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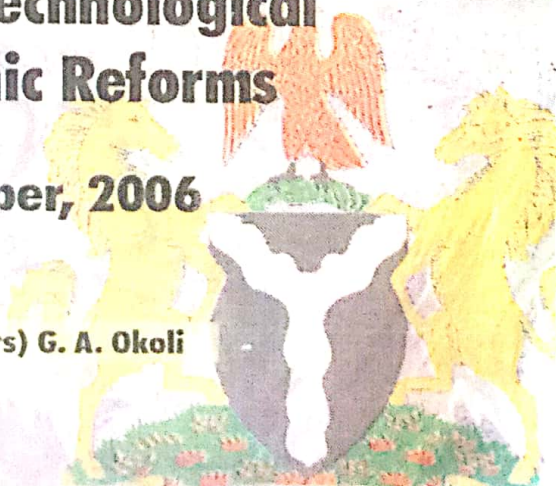
BOOK OF READINGS

Theme:
**Challenges in Science and Technological
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Corporate Social Responsibility As A Viable Option For Science And Technological Advancement In Nigerian Universities

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Abstract

Assessment of the education sector in Nigeria in the last two decades point to a state of fundamental crises which has brought the system to near total collapse. Eminent Nigeria educationist and prominent action research results (Akinkugbe,1994; Federal Government of Nigeria FGN; United Nations Development Programme,2000; The World Bank Group,2004.) The most fundamental issue raised as afflicting the education sector in Nigeria as at the end of 2005 includes under funding of the education sector. In line with this ,the research paper attempts to examine the corporate social responsibility as a viable option to funding of universities which will eventually guarantee the advancement of science and technology .This paper contains the concept CSR and its meaning, approaches of CSR viz a viz traditional and modern approaches. Also the concern of stakeholders were analyzed. Challenges of CSR all were uncovered .Later, Science and Technological advancement through CSR were discussed and conclusions and recommendation were drawn.

Introduction

CSR is operating a business in a manner that meets or exceeds the ethical, legal, commercial and public expectations that society has of business. Responsibility is the guiding principle for every decision made and in every of a business. CSR is a concept with a growing currency around the globe. CSR is a concept that frequently overlaps with similar approaches such as corporate sustainability, corporate responsibility and corporate citizenship.

While CSR does not have a universal definition, it is seen by many private sectors way of integrating the economic, social and environmental imperatives of their activities. As such, CSR closely resembles the business pursuit of sustainable development and the bottom line. In addition to integration into corporate structures and processes, CSR also frequently involves creating innovative and proactive solutions to societal and environmental challenges, as well as collaborating with both internal and external stakeholders to improve on CSR performance.

The view that a business can have obligations that extend beyond economics roles is not new in many respects. Throughout recorded history ,the roles of organizations producing goods and services for the market place were frequently linked with and include political ,social and military roles . For example, throughout the early evolutionary stages of company development in England (where organizations such as the Hudson Bay company and the East India company received broad mandates) there was a public policy understanding that corporations were to help achieve societal objectives such as the exploration of colonial territory, setting up settlements, providing transportation services, developing bank and financial services e.t.c

By the midpoint of the twentieth century, corporate social responsibility was being discussed in the US by business management experts such as Peter Drucker and being considered in business literature. In 1970, economist Milton Friedman outlined his view that the social

responsibility of corporations is to make profits within the boundaries of societal morals and laws (but cautioned that socially responsible initiative by corporations could lead to unfocused management directions misallocations of resources, and reduced market competition, opportunity and choice). CSR emerged and continues to be a key business management marketing and accounting concern in the US, Europe and lately in Nigeria.

CSR – Definition

CSR has almost as many definitions as there are people willing to define the concept. However, the various definitions seem to be based on two premises:

1. That there are some goals which society is interested to accomplish and the business in social institutions have a moral obligation to assist the society in this quest.
 2. That the business contributes to the problem of society and therefore is expected help solve these problems and make the society a better place in which to live.
- With these two premises, CSR could be define as the obligation of business decision maker to take actions which protect and improve the welfare of society as a whole along with their own interest .to protect implies avoiding negative impact in the society and to improve implies creating positive benefit for the society.

Approaches of CSR

According to Kamaludeen(1999), he classified corporate social responsibility into two: Traditional and Modern Approach.

The Traditional Approach

This approach views social responsibility as an organization effort to achieve greater efficiency in its operation. In this regards, an organization is view as the resources-converter and therefore a custodian of the society's available resources. Adam Smith (1976) wrote that business contributes to the greater good of the society when they act in their own best interest. This view of business is sometimes refers to as "invisible hand". According to this view, when a firm produces goods and services in a more profitable way possible, then it is guided as if by an invisible hands to use society material and human resource responsibly and wisely .As a result, there will be greater social welfare for all. Any action not in the self interest of the firm, works against the invisible hand and reduces the good of the community. According to this approach there is one and one only social responsibility of business, to use it resources efficiently and engage in activities designed to increase profit for as long as it stays within the rules of game.

Another supporter of Traditional approach is Mr.Slipper as one time the chief executive of Cardbury Nigeria ltd, he stated that a business organization should not be considered for education, transport housing and medical care for the people in the area in which they operate." I will like to make the point that after paying its dues and taxes a business should be allowed to utilize its profit to pay attractive dividend to its shareholder to fund investment in the development of the business and to improve wages and salaries, working and retirement of its staffs, any fund which have to be diverted to make up for social services deficiency in a country can only in the long-run be to the detriment of the company and the economy.

Generally, this traditional view argues that society responsibility of the business includes:

- (a) Converting resources both human and materials into wants satisfying goods and services needed by the society.

- (b) Consumerism that is business should strive to enhance on behalf of customer product quality, product reliability, safety, adequate information and the rest.
 - (c) Motivation of workers by reasonable ways and salaries job securities, work safety, vacation, adequate health care and among others.
 - (d) Follow government rules and regulation and prompt payment of taxes.
 - (e) Generally observe business ethics both within and outside their business environment.
 - (f) Provision of employment to member of the society and accepting full responsibility for minimizing or removing socially undesirable impact caused by their own existence or activities e.g. pollution.
- If all these responsibilities mentioned above are observed then corporate organization have fulfilled its social responsibility obligation

The modern approach.

Especially after the 1950's the concept of social responsibility change drastically in many organization. There are calls from many sections of the society that business organization should not be only profit oriented but should strive to be socially responsible. It should be the keeper of the society conscience, solver of society conscience and solver of society's problem. Generally this approach view social responsibility to include all the points discussed under the traditional approach and in addition, business should embark on the following.

- (a) Community project, this includes cultural program, youth activities, students and school activities, local health program.
- (b) Contribution to education program, epidemic e.t.c.
- (c) Environment concern and energy conservation
- (d) Voluntarism that is actively participating in public service work for example sanitation.
- (e) Social investments that will not have made under the company's customary lending standards.

The Stakeholder Concerns

Stakeholders are individuals or groups that have interest, rights or ownership in an organization and its activities. Stakeholders who have similar interest and rights are said to belong to the same stakeholder group. Customers, suppliers, employees and strategic partners are examples of stakeholder group, each has an interest in how organization perform and is interdependent with them. These stakeholder group can benefit from a company's success and can be harmed by its failure and mistakes.

Each group of stakeholders has somewhat difference concern. That is, each cares more about some aspect of an organization's activities and less about others.

Meanwhile, the researcher's concern is about the society and the environment. This because conducting business in away that protect the natural environment while making economic progress is refers to as sustainable development. Recently, industry analysts and the media have put more pressure on companies to be responsive to communities and environmental concerns. For many industries, being profitable while addressing society's need for a healthy environment has been a difficult challenge.

Challenges Of CSR

In the last decade, CSR and corporate sustainability has expanded. This has perhaps

occurred in response to new challenges such as those emanating from increase globalization on the agenda of business managers as well as for related stakeholder communities. It is now more apart of both the vocabulary and agenda of academics professionals, non-governmental organizations, consumer groups, employees, suppliers, shareholders and investors.

Challenges are increasingly recognized in public policy debates as well as in the market place by companies and industry sector associations and they are frequently recognized as opportunities. British American Tobacco is a case in hand here, public debate eventually led to a situation where the company could no longer advertise and this amongst others affected market initiatives.

Stakeholders challenge corporations to play social responsibilities role- at both the domestic and international levels. Challenges usually focus on one or more elements of CSR such as environmental protection, health and safety, human rights and the rest of it. In many cases, the challenges are spelled out in a more comprehensive and effective responses to social and environmental problems- both in the domestic and international contexts.

The challenges for action can differ considerable from one stakeholder group to another. For example, the demands can range from a call for more disclosure of information to demands for improved stakeholders involvement to request for change in management practices to proposals altering the relationship between company directors, business managers, auditors, shareholders, debt holders, employee, suppliers, customers, community members, and other stakeholders. Some of the challenges are oriented to the ways that businesses manage their internal operations such as human resources management while others are directed at the ways that a business interacts with the rest of the community and society (E.g. human rights, consumers and supplier relationship)

Tools For Advancing Corporate Social Responsibility

Companies interesting in advancing corporate social responsibility and in improving their social and environmental performance as part of their business have a wide range of tools available for application.

Tools can vary widely in terms of objectives, scopes, costs, level of formality, partnerships, extent of stakeholders involvement, and many other characteristics. Tool can be applied to one or more of the planning, implementation, checking, and improvement facets of corporate operations.

Businesses have option in how they can use the tools. For example, companies can use the tools that have been developed by others or they can develop their own tools either independently or in partnership with other stakeholders. MTN and Guinness are very good reference points.

The tools include principle, guidelines, codes of conducts, measuring reporting and benchmarking.

Evaluating Corporate Social Performance

With heightened public interest in corporate social responsibility, many companies are discovering that they can't avoid people evaluate how well they perform in this respect. As we have noted already, business publications rank various aspects of organizational performance annually. Ron Brown (1997), established in his Ron Brown Award for Corporate leadership, which rewards leadership in employee and community relations the Ron Brown Award defines excellence in terms of three basic principles

1. Top management must demonstrate commitment to corporate citizenship.
 2. Corporate citizenship must be a shared value of the company that is visible at all levels.
 3. Corporate citizenship must be integrated into a successful business strategy.
- When evaluating companies, a select committee of judges looks for employee and community centre program that meet five criteria.
- (a) The programs are distinctive, innovative, and effective. They represent 'best practices' when compared to competitors.
 - (b) They have had a significant, measurable impact on the people they were designed to serve.
 - (c) The programs offer broad potentials for social and economic benefits for Nigeria society.
 - (d) They are sustainable and feasible within a business environment and mission.
 - (e) They can be adapted to other businesses and communities.

Ron Brown concluded by trying to encourage business leaders to move away from the traditional utilitarian model of business and to take a more proactive stance with respect to contributing to society. Rather than deny their social responsibility, or resist it by doing the least possible amount, many companies are choosing to do everything that is required and to look for areas in which they can do even more for the mutual benefit of all stakeholders.

A proactive or affirmative approach to social responsibility is the most difficult, complex, and expensive concept for organization to implement. It involves accepting five categories of obligations ranging from broad performance criteria, ethical norm, operating strategy, response to social pressures and legislative and political activities.

Science And Technological Advancement Through CSR.

The crises of funding in the education sector generally and in universities in particular refers more to the perpetration of endemic and brazen corruption in the system, inadequate budgetary allocation, the fire-brigade approach to solving problem requiring funds injection into the sector and the resort to deprioritizing release of funds to the education sector (Akinkugbe 1994; FGH, UNICEF and UNDP, 2000).

Indeed, the crises in the higher education sector much illustrated by the implication of the devaluation of the naira, the quantum leaps in expansion of the Nation budget even against increased funding (Abdulkadir, 2005).

In order to eliminate the crises of funding which has resulted directly the casual factor of the decayed infrastructure in educational institution, paucity of teaching and learning facilities, poor welfare for students, poor pay package to lecturers, the invasion of donor support for attending to even the basic needs, and the now infamous "bribe for budget" syndrome, CSR is a viable option.

This is the time for organizations and the government to review CSR policies for the good of the business as well as the society. Companies should come together and form policies that will enhance the standard of our universities, especially the science and technology which has a strong multiplier effect on every other sectors of the economy. The percentage of the revenue of quoted companies is to be ensured they are channeled to social due management.

Conclusion.

To truly grow and advance science and technology in our universities, corporate bodies must be proactive and must be committed to a deliberate planed program of investment and actions such that it will exceed the expectations of the public as the requirement of the law. It is evidence that corporate organization have been contributed in some way to the upliftment of Nigerian institution in areas such as Provision of computers, study scholarships for both staff and students, Aids and Donation in cash and kind and the rest. Nevertheless, there is a need for more active support for the institutions in order to save them from epileptic funding.

Recommendations.

By and large, the dividend of the support to universities is inevitable both for the citizenry and the corporate organization themselves. As various scholars sighted that there will be no room for growth and development in any country without advancement in science and technology as engine of growth.

Therefore, the paper recommends that corporate organization should;

1. Provide hugely, timely and consistently aids and support to tertiary institution.
2. Adhere to reform policies of the government so that efficiency will be attained.

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