

THE ROLE OF SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND THE STATE IN PROPELLING NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA: A CONCEPTUAL APPROACH

Maxwell Ayodele Olokundun, Covenant University

Chinonye Love Moses, Covenant University

Hezekiah Olubusayo Falola, Covenant University

Stephen Ayodotun Ibidunni Covenant University

Odunayo Paul Salau, Covenant University

Oke Adunola Oluremi, Covenant University

ABSTRACT

This paper was based on a conceptual analysis geared towards examining the role of social entrepreneurship and the state in stimulating national development particularly in Nigeria. For a social entrepreneur, wealth is a tool for tackling social challenges hence; the success of a social entrepreneur is designated by the social impacts achieved. From this view perspective, a nation achieves national development when the adverse effects of social challenges are effectively tackled by sustaining an effective social system. Therefore to achieve national development in Nigeria as a Nation State, the machinery of the State is considered a foundation and catalyst that can help transform the investments in the economy into developmental. Therefore, social entrepreneurship may serve as a spring board for the achievement of national development in Nigeria owing to the fact that creating social impacts by changing systems that combat social challenges is the focal point of social entrepreneurship. It was therefore recommended that government programmes in Nigeria should be designed to create enabling environments to stimulate the emergence of highly enthused social entrepreneurs who will become creative and innovative in finding solutions to socio-economic problems facilitating the achievement of national development.

Keywords: Social Entrepreneurship, State, National Development, Nigeria.

INTRODUCTION

A major indicator of economic development in every country is growth in business and entrepreneurship activities. This motivates the emergence of highly skilled entrepreneurs who engage in profitable small scale enterprises while also creating employment opportunities. Entrepreneurship is all encompassing and affects every major sector of an economy hence, the commitments of government or the state in creating an enabling environment for entrepreneurial activities can culminate in national development. Specifically, the concept of social entrepreneurship involves the identification of social challenges and the adoption of innovative and entrepreneurial approaches targeted at proffering short and long term solutions (Addou, Fahmy, Greenward and Nelson, 2010). Therefore, a proper understanding of how social

entrepreneurship and the activities of social entrepreneurs shape national development, will obviously enable a state or the government of any nation to be at a vantage position to anticipate the positive impact this will have on national development (Schaltegger and Wagner, 2011). This will in turn, facilitate the formulation of relevant and appropriate policies, targeted at motivating the activities of social entrepreneurs. Much of entrepreneurship literature particularly in the Nigerian context have laid emphasis on business entrepreneurship however, this has not been successful in changing and sustaining a new set of social values that motivate national development. Although, business entrepreneurs offer some new value(s) to the society in the form of innovative activities through the creation of firms however, national development has been farfetched. Studies such as Addou, Fahmy, Greenward and Nelson (2010) supported by Garima and Saxena (2013) have showed that social entrepreneurship can be a panacea for sustainable development. In the Nigerian context studies such as Holmes (2012) supported by Moses and Olokundun (2014) focused on the role of social entrepreneurship in tackling social challenges and motivating sustainable development. However, there is a need to examine the role of social entrepreneurship and the state in stimulating national development particularly in Nigeria.

METHODOLOGY

This paper adopted conceptual analysis as research method. The analytic method often aims at the definitions of concepts, in order to have necessary and sufficient conditions for the application of the concepts. The several critiques of this analytic method are mostly based on a critique of definitions. However, conceptual analysis is largely considered a beneficial method of inquiry particularly when the goal of the analysis is to analyse concepts into their constituent parts in order to gain knowledge or a better understanding of a particular philosophical issue in which the concept is involved (Boston-Kemple, 2012). Therefore, this paper analysed the concepts of social entrepreneurship, the State and National Development in order to gain knowledge and better understanding of the proposed relationships between the concepts in the context of Nigeria.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Definition of Concepts:

Social Entrepreneurship

Research on Social Entrepreneurship suggests that 'defining the concept of social entrepreneurship is a challenging task (Cho, 2006). Many authors such as Raghda (2013) and Schaltegger and Wagner (2013) to mention a few, have attempted to define the term social entrepreneurship. However, most conceptualisations of social entrepreneurship are usually a reflection of what scholars conceive to be the definition of entrepreneurship as a concept (Mair and Marti, 2004; Moses and Olokundun, 2014; Hockerts, 2017). There is a sharp distinction between economic entrepreneurship and social entrepreneurship hence, a holistic overview of entrepreneurship which reflects the economic and social perspectives can help to clearly differentiate the types of entrepreneurship (Peredo and McLean, 2006). Economic entrepreneurship refers to the identification and exploitation of business opportunities and the attraction of resources targeted at proffering solutions to business problems or challenges

(Ogbari et al., 2016; Olokundun et al., 2017). Social entrepreneurship on the other hand, refers to the process through which solutions are proffered for social challenges without recourse to the constraints of resources currently available (Moses and Olokundun, 2014; Stevens, Moray and Bruneel, 2015). Social entrepreneurs are individuals with daunting determination and commitment to persist in the face of obstacles (Johanna and Marti, 2006; Choi and Majumdar, 2014). For an economic entrepreneur, wealth is a measure of value creation (Garima and Saxena, 2013). Hence, the wealth that accrues to a business is considered an indication of the success of the business. On the other hand, for a social entrepreneur, wealth is a tool for tackling social challenges (Ebrahim, Battilana and Mair, 2014; Reiser and Dean, 2015). Consequently, the success of a social entrepreneur is designated by the social impacts achieved (Cornforth, 2014; Liu, Eng and Takeda, 2015). Therefore, in line with the work of Peredo and McLean (2006) Social entrepreneurship can be broadly defined as 'the identification and exploitation of opportunities and the attraction of adequate resources with a focus on overcoming social challenges or problems geared towards fostering development in in a society.

National Development

The concept of National development refers to the ability of a county or countries to enhance the social welfare of the populace by providing social amenities such as quality education, employment opportunities, potable water, transportation infrastructure and medical care (Fosu, 2010). From this view perspective, a nation achieves national development when the adverse effects of social challenges are effectively tackled by sustaining an effective social system. In Nigeria according to the National Bureau for Statistics (2017), unemployment level rose from 16.2% to 18.8% in 2017. Similarly, Statistics shows that 57 million people in the country do not have access to safe water and lack of access to adequate health services was identified as accounting for 90% of the cause of deaths in Nigeria (Premium Times, 2017). This suggests that for national development to be achieved in the nation, social challenges must be effectively tackled particularly because unfavourable conditions, situations or circumstances in an economy that are consequences of absence of effective social systems or failure of the existing ones are evidences of an under developed nation (WESS, 2013).

The State

The state refers to a territorial political community which possesses an independent organised government. The primary loyalty of a state is its cultural identity which is referred to as nationality (Herbst, 2000). This is considered predominant for the organization or formation of a State. A state possesses sovereignty and legitimacy and the significance of the nation state is that, once consolidated around a particular nationality, it is the sole form in which National development of a nation is possible (Alesina and Spolaore, 2003). Therefore to achieve national development in Nigeria as a Nation State, the machinery of the State is considered a foundation and catalyst that can help transform the investments in the economy into developmental gains (Besley and Persson, 2010).

CONCEPTUAL LINKAGES

The Role of the State in Enhancing National Development

The government of Nigeria as a Nation State has at different dispensations initiated different policies, programs and schemes to ensure that adequate attention is given to the populace of the nation. A key criticism of the Government is the limited priority given to the poor and under privileged within the health, education, economic and social welfare sectors (Holmes, 2012). Most of the social programs and services initiated by the Governments do not get to the disadvantaged and marginalised group of individuals in the economy (Seelos and Mair, 2005). Therefore to achieve national development in Nigeria, it is the responsibility of the state or government of Nigeria to initiate social programmes and services that will reflect social inclusiveness and effective implementation. However, considering the complexities of the social challenges in Nigeria, the task seems too enormous to be effectively tackled solely by the government.

Social Entrepreneurship and National Development

The traditional options engaged by most nations towards combating social challenges and achieving national development emphasises the importance of social entrepreneurship (Christian and Johanna, 2005; Kannampuzha, 2017). This is consequent upon the fact that the goal and strategy of most nations as regards the achievement of national development has been geared towards tackling social challenges such as reduction of poverty and resulting consequences of poverty (Seelos and Mair, 2005). However, regardless of the many decades of foreign investments and aids as well as policy reforms channelled towards national development in under-developed and developing nations, yet little or no successes have been achieved. There seems to be a continuous trend of unequal distribution of resources and wealth within developing nations and between countries (Fosu, 2010). Despite the investments in developmental projects and government interventions particularly in Nigeria, these have not tangibly resulted in national development. It is evident therefore, that the achievement of national development still requires new and innovative approaches especially for a developing nation as Nigeria (Cho, 2006). It is pertinent to state that social challenges are consequences of absence of effective systems or failure of the existing ones. Hence, situating appropriate social systems may facilitate the achievement of national development (Raghda, 2013; Kim and Lim, 2017). Therefore, social entrepreneurship may serve as a spring board for the achievement of national development in Nigeria owing to the fact that creating social impacts by changing systems that combat social challenges is the focal point of social entrepreneurship (Banodia and Dubey, 2017).

Implications for National Development in Nigeria

A nation achieves national development when the adverse effects of social challenges are effectively tackled by sustaining an effective social system. The machinery of the State is considered a foundation and catalyst that can help transform the investments in an economy into national development however, considering the complexities of the social challenges in Nigeria; the task seems too enormous to be effectively tackled solely by the government. The concept of national development remains a learning field and it has also emerged as a sub-set of entrepreneurial theories and practice. Social entrepreneurship as a strategy for achieving national

development in Nigeria has not been adequately explored regardless of the fact that it has been shown as a remedy for social problems and challenges towards the initialization of national development. However, there remains a considerable uncertainty as regards the social impacts of social entrepreneurs in Nigeria. To this end, the involvement of the government in financing social entrepreneurs in Nigeria will help to attract more individuals, organizations and institutions into social entrepreneurship channelled towards solving social challenges. It is therefore recommended that government programmes in Nigeria should be designed to create enabling environments to stimulate the emergence of highly enthused social entrepreneurs who will become creative and innovative in finding solutions to socio-economic problems facilitating the achievement of national development.

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