

Chapter 43

Leveraging CSR as a ‘Support–Aid’ for Triple Bottom–Line Development in Nigeria

Evidence From the Telecommunication Industry

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ABSTRACT

This book chapter focuses on the developmental-oriented perspective of CSR which views corporate involvement as a ‘support-aid’ for meeting triple bottom-line development in Nigeria. Arising from the literature, the stakeholder, legitimacy and social contract theories provide the required theoretical grounding for the discourse. The qualitative research method was found appropriate for this discourse. From the list of 25 registered telecommunication companies in Nigeria, a sample of 8 functional companies was selected using purposive sampling technique. The data extracted from the annual reports and websites of these companies were analysed using the content analysis. The findings indicate that the telecommunication companies are practically leveraging their CSR initiatives for social, economic and environmental wellness in Nigeria through a number of developmental programmes. The chapter explicates the fact that CSR as a private sector development model can be a potent tool for bridging governance gap environment instead of leaving all social problems to governments.

INTRODUCTION

Extant literature identified philanthropic, citizenship, instrumental, relational, normological, ethical, political and development-oriented perspectives as the prevalent modes of expressing corporate social responsibility (CSR). CSR in the developing country like Nigeria is focused on philanthropy and corporate donations to worthy cause (Amaeshi, Adi, Ogbechie and Amao, 2006). Beyond the philanthropic perspective of social responsibility, the development-oriented CSR is emerging and requires further

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investigations. Unlike the conventional CSR, the development-oriented CSR addresses critical social issues like poverty, unemployment, diseases, infrastructural needs in the developing economies with infrastructural deficits (Frynas, 2005; Frynas, 2008; Idemudia, 2010; Sharp, 2006).

In Nigeria, corporations across different sectors of the economy focus their CSR programmes essentially on sports, sales promotion, sponsorship for the entertainment industry and donations to schools/hospitals/welfare centres. These uncoordinated CSR investments have not impacted effectively and efficiently on the social, economic and environmental development nor reduced poverty sustainably, hence this CSR strategy calls for re-examination. The CSR initiatives arising from philanthropy could at best be described as one-off effort that give momentary satisfaction and short-term benefits to the stakeholders/beneficiaries, but in the long-run such CSR investments would not address the root causes of poverty, and would not develop the capacities of the intended beneficiaries because of lack of comprehensive CSR policy or programmes (Boyle and Boguslaw (2007). A better model of CSR investment with richer theoretical foundation from what is styled a development-oriented CSR is required to meet the needs and expectations of the developing countries with weak institutional support and deteriorating governance (Adelopo, Raimi & Yekini, 2015).

The present discourse therefore attempts to fill the gap in the literature of social responsibility by leveraging CSR as a 'support-aid' for triple bottom-line development in Nigeria. In specific terms, the chapter seeks deeper understanding and application of CSR as a private sector development model (PSDM) in a poverty-ridden society with wide governance gap.

A number of studies report that socio-economic and environmental development in Nigeria is hindered by bad governance, weak institutional structures and ineffective governmental policies (Ite, 2007; Young, 1999). In a bid to redress the wrong above and promote socio-economic and environmental development in Nigeria, several attempts have been made by the governments in the past through a number of industrial policies and entrepreneurship intervention programmes (Raimi, Patel, Yekini & Fadipe, 2014), but the socio-economic impacts of these policies and interventions on the wellbeing of the people have been marginal when viewed against macro-economic indicators like unemployment, poverty rate and crime rate in the country (Raimi, Akhuemonkhan & Ogunjirin, 2015).

Retrospectively, the Nigerian government had experimented with several intervention development programmes with a view to actualizing the goals of wealth creation, technological progress and job creation. In spite of these developmental efforts, they did not produce desirable positive results; rather the rates of poverty, crime and unemployment have continued to rise over time (Raimi, Akhuemonkhan and Ogunjirin, 2015). Highlights of ineffective entrepreneurship development programmes (EDPs) in Nigeria include: the Indigenisation Policy, the Enterprises Promotion Policy, the Operation Feed the Nation (OFN), the Back-to-Land programme, the Import Substitution Strategy, the National Directorate of Employment (NDE), the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP), the People's Bank of Nigeria (PBN), the National Economy Reconstruction Fund (NERFUND); the Community Banking Model, the Technology Business Incubation Centres (TBICs), the National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS), the Bank of Industry (BOI), the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Agency of Nigeria (SMEDAN), the Small and Medium Enterprises Equity Investment Scheme (SMEEIS), the National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP), the 7-Point Agenda, the Economic Transformation Programme, Youth Enterprise with Innovation in Nigeria (You Win) Programme, Subsidy Reinvestment & Empowerment Programme (SURE-P) and National Enterprise Development Programme (Njoku, Ihugba & Odii, 2014; Oghojafor, Okonji, Olayemi, & Okolie, 2011; Raimi et al., 2014).

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