

Impact of Faith-Based Organisations on Societal Development in Nigeria

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Abstract

Faith-based organisations have been an integral part of Nigeria's history, not only in religious practice but also in driving developmental initiatives. Despite their contributions to societal progress, their impact often goes unrecognized. This paper explores the significant role these organisations play in development; highlighting their efforts beyond faith-based activities. It emphasizes the need for proper documentation and acknowledgment of their contributions to ensure they receive the recognition they deserve.

Keywords: *Faith-Based Organisations, Development, Empowerment, Employment and Society.*

Introduction

Faith-Based Organisations (FBOs) whether at the national or worldwide level, are formal organisations whose identity and mission are drawn from the teachings of one or more religious or spiritual traditional work independently, voluntarily, and non-profitably to promote and actualize collectively stated ideals about the public good (Siddika, 2021). They may have direct ties to a religious organisation and are frequently an extension of the church's institution. According to Black Sheep Community (2023), FBOs do play significant roles in society by providing healthcare, education, and social services, particularly in underserved communities. They may also contribute to preventing and addressing social concerns in conflict situations, such as gender-based and sexual assault. FBOs often have access and influence in communities that only a few other organisations have, making them uniquely positioned to positively effect change and improve outcomes for those in need.

It has been a common practice to ignore and exclude religious bodies and FBOs from the list of organisations with possible influence on community or societal development. For the most part, attention is frequently given to governments, financial organisations and cooperate bodies. However, in recent times, there seems to be a shift in attention toward places of worship such as churches, synagogues, mosques, and others that are fundamental to the growth of society and the building of communities. Policymakers now widely recognize the vital role faith-based organisations play in driving progress within their

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communities and society at large. According to Vidal, this optimism stems from several factors: efforts to scale back the public sector's role, notable successes in housing and economic development led by large churches, the absence of other strong institutions in struggling neighborhoods, and the belief that faith communities possess a unique ability to tackle persistent challenges where others have fallen short (2016).

In addition, Ngala (2018) posits that this optimism is influenced by the large size of the religious sector; as it holds a significant position within Nigeria's nonprofit landscape. Following health and education, religious congregations, denominational organisations, and other faith-based entities collectively form the third-largest segment of the country's nonprofit sector. This highlights the substantial role faith-driven institutions play in social and community development (Ayodele, 2015). FBOs have gained a prominent position that was unthinkable a few decades ago in a secular sociopolitical environment where religion cannot be ignored (Tomalin, 2013).

Development engagement for FBOs is not a new approach. This is because they have deep-rooted ties in developmental activities in various communities. This explains why Fountain (2015) contends that the development efforts of several FBOs are fundamental to the current secular development agenda. Denulin and Bano (2019) also argue that the church is widely known for its charitable works such as the provision of aids and medical assistance to the poor and less privileged in the society. The Islamic religion, on the other hand, is also known for such kinds of activities as evidenced in the act of Zakat which requires that a follower of Islam devotes 2.5 percent of his income to philanthropic causes. Similarly, Dyana, or generosity, is a related ritual in Hinduism. Also, through Christian Aid, Islamic Relief, and World Vision, FBOs' operations are also visible on a global scale. As in the cases of the Christian Commission for Development in Bangladesh (CCDB) and the Ramkrishna Mission of Bangladesh, this might also be localized. In fact, the former US President, George W. Bush's establishment of the Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives served as an official link between the state and FBOs, inspiring others to establish a relationship with them. Further, in order to collaborate with FBOs in the development sectors, the UK's Department of International Development (DFID) has created a formal connection with them, developing the Faith Partnership Principles, for example. (Flanigan, 2016).

It is to be noted that numerous developing nations, including Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, and several African nations, are home to FBOs. Education, aid, child health, poverty alleviation, women's empowerment, climate change, peacebuilding, and many other areas have all benefited greatly from their efforts. Still, FBOs have come under fire despite their contributions to the development sector, as many of them have been charged with supporting Islamic militants, offering sectarian social services, spreading Wahhabism, an ideology that is popular in Saudi Arabia, and coercing or bribing the impoverished to convert to other religions. They have also been charged with partisanship and prejudice in the delivery of services in Nigeria. For example, FBOs may reflect, perpetuate, and strengthen socioeconomic differences seen in the milieu in which they operate, according to Ngala (2018). The dynamics of sectarian service delivery are further accelerated by this separation (Flanigan, 2016).

In light of the above, Occhipinti (2015) posits that some FBOs are often seen as suspicious as the services they provide could be suggestive of an attempt at the evangelisation and conversion of their recipients. This is because they feel that their donations are selectively

appropriated. Although she believes that the religious nature of these dubious FBOs poses less of a threat to secular development organisations at this time, the accumulation of these claims has heightened worries and prompted various inquiries regarding whether FBOs support conversion, fund terrorism, or offer sectarian services. Nonetheless, it is certain that FBOs have had a major influence on the growth of their host towns and have been recognized as development agents. Information on the functions and effects of FBOs on society growth and development appears to have been overlooked, since their role is still one of the least studied facets of community development. This article aims to investigate the role that faith-based organisations have in Nigerian societal development.

Periscoping Faith-Based Organisations

It is challenging to identify faith-based organisations in a strict sense. An exclusive definition might be restrictive as it could leave out unofficial organisations. Furthermore, many definitions of FBOs exist. Although the word FBOs is used more often in contemporary literature, others prefer to use Religious Non-Governmental Organisations (RNGOs) rather than FBOs. Julia Berger (2013), for example, substitutes Religious Non-Governmental Organisations (RNGOs) as a subset of Faith-Based Organisations (FBOs) that actively work to promote shared ideals of the public good at national and international levels. According to Berger (2013), these organisations are formally structured, deriving their identity and mission from religious or spiritual teachings. They operate as independent, non-profit, and voluntary entities.

Baiyeri (2015) takes a broader approach to defining faith-based organisations, drawing from the World Faith Development Dialogue (WFDD). Rather than limiting the term to a specific type of institution, Baiyeri includes everything from churches to non-governmental organisations (NGOs) under the umbrella of FBOs. He also highlights the concept of Faith-Inspired Organisations (FIOs), which encompasses any development-focused organisation whose mission, vision, or historical foundation is rooted in religious teachings. Within this diverse landscape, the influence of religion varies. Some organisations integrate faith deeply into their operations, while others maintain a more secular approach despite their religious heritage. Whereas some organisations view religious principles as just supporting more formal relief and development activities, others view religion propagation as a key component of their social welfare work (Baiyeri, 2015).

To gain a better understanding, Clarke and Ware (2015) have taken a somewhat different approach and placed some focus on the typology of faith-based organisations. The teachings and principles of the faith, or a particular interpretation or school of thought within the faith, serve as the source of inspiration and guidance for FBOs' activities, according to Clarke (2008). They suggest five different kinds of FBOs. These include: religious representative organisations; religious development or charity organisations; religious sociopolitical organisations; religious missionary organisations; and religious extremist, unlawful, or terrorist organisations.

Clarke and Ware (2015) identify four distinct types of faith-based organisations (FBOs). Some are directly linked to a local congregation or religious leader, while others operate within a formal religious denomination or sect as an official part of its institutional structure. There are also FBOs that, while connected to a religious tradition, function as independent entities. Lastly, some organisations draw inspiration from a broader religious heritage without being formally tied to any specific group.

Similarly, Sider and Unruh (2004) categorize Christian social service and educational

initiatives into six types, ranging from deeply faith-integrated to entirely secular. These include faith-centered, faith-affiliated, faith-permeated, faith-background, faith-secular collaborations, and purely secular organisations, reflecting varying degrees of religious influence in their mission and operations.

Faith-permeated Organisations: In these organisations, the relationship to religious faith is visible at every level of support, governance, staffing, and mission. Explicitly religious content is widely included into faith-permeated programmes. Participation in religious activities is frequently mandatory as it is thought that the religious component is crucial to the programme's success.

Faith-centered Organisations: Faith-centered organisations were established with a religious mission, maintain close ties to the religious community through affiliation and funding, and demand that the majority of its employees and the governing board share their religious beliefs. Although faith-centered programme's include overtly religious content and activities, they are made to allow members to easily choose not to participate and still receive the programme's advantages.

Faith-affiliated Organisations: With the probable exception of certain board and executive executives, faith-affiliated organisations do not demand its employees to accept their religious views or practices, but they do maintain some of the influence of their religious founders (for example, in their mission statement). Despite having little to no overtly religious material, religion-affiliated programmes may provide participants with spiritual resources and generally affirm their faith. The goal of faith-affiliated programmes may be to use nonverbal displays of kindness and concern to spread a religious message.

Faith-background Organisations: Despite having a historical connection to a religious heritage, faith-based organisations typically maintain a secular appearance and disposition. While certain employees may be motivated by their religious convictions, faith commitments are not taken into account when choosing the board or staff. Aside their potential placement in a religious environment, faith-background programmes do not openly address religion and they do not often anticipate that religious experience would influence programme results.

Faith-secular Partnerships: An interesting dynamic unfolds when a secular organisation – or even a faith-based one – teams up with churches or other openly religious groups. While the core management of such an organisation remains secular, it leans heavily on its faith-based partners for volunteer support and in-kind contributions. The collaboration is not necessarily built on shared religious beliefs, but there is a deep mutual respect between the leadership, staff, and their religious allies. Even though faith-inspired volunteers may offer optional religious resources or activities, the actual programmes tend to steer clear of overt religious messaging. Still, whether explicitly acknowledged or not, the spiritual foundation of these religious partners is often seen as a valuable asset that enhances the programme's overall impact.

Secular Organisations: Secular organisations view it as inappropriate to take religious commitments into account when recruiting and governing, and thus make no mention of religion in their mission or founding history. Thus, we could say that there is no religious

component in secular programming.

In light of the aforementioned, FBOs may be broadly classified into two groups: formal and informal. In order to carry out their operations, formal FBOs have a more structured and organized approach. Many FBOs have a more NGO-like appearance. They are actually listed as NGOs in a number of nations. Faith-based political parties might be included in this category because of their organisational structure. They might be both domestic and foreign. Despite looking to Faiths for inspiration, they often do not discriminate while offering services. However, churches, mosques, and temples are the primary locations for informal FBOs, which may be thought of as a unit station for all faith-based service provision. Even though these FBOs lack the official FBOs' organisation and structure, structured FBOs occasionally use local churches, mosques, or temples to build networks in their communities. Despite having different organisational capabilities, these two groups share the same objective of serving the public and promoting growth.

For the sake of this essay, FBOs will include churches, mosques, and organisations that are registered under them, connected to them in some manner, or run by their owners or members.

The Concept of Societal Development

Most people would agree that development is a prerequisite for advancement. In a range of contexts, such as linguistic, literary, biological, scientific and technical, social, and political, it is defined differently. The idea of change serves as the theoretical foundation for the idea of development. A change is a shift from one situation to another. According to this method, development is a sequence of transformations that are marked by characteristics like spontaneity, irreversibility, and monotony (Midgley 2013). Additionally, it refers to the idea of directionality and structure (Chojnicki & Czyż 2019). According to Gboyega (2018), development as an idea embodies all attempts to improve the conditions of human existence in all manifestations. It implies enhancement in the material wellbeing of all citizens, not the elites alone, but ensuring that every citizen enjoys better quality of life, while safeguarding resources for future generations. Essentially, socioeconomic development is the driving force behind this transformation, merging economic growth with social progress to create lasting change.

At its core, social development reshapes institutions and societal structures, equipping communities with the tools to meet evolving challenges. This could mean adopting cutting-edge technologies, refining processes, or fostering a mindset shift that embraces progress. On the other hand, economic development focuses on strengthening financial prosperity at a national or regional level, ensuring that wealth generation translates into tangible benefits for the people. While economic growth often serves as a benchmark for development, true advancement lies in a balanced blend of both social and economic progress. The enhancement of living circumstances for both people and groups within a community is referred to as societal development.

Social development also includes the expansion and advancement of a nation's social and human capital. According to Midgley (2013), social development is achieved by lowering the rates of poverty, inequality, exclusion, isolation, and vulnerability of individuals at the periphery of society. This includes areas such as health, education, security, and employment, which form the backbone of a thriving society. To foster growth and ensure no

one is left behind, the state steps in through its various agencies and organisations. These bodies play a crucial role in implementing social protection policies and programmes designed to uplift those in the most vulnerable situations, promoting inclusion and creating opportunities for a better future. It is motivated by society's unconscious desires for progress or advancement and is the result of both the development of organisational mechanisms to express these discoveries and the pursuit of better ways to fulfill these desires in order to accomplish social and economic objectives (Midgley, 2013).

Societal development is a process that expands human consciousness and enhances social organisation. It happens when trailblazing individual efforts are copied, duplicated, and vigorously backed by society, which thereafter actively plans the new endeavor by putting in place institutions, laws, and procedures that encourage it. In other words, societal development is principally the responsibility of the government of the nation. This is because, apart from the funding of developmental projects and programmes, governments also provide the climate in which development thrives through its laws and policies. However, individuals and groups in every society also contribute in one way or the other to the development of the society. For instance, non-governmental organisations, clubs and foundations contribute to societal growth and development through focus and investments in various aspects of the economy such as education, health, agriculture and so on. According to Vidal (2016), they provide scholarships for students, soft loans and improved seedlings to farmers, skill acquisition programmes for youths as well as other types of empowerments. Indubitably, a significant contributor to societal development in Nigeria is Faith-Based Organisations (FBO).

Societal development could therefore be seen as the method by which a country enhances the social, political, and economic well-being of its citizens. Societal development is all about creating a world where everyone – individuals and social institutions alike – can thrive. It is not just about improving living conditions or boosting economies; it is about fostering an environment where people feel supported, connected, and empowered to reach their full potential. True progress happens when both material well-being and social harmony go hand in hand, paving the way for the highest level of human development.

Economic and social growth must be integrated for societal progress. According to Nabofa (2016), social development is the process of enhancing people's well-being by solid collaboration amongst all societal groups, business entities, and other sectors. Therefore, social and economic growth are combined to form societal development. In this instance, socio-economic development encompasses the improvement or progression of the standard of living as well as the expansion of people's economic circumstances and lives. Gboyega (2018) asserts that societal development is the result of intersection of social structures, dynamic processes, and human interactions. It prioritizes people at its core, championing participatory approaches that empower communities to shape their own progress. Rather than imposing solutions from the top down, this approach fosters collaboration, ensuring that development is both inclusive and deeply rooted in the needs and voices of the people it serves, which takes into account the social concerns of the populace as development goals. The common good, social fairness, and inclusivity are important to societal progress. According to Chojnicki and Czyż (2019), societal development consists of processes brought about by both endogenous and external variables, which dictate the development's trajectory. To put it another way, societal development processes are typically preceded by the results of other processes rather than operating alone.

This means that societal development as a whole is dependent on the various fragments of improvement and advancement in different sectors of the society. This is what is largely referred to as measure of development.

Measures of Societal Development

Societal development is measured with indicators, such as housing condition, health, levels of employment, and education. Housing conditions serve as an important indicator of societal development. The quality of housing is closely linked to various aspects of well-being, including health and economic status. Poor housing conditions, such as inadequate infrastructure, overcrowding, and exposure to environmental hazards, can have detrimental effects on health and overall quality of life. Additionally, housing characteristics, such as tenure and amenities, are widely used as measures of socioeconomic position. For instance, the majority of people's wealth and a significant amount of their income are derived from their housing tenure, whether they are renting or owning their home.

Health is a critical aspect of the life of an individual, without which not much can be achieved by him/her. Health is referred to as the physical, emotional, psychological and even spiritual status of an individual. It is the total and holistic wellbeing of a person at a given time. The importance of the health of people in particular and the world in general explains why both local and international organisations continue to emphasise and donate towards qualitative health care service. According to the Institute of Medicine (2016), having timely access to personal health services is essential for achieving optimal health outcomes. This implies that health facilities should be within the reach of all when required and that it is utilized and positioned in order to render appropriate services from which users can achieve the expected outcomes.

Employment represents the social and economic effects of the economic system and is a significant feature of societal development. To put it differently, any or all of the activities that take place in the workplace directly affect social and economic developments in society. Employment is defined as any activity that produces revenue and satisfies persons' social and personal requirements while abiding by the law. In order to create national wealth as a social product that is essential for society and all of its members, it is the process by which members of the able-bodied community achieve their labor potential and talents. One broad measure of society's labour activity is the employment level. However, many countries, particularly emerging ones like Nigeria, are dealing with high unemployment rates as a result of diminishing resources. Therefore, entrepreneurship offers a holistic answer to the job issue.

Education is, no doubt a critical aspect of the development of any nation. It is a strong determinant of how developed a nation is and how much development it can potentially attain. According to Misra (2019), Education is regarded as one of the most effective means of fostering social and economic development and has been demonstrated to have a quick positive influence on family planning, nutrition, health, and income. The claim that "no nation can develop beyond its educational system" is explained literally in this way. The evolution of contemporary economy and society is significantly influenced by the educational system. It is among the most crucial elements for a society's social and economic advancement. Additionally, it is the primary element in the development of human capital. If a nation does not make enough and prudent investments in education, it will be extremely difficult to achieve effective economic advancement.

Faith-Based Organisations and Societal Development in Nigeria

Faith-based organisations have played a significant role in offering services that advance societal development. The contribution of FBOs cuts across several sectors including health, education, employment, social services, entrepreneurship among others.

Health

FBOs have significantly influenced the provision of healthcare in Nigeria. This is typically through the establishment of hospitals, clinics, and other health facilities. They have played crucial roles in addressing public health needs, particularly in areas where government resources are limited.

Contributions of Christian FBOs to Healthcare in Nigeria

Missionary Hospitals and Clinics: Christian missionaries were among the first to establish hospitals and clinics in Nigeria, dating back to the 19th and early 20th centuries. Institutions such as the Wesley Guild Hospital in Ilesha and the Sacred Heart Hospital in Abeokuta are examples of facilities established by Christian missions. These institutions provided essential healthcare services and set the foundation for modern healthcare in Nigeria. According to Adamu, (2021), the Catholic Church alone operates about 300 health facilities across Nigeria, which include hospitals, clinics, and health centers. These facilities are often concentrated in both rural and urban areas. FBOs of other Christian denominations, including the Anglican, Methodist, and Baptist churches, also own and operate numerous health facilities, though the exact numbers are often less documented.

Health Education and Training: Christian FBOs have been involved in health education and the training of healthcare workers. Many of Nigeria's early nurses, midwives, and doctors were trained in mission hospitals and schools. For example, the School of Nursing at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, was initially influenced by Christian educational principles. Christian Connection for International Health (CCIH), (2021) report that Nigerians have been receiving health services including family planning, immunization, nutrition, and the building of health systems generally from the Christian Health Association of Nigeria, Rural Health Services, Isaiah 58 Care Foundation, Life Builders Ministries International, and World Renew. Despite holding just 27% of Nigeria's medical facilities, the faith-based health care system contributes more than 65% of the country's real health care delivery (World Health Organisation, 2016).

Community Health Initiatives: Various Christian FBOs have initiated community health programmes, focusing on preventive care, maternal and child health, and combating diseases like HIV/AIDS. The Catholic Church, through its health commission, runs numerous health facilities across the country, often in remote areas, providing services to isolated populations. In addition, faith-based institutions have developed some sort of partnership with the government. This essentially involves government healthcare personnel being assigned to faith-based healthcare facilities. States in Nigeria including Kogi, Taraba, Anambra, Benue, Imo, Edo, and Cross-River are home to this. However, CHAN Medi-Pharm offers medicinal supply warehousing and logistics for intervention programmes, including Global Fund and PEPFAR.

Contributions of Islam to Healthcare in Nigeria

Islamic Medical Missions: Islamic FBOs have also established health facilities in Nigeria, particularly in the northern regions. These facilities often cater for the healthcare needs of the Muslim population, offering services that are culturally and religiously sensitive.

Examples include the Islamic Medical Association of Nigeria (IMAN), which operates clinics and hospitals.

Community-Based Health Services: Islamic FBOs have been involved in providing community-based health services. These include vaccination campaigns, health education, and disease prevention programmes. Also, the Federation of Muslim Women's Associations in Nigeria (FOMWAN) is active in maternal and child health, focusing on improving health outcomes among Muslim communities.

Healthcare Funding and Donations: Islamic charities and philanthropists have contributed to healthcare funding, particularly in building and equipping hospitals and clinics. These contributions are often directed towards improving access to healthcare in underserved areas.

Education

Just like the health sector, FBOs have also been deeply involved in providing education to Nigerians. In Nigeria, FBOs are heavily involved in the education sector. This is demonstrated by the vast number of FBO-affiliated schools that span all educational levels. The building of classroom blocks, community schools, the supply of educational resources, teacher training, and the immersive contribution to the formulation of the national curriculum are all attributed to FBOs. Another area in which many FBOs have invested and continue to do so is in the education of girls. The Federation of Muslim Women Association of Nigeria (FOMWAN) aims to educate Muslim women and have a beneficial influence on national issues, according to Ngala (2018).

FBOs in Nigeria own and operate secondary schools. Some of which are: Loyola Jesuit College, Abuja; Immaculate Conception College, Benin City; St. Michael College, Benin City; Holy Child College, Ikoyi; Christ The King Catholic College, Ijebu; Notre Dame Girls' Academy, Abuja; St. Gregory's College, Lagoon School, Lekki; Faith Academy, Abuja; Lifeforte School, Ibadan; Hillcrest School, Jos; Seaba Model Christian Girls College, Akure; Wellspring College, Lagos; Baptist High School, Abuja; Showers Christian High Schools, Port Harcourt; Surefoot International School, Cross River; Dansol School, Lagos; Sacred Heart Secondary School, Benin City; Lumen Christi International High School, Uromi; Domus Mariae College, Igarra, among others.

A few years ago, at the tertiary level, Osewa (2019) noted that there are 39 tertiary institutions owned by FBOs while about 15 FBO tertiary institutions are awaiting approval. The current faith-based/affiliated institutions in Nigeria include: Babcock University, Madonna University-Rev, Bowen University-Nigerian, Covenant University, Benson Idahosa University, Redeemers University of Nations, Ajayi Crowther University, Caritas University, Gregory University Uтуру, Bingham University, Crawford University, Joseph Ayo Babalola University, Salem University and Tansian University. Others are the Veritas University of Nigeria, Wesley University of Science and Technology, St Paul's University College, Rhema University, Bishop Godfrey Okoye University, Obong University, University of Mkar, Pan African University, Landmark University, Samuel Adegboyega University, McPherson University, Adeleke University, Evangel University, Mountain Top University, Anchor University, Kings University, Precious Cornerstone University, Hezekiah University, St. Augustine University, Clifford University, Dominican University, Spiritan University, Dominion University and Trinity University.

Social Services

Faith-based organisations (FBOs) hold a unique edge over secular social service providers, thanks to their strong ethical foundations, deep connections within both rural and urban communities, and the unwavering trust they have earned from their members and beneficiaries. This deep-rooted credibility sets them apart. James (2009) points out that while donors may have overlooked them for years, FBOs have long been pioneers in social welfare and service provision, leading the charge in uplifting communities even before they gained widespread recognition.

Also, various Christian FBOs in Nigeria are engaged in poverty alleviation initiatives. These include providing microfinance to small business owners, agricultural training programmes, and community development projects. Organisations such as the Catholic Caritas Foundation of Nigeria (CCFN) have been active in providing humanitarian assistance and development programmes, especially in conflict-affected areas (Agbiji & Swart, 2015). Similarly, Zakat, one of the Five Pillars of Islam, plays a significant role in poverty alleviation among Muslims in Nigeria. Islamic organisations and individuals often distributed Zakat to the poor and needy, providing financial support, food, and clothing. In addition to Zakat, other forms of charity like *sadaqah* and waqf (endowment) are also practiced, with funds often directed towards building schools, healthcare facilities, and providing social services (Abdullahi, 2011).

Entrepreneurship

A capitalist system is propelled by entrepreneurial behavior, and industrialized nations are steadily moving toward an economy centered on entrepreneurship. Entrepreneurial growth has been examined from the perspective that certain environmental elements, including government policy, family and community support, business support services, and the availability of funding, might have an impact. In this sense, religious organisations may also play a crucial role in business. This is true because religion invariably has a favorable impact on individual traits including integrity, fortitude, bravery, foresight, and general ethical standards.

Institutionalized religion transmits values that influence individual business and professional success. Therefore, religious organisations assist in promoting ideals that lead to successful entrepreneurship. According to Griebel, Park, and Neubert (2014), cultural influences like religion also have an impact on employment decisions in addition to economic ones. The same is true for female business owners, for example. Church attendance and religious customs influence the choices members make regarding their company. Sometimes a woman's religion influences how she runs her business and makes decisions within it.

In view of the above teaching on a complete eclipsing of poverty in the nation, the inauguration of an organisation aimed at promoting development and building a society where poverty will be reduced to its barest minimum led to the establishment of JDPC. JDPC is an acronym for Justice, Development, Peace, Commission. The Catholic Women Organisation (C.W.O) under the auspices of JDPC have provided empowerment programmes across the country which has culminated into many women being self-reliant rather than over dependent on the church for survival. According to Griebel, Park and Neubert, (2014), the organisation puts widows into serious cognizance in order for them to be independent and provide for themselves and family. Rather than just providing clothes and money amongst other material things, Women participate in skill-building programmes that enable them to support their families and take care of themselves.

In a similar vein, the women's foundation of the Mountain of Fire Ministries, or MFM, was established in 2010. According to MFM leaders, women have a distinctive role to play in the Body of Christ since God has given them certain abilities for particular tasks, especially in this day and age. The Women Foundation's administration flows horizontally through the MFM Regions and into the MFM Branches around the globe. Through enlightenment and spiritual awareness, this is intended to have an impact on the lives of all MFM women. The goal of every MFM branch throughout the globe is to provide all women who are devoted members of the MFM Ministries with access to a highly operational and dynamic Women Foundation Department.

Essentially, the objective of the Women Foundation is to provide all women with the knowledge and abilities necessary to fulfill their roles as wives and husbands' helpers. Additionally, frequent prayer meetings, seminars, and workshops help to enhance the women's spirituality. Bringing out the best in women and empowering them to be satisfied as God's children, devoted family members, and valuable wage workers is their main objective. It also seeks to develop female leaders who will always stand out in an honorable manner. In order to make women more applicable to the church and society in the twenty-first century, the goal is to train and develop them in all aspects.

Thus, congregants who gather together after church to exchange ideas on how to market their enterprises surely build strong networks for entrepreneurs. Sermons and seminars with a business theme might help encourage members to start their own businesses. Churchgoers' support of products and services promotes the expansion of entrepreneurship. In actuality, many FBOs routinely host business seminars and workshops with the main goal of bringing out the best in their members, enabling them to be fulfilled as God's children and deserving wage earners, and producing leaders who will consistently present a positive image of themselves, according to Vidal (2016).

Empowerment

The process of granting basic economic privileges to the underprivileged, either directly or indirectly, with the assistance of the privileged individuals who have access to these opportunities, is known as empowerment of economic drive. Actively blocking efforts to prevent those possibilities is another aspect of it. (Blanchard, John, & Alan, 2016; Wilkinson, 2018). Generally speaking, involvement is the only way to demonstrate empowerment through the FBO's social and economic programmes. Given the urgent need to enable youth to assume socioeconomic responsibilities that determine their effectiveness in the empowerment process, such participation is even more crucial. A recognizable instance of the FBO empowerment programme is the collaboration between the Catholic Women Organisation and the Police Wives Association in Abuja in 2018 where over 500 women and youths were empowered with several skills to enable them to become their own boss rather than be financial burdens to their families. In 2014, the Catholic Women Organisation of St. Anthony Parish in Gbaja, Lagos State empowered 110 women in barbing, tying of head gears, interior decoration, make-up amongst others (Oyeka, 2019). Nabofa (2016) has conducted a research on the effectiveness of Christian religious organisations' economic empowerment initiatives in Bayelsa State, Nigeria. The results show that Christian religious organisations offered skill-building programmes to empower their members. Additionally, the study found that most Christian religious organisations actively supported the empowerment of women, youth, and other vulnerable church members as well as the host communities.

Similarly, Islamic FBOs collect and distribute Zakat to support small businesses, provide scholarships for education, and assist in healthcare, thereby empowering recipients to improve their socio-economic status (Aliyu, 2014). They also engage in broader social welfare activities that contribute to the empowerment of citizens. These activities include building and running orphanages, providing healthcare services, and offering legal aid to those in need. By addressing these social needs, FBOs help to empower individuals and communities, enabling them to overcome challenges and improve their quality of life (Abubakar, 2009).

Employment

In the aspect of employment, it is incontrovertible that FBOs are immense employers of labour. According to Ngala (2018), religious organisations provide 22% of the employment opportunities in the country. This cuts across several categories namely low-level jobs such as janitors, security men, cooks, drivers and messengers; middle-level jobs such as secretaries, clerks, office assistants, accountants, teachers and lecturers and top-level jobs like Managers, Administrators, Bursars, Directors Vice Chancellors, Provosts, Rectors among others (Ngala, 2018). FBOs also provide skilled and non-skilled labour. According to Diwe (2015), skilled labour in the context of FBOs refers to job skills particularly related to the teachings and practice of a particular FBO. For example, to become a priest in the Catholic Church, one has to be trained for a minimum of nine years. Special training is also required for jobs such as catechists, sacristans among others. In other well-structured denominations, special training is required before one can get the job of a pastor. Similarly, Islam also requires certain levels of training before one can become an Imam.

According to An-Nawawi's version of Muslim's authenticated Hadiths (2016), becoming a competent Imam is a procedure that is somewhat analogous to becoming a priest. Years of instruction in traditional Islamic disciplines are required. Arabic first, followed by the study of fiqh (jurisprudence), 'aqidah (belief/creed), the Quran, Hadith, and spirituality, among other subjects. The fact that FBOs own and manage facilities and provide services across all sectors of the economy implies that people are employed to manage these facilities and provide prescribed services. This automatically translates to job opportunities for such persons.

FBOs have established numerous schools, colleges, and universities across Nigeria, which have not only provided education but also created significant employment opportunities. For example, a study by Afolabi (2015) revealed that Christian mission schools have been key employers in their communities, providing jobs for teachers, administrative staff, and support personnel. These schools often employ locals, thereby contributing to the reduction of unemployment in the regions where they operate. Correspondingly, Islamic FBOs have established schools and educational institutions that have created employment opportunities for educators and administrators. Sule-Kano (2008) has discovered that Islamiyya schools in northern Nigeria are major employers in the region, providing jobs to thousands of teachers and support staff, many of whom are locals. Healthcare facilities run by FBOs are another significant source of employment in Nigeria. Hospitals and clinics established by Christian and Islamic organisations hire a variety of medical specialists, such as physicians, nurses, technicians, and administrative personnel. In a similar vein, Onah and Okoye (2019) document that Catholic healthcare institutions, such as St. Gerard's Hospital, Kaduna and the various hospitals run by the Catholic Church, employ thousands of people across the country. These institutions are often among the largest employers of labour in their communities, particularly in rural and underserved areas.

Islamic healthcare facilities also contribute to employment. A study by Adamu (2008) highlights the role of Islamic organisations in providing healthcare services and creating jobs for healthcare professionals in northern Nigeria. These facilities employ a variety of staff, contributing to the local economy and reducing unemployment. Again, some FBOs in Nigeria have also been involved in microfinance initiatives that create jobs and support small businesses. For example, the Christian Rural and Urban Development Association of Nigeria (CRUDAN) provides microloans and training to small business owners, which helps them to start or expand their businesses. Adesina (2013) discovered that these initiatives have led to the creation of numerous jobs in rural areas, where employment opportunities are often limited. Islamic FBOs also engage in similar activities, particularly through the distribution of Zakat (almsgiving). Abdullahi (2014) documented that Zakat funds are often used to support small businesses, which in turn create jobs and provide income for local communities. This approach not only provides immediate financial assistance but also fosters long-term economic development and employment.

Conclusion/Recommendations

It should be stated that societal development is a complicated and multidimensional idea that includes many facets of social and human capital and is motivated by society's underlying desires for development. In order to accomplish social and economic objectives, it is accomplished via the creation of organisational structures to represent that knowledge and the discovery of better ways to meet these desires. Building connections and being sociable are also important, and it calls for the capacity to gain trust by imparting wisdom, information, and insights into one's area of competence.

It is impossible to overstate the contribution FBOs make to the advancement of society. Their actions in almost every area of the economy, with special reference to health, education, empowerment, employment, and even government, provide ample proof that they have been actively involved in society progress. Therefore, it is essential that these accomplishments be suitably recorded and duly recognized.

Additionally, more FBOs are also invited to rise up to the occasion by contributing meaningfully to the socio-economic development of their host communities and the entire society at large by identifying an aspect of the economy and plunging deep into it in order to bring about the best possible quality service for the benefit of Nigerian citizens. More so, despite the fact that faith-based organisations operate on the principle of selflessness, it is apt to propose that FBOs develop amongst others, video and pictorial evidence catalogues of their involvement in the provision of developmental services to the society. This could strictly be for the purpose of record keeping and research since they mostly prefer to carryout benevolent acts without amplifying them.

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