneurial development in developing economies.

The observations of manufacturing Association of Nigeria (MAN) in its Annual Report and Accounts indicates that the entrepreneurial sub-sector which dominates the make-up of small and medium scale sectors performed poorly in the year 2006 and up to 2013. The reasons adduced for the poor performance of the sector are as follows:

- i. Poor and deteriorating infrastructural services, particularly in the area of power supply.
- ii. Inadequate/inaccessibility to long term funds, high cost of funds;
- iii. Influx of cheap/substandard / prohibited products across borders, with the attendant weak demand of locally made products;
- iv. Lack of patronage of locally manufactured products by governments at all levels
- v. Inconsistent government policies;
- vi. Scarcity/incessant increase in the prices of petroleum products;
- vii. Poor administration/management of seaports;
- viii. Multiple taxes/levies from the three tiers of government;
- ix. Corruptions and all forms of trade malpractices including smuggling, dumping, fake and counterfeit products, among others.

Scholars that focused on the role of government, that is public policy, suggests several policy options for developing entrepreneurship. These policy options include provision of venture capital funds, tax-based incentives, and government procurement programs; protection of proprietary ideas and innovations, investment in education and research; explicit recognition of, and support for, entrepreneurship by government agencies; fostering of entrepreneurship by educational institutions; and minimization of entry barriers (see, Goodman, Many, & Pate, 1992; Mockry, 1988; Et-Namaki, 1988; Onuoha, 2012; Abimbola & Agboola, 2011).

The Nigerian government at various tiers have initiated some entrepreneurship support programmes aim at enhancing entrepreneurial activities following the recognition of the importance of entrepreneurship to society's socio-economic development. The programmes are categorized into two:

1. Entrepreneurship development programmes and institutions; and
2. Finance and micro-credit programmes and institutions (Abimbola & Agboola, 2011).

The first category comprises policies and programmes aimed at stimulating, developing and enhancing the capacities of entrepreneurs, while the second category consists of measures aimed at providing stress-free credit facilities. This policies and programme are shown on table 1.

**TABLE 1: SELECTED POLICY PROGRAMMES AIMED AT ENTREPRENEURSHIP DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA**

	Programme	Objective	Remarks
1	Industrial Development Centres (IDCs)	Provision of extension services to SMEs in project appraisal and training	Lack of adequate equipment and finding
2	Small Scale Industries Credit Scheme (SSICS)	SSICS was set up to provide technical and financial support for the SMEs	Inadequate manpower to monitor advances leading to repayment default
3	The Nigerian Industrial Development Bank (NIDB)	NIDB was designed to provide medium to long term loans for financing of industrial activities	Financial and administrative constraints and currently embroiled in merger controversy.
4	The Nigerian bank for Commerce and Industry	The bank was set up to provide financial services to indigenous business community and to administer the SME 1 World bank Loan scheme.	The bank suffered operational problems, which resulted into a state of insolvency (Sanusi, 2003).
5	National Directorates of Employment (NDE)	Responsible for vocational skills development and small sale enterprises programmes designed to combat unemployment	Lack of commitment by the different tiers of government to its operations.
6	National Economic Reconstruction Fund (NERFUND)	Fill the gap in any observed inadequacies in the provision of medium to long term financing to small and medium scale industrial enterprises.	Currently embroiled in merger controversy.
7	Family Economic Advancement Programme (FEAP)	Established to provide micro facilities for entrepreneurs.	Discontinued due to change in government
8	People's Bank	Designed to make banking services more accessible and extent credit to the poor.	Discontinued due to change in government
9	Community Bank	Designed to make banking credit accessible to the active poor.	Discontinued and substituted with Microfinance Banks
10	Better Life Programmes /Family Support Programme (BLF/FSP)	Aimed at sensitizing and providing micro-credit facilities for women entrepreneurs.	Discontinued due to change in government
11	Small and Medium Enterprises Development Agency of Nigeria (SMEDAN)	The Small and Medium Enterprises Development Agency of Nigeria (SMEDAN) was established to promote the development of the MSME sector of the Nigerian Economy.	The impact is not felt at all elves of societal strata
12	Small & Medium Enterprises Equity Investment Scheme (SMEEIS)	To provide credit facilities for small and medium entrepreneurs	Lack of national spread in implementation
13	Micro Finance Banks	Established to provide finance for the active poor in the population	Lack of national spread and high interest rate

Source: Central Bank of Nigeria, 2012.

On the whole, the aggregate goals of these policies and programmes include, amongst others, stimulation of economic growth and development, empowerment of the disadvantaged portion of the population, employment generation and invariably, poverty reduction. The question is then asked: how have the operations of these programmes of governments fared to impact on meeting the objectives for which they were designed? The answers to this question are reflected in the remarks on Table 1 above.

Though the above table showcase an array of government programmes, and policies geared towards entrepreneurial development in Nigeria, most of the programmes are moribund, or discontinued, and in most cases outrightly replaced with new ones as a consequence of change in government (Family Economic Advancement Programme (FEAP); People's Bank and Better Life Programme/Family Support Programme; Merger of related programmes as in the case of National Economic Reconstruction Fund (NERFUND), the Nigerian Industrial Development Bank (NIDB), and the Nigerian Bank for Commerce and Industry (NBCI) into Bank of Industry (BOI); or outright replacement with new programme. A clear example of this is found in the replacement of community banks with Microfinance Banks).

The social-cultural dimensions and its link with security issues are rightly captured by Adagba, et al (2012). They asserted that the activities of armed robbers, kidnappers and the insurgency particularly in the northeastern part of Nigeria has rendered business activities sterile thereby hampering entrepreneurial initiatives and growth. Summary of some of the selected studies on the relevance of environmental variables for entrepreneurship development are shown below on table 2.



TABLE 2: SELECTED RESEARCH ON THE IMPORTANCE OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS FOR ENTREPRENEURSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Environmental conditions	Findings	Citation
Government Policies and Procedures	In Cayman Islands, entrepreneurship was facilitated by keeping paperwork and procedural requirements at minimum	Dana, 1987
	In Malaysia, concentration of power in the business development agency established by the government and too many procedural requirements encouraged entrepreneurship	Dana, 1990
	In Saint Martin, excessive regulations on businesses suppressed the growth of entrepreneurship, conversely, in Saint Martin, minimum regulation and procedural requirements encouraged entrepreneurship	Dana, 1990
	In Mexico, key barriers for start-up included excessive government regulation, high rates of taxes, and increasing inflation	Young & Welsch, 1993
Socioeconomic Conditions	In Sweden, tax and other incentives had greater impact on persons who were strongly motivated to start a business than on persons who were less motivated	
	The greater the percentage of small firms in a growing sector, the greater the share of jobs created by small firms in that sector.	Davidsson, 1991
Entrepreneurial and business skills	In Sweden, both business-related experience and business education were highly correlated with entrepreneurs' ability to start and manage a business	Davidsson, 1991
Financial Support	In Cayman Islands, creation of investment companies facilitated entrepreneurship	Dana, 1987
	In Singapore, provision of low-interest loans and government grants facilitated entrepreneurship development	Dana, 1987
	In the US, availability of financial resources was an important contributor of organizational birth rate	Pennings, 1982
	Credit guarantee scheme exist to guarantee loans to SMEs, local governments have special funds that serve as a reserve for loans to SMEs. Consequently, most entrepreneurs get loans for start-up business.	Etim, 2010
	In the United Kingdom and Nigeria, private investors are attracted to invest in new companies because the government provides tax relief for new equity investment by individuals in unquoted companies.	Harrison & Mason 1988, Etim 2010
	In Mexico, key barriers for start-up included lack of working capital, difficulty in obtaining loans, and seasonal fluctuations in cash.	Young & Welsh, 1993
Non-financial support	In Australia, the provision of nation-wide management training programs and the supply of textbooks and information materials on business start-up issues encouraged new business start-ups.	Dana, 1987
	In Cayman Islands, government guarantee not to tax businesses for 20 years attracts entrepreneurs	Dana, 1987
	In Japan, regional information centres gather, analyse, and disseminate technical and market information and offer free access to computers, local business development centres provide free consulting and training services, government purchases certain quantity of the products of small enterprises every year. All these facilitated entrepreneurship development	Hawkins, 1993
	In the US, large size urban areas and presence of universities for training and research assistance were important factors contributing to the birth of new firms.	Pennings, 1982
	Presence of business development assistance was significantly correlated with the share of jobs created by small firms	Philips, 2012

Source: Extracted from Relevant literature reviewed.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The objective of this study and the nature of the data gathered determined the appropriateness of the descriptive method that was adopted for this research. This study used set of questionnaire designed for collecting data from entrepreneurs with Akwa Ibom State urban centres, Nigeria. Assurances in obtaining data from small and medium business owners (entrepreneurs) were accorded by undergraduate students of the University of Uyo studying entrepreneurial studies. Based on the known fact that entrepreneurship is inextricably linked to all sectors of the economy, sample of 300 entrepreneurs was drawn from an estimated population of 5430 of small and medium business enterprises registered with the State Ministry of Commerce and Industry. 290 were correctly filled and used for analysis, representing a response rate of 97%, deemed impressive and adequate. The data were presented in tabular form and analysed using percentages and means scores. The questionnaire elicited information about the severity of environmental factors or influences on entrepreneurial set-up and development and perceptions of entrepreneurs on these environmental influences on meeting their needs or reinforcing them.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The study was prompted by the fact the entrepreneurship has been found to be a key factor in economy growth and development of world economies, and the need to nurture a new breed of entrepreneurs in the country. The scaling parameters for the variables are shown as follows:

Parameter	Scale
No problem or constraint	0 - 2.49
Problem or constraints	2.50 - 3.49
Serious Problem /Constraint	3.50 - 4.49
Very serious problem or Constraint	4.50 - 5.50 or above.

The findings of the result are analysed under two headings:

- Presence or absence of environmental variables affecting entrepreneurship development; and
- The effect of environmental variables /factors on entrepreneurship development.

## PRESENCE OR ABSENCE OF ENVIRONMENTAL VARIABLES AFFECTING ENTREPRENEURSHIP DEVELOPMENT

The study shows that there are many problems and challenges that have negatively affected entrepreneurial activities in the economy. From Table 3, 89% of the respondents as against 11% have been discouraged by one environmental variable or problem or the other.

TABLE 3: WHETHER THEY HAVE ENCOUNTERED ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEMS/CHALLENGES/CONSTRAINTS OR NOT IN THEIR ENTREPRENEURIAL ACTIVITIES

OPTION	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
YES	259	89.2
NO	31	10.8
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>290</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Field Survey.

A further ranking of these challenges /environmental factors is shown on table 4. Note, the values of the ranking starts from 1 through 4 and the minimum value is one (1) and maximum value is four (4).

TABLE 4: ENVIRONMENTAL CHALLENGES /CONSTRAINTS THAT AFFECT ENTREPRENEURSHIP DEVELOPMENT

	Environmental Constraint	Mean Value	Rank Value
(a)	Government Policies and Programme	5.21	Very serious Problem/Constraint
	Legal and Institutional	4.98	Very Serious Problem Constraint
	Socio-Cultural & Political	4.43	Serious Problem/ Constraint
	Economic	3.98	Serious Problem/ Constraint
	Task – Competition	4.47	Serious Problem Constraint
	Financial	4.94	Very Serious Problem Constant
	Physical-Infrastructural	3.74	Serious Problem Constraint
	Globalization/International	4.34	Serious Problem Constraint
	Technological	3.36	Problem/constraint
	Task – Customers	3.77	Not serious problem constraint

Source: Computed from Field Survey Data, 2014.

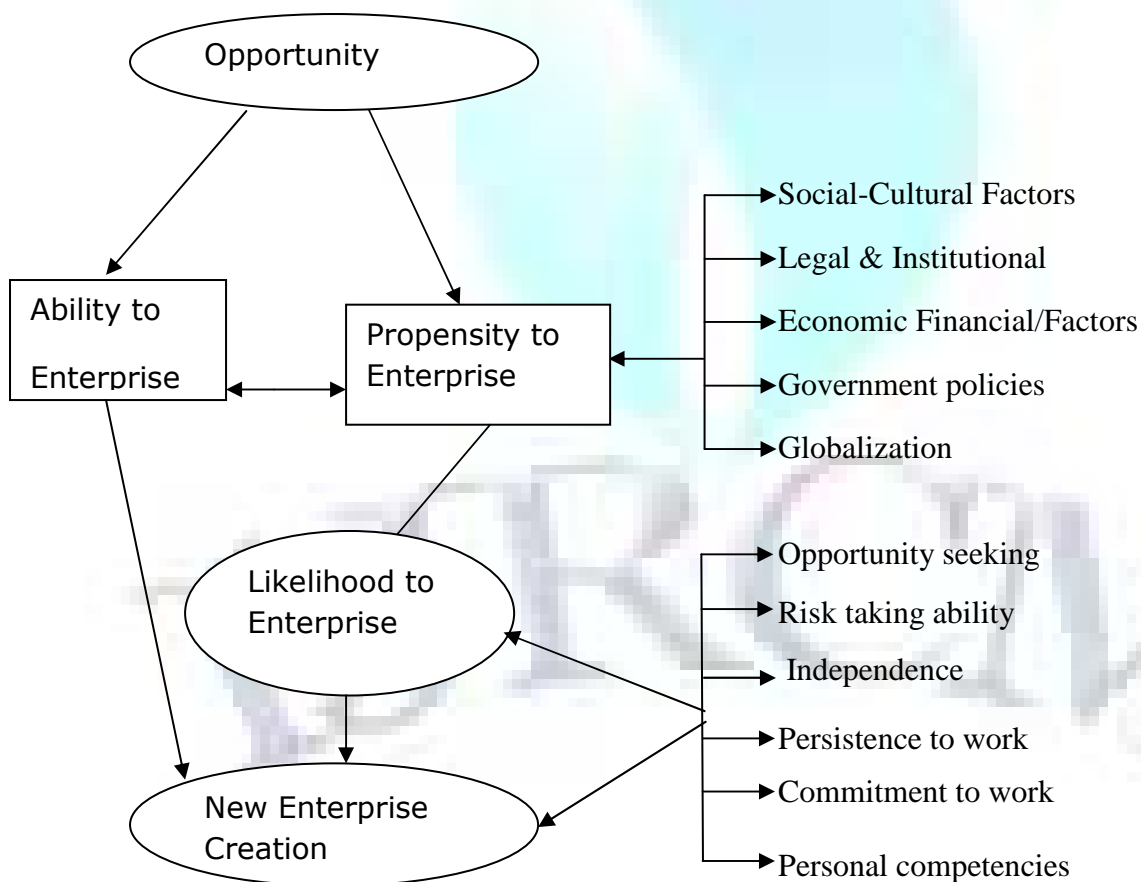
Table 4 shows that government policies and programme, legal and institutional framework, and financial variables are very serious challenges or constraints (environmental variables) that have worked against entrepreneurship development in Nigeria with mean values of 5.21, 4.98 and 4.94 respectively. This is in agreement with earlier studies by Eke (2007) and Obeleagu-Nzelibe (2000).

These three environmental variables have always been regarded as the major constraints as they have brought about the non-starting or an early collapse of entrepreneurial ventures in Nigeria. Other serious environmental constraints are task/competition variables with a mean value of 4.47, socio-cultural constraints 4.43, Globalization 4.34 and economic constraints 3.98. Alowole (2007) has also identified the high inflation, bank lending rates and a decline of fund made available to SME's in Nigeria over the past two decades. Although other studies (See Etim 2010; Onuoha, 2011) identified technological, physical (infrastructures) and changes in customers taste as impediments to entrepreneurial development in Nigeria, this study shows these constraints are not very serious problem or constraints with technological variables, physical-infrastructure and task-customers having mean values of 3.36, 3.74 and 3.77 respectively. A priori one would have thought these last variables constitute serious constraints.

### THE INTEGRATED MODEL AND ITS IMPLICATION FOR RESEARCH

The foregoing analysis suggests the importance of each of the environmental variables though with varying degrees, depending upon the availability of opportunities for business start-up, and the overall level of propensity and ability to start an enterprise. Each of the three core variables: **OPPORTUNITY – PROPENSITY TO ENTERPRISE – ABILITY TO ENTERPRISE** are sharpened by diverse environmental variables which must be identified at each stage.

FIGURE 1: INTEGRATED MODEL FOR ENTERPRISE START-UP US ENVIRONMENTAL VARIABLES



The model shows that opportunities are latent in any environment and must be sought. The ease to discovery of the latent opportunities is directly linked to propensity to enterprise and ability to enterprise. These two core elements are dependent on government policies & programmes, legal & Institutional framework, socio-cultural factors, economic and financial factors as well as globalization dimensions of the environment. Thus, the more favourable these factors, the more likely that the propensity to enterprise and ability to enterprise are prop and the likelihood to enterprise into new enterprise creation.

The Dimension of the environment that relates to the likelihood to enterprise is the level of entrepreneurial and business skills. These include opportunity seeking ability, risk taking ability, independence, persistence ∝ commitment and personal competencies. Thus, if people have a high propensity to enterprise but

a low ability to enterprise, environmental interventions will need to develop the entrepreneurial and business skills of the people. Conversely, if people have high ability to enterprise but a low propensity to enterprise, environmental interventions need to be oriented towards making the socio-economic variables conducive for entrepreneurship. This suggests the following propositions:

- i. The higher the opportunity, propensity and ability to enterprise, the higher the likelihood to enterprise
- ii. The more favourable the environmental variables, the greater the propensity and ability to enterprise.
- iii. The greater the entrepreneurial and business skills, greater the ability and likelihood to enterprise.

Ideally, the likelihood to enterprise and start-up new venture is a function of an understanding of the intervening variables. Since governments play pivotal role in enhancing overall economic stability, the implications for public policy as identified in the study is anchored on the roles of government in stimulating entrepreneurial development and growth.

## RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

Every organization operates within the framework set up its environment. Environmental variables offer business organizations opportunities, threats and constraints. The arguments developed in this paper suggest that relationships may exist between environmental factors and performance of an entrepreneur, and that a match between these environmental variables and specific requirements of the enterprise gives the likelihood to venture into new business. Since government is the main hub that drives any business environment, the model suggests the role of government in formulatory and implementary policies that motivate people into business and to remain in business are the cardinal issues of focus. Hence, the following points summarize the guidelines for policy formulation:

- a. Government should contribute to entrepreneurship development by adopting policies and programmes that provide a broader scope of opportunity to entrepreneurs.
- b. Government should design policies and programmes geared towards improving ability and propensity to enterprise such as inclusion of entrepreneurial values and thinking in the educational system.
- c. With the explicit link between environmental factors, and opportunity, propensity and ability to enterprise, and dimensions of likelihood to enterprise, governments should propel and facilitate regulatory and institutional frameworks to lubricate the linkage. These may include development financing, diversification and reforms of the economy to ensure stability and growth rates of entrepreneurial ventures.

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