

Assessing the Distinctiveness of Faith Based Organizations in the Development Sector in Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

In Nigeria, the secular NGOs and FBOs have been commended for their efforts in bettering the lives of the poor and underprivileged (Odumosu et al., 2009). However, recent studies have pointed to the important roles FBOs play in the development of poor people in grassroots levels in developing countries (Berger, 2003; Clark and Jennings, 2008; James, 2009; Leurs, 2012). An important aspect of these studies focus on identifying what makes the FBOs more distinctive than their secular counterparts in the development sector. With the growing recognition of the importance of religion in development – especially in its recent contributions to social capital influence in development; government, donors and researcher have channeled both material and financial resources in analyzing the relevance of Faith Based Organizations in the civil society, and to integrate these findings in broader development policies. Thus, this paper provides an avenue for identifying the contributions of Faith Based Organizations (FBOs) in the development sector in Nigeria, especially as they are emerging as important center for mobilizing civil society in the country (CSEA 2010). In particular, this paper aims to highlight pertinent issues which have come to be relevant in analyzing the development functions of FBOs, especially the role religion and religious groups play in facilitating social capital required for civic engagement in social service delivery. Hence, the study drew extensively from the religious social capital theory to underscore the relevance of faith based organizations in development sector in Nigeria. The paper relied solely on secondary sources such as literature, official documents, and internet sources.

KEYWORDS: *Faith Based Organizations, Civil Society Organizations, Religion, Development, Social Capital, Service Delivery*

INTRODUCTION

In the past decades, the role of religion and the group it motivates were not fully appreciated by scholars and donors and largely viewed as anti-developmental (Clarke and Jennings, 2008). This is because religion was conceptualized as unconnected to issues of socio-political and economic development and thus received less attention (Ver Beek, 2000). However, in recent times, studies of Faith Based Organizations (FBOs) or what some literature refers to as Religious Non-Governmental Organizations (RNGOs), have increased and are taking a new dimension in fashioning religion beyond the realm of the divine to development discourses, both in the national and international levels. This new development has recently motivated increasing research and studies that aim to project the engagement of religion within the broad discussions on civil society and development. Recently, Faith Based Organizations in have received great recognition from the international community and donors such as the DFID, UNDP, World Bank and SIDA (Olarimoye, 2012:2). These donors have convened conferences and funded researches to facilitate better understanding of the relationship that exists between religion and development in the country. An example of such development research is the Religion and Development project (RAD) sponsored by DFID. An essential

part of these researches involve finding out what has made Faith Based Organizations distinctive from their counterpart secular NGOs, which have hitherto received more recognition by the international community in the past decades.

This debate has also taken place prominently in Nigeria. For instance, a recent research prepared for DFID's Coalition for Change program as well as from the UNDP/CIVICUS report cited in the CSEA Country Assessment Report for Nigeria (2009:52) observed that "Faith-Based Organizations are emerging as an important centre for mobilizing civil society in Nigeria". This recognition and others alike have encouraged growing research on the contribution of Faith Based Organizations on socio-economic development in the country, especially in their role in public service delivery (Davies et al., 2010; Leurs, 2012). Moreover, in as much as these literature give credit to the FBOs, very few studies have been conducted to identify what makes the FBOs distinctive in their service delivery to their beneficiaries in Nigeria (Leurs, 2012). Thus, a pertinent question this paper aims to answer is "*what makes FBOs distinctive in the development sector in Nigeria?*" The answers to this question will direct the study of FBOs on specific subject matters in human development theses.

DEFINITION OF FAITH-BASED ORGANISATIONS

Dicklitch and Rice (2004:662) defined Religious Civil Society or what is commonly known as Faith Based Organizations as "Non-state actors that have a central religious or faith core to their philosophy, membership, or programmatic approach, although they are not simply missionary". On the other hand, Clarke and Jennings (2008:24) conceptualized Faith Based Organizations as "organizations that derive inspiration and guidance for its activities from the teachings and principles of the faith or from a particular interpretation or school of thought within the faith". In this view, Faith Based Organizations are conceived as deriving their origin and practice from doctrines and precepts established by affiliated congregations in the society. Berger (2003:16) provided the definition mostly accepted in this field of study. He defined Faith based Organizations as:

"A formal organization whose identity and mission are self-consciously derived from the teachings of one or more religious or spiritual traditions and which operates on a non-profit, independent, voluntary basis to promote and realize collectively articulated ideas about the public good at the national or international level".

This definition shows that the intrinsic value of religious civil society organizations goes beyond religious practice to other broad areas of development and social functioning. However, unlike their counterpart secular NGOs, they are often influenced or motivated by their faith based values to perform humanitarian tasks. Notwithstanding the commonly accepted definitions of Faith Based Organizations, scholars believe that there still lies the immense ambiguity with the conceptualization especially in the area of activities, structure, size, and practice. Berger (2003:25) noted that the pervasiveness of religious actions varies and Candland (2000:368) referred to this pervasiveness as the level of piousness and attachment to religious tenets. The level of attachment to religious tenets varies with differences in practice, however, this tend to give way when these organizations are preoccupied with humanitarian or developmental services and tend to come into relationship with the international community or other relative groups.

It is equally relevant to differentiate FBOs from religious associations that operate in grassroots to support disempowered people; hence, in this paper I use the term service delivery FBOs. According to Tadros (2000:15) a service delivery FBO is defined *as a civil society organization of religious character or mandate engaged in various kinds of service delivery*. In this view, it can be said that service delivery FBOs are faith inspired development

organizations or religious NGOs. Moreover, the essence of defining a service delivery Faith Based Organization is to differentiate organizations that seek to draw members from places of worship from those with development goals in place. The separation of service delivery Faith Based Organizations from religious supports groups is crucial because as Jeavons (2004:144) indicated “...congregations should not be called FBOs because it blurs the very distinctions that are critical for policy purpose.” Thus, in defining service delivery FBOs, it is important to emphasize that religion influences their organizational work and programmes.

CLASSIFICATION OF FAITH BASED ORGANIZATIONS

There have been attempt on classifying FBOs in order to identify the core service delivery or development channeled FBOs in the list of Faith groups working in the civil society sector. An early attempt was made by Monsma (2002) who identified lists of religious attributes and features that could be used in classifying FBOs and identifying service delivery FBOs. Mosma identified two types of faith groups working in the civil society sector, which he termed – faith based integrated and faith based segmented groups. According to him, the faith based integrated groups incorporate their religious tenets and ideology in their services to the extent that it became difficult to separate faith from their services; whereas the faith based segmented groups though retaining their faith principles and values, tend to separate them from their service and development work. Later in his more recent book, Monsma (2002) argued that the latter group can easily partner or even merge with secular groups in their functions because of flexibility in their religiosity and value for objectivity which is targeted towards human development. However, his classification was limited to only two types of faith groups, excluding the existence of other typologies of faith groups existing in the civil society sector. Owing to this deficiency, a more elaborate approach was adopted from the typology given by Clarke (2006), Meville and McDonald (2006), and Sider and Unruh (2004).

Clarke (2006) identified five different types of FBOs depending on their missions and representative status in the civil society sector. These include:

- a) Faith Based Representative Organizations – these groups work as intermediates between believers and the state and other actors
- b) Faith Based Development organizations – these groups mobilize necessary resources from internal and external sources in support of humanitarian development functions/services to the poor and underprivileged in the society.
- c) Faith Based Socio-Political Organizations – these groups mobilize necessary resources and utilize faith in constructing space for political deliberations that would benefit members, thus mobilizing members to engage in political affairs. Clarke also identified that these group tend to pursue broader political issues and promote faith as a viable tool for encouraging democratic governance.
- d) Faith Based Missionary Organizations – these groups involve in evangelization of faith and actively promote religiosity abroad. Their mission is to proselytize their faith, seeking to convert people to their religious sect or engaging with like groups to promote community development works.
- e) Faith Based Illegal Organizations – or what may be termed “Terrorist Organizations” are still considered faith based but with a different ideological mission. These groups tend to pursue their goal through armed struggle or violent acts justified on ground of faith and belief system.

Mevile and McDonald (2006) and Sider and Unruh (2004) went further to focus on the intensity faith plays in the organizations and divided Faith Based Organizations into five groups, these include:

- a) Faith Permeated Organizations – These groups tend to structure their programmes based on doctrinal values and principles. Their religious aspirations and development services at this level are inseparable. Membership is strictly by adherence to the religious teachings and worship.
- b) Faith Centered Organizations – These groups possess all attributes to the first group only that there is flexibility in membership. In this case, members are allowed to make choices to be part of the programme or not.
- c) Faith Affiliated Organizations – these groups exist as affiliated groups to already existing religious sects and draw instructions, aspirations and organizational structure from them. Most of the time, the principal clergy man or leader dictates what happens and the tasks of decision making rests on him.
- d) Faith Background Organizations – these groups are inspired by faith but act more like the secular NGOs in development services. They draw inspiration and guidance from religious doctrines but apply secular principles in their work. They are structured like secular NGOs, maintain corporate structure and implement programmes in organized and stipulated formats (sometimes in donors’ formats).
- e) Faith Secular Partnership – These groups work closely with secular civil society organizations to form a new hybrid which Sider and Unruh (2004) commented as the contemporary civil society partnership facilitated and nurtured by international organizations such as UNFPA and DFID seek to promote.

EMERGENCE OF FAITH BASED ORGANIZATIONS IN CIVIL SOCIETY AND DEVELOPMENT DISCOURSE

Since the 1990s with the growing trust on the third sector as alternative to unstable and unreliable governance in developing countries, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) in form of Secular Non-Governmental Organizations and Faith Based Organizations have become prominent on the agenda of policy makers, activists and international donors Obadare (2005). Many literature¹ have commented on the relevance of these civil society organizations in facilitating the much needed development in Africa and the rest of the developing world. These literature view the civil society as an antithesis to the state, and portrays civil society organizations as agents for democratic and developmental growth in less developed countries. Gradually, these civil society organizations became donors’ development instruments and served as alternatives to the state in its function of delivering social services in developing countries.

Moreover, it is pertinent to point out that civil society sector as a whole has shifted away from its initial focus on promoting political mobilization and accountable government, to the apolitical function of delivering of basic services² to the poor (Rahma, 2006:45). This shift resulted from perceived concern with the various social problems related to homelessness, poverty, poor literacy and educational standard, human rights violations, gender inequality, environmental degradation and health depreciation affecting the people (James, 2009). Hence, the direct provision of services to poor people became an important activity of these development organizations in form of self-help projects (Cassen, 1994). In cases where the state is weak, they provided basic social benefits such as economic empowerment in form of skills acquisition, cooperative and loan society, granting soft loans for agricultural purposes; and other development activities like providing shelter, clean water supply, health, and educational services to marginalized communities. FBOs can elicit

¹ Howel and Pearce (2001), James (2009), Kaldor et al. (2005), Misztal (2001) and Obadare (2005)

² In this study *Service Delivery* is defined as the mobilization and utilization of resources (financial, social, human and physical resources) by development organizations in the empowerment of disempowered widows, who have no access to productive resources or public services in their communities.

cooperation of the local people; they are able to identify local needs and constraints, and can penetrate easily into local communities without restraints (Cassen, 1994:51). This has resulted to more partnership between donors and these organizations in the provision of services to the poor in developing countries.

Clarke (2006:837) opined that FBOs emerged prominently in development discourse in 1980, when President Reagan of USA, being a staunch Pentecostal Christian mobilized the Christian right in support of his domestic and foreign policy, especially his opposition to communism. However, in recent times, due to their preoccupation in development works previously handled by their secular counterparts, the FBOs are becoming more prominent in international discourses (Berger, 2003; Clarke and Jennings, 2006; James, 2009; Leurs, 2012). The recent recognition of FBOs by international community and donors such as DFID, UNDP, World Bank and SIDA resulted from the continued acceptance of religion as an important aspect of public life, which has arose to question the assumptions of some secularist literatures (James, 2009; Leurs, 2012; Lipsky, 2012). These donors have convened conferences and funded researches to facilitate better understanding of the relationship that exists between religion and development. Thus, the assumptions of secularism in service delivery functions of civils society organizations have gained lesser ground with the recognition of the contributions of FBOs to so many socio-political and economic developments in the world today (Clark and Jennings 2006; Berger, 2003; James, 2009).

FAITH BASED ORGANIZATIONS IN NIGERIA

Emergence of FBOs in Nigeria

Generally, scholarly review of the emergence of FBOs in Nigeria is no different from the broad description of the evolution of civil society organizations in Nigeria. However, some texts still insist that they evolved with the missionary activities in the pre-colonial era. The evolution of religious civil society organization in the pre-colonial era is associated with various socio-religious movement such as the Muslim Jihad in Northern Nigeria and the various activities of Christian missionaries in southern Nigeria (Davis et al., 2011).

In the colonial era as recounted by Imade (2001), civil society (inclusive of FBOs) emergence in Nigeria originated due to the absolutist doctrine of the colonialists and their obvious authoritarian rule. Davis et al. (2011) noted that this period saw the formation of various social movements organized in the platforms of student movements, trade unions, nationalist movements, women associations, and emergent ethnic and town movements. Davis et al. (2011) remarked that in the early stage of colonial rule, the Muslim community revolted against the introduction of western education which they viewed as a means for establishing Christian religious worship. In reaction to this development, Muslim organizations such as Amadiyya and Ansar-ud-deen opened schools where both western and Muslim educations combined are taught to young male indigenes (Kenny, 1979). Kenny (1979) commented that the aims of these societies include building solidarity amongst members, ensuring loyalty to Muslim traditions, practicing and worshipping, and establishing a strong network for spreading the religion in the Northern and Middle belt regions of the country. The impact made by Christian missionary societies during the colonial era in the area of provision of educational facilities, health services and recreational grounds could be accounted for religious civil society impact in this period. For instance Agboola (1998:28) recounted that:

“The Missionary movements of the 20th century moved hand in hand with colonizersThe church has however made tremendous contribution to the intellectual and social development of Nigeria. The earliest schools, hospitals, recreation grounds and many more were provided by the various religious groups or NGOs.”

Agboola (1998:29) noted that Christian Missionary groups accounted for 60 percent of schools and hospitals in colonial Nigeria. William (1991:31) confirmed this by writing: “Missionary schools outnumbered government schools in southern Nigeria ... Christian schools most often were better run than their government counterparts and parents scrambled to send their offspring to them regardless of their religious bias”.

Post-civil war era Nigeria witnessed reduction on the impact of Christian missionary organizations on development in Nigeria, due to banishment of some of these groups from the country as a result of their involvement and support rendered to Biafra during the civil war (Ukaiwo, 2007). William (1991) and Ukaiwo (2007) noted that the federal government seized missionary schools and converted them to national schools depriving the missionaries the opportunity of engaging in development services. The military government on seat introduced various policies to ensure that schools were under the framework of national education policy which ruled out inclusion of missionaries.

Religious civil society organizations in Nigeria could be said to make much impact in 1980s and 90s, especially with the interference of various militaristic regimes and their obvious authoritarian rule which increased poverty level, repression of the masses and economic recessions in the country. For instance, Imade (2001) recounted that the second period of civil society growth in Nigeria can be traced back to the anti Babangida and Abacha sentiments that grew out of the excessive indiscipline, corruption and dictatorial rule which exacerbated poverty and lacks, especially with the devaluing of Nigerian Naira by Babangida’s regime. Much struggle from the masses was on the removal of militaristic rule which have offered nothing more than misery and repression to the people. Collective efforts were made by various civil society agents working in the national and grass-root levels. All joined in this struggle, until in 1999 – a democratic regime was restored with the coming of Obasanjo to power. Hence, the proliferation of civil society organizations including FBOs in Nigeria can be traced back to the 1980s and 1990s (Obadare, 2005).

According to the recent UK DFID sponsored research on religion and development cited in CSEA country assessment report (2009:52) there is an observed increase in the number of FBOs operating in policy areas such as education, health, poverty reduction, community and women development in Nigeria. This is due to the fact that religion in Nigeria constitutes an associational life that supports and enhances a distinct form of social capital, which encourages civic engagement in socio-political development. Over the years it has become obvious that government have failed in their ability to successfully provide needed services to the populace in the country, thus the increasing response of FBOs to these services. For instance, Allard and Martinez (2008) noted that civil society (of which FBOs are included) perform a number of distinct roles that have come to enhance the provision of social services or the promotion of social needs in lacking communities. To facilitate their humanitarian activities, most faith based organizations have mobilized and channeled resources towards development activities such as health provision, agricultural development, microfinance, skills acquisitions training, civic education and other educational services, youth and women empowerment amongst others (Awojobi, 2011; Nchuchuwe, 2010).

The FBOs functions in the educational sector include constructing schools and offering adult education classes to rural people, especially women who did not receive an education early in life (Offorma, 2008). A key component of their educational campaign focuses on ensuring greater enrolment of girls in primary and secondary schools, in part to meet quotas established by the UN’s Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which sought to eradicate the gender disparity in education by 2015.

In the health sector, the FBOs tend to provide services to improve the health of people, such as building community or rural health centers for managing people’s health and family planning; offering HIV screening, counselling and treatment services to PLWHA

(People Living With HIV and AIDS), and mitigation efforts, including vaccinations, especially against maternal-child transferable diseases and deadly contagions in infants (Ariyo, 2005; UNFPA, 2010). The National Agency for the Control of AIDS (NACA) (2009) recorded that more than one thousand Religious NGOs have been involved in stemming the spread of HIV and AIDS in all states in Nigeria since 2000. The Federal Ministry of Health and UNDP (2011) reported that to combat deadly diseases such a malaria, cholera, HIV/AIDS, government have resorted to collaborating with humanitarian organizations, whose scope of work, targets, programme designs and professionalism have contributed to the reduction of the wide spread of these disease in the country. Their sustained relationship and partnership with the international donors was said to have increased aid worker's capacities to deal with health and development concerns in various states in the country.

Driven by their public mission initiated by sacred teachings on the respect for human life and dignity, FBOs tend to serve the underserved or neglected populations to expand their freedom of expression required for the transformation of their lives. They could achieve this because of their religious orientation and mission which directs their services towards the deprived and marginalized in the society. Leurs (2012) observed that Faith Based Organizations tend to preserve the interest of the poor by raising neglected issues, fostering public deliberations and debates that favour recourse to the challenges facing the poor and marginalized in the society. He observed that FBOs could achieve this because of the sacred position they occupy in society.

In line with the above discussion, some literatures on FBOs have come to assert that FBOs are more effective than secular NGOs in their services to poor communities. The issues raised in their arguments are discussed in the next section.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Religion as Social Capital

Leonard and Bellamy (2010:446-447) proposed that one prominent way of conceptualizing the relevance of Faith Based Organizations in the civil society sector is through the social capital scholarship. Putnam (1993:167) defined social capital as “features of social organizations such as networks, norms and trust that facilitate coordination for societal efficiency”. He argued that social capital develops from two related sources – the norms of reciprocity and networks of civic engagement (Putnam 1993:171). In exploring the relationship between economic modernity and institutional performance in Italy, Putnam discovered in his studies of civic traditions in modern Italy a strong relationship between the performance of political institutions and the character of civic life – what he termed ‘the civic community’ (ibid:15). He observed that these communities were characterized by civic engagement, solidarity, trust and a strong associational life, which reinforce a stronger civil society especially in the administration of public affairs. Civic engagement depicts the ability of groups to become organized, active and effective in the civil society sector. Putnam’s study reflects on how civic engagement could facilitate effective administration of public affairs by organized civil groups because of its capacity to enable groups derive required human, financial, material and organizational sources from established networks (Putnam, 2000).

The social capital topic in development discourse sheds light to the extent to which peoples’ social networks or relationships enable them to gain access to cultural, social and economic resources (Coleman, 1988; Littlefield, 2007; Portes, 1998). Hence, social capital informs a way of understanding how individuals gain connections to valued resources due to

virtue of their membership in society. The argument propounded by scholars³ dealing with impact of religious social capital in development is that religion builds a strong network of people which Putnam (1993) posited as a pre-requisite for building social capital that could encourage civic engagement in political and socio-economic development. In particular, Putnam commended faith communities as the single most important repository of social capital (Norris and Inglehart, 2004:182). In other words, the comprehensive hold of religion on believers' identities ensures a stronger connection to their social networks and reinforces civil society engagement in development services. Moreover, these literature suggest that religious networks are broad in highly religious societies mostly found in developing societies, to the extent that religious affiliations result to stronger social cohesion. And even if these connections are weak in some instances as suggested by Granovetter (1973), the breadth of the network might still ensure overall better social communication among members and better results in the achievement of network-related goals.

To articulate the contribution of social capital in the study of FBOs impact in the development, literature⁴ have argued that Faith Based Organizations have come to be distinctive in their social services more than other secular groups in the civil society because they promote a more holistic perspective of development that acknowledges the spiritual and material input in human development thesis and because religious teachings possess humanitarian principles that could facilitate engagement of civil society in development services towards the poor and marginalized. These literature point at the capacity of religion in the context of FBOs services to bond members of the society and encourage positive civic engagement in servicing sectors such as Health, Education, Poverty Reduction, Women and Youth Development and Community Development.

THE RELEVANCE OF FAITH BASED ORGANIZATIONS IN DEVELOPMENT

As aforementioned, many literature suggests that in recent time FBOs have started emerging prominently in the agenda of donors and international communities because they are considered to perform better than their secular counterparts (NGOs) in service delivery; and also because of the waned identity of NGOs with donors who have come to question the genuine content of their service engagements and legitimacy in their respective countries (Berger, 2003; James, 2009; Lipsky, 2012; Littlefield, 2010; Norris and Inglehart, 2004; Petersen, 2010; Vidal, 2010). These literature suggest that FBOs are able to excel in their services in communities because they exist as off-shoots from already existing religious congregations, especially in staunch religious countries, where religion informs the major part of people's sociocultural identity (Berger, 2003; James, 2009; Lipsky, 2012). In the following subsections, I will go on to discuss scholarly perceptions on why the FBOs may have more advantage in very religious societies like Nigeria.

i. Provides an Alternative to Secular Theory of Development

The secular theory of development emerged from the global perception of the obvious failure of governments in most developing countries and the initiation that civil society could be effectively utilized in bringing comfort and solace to the versed population of people living in abject poverty; deprived or under-privileged to access quality health care services and attain basic primary education in their countries. The underlying assumption about civil society was that it has the capacity to mobilize people which are required for any change to be effected in the society. This is concurrent with the neoliberal approach domesticating their neoliberal

³ See Bartkowski and Regis (2003), Cnann et al. (2003), Coleman (1988), Sider and Unruh (2005) and Sherkat & Ellison (1999)

⁴ See Berger (2003), Clarke and Jennings (2008), Inglehart (1990), James (2009), Leonard and Bellamy (2010), Norris and Inglehart (2004), Smith and Sosin (2001), and Smidt (2003)

agenda which allows market forces to take over state functions. This domesticating campaign encouraged emergence of civil society organizations with the motive of filling the void the state left behind as it focuses on economic growth and power influence in the global community rather than creating and delivering sustainable and resilient development services that reaches the very needs of its population (Sogge, 2002). The principle guiding provision of services was directed towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals set up by the United Nations development arm – the UNDP for 2015. However, Sogge (2002) went on to argue that downsizing of the state which was a foremost ideology in the secular development theory projected by the market fundamentalists (international development organizations) concealed other negative economic implications for the third world countries.

According to Sogge (2002:20) “market fundamentalists have shown no hesitation in using strong, centralized authority to preserve the value of international currencies, maintain high real interest rates and insure big investors against loss. The implicit ideology is to privatize the state and socialize risks”. In effect, what this implies is that while donors and international community project privatization of the state arms to increase market value of foreign currencies, civil society organizations created by them were utilized as a vehicle for subduing risks that could emanate from state agitation and discontentment. This hidden agenda has been queried by authors such as Lavalette and Fergusson (2001) and Obadare (2006) especially in the spread and proliferation of secular NGOs, who are particularly their foremost agents in the developing world. Further implication of this hidden ideology also includes the burden of foreign debts borne by developing countries, which result from capital accumulation from dependence on foreign aid and technological assistance which force governments to forgo development projects in order to pay off owed debts, hence resulting to further economic depreciation and poverty in these countries. Therefore it is argued that the implication from unchecked market approaches to development theory tend to enhance poverty and deprivation in countries its ideology claim to support (Hoffstaedter, 2011:17).

From this angle of discussion, Hoffstaedter (2011) argued that the initiative of Faith Based Organizations counteract the secular ideology and have filled gaps left behind by neoliberal policies towards development. Hoffstaedter (2011:14) was of the opinion that FBOs emerged to challenge secular development paradigm and market maxim facilitated by market fundamentalists and neo-liberalists who championed pioneering of civil society in developing countries. For instance, he equally argued “secular aid agencies seem implicated in the neoliberal model of development that focuses on economic growth as the key determinant of development” (ibid: 14). However, development encompasses more than just capital accumulation and GDP, but include other unquantifiable determinants such as justice and wellbeing which are paramount in development services of Faith Based Organization. Hence, the paradigm of religion in development aims to direct development theory towards seeking not just the material wealth but in developing a continuum for understanding the humanitarian implication and moral values of development. Marshall and Keough (2004:2) argued that the primary content of FBOs services is to build the spiritual wellbeing of members and the long term implication of the spirituality on the mind and action of the members, thereby encouraging moral drive towards development especially in poverty reduction. Part of this assumption is that FBOs tend to transform the system that reinforces poverty and other social ills by enabling the poor to access and utilize the resources required for improving their living condition.

Besides, the principle of religion in development brings back our focus from income and economic related issues in development, to humanitarian values in development. Religion tends to inform social values such as charity, trust, bond and civic responsibilities which facilitate civil society engagement in humanitarian services (Clarke, 2008). In the same vein, Robert et al. (2009:4) noted that studies that contextualize development in a non-

secular approach views religion in its capacity to integrate humanitarian mission and drive in its members which demonstrates the capacity of the divine or spirituality to facilitate civil society engagement in development. Clarke (2008) concludes that because religion constitutes an integral aspect of the cultural identity and wellbeing of people, mostly in the developing world, it provides an alternative to secular theory of development.

ii. Religion Motivates Social Action and Resource Mobilization For Civic Engagement in Social Service Delivery

Religion plays very important role in the activities of FBOs and it is a powerful motivating factor in development because of the emphasis it lays on humanitarian concepts such as morality, compassion and service, unity and peace, justice and equity (Einolf, 2011). Moreover, it is argued that religion motivates civil society action because majority of people, especially in developing societies, still attach relevance to its teachings, values and practices. Perhaps the most important relevance attached to religion is the hope and courage it brings to people to overcome fear of the unknown, oppression and suffering. It gives hope of a better tomorrow, hence its relevance and productivity in the society till today. Religion enables social action mostly through the value placed on the sacred and holy objects which form the symbol or identity of the religious form. This includes religious leaders who are considered as divine and sacred. These religious leaders are able to mobilize the crowd of believers because they reserve divine authority which attracts reverence and respect from adherents who considers it an obligation to the divine to do so.

Perhaps the most effective way of understanding the relevance of religion in motivating social action is still through the thesis on religion and social capital. Littlefield (2007) argued that religious social capital literature explores the extent to which the religious content in their services allow religious groups in the civil society sector to access cultural , social and economic resources. These resources are considered important sources of support for and can produce values and norms which influence civil society action. Congregations is perceived as the vehicle by which religious groups respond to structural and cultural marginality by providing members with the opportunities to engage in public debates and forums that could address specific social needs (Littlefield, 2007). This reflects on Hegel's postulations on the need for association. The realization that one is not alone and the possibility of accessing societal benefits through networks or associations motivate individuals to associational life which is the starting point for social action. Religion provides such opportunity because it constitutes associational life by virtue of its congregational status in the society – its potentiality to bring people together under one family or group with common and accepted method of worship, values and belief.

The social capital input in understanding the motivation of religious groups towards developmental goals also highlights the relevance of trust which is essential for bonding members of the society. Trust is a congenital factor of religion (James, 2009) because of the capacity of religion to inculcate in members complete dependence and reliance on the divine for solution to virtually all problems of life (Lipsky, 2011). Trust is important for associational life and has properties of public good when utilized appropriately for positive benefits in the society. Investment made in the creation of trust is required by members to address long term collective needs. Ostrom and Walker (2003:403) cited in Reuben (2011:231) elaborated on the role of trust in nurturing coherent communities and identified its importance in social integration and cohesion. Also, the value of trust is necessary for building confidence and loyalty toward collective actions which could be accessed through associational life. Reuben (2011) argued that religious values play distinct role in creating trust among members because it provides moral justification for engaging in shared commitments and responsibilities.

The world has come to realize the potential of religion to motivate social action either for good or bad (James, 2009:9). This recognition informs one of the major reasons religion found its position in international discussions especially on its capacity to motivate terrorist group and religious fundamentalists into drastic actions. James (ibid) recalled the 9/11 incidence which was the tipping point for recollecting issues previously neglected in the discussion of religion in international politics and development. But, this does not suggest religion only motivates actions towards the negative. It could be also a force for good, for instance, it can encourage the principles of philanthropism and volunteerism in members as part of its teachings (Einolf, 2011). James (2009) argued that these positives associated with religion have come to demonstrate the comparative advantage of Faith Based Organizations' development services over their counterpart secular NGOs. These positives also reflect the capacity of FBOs to mobilize other forms of capital – financial, human, intellectual and physical capitals, which are necessary in development services.

iii. FBOs have more Grass Root Presence and Legitimacy in Beneficiary Communities

Faith Based Organizations are being valued by donors because of their capacity to reach the poorest and provide services to the marginalized and deprived communities (James, 2009; Lipsky, 2011). This is because their affiliation to broader religious congregations enables them to generate interactive networks which inform a rallying point for the distribution and accessibility of services to the poor. These religious networks are often found in the most inaccessible areas where government services do not reach, hence, they resort as the available connection between these communities and the larger society (government, donors etc). These networks are also said to be more established than local or national governments, and provide channels of information and resource distribution in the absence of state sponsored alternatives (Lipsky, 2011: 20). Faith Based Organizations could achieve successful grass-root operation because the best and physical infrastructure in the poorest communities are probably churches, temples, mosques and other similar places of worship, which inform the focal point and assembly of the communities they serve. In addition, they are said to have a masterly of the local communities than their secular counterparts because their presence has been established, especially in remote communities where they have built a foundation through their missionary services or through the influence they may wield (Green, 2003). Their long standing relationship with the most marginalized members of the society gives the Faith Based groups an edge above their counterpart secular NGOs, and has accounted for many of their successes in development works. Their closeness to the poor in remote communities, their long-term relationships with these communities and identification with the needs of the poor, make faith-based organizations highly reliable partners for grassroots-oriented development projects (Green, 2003).

Another growing interest in FBOs is the perception that they possess certain distinctive characteristics and comparative advantages over their secular counterparts in terms of community integration and legitimacy in the community they service (Leurs, 2012:707). Davis et al., (2009) observed that FBOs are conceived to have better legitimacy in the local settings than the NGOs, hence have the capacity to instate social change. It also suggested that FBOs are distinctive because have a masterly of the local communities than their secular counterparts, and because their presence has well been established, especially in remote communities where they have built a foundation through their missionary services or through the influence they may wield on the people through their broader congregations (worship centers). For instance, in his study of FBOs and NGOs in Nigeria, Gwarzo (2003:294-295) discovered that the success of NGOs were limited because of their poor connection to communities they claim to serve. He opined that the suspicion and distrust of the secular

agenda in the development works of these NGOs often lead to their non-acceptance by the community people. Also, Davis et al. (2009:31) illustrates how due to backdrop of suspicion and some political undertone, some Muslim communities in Nigeria rejected polio vaccination based on the assumption that the government and donors shared anti-Islamic dispositions and interest, and possessing other hidden agenda for their people.

James (2009:8) concluded therefore, that religious institutions would be more trusted in developing countries because religion is still central to the social, cultural and moral life of these communities. Clarke (2006:839) commented thus- “FBOs help the faithful to maintain their cultural identity, to help the poor overseas and to provide alternatives to secular organizations which dominate aid flows to the developing world.” Because connecting to the sacred is an integral part of the poor people’s lives in most developing countries, hence their respect for organizations that have the capacity to sustain their social values while delivering necessary services to them. Berger (2003) underscores that Faith Based Organizations are perceived by the community people to represent their cultural and traditional values, hence are more accepted, respected, valued and trusted than the NGOs who are conceived to be more elusive, secular and anti-cultural. Moreover, religion is said to play a big role in community building and ensures that community resilience is maintained – such as cultural identity and traditions that form the integral part of the society (Lipsky, 2011). This is achievable because FBOs tend to impact more on communities that are affiliated to their faith or sect, hence enabling a distinct form of social capital which facilitates development services (Berger, 2003, Lipsky, 2011). In this way, Faith Based Organizations achieve more impact in the communities and enable community people gain access to resources – financial and physical essential for improving their livelihood.

SOME CHALLENGES IN WORKING WITH FAITH BASED ORGANIZATIONS IN DEVELOPMENT

In as much as religion generate social capital and moral judgement for engagement in development works, it is essential to identify some disadvantages that it may bring in the development services of FBOs especially in countries characterized by different religious sects like Nigeria. For instance, Beed and Beed (1999) argued that in religiously diverse society civil unrest may erupt because of clash amongst different religious sects. Action-Aid international (2009) in a report presented on HIV/AIDS project in Sub-Sahara Africa, noted that working with Faith Based Organizations (FBOs) posed various challenges. The report observed that apart from the limited understanding of the doctrines and tenets of different groups, acceptance of working with different religiously inclined groups proved difficult. The challenges of acceptance could be viewed from two angles. Firstly, donors’ programme may be viewed with suspicion and as such be rejected. Secondly, the programme team may be rejected if they do not belong to the same faith. It is also observed that some faith groups are found to be insensitive and less sympathetic to women's rights and this continue to pose a great challenge in working in the development field of women rights and empowerment bearing in mind their vulnerability to these challenges.

Beed and Beed (1999) also argued that several basic religious beliefs oppose the values and principles of modern capitalism and secular economics. Tolling their argument, possible negative effects of religion on development include religious restrictions on capital accumulation, profit-making, credit markets and interest. Moreover, they observed that some religion tends to restrict any infiltration of globalization and the principal contents of modernity. Terchek (1998) noted that these religious groups in extremity tend to criticize the principles of modernity because they propagate secularism which condemns the originality and sacred content of religion. For these groups secularism is neo-imperialists doctrine which has failed to deliver an impact on the suffering masses. The argument raised is that the moral

costs of modernization had to include in specific ways the supposed increase in political, economic and cultural autonomy that modernization ideology envisaged. These views are observed amongst fundamentalist movements who challenge the ideological content of neo-liberalism (An-Na'im, 2002; Juergensmeyer 2000).

Juergensmeyer (2000) observed that some faith organizations could be overridden with fundamentalist tendencies. Fundamentalism is a concept that explains religious groups' actions against the ideology and doctrine of modernity and secularism. The problem with religious fundamentalist civil society groups is their inclination to be authoritative in seeking to mobilize all the resources of the society for the realization of their own specific vision of the public good. Juergensmeyer (2000) argued that known fundamentalists have their own characteristic features and peculiar forms of discourse in relation to its own work reference. The common challenging feature these fundamentalist movement or groups share is their capacity to allow members to make their own moral and political choices and to live accordingly. Thus, the major problem with any form of fundamentalism is that it denies members autonomy at individual or collective, social, political, and/or economic levels.

It is from these perspectives that scholars perceive some Faith Based organizations as constituting a challenge to building bridge for any form of local, national, or global network.

CONCLUSION

Hitherto, religion and the groups it motives such as FBOs have not received much recognition in international agenda. However, with the growing understanding of the impact of religion in world affairs, international communities have come to invest resources to find out the role of religion in development. With the growing interest in global civil society, studies on social capital started to emerge to view many ways civic engagement in socio-political development are facilitated through networks of people with likeminded objectives and goals (Smith and Woodberry, 2004:112). One of the promising links was found in religion, since religion tend to provide instances for evaluating social ties formations in societies. This is especially important because in developing countries (where most of the development projects of multilateral international organizations are conducted) religion play a major role in the social life of people. Hence, it is presently imperative to devise a platform for the study of the impact of religion in the light of development functions of FBOs. This paper has been able to shed light on salient issues for analyzing the relevance of FBOs in development sector. The paper argued that all things being equal, FBOs have the capacity to promote a more holistic perspective of development that acknowledges the spiritual and material input in human development thesis. This is because religion as a force for social capital can enhance participation of members in salient social issues. Moreover, the debate on the input of religion in social capital theory makes effort in conceptualizing its linkage to development especially in explaining how faith provides a context for understanding more holistic and humanistic version of development. This includes how religion offers opportunities for reaching the poor in grassroots because of the virtue of its moral acceptance and legitimacy in communities.

Notwithstanding, the paper equally presented some disadvantages of working with religious group in development sector. This is a global concern because it is assumed that global network of faith based organizations is a channel for engendering and implementing effective and sustainable responses to many national and global problems. The refusal to adhere to the normative and process requirements of global civil society by religious fundamentalist groups adds to the many misconception of religion in development studies. It is strongly argued that putting these concerns prior in the agenda of global civil society is important for an effective response to the challenges of fundamentalism and bridge building for cross-religious partnership in tackling social problems. It is necessary to address pertinent

concerns in the overload of religious tenets that may be antithesis to development principles of civil society. Organizational principles of fundamentalist FBOs should be able to override unnecessary religiosity and integrate broader spectrum of development.

However, it has been observed that most donor programme fail to identify with the needs of the groups they work with and in effect incur resistance or aversion from the groups. Hence, donors should realize that knowledge of the groups' religious tenets and culture are very important in structuring their programmes. Hence, learning to adapt and appreciate the religious principles and tenets of these groups will facilitate effective partnership with the group and provide opportunities for understanding grassroots needs and support for their beneficiaries.

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