

ASSESSMENT OF INDIGENOUS COMPANIES AND PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS IN LIVING OUT CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES IN EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN NNEWI NORTH LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA

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Abstract

This paper examined the need for a more coherent and binding recognition of the corporate social responsibility principle in Nigeria. In a country such as Nigeria, where the principles and benefits of democratic governance are still fragile coupled with high poverty rate among the citizenry and devastating effect of corona virus, there is a need for a dynamic and step-wise approach through which the corporate social responsibility concept could be continually mainstreamed into national laws and policies. The paper is focused on Nnewi North Local Government Area of Nigeria, though without any oil reserve as in Niger Delta which is major source of revenue for the country but highly rich in creativity and entrepreneurship with numerous industries and factories. It is often referred to as Japan of Africa due to ingenuity of individuals located there. The simple survey done in 46 public primary schools and eight public secondary schools on the activities and undertaking of indigenous company and public institutions on the corporate social responsibility as affect educational development and its improvement shows a total and complete lack of presence of these companies and public institutions. Therefore, the paper encourages these captains of industries and companies to imbibe and adopt the CSR policies and regulations in various companies and industries in order that both society and environment will benefit thereby, uplift the already battered and disillusioned society and instill hope and support through empowerment in educational development and improvement as seen in other parts of the world. The paper also urges governments to do more in educational development and improvement to be concerned with numerous children dropping out both in primary and secondary schools due to poverty and lack of funds which has dashed out their hope, dreams and desires, coupled with drive to eradicate illiteracy in the land and live out their vision 2030, which is eradication of illiteracy in the land. Secondly, the national and state legislators should pass a resolution on tax deduction for companies and public institutions, which will go a long way in achieving the realization of CSR principles and purpose. Thirdly, the enactment of laws should be in form of policies, persuasion, appealing to their good consciences. Hence, the success and ratings of best companies and public institutions should not be based on the profit they make yearly and its promptness in meeting up of the demand of government but the impact and ability of giving back to the society.

Keywords: Educational development, Indigenous Companies, Public Institutions, Corporate Social responsibilities

Introduction

Corporate social responsibility policies and purpose and its enactment into law in order to uplift the already battered and disillusioned society and instill hope and support through empowerment in educational development and improvement as seen in other part of the world are very much

needed more than ever following fragile democratic governance in Nigeria coupled with high poverty rate among the citizenry and devastating effect of corona virus. There are numerous children dropping out both in primary and secondary schools due to poverty and lack of funds which has dashed out their hope, dreams and desires. The effect of Corona Virus pandemic has really dealt with already handicapped, vulnerable, marginalized and socio- economically disadvantage parents. There is a need for a dynamic and step-wise approach through which the corporate social responsibility concept could be continually mainstreamed into national laws and policies.

The struggle and clarion call is focusing on Nnewi North Local Government Area of Nigeria. Though without any oil reserved as Niger Delta which is major source of revenue for the country but rich in creativity and entrepreneurship with numerous industries and factories. It is often referred to as Japan of Africa due ingenuity of individuals located there. The paper encourages these captains of industries to help through the CSR policies and purpose to uplift the already battered and disillusioned society and instill hope and support through empowerment in educational development and improvement as seen in other part of the world. The struggle of CSR to gain its root in Nigeria is already gathering momentum in Niger Delta Region of Nigeria that produces a significant portion of the aggregate oil wealth of Nigeria. With the emergence of oil and its exploration mostly by foreign companies in Oloibiri in Southern Nigeria in 1956, the region has been suffering from environmental neglect, crumbling infrastructures and services, high unemployment, social deprivation and abject poverty. This necessitates the clarion call for oil companies operating in the Niger Delta to demonstrate the value of their investments to Nigeria by undertaking increased community development initiatives that provide direct social benefits such as local employment, new infrastructure, schools, and improved health care delivery.

However, the struggle for implementation of this international law and social contract, a policy that was heavily neglected by the Government, foreign companies, indigenous companies and public institutions is not limited to the Niger Delta Region alone. The paper has carried out a survey on the responsibility and obligation of indigenous companies and public institutions in Nigeria using Nnewi North Local Government Area as a case study. It is one town Local Government highly compacted and densely populated with human and material resources. The paper made a simple survey of the knowledge and undertaking of indigenous company and public institutions on the corporate social responsibility as affect educational development and its improvement in 46 public primary and eight public secondary schools in the local Government Area and found a total and complete lack of presence of these companies and public institution. This paper also explore the concept of cooperate social responsibility and its evolution and growth under the international law and the key institutions that have spearheaded this growth. The emergence of the CSR concept in Nigeria has been espoused mainly as an optional and non-obligatory responsibility not only by oil companies, even indigenous companies and public institutions. For Adetookunboh 2009, there is no national law in the area of CSR, even though there are many in the international corporate responsibility instruments, such as the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises, United Nations (UN) Global Compact and the 1998 ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights have soft law on CSR with less binding status in international law and by extension in Nigeria. There is need to push forward this idea of CSR policies and purpose in the Nnewi North Local Government Area of Anambra Nigeria, located in Southern Nigeria where numerous industries and factories are scattered all over.

The aim of this paper is to create awareness and the need for a more coherent and binding recognition of the CSR principle in Nigeria. In a country such as Nigeria, where the principles and benefits of democratic governance are still fragile coupled with high poverty rate among the

citizenry and devastating effect of corona virus, there is a need for a dynamic and step-wise approach through which the CSR concept could be continually mainstreamed into national laws and policies. Nnewi North LGA just like Niger Delta has a lot of things in common; Niger Delta region is oil wealth of nation, while Nnewi North is highly prominent in technological and creativity. In fact, it is referred to as “Japan of Africa”, due several industries located there and numerous products and production been manufactured there, ranging from motor industries, motorcycle industries, several spare parts, oil and gas plants, numerous foodstuffs, kitchen equipments and human outfits. There are also numerous public institutions scattered within the town, like Hospitals, Banks, Agro- allied industries, cable industries, Insurance companies, etc. Thus, a town with all these facilities should be glory in abundance in human development, improved infrastructure such as schools, good roads, available clean water, and constant light. The corporate bodies should not only provide schools, but support skills acquisition, expertise and excellence in schools through constant initiation of several training programs, competitions both as debate and quiz competitions, giving scholarships and helping the children of immediate communities by not allowing school dropout due to lack of fund or inability to pay school fees.

Significance of the Study

Theoretically, the study is anchored on the Corporate Social Responsibility and Systems theories. Corporate social responsibility theories states that each corporation and institution is saddled with economic, legal, ethical and philanthropic obligations and has triple responsibility of sustaining economic, social and environmental realms. It is a self-regulating business model that helps a company be socially accountable to itself, its stakeholders and the public. By practicing corporate social responsibility also called corporate citizens, the companies can be conscious of the kind of impact they are having on all aspects of society include economic, social and environmental. The company while engaging in CSR operate in ways that enhance society and the environment. The general understanding and implementation of corporate social responsibility will go a long way in uplifting the already battered society and enkindle the hope of downtrodden and those parents that has lose hope of seeing their children obtained basic education due to harsh economy, bad leadership and mismanagement of collective resource coupled with the general economic meltdown due to pandemic of corona virus ravaging the nation and the whole world at large.

Meanwhile the systems theories will see the ways of engaging government, different stakeholders and captains of industries to fulfil the obligations of each. Since it is theories that focus on interdisciplinary study of systems as they relate to one another within a larger, more complex system. Systems theory seeks to explain and develop hypotheses around characteristics that arise within complex systems that seemingly could not arise in any system within the whole. The systems theory has a lot of task and engagement of each group and institutions to fulfil obligations as concerned the polices and regulations of corporate social responsibility.

Statement of the problem

The enormous and challenging task that befall our dear nation should be the concern on our indigenous companies and public institutions, especially in area of uplifting the common man and restoring hope to hopeless situation, it is noble task to demand from these companies and public institutions to invest in human formation and development, especially the *anawim* (poor ones) which are the vulnerable, the marginalized and socio- economically disadvantage people of the society. There exist near absent of support skills acquisition, expertise and excellence in schools through constant initiation of several training programs, competitions both as debate and quiz competitions, giving scholarships of both indigenous companies and public institutions. Thus, there is need to encourages these captains of industries to collaborate with Government in

educational development and improvement and realization of vision 2030, which hipped on eradication of illiteracy in the land through the CSR policies and purpose in order to uplift the already battered and disillusioned society and instill hope and support through empowerment in educational development and improvement.

Concept of Corporate Social Responsibilities

Corporate social responsibilities are people oriented policies and operations which should be assessed and reassessed by the people. For many decades, companies have been using corporate social responsibility as a way of giving back to society while bolstering brand reputation. This management concept as we know it today is mainly a product of the eighteenth century, taking shape in the early nineteenth century. However, the history has span over two centuries.

Corporate Social Responsibilities are forms of self-regulation, conscious attempts and self-efforts undertaken by organisations for self-preservation and enhancement of their operations. CSR is usually integrated into a business model for an organisation to be able to live in harmony with its operating environment. Corporate social responsibility policy functions as a built-in, self-regulating mechanism for a business entity to monitor and ensure its adherence to laws, ethical standards, and norms and nuances of its environment. CSR when proactively undertaken promotes the public interest by encouraging community growth and development, and by voluntarily eliminating practices that harm the public sphere, regardless of legality. It is the deliberate inclusion of public interest into corporate decision-making and the honouring of a triple bottom line known as *People, Planet and Profit* (Wikipedia, Dictionary).

In the interest of its business and its environment, an organisation needs to relate its operations and policies in ways that are mutually beneficial. The models of CSR encourage businesses to actively and voluntarily contribute to community development. An important element of corporate social responsibility in businesses is taking responsibility for its impact on society or their activities on the environment, consumers, employees, communities, stakeholders, and all other members of the public sphere

Evolution and Growth of Corporate Social Responsibility

There has been a recent spike in the popularity of CSR. These evidence of businesses' concern for society can be traced back to practices of industrial revolution. In the mid-to-late 1800s, there were growing concern about worker wellbeing and productivity among industrialists, growing from criticisms of the emerging factory system, working conditions, and the employment of women and children were being brought to light, especially in the United States. Thus, the consensus among reformers was that current employment practices were contributing to social problems, including poverty and labour unrest. However, industrial betterment and welfare movements at the time were viewed as a combination of humanitarianism and business acumen credit to Industrialist Andrew Carnegie, who made most of his fortune in the steel industry, was known for donating large portions of his wealth to causes related to education and scientific research. Following in the footsteps of Carnegie, oil industry business magnate John D. Rockefeller also donated more than half a billion dollars to religious, educational, and scientific causes.

Although responsible companies had already existed for more than a century before, the term Corporate Social Responsibility was officially coined in 1953 by American economist Howard Bowen in his publication *Social Responsibilities of the Businessman*. As such, Bowen is often referred to as the father of CSR. However, it was not until the 1970s that CSR truly began to take its root in the United States. In 1971, the concept of the 'social contract' between businesses and society was introduced by the Committee for Economic Development. This contract brought forward the idea that companies function and exist because of public consent and therefore, there is an obligation to contribute to the needs of society. By the 1980s, early CSR continued to evolve

as more organizations began incorporating social interests in their business practices while becoming more responsive to stakeholders.

The 1990s marked the beginning of widespread approval of CSR. In 1991, Professor Donna J. Wood of University of Pittsburgh published a book titled *Corporate Social Performance Revisited*, which expanded and improved on early CSR models by providing a framework for assessing the impacts and outcomes of CSR programs. In the same year, business management author and professor at the University of Georgia Archie B. Carroll published his article titled *The Pyramid of Corporate Social Responsibility*, he expanded on areas he believed were crucial when implementing CSR in an organization. By the early 2000s, CSR had become an essential strategy for many organizations, with multi- million dollar companies such as Wells Fargo, Coca-Cola, Walt Disney, and Pfizer incorporating this concept into their businesses processes.

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) has come a long way, morphing from a nice thing to do to what it is today a necessity for a successful business. Thus, describe as a type of international private business self-regulation with the aim to contribute to societal goals of a philanthropic, activist, or charitable nature by engaging in or supporting volunteering or ethically-oriented practices. But today, CSR as an internal organizational policy or a corporate ethic strategy has passed and developed into international laws and various organisations have used their authority to push it beyond individual or even industry-wide initiatives. While it has been considered a form of corporate self- regulation for some time, over the last decade or so it has moved considerably from voluntary decisions at the level of individual organizations to mandatory schemes at regional, national and international levels

The Emergence of Corporate Social Responsibility in Nigeria and its Challenges

The emergence of the CSR concept in Nigeria has been espoused mainly as an optional and non-obligatory responsibility not only by oil companies, even indigenous companies and public institutions. According to Adetokunboh 2000, there is no national law in the area of CSR, even though there are many international corporate responsibility instruments, such as the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises, United Nations (UN) Global Compact and the 1998 ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights have soft law on CSR with less binding status in international law and by extension in Nigeria.

The foregoing brings to the fore, Corporate Social Responsibility in Nigeria vis-à-vis the CSR Bill before the National Assembly. The most active sector in Nigeria is the oil industry and it is where the Nigerian Government derives over 70 per cent of its revenue. The Nigerian oil sector is dominated by big players such as Shell, Chevron-Texaco, Exxon Mobil, and Agip that have extended business interests across the seas into the geographic confines of the country. While the Nigerian state has a strong challenge of abuses of rights by multinational corporations over the years, recent interventions by international advocacy groups and the unrelenting struggles of victims of the operations of these oil companies are making them to be more socially responsible. This of course is still not within the acceptable range. The environmental protection laws have been largely neglected as government lacks the political will to enforce its own laws.

Many companies operating in Nigeria argue that they perform better in their responsibilities to the society and that government should gather its loins to perform optimally. They contend that it is the failure of government to discharge its responsibilities that have made the various communities to be turning the heat on them. The discourse on corporate social responsibility raises the question of how social performance can be evaluated. A social impact assessment is a reasonable yardstick. It consists of a regular, independent, systematic, documented and objective evaluation of the

environment performance of an organisation. It is imperative however to have these procedures not only on paper but transparently undertaken.

The perceived infrastructural dearth and inequities in the Niger Delta prompted government to establish the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) and recently the Niger Delta Ministry to cater for the needs of the Niger Delta Area. Established in 2000, NDDC was to facilitate ‘the rapid, even, and sustainable development of the Niger Delta into a region that is economically prosperous, socially stable, ecologically regenerative and politically peaceful’. The performance of NDDC to many observers are conjectural, and cynics and skeptical in the sense that they are tools for numerous corruptions and embezzlement on the part of government and cohorts. With recent panel of inquiry set out by government through the National Assembly to look on the numerous allegations of corruptions, embezzlements and lack of due process in awarding and execution of contracts and drama that follows before national television before full gallery of all is a mockery on our democracy and have exposed the endemic corruption embedded in the commission, that supposed to be the mouth piece of the people and champion of human and physical development for its people (Ijaiya, 2014). It is an issue that remains with us and continue to recall even in this current leadership of President Muhammad Buhari that came into power with slogan of fighting corruption.

In the midst of the cacophonous buck-passing, a Bill on Corporate Social Responsibility is now before the National Assembly. The Bill is for an Act to create the Corporate Social Responsibility Commission, which will be charged with providing standards, integration of social responsibility, and international trade issues. The bill seeks to establish a supervisory organ that will mandate corporations and companies to spend 3.5 per cent of their profit before tax on Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) {Ijaiya, 2014}.

The role of the Commission will include:

- i. Publishing the annual report of the social and environmental impact of the activities of firms;
- ii. Developing policies to encourage corporate organisations to undertake community engagement as part of CSR;
- iii. Ensuring that companies sponsor cultural and educational activities that offer added value to Nigeria’s socio-political and technological development;
- iv. Promoting statutory labour standards and collective social governance in the context of globalisation; and
- v. Ensuring that companies are accountable not only to employees and their trade unions but also to investors, consumers, and host communities and to the wider environment.

Nigeria is in dire need of development. Most of its public infrastructure is collapsing. The business climate is inclement and many business entities are going under. Many companies are relocating to outside of Nigeria, while some already folded. With an array of graft agencies, one would think corruption and nepotism would be at their lowest ebb. Unfortunately, corruption, tribalism, and electoral malpractices are now systemic. So it is vital that the contributions of companies which would be strategic to the growth of the society are encouraged. Thus, social, economic and environmental progress should be the panacea and expectation when companies are sited in a defined location.

However, the prospective and sensitive business climate of Nigeria currently does not permit companies to accede to the compulsory remittance of 3.5 per cent of profit to the authorities for social development. It is contended that if companies are to contribute to the community, it should be from the voluntary spirit of benevolence and philanthropy. In fact, many policy analysts are concerned about the extent to which a new CSR law would actually change lives in the

communities in which the companies operate. Unless there is a radical regeneration of the society and a social rebirth, the law if passed and assented will soon become unenforceable. The issues include the practicability and enforcement of such a law, the creation of another avenue for corruption, and has any other country put in place the type of CSR law Nigeria is contemplating. While government is expected to make laws for the good governance of the society, it appears that the CSR bill contradicts the whole notion and concept of CSR. CSR is enlightened self-interest. Government should enforce the existing laws on taxation, management of resources, anti-graft, and plug the leakages. Above all, government should fix all the infrastructures including energy, roads, rail system, waterways, and social services (education, electricity, security, unemployment, housing, and agriculture). It is doubtful if an enactment on CSR will achieve the purpose being canvassed. Instead, an establishment that functions in an advisory capacity will achieve much more than an explicit legislation. A law on CSR negates its voluntary spirit. If government is looking for ways to improve CSR activities in Nigeria, it could do so through policies, persuasion and complementary activities. The addition of CSR tax to profit tax, education tax and VAT will be most damaging to business interest. As the CSR bill continues to make progress through the National Assembly, corporate Nigeria may remain skeptical of its real value.

However, it seems that typical Nigerian cannot do anything right without coercion. This time, the issue at moment is so glaring that it should go beyond putting CSR into law or not, therefore the need to allow the communal spirit (Negritude) to arise in us and through us. The ugly situation in Nigeria ranging from economic meltdown, bad government, the rise in poverty rate coupled with the global pandemic of corona virus (Covid'19) has really dashed the hope of the struggling parents to sustain the children basic education and has exposed the inability of government in the face of difficulties and its handicapped in surmounting the difficulties and restore hope to these numerous hopeless children that rooming around the street. In the words of Prof Kate Omenugha, "Is it their fault that they dropped out of schools". We cannot deny the fact that they are millions of children that have dropped and millions that are at verge of dropping out from school soonest. What are we to do as educationist, educational foundations, and students of education management and stakeholders of education management? Surely we must do something; we cannot fold our hands and watch these colossal damages and unprecedentedly situation to befall our dear nation. We cannot quantify or measure the effect of these situations in our society. Surely it is better imagined than experience.

The country is already wagging war in two fronts; the ignorance and unimaginable killing by Bokoharam, Fulani herdsmen and Banditry in the North and the various agitations in the south combined with kidnapping, criminalities, arm robbery and yahoo boys and yahoo plus who catch in the situation and utilizing it to their advantage. What about the activities of Unknown gunmen and Eastern Security Network which directly and indirectly linked with killing of our Police Force and many civilian including local vigilantes and numerous treat of more mayhem ahead?

The main aim of the paper is to assess and create more awareness for indigenous companies and public institutions to arise to occasion and take seriously the corporate social responsibility and see it as an act of justice, uplifting communal spirit (negritude) and good charity and see it as a duty they own to the society and environment they found themselves. It is a duty of giving back to society and to better the society. The simple survey made in 46 public primary and 8 secondary schools in Nnewi North Local Government Area of Anambra State on giving out scholarship to indigent students, free textbooks and notebooks and organizing various school's competitions ranging from sports, quiz and debate show total and complete negation on these aspects by captains of industries and public institutions. Thus, there is unison call and clamouring by the various schools' head for serious support on this regard due the ugly situation commonly experienced today

as it concerned the high rate of school dropout. These captains of industries and public institutions should forget the political statement by some politicians and government that echoes every election on free education from primary to secondary school level. Such thing does not exist. Thus, their presence in educational development and improvement will go a long way in ameliorating already hopeless and precarious situation.

Conclusion

The agitations and struggles for corporate social responsibility of various categories of companies and public institutions should be collective responsibility of all and not to be limited to a particular region of the country. It is clarion call for genuine and good people of this nation to see and understand what justice, communal spirit (negritude) and giving back to the society means. Having seen it practice in other countries, should rise and demand the same not only from government, but various companies and public institutions that ought to have imparted positive to the society and environment especially in educational development which is bedrock for society growth, sustenance and survival.

In the face of enormous and challenging task that befall our dear nation, especially in area of uplifting the common man and restoring hope to hopeless situation, it is noble task to demand from these companies and public institutions to invest in human formation and development, especially the *anawim* {poor ones} which are the vulnerable, the marginalized and socio- economically disadvantage people of the society. One of best solution is what this paper is doing, creating awareness and calling on education stakeholders and lovers of education to resort to writing, advocacy in various forms demanding that these companies and public institutions do the right things as their counterpart all over world. It should be understood that in giving to society, they are currying favour to themselves in one hand and promoting their brand on the other hand. The real advert is not millions of naira that been wasted in national and local television and radio stations, the real advert is done through empowerment and service to the communities and humanity in general. The paper is calling on these companies and public institutions especially those within Nnewi and environs to imitate the likes of Cowbell and Maltina Companies that have instituted annual national competitions, promoting and encouraging the best hands in teaching profession through rich reward and benefits and sponsoring various students competitions, rewarding academic excellence and giving out both gifts and scholarship to best minds and indigent students, thereby doing a wonderful work in educational development.

Recommendation

The paper recommends that the Government of day should do more in educational development and improvement, been concerned with numerous children dropping out both in primary and secondary schools due to poverty and lack of fund which has dash out their hope, dream and desire, coupled with drive to eradicate illiteracy in the land and live out their vision 2030, which is eradication of illiteracy in the land.

Secondly, the national and state legislators should move a motion on tax deduction for this companies and public institutions, which will go a long way in achieving the realization of CSR principles and purpose in Nnewi North and Nigeria in general.

Thirdly, if the law should be enacted, let the law be in form of policies, persuasion, appealing to their good conscience and complementary activities on the need of the moment and for better and stronger country, demanding from these companies and public institutions to invest in human formation and development, especially the *anawim* {poor ones} which are the vulnerable, the marginalized and socio- economically disadvantage people of the society

Fourthly, the success and ratings of best companies and public institutions should not be based on the profit they make in a year and promptness in meeting up of the demand of Government but the impact and ability of giving back to the society. How do they improve the human and physical development in their immediate environment and nation at large? The captains of industries had to encourage to show more interest in educational development and improvement and imitate their counterpart in other part of the world and should focused on giving out scholarship to indigent students, free textbooks and notebooks and organizing various school's competitions ranging from sports, quiz and debate, etc.

Finally, even if the law does not condemn or punished the offender, the law should find a way of encouraging, promoting and rewarding those who keep to the dictates of the law of CSR.

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