

Social Entrepreneurship and Sustainable Development

Iwueke Obinna C. (Ph.D)

Dept. of Business Admin. & Mgt., Federal Polytechnic Nekede, Owerri.

obinnachukwumaiwueke@gmail.com

Nwaiwu Blessing N.

Dept. of Business Studies, Alvan Ikoku Federal College of Education Owerri.

Abstract

Business entrepreneurship activities in Nigeria has been on the increase, causing changes and boosting economic development to some existent especially in the provision of self employment and earning profit only. But to meet the challenge of sustainable development we require social entrepreneurship which is the application of entrepreneurship attributes of creativity, innovation and motivation combined with the drive to solve the most pressing social problems in the society. The study evaluated the contributions of social entrepreneurship and its core elements in sustainable development using a cross section of entrepreneurs and interest groups from Imo and Abia States. While simple correlation analysis was used to process the data. It was revealed that social entrepreneurship has not contributed effectively to sustainable development due to low level of creativity and innovation in our entrepreneurs Also, this has adversely affected development of women and rural areas. It is therefore recommended that entrepreneurship programmes should not just focus on business – profit and wealth creation but improvement of citizens creativity and innovativeness capability. This will facilitate sustainable development.

Keywords: Business entrepreneurship social entrepreneurship, sustainable development creativity, innovation.

INTRODUCTION

A rewarding characteristic of economic development in every nation now has been growth in business entrepreneurship activities. This has expanded highly skilled entrepreneurs who drive the small scale industries that make profits and create employments. But there are many specifics within the world of entrepreneurship to which nations might be committed. These specifics include business, education, women, rural and social. The commitments of government to these specifics culminate in sustainable development, because it encompasses all the needed infrastructures for broad development.

Therefore to explain why entrepreneurs do what they do in various organizations, we need to understand the relationship between entrepreneurship and national development. A proper understanding of how specifics like social entrepreneurship shapes development will obviously enable stakeholders to be in a better position to anticipate the impact this will have on our national development and design programmes in that line. Within entrepreneurship literature in this part of the world, much of the theoretical work has focused on business especially with emphasis on small scale businesses. But this has not been successful in the dispersal of industries in small towns and rural areas, empowering women, changing and sustaining a new set of social values that trigger on development. This emphasis has raised concern. Ladipo et al (2004) opined that an entrepreneur offers some new value(s) to the society sometimes in the form of innovative or novel things through the creation of a firm. But creation of new values and firms have been redundant notwithstanding the acclaimed high level of entrepreneurship in our country especially business specific.

However, recent studies provide a strong case for the study of social entrepreneurship because of its role in sustainable development, for instance, Emerson and Twersky (1996) in their study revealed that social entrepreneurship is the key to non profit creations. Also, Bhatt (1989) corroborating Emerson and Twersky (1996) in his study found that social entrepreneurship is a potential means of empowering people, developing rural women and solving other social problems.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Entrepreneurship has become a subject of considerable attention in academic literature in the early 1990's with crisis hitting the global economy. Early efforts to clarify the meaning led to the definition from various perspectives.

Kao and Stevenson (1984) defined entrepreneurship as the attempt to create value through recognition of business opportunity the management of risk-taking appropriate to the opportunity, and management skills to mobilize human, financial and material resources necessary to bring project to fruition. Thus, entrepreneurship is a function performed by an entrepreneur which gives birth to a new enterprise.

Anyanwu (2003) stressed that development is all encompassing and involves upward change in the positive direction of a nation over a long period of time there are empirical evidences which demonstrate that education and training in entrepreneurship help entrepreneurs to provide the inertia for development. This concept has brought a change in perception and recognition of the critical role the entrepreneurs play in national development. The expansion of Entrepreneurial Development Programme (EDP) by the government is as a result of the need

to speed up the process of activating the various factors responsible for dispersal economic, social, technological and political activities that will facilitate sustainable development. Thus, it is on going process that is tailored to equip citizens with basic enterprise building skills, imparting managerial skills required to set up and manage enterprises successfully. Social entrepreneurship is a new breed of entrepreneurs though it has its root in entrepreneurship because of the attributes of innovativeness, creative critical thinking and motivation. When these attributes are combined with the drive to solve social problems, social entrepreneurship has taken place. This specific of entrepreneurship is not popular in Nigeria when compared with business.

Hagen (1964) opined that entrepreneur is a creative problem solver interested in things in the practical realm and driven by a duty to achieve.

Roger and Osberg (2007) defined social entrepreneurs as individuals with innovative solutions to society most pressing and daunting social problems, they are ambitious and persistent tackling major social issues and offering new ideas for wide scale change. Throughout history, such individuals have introduced solutions to seemingly intractable social problems, fundamentally improving the lives of countries individuals by changing the way critical systems operated definitely, social entrepreneurs are pioneer of innovations that benefit humanity at large. Agu (2000) opined that ABC transport limited revolutionized the luxurious bus business with their entrance into the transport. This brought a large measure of customer satisfaction at a time traveling by luxurious buses was dissatisfying due to poor service orientation of the owners. Their customer's service strategy, curbing of touting and its associates social vices and building of the ultra modern bus terminals changed the business industry. This new enterprise and new values arising from creativity and innovation solved a daunting social problem.

Stevenson and Carlos (1990) were of the view that an increase in corporate entrepreneurship reflects an increase in social, cultural and business pressures. That is social variable has been viewed as a factor that requires adequate attention in entrepreneurship. The common element found in social entrepreneurs is that they focus on making change through their actions which must lead to solutions to society problems.

Bill Drayton founder and CEO of Ashoka stated that "social entrepreneurship at its best produces small changes in the short term that reverberate through existing systems to catalyze large changes in the longer term". This was typical of ABC Transport activities in the luxurious bus business.

Just as entrepreneur change the face of business, social entrepreneurs act as change agents for the society. They seize the opportunities which others miss and improve the existing equilibriums, they do so by inventing new approaches and creating sustainable solutions to change society for the better from what it used to be. However, unlike business entrepreneurs who are generally motivated by profit earnings, social entrepreneurs are innovative, change oriented and always searching for new and better ways to solve the problems facing the society.

CHARACTERISTICS OF SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURS

Roger (2007) stated that social entrepreneurs are characterized by the following key attributes:

Ambitious: social entrepreneurs have high ambition and they are reformers and revolutionaries with a social mission they tackle major social issue and offer raw ideas and solutions for wide scale charge.

Strategic: the search and identify the major social issue what other miss, they use these opportunities to improve the existing social systems, create solutions and invent new approaches that create social values that are satisfactory.

Resourceful: social entrepreneurs function in a social framework not within the business world. So limited access to capital demands they possess skills, mobilize every resources required to solve social problems. This witnessed in developing rural areas and women in that environment.

Result Oriented: ultimately social entrepreneurs are driven to produce measurable results that will change existing situations for the benefits of the society at large.

Mission Oriented: successful social entrepreneurs have the ultimate purpose of not just creating wealth but most important by generating as much as possible social value. Although wealth creation may be part of the effort but is not an end in itself.

The Link of Social Entrepreneurship and Sustainable Development

The Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC), an equivalent of National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP) was established to focus on breaking the cycle of poverty in Bangladesh through social entrepreneurship they have achieved essential innovation which focuses on local rural constituents needs and capacities through a systematic approach to poverty alleviation that emphasizes systematic learning at many levels. Also, they organize the poor for self help and build local capacities for economic development, education and women entrepreneurs. This has changed the local attitudes and culture that create glass ceiling for women participation and practice of caste system. The work of Yunus (1997) further explained the relationship of social entrepreneurship and development, viewing raising of social status, less dependence of women on their husbands, better nutrition for children, improved home, expansion of poor women's roles in income generation as integral part of development. The focus is on improving the capacity of poor and marginalized people especially women in the rural areas to participate in small businesses. Thus the features are grassroots for village development,

provision of support service and micro credit for business. These initiatives have impacted highly on the social economic and political environment. And has been generating a great social change unlike what we are experiencing in Nigeria where much emphasis is on profit from businesses. Amidst this exposure which is obtainable in developed nations and the Asian countries that are fast growing economies this gap must be filled if sustainable development is to be attained through entrepreneurial expressions. The ability to think creatively is an essential skill for every social entrepreneur, the application of their creativity is a possible means of finding innovative solutions to most difficult problems facing our society. Creativity of social entrepreneur helps to understand the process of generating assessing and sharing ideas that provide solution. On a social level, collectivity creativity provides the opportunity to improve quality of life of people. This has been supported by empirical studies of some social entrepreneurs who refused to be constrained by culture and circumstance and were tired of doing things the way they were always done. Instead they see problems as opportunities to find new ways of doing things. Thus, they use creative thinking to gain a new perspective on the world.

METHODOLOGY

Reporting on social entrepreneurship is a means to provide stakeholders an insight into its contribution to sustainable development in Nigeria not just focusing on business specific. Data were collected by surveying entrepreneurs and interest groups in Imo and Abia States. The estimated population size of the study was approximately 600 for both states and the sample size of 240 respondents using Yaro Yamen samples size determination formula. The data were elicited through linkert type scale, ranging between (1) strongly disagreed to (4) strongly agree to evaluate the extent of relationship between social entrepreneurship and sustainable development in Nigeria and whether creativity and innovativeness affect the level of social entrepreneurship in Nigeria. Data processing was carried out using simple co-relation statistical tool. All the analyses were conducted using 95% level of confidence.

RESEARCH RESULT AND FINDINGS

Hypothesis I

H₀: Social entrepreneurship has not contributed effectively to sustainable development in Nigeria.

H_i: Social entrepreneurship has contributed effectively to sustainable development in Nigeria.

Table I: Social entrepreneurship and sustainable development

	X	Y	X²	Y²	XY
1	80	130	6400	16,900	10,400
2	110	120	12,100	14,400	13,200
3	75	135	5,625	18,225	10,125
Total	265	385	24,125	49,525	33,725

$$R = \frac{\sum xY}{\sqrt{(\sum x^2)(\sum Y^2)}} = \frac{33725}{\sqrt{(24125)(49,525)}} = 0.98$$

$$T = RS \sqrt{\frac{n-2}{1-r^2}} = 0.98 \sqrt{\frac{3-2}{1-(0.98)^2}} = 4.9$$

Referring to the t-table for n-2 = 1 degree of freedom the critical value t at α = 0.05 level of significance is 6.34 since tabulated value of t is highest than the calculated value.

We accept the null hypothesis meaning that social entrepreneurship has not contributed effectively to sustainable development in Nigeria.

Table II: Level of creativity and innovation and sustainable development.

	X	Y	X²	Y²	XY
1	65	145	4225	21,025	9,425
2	117	93	13,689	8649	10,881
3	97	113	9,409	12,769	10,961
4	105	115	11,025	13,225	12,075
Total	384	466	38,348	55,668	43,342

$$R = \frac{\sum XY}{\sqrt{(\sum X^2)(\sum Y^2)}} = \frac{43,342}{\sqrt{(38,348)(55,668)}} = 0.94$$

$$T = RS \sqrt{\frac{n-2}{1-rs^2}} = 0.94 \sqrt{\frac{4-2}{1-(0.94)^2}} = 4.01$$

Referring to the t-table for $n-2 = 2$ degree of freedom. The critical value of t at $\alpha = 0.05$ level of significance is 2.92. Since the calculated value of t is higher than the table value, we reject the null hypothesis meaning that the level of creativity and innovation has adversely affected sustainable development in Nigeria.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

This study has established that there is a relationship between social entrepreneurship and development, but in Nigeria it has not contributively effectively to sustainable development because it has not been treated as a specific with different impact.

Again, it was also found that the level of creativity and innovation has adversely affected sustainable development in Nigeria which means our creativity and innovation is low. This supports the findings of some researchers who stressed that creativity provides the opportunity to change and improve the quality of life through innovation. According to Drucker (1954) systematic innovation involves purposeful and organized search for changes and in the systematic analysis of the opportunities such changes might offer scope for economic and social innovation. Thus, innovation is a specific tool of social entrepreneurs and the means by which they exploit changes and create new values that trigger on sustainable development.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study has been able to establish that:

Social entrepreneurship has not contributed effectively to sustainable development in Nigeria.

The level of creativity and innovation has adversely affected sustainable development in Nigeria.

Based on the above findings, the researchers recommended that entrepreneurship education and government programmes should be designed to elicit highly motivated entrepreneurs who will become creative and innovative in finding solutions to socio-economic problems.

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