



AN EVALUATION OF CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY PROGRAMS OF OIL FIRMS IN BAYELSA, EDO, DELTA AND RIVERS STATE IN THE NIGER DELTA REGION OF NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

KEYWORDS:

Corporate social responsibility, Niger Delta, oil companies, programs evaluation.

Niger Delta region has abundant natural resources, more importantly crude oil which has necessitated the emergence of oil exploration as the main economic activity in the region. This paper therefore grapples with the corporate social responsibility concept and its programs by oil firms in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. The study made a comprehensive evaluation of the implementation of corporate social responsibility programs in two communities in Bayelsa State, two communities in Delta State, two communities in Edo State and two communities in Rivers State as representatives of oil producing communities in Niger Delta of Nigeria. The primary data generated through questionnaire, personal interview and the secondary data generated through companies published accounts, documents, reports for the study were used to either support or reject the assertions of corporations and those of the communities in respect to major or minor corporate social responsibility programs execution findings revealed that there exist a missing link between oil firms operation in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria and the host communities on execution of satisfactory major programs, especially in this period of economic meltdown. It was therefore concluded that oil firms in the Niger Delta should embark more on major programs such as road construction, building of bridges etc than minor programs such as renovations, donations, building of health centres etc.

1. INTRODUCTION

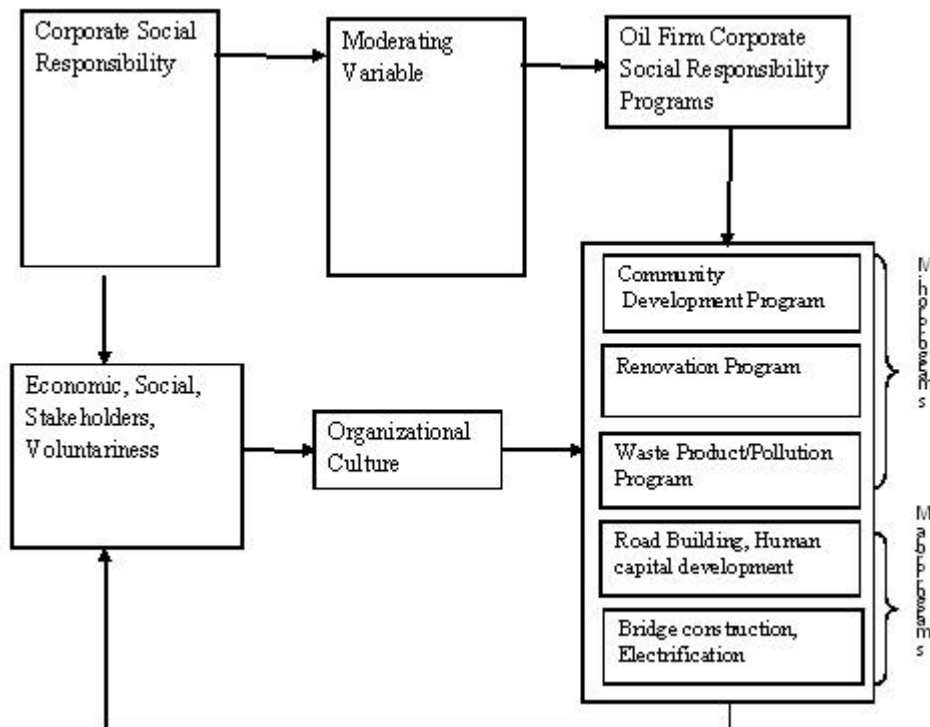
The purpose of this paper is an evaluation of corporate social responsibility programs of oil companies such as Shell petroleum and development corporation, Agip (Nig) Ltd, Chevron (Nig) Ltd as representatives of oil companies operating in the Niger Delta are of Nigeria, specifically in communities such as Imiringi and Beniseide in Bayelsa State, Iwherekan and Gbalamatu in Delta State, Gbelegele and Ologbo in Edo State, and Rumuekpe and Aluu in Rivers State.

The exploration activities by oil companies in the Niger Delta area of Nigeria have affected the lands of these communities' whose major occupation includes farming and fishing. These activities have resulted to oil spillage, gas flaring, waste products, which had caused degradation of their environment and in turn affected the health of inhabitants. As a consequence, there exists a high level of poverty and continuous conflicts among communities with respect to the corporate social responsibility programs of oil companies that are deemed necessary. The communities' perception on the execution of corporate social responsibility programs have given room to an ugly relationship between the host communities and the oil companies by dint of the enormous

wealth generated from their land. In other words, what the companies are supposed to do by law and agreement as an indispensable organization in the communities where they operate needs take cognizance of corporate social responsibility programs. These people have envisaged better conditions of living as a result of exploration, but to no avail.

It is believed that oil exploration companies operation in communities in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria have always been involved in minor corporate social responsibility program such as building of health centres, donations of different kinds, instead of major programs involving building of bridges, road construction, human capital development, and electricity. This scenario has resulted to severe arguments in which the oil companies have claimed of immensely contributing to the development of the communities by executing major programs, while on the other hand, the host communities contends that they have only been involved in minor programs. The perceptual differences have caused unprecedented tensions and problems persistently in the region, despite all efforts made by the government to ensure a good level playing ground that would create a conducive environment between the host communities and the companies.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK



Source: Dimensions of corporate social responsibility was adopted from the work of M. Scilly while measures of the study

From the framework, corporate social responsibility does not have an all embracing acceptable definition by scholars globally, but is defined for the purpose of this evaluation as an expression of certain impressive conduct by government and businesses towards society and environment rather than gaining economic and technical values only. This definition is further made explicit by elucidating the main thrusts of the dimensions and measures.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

1. **Economic Dimension:** The meeting of this dimension enables organizations to make sufficient and acceptable returns to investors, regularly pay employees, fix fair prices of goods for customers. As a consequence, their satisfactions form the strength for the satisfaction of other responsibilities and tend to create a balance between cost and profit.
2. **Social Dimension:** This explains the involvement of management in taking legal and morale actions that has the tendencies of creating relationships with the society and contributing to their well being and interests as well as those of the organization, customers, stakeholders, employees etc. This relationship is manifested in the provision of acceptable products and appreciable salary payment to employees.
3. **Voluntariness Dimension:** This dimensions is not entirely required to be carried out by corporations, but are subject to corporation's belief on what is correct to be done or not. It could be a function of ethical values that are very specific.
4. **Community Development:** Is a program intended to provide resources to communities which are used to solved a wide range of community special development needs.

5. **Renovation Program:** This program enables targeted structures within the neighborhood to become more attractive and economically viable.
6. **Waste produce/Pollution Program:** This involves practices capable of reducing eliminating and prevention of pollution at its source.
7. **Road Construction:** Construction primarily for the use of motor vehicles running on their wheels which includes bridges, tunnels, junctions and crossings.
8. **Bridge Construction:** A length structure built without closing a body of water, valley or road for the purpose of providing movement of vehicles.
9. **Human Capital Development:** The transfer of knowledge, skills, ability needed to drive organizational change in rapidly changing global work environment.
10. **Electrification:** The process of bringing electrical power to rural or remote areas.

2.THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

Corporate social responsibility is a term that has generated much concern and also supported in every gathering around the globe. However, scholars have not accepted a common and unified definition of the term. This could be as a result of the importance of the features included by different scholars in its definition. For example, Theodore Levil believes that the concern of business does not include being socially responsible at the instance of the owners. Milton Friedman maintains that the only social responsibility of business is to make profit by using its available resources, provided it works in accordance with the rules.

On the contrary, authors have also argued that companies have to be involved in social responsibility by dint of their activities in the communities where they operate which have resulted to unprecedented complex problems. As a consequence, their activities make them to be dependent on the society because their products are used by the communities around the globe. Therefore, companies have to be responsible to the needs and aspirations of communities hosting them in order not to be adjudged wrongly.

Corporate social responsibility as defined by Wikipedia is a term that lets organizations not to undermine the powerful interest of society resulting from the effects of their operations on various agents such as employees, stakeholders, suppliers, and communities where they operate. In other words, corporate social responsibility involved a continuous involvement of business in ethical behavior by contributing to the development of the employees' families, the communities where they operate and the general public. According to Blowfield and Frynas (2005), they posit that the only bridge connecting businesses and development as recognized by government and civil society is corporate social responsibility. They recognize strongly that companies have overwhelming responsibility consequent upon their operational effects on the society and environment. Move over, Idemudia (2008) strongly posits that companies should be held to be accountable for their operations. This however, can be translated in their social commitment in order to douse the tensions of the host communities and generate peaceful co-existence.

As defined by Macmillan (2005), corporate social responsibility describes a company's obligation to be responsible to all the stakeholders concerning all of its operations and activities. In other words, companies that are socially responsible needs to take into consideration the extent of their impacts on communities and the environment in cause of making decisions. Corporate social responsibility can hence be referred to as socially responsible actions and decisions organizations take, particularly beyond the direct economic interest of organizations. More importantly, socially responsible business practices means that corporate social responsibility involves social practice of businesses in conducting discretionary business activities to support the social development of community well-being and to protect the environment.

2.2 NIGER DELTA REGION

The Niger Delta region of Nigeria is made up of nine states which includes Bayelsa, Rivers, Edo, Delta, Imo, Ondo, Cross-River, Abia and Akwa-Ibom States. This region, solemnly situated in the Southern part of Nigeria has significant criss- crossed rivers and streams for fishing dry and wet lands for settlement and farming by the Niger Deltans through which they survive. The region is also endowed with unprecedented natural resources, particularly crude oil and thus known for providing colossal portion of the total oil wealth in Nigeria.

The sustainability of Nigeria economy is derived from crude oil enormously identified in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. This opportunity necessitated the influx of large number of oil exploration companies in the region. In 1908, Nigeria bitumen corporation, a German company came for oil exploration in Ondo State, but suffered termination upon the outbreak of the first world war as cited by Nzekwu (1980). Oil exploration by Shell Petroleum Development corporation started in 1937, and in 1956, the company discovered the

first crude at Oloibii in Rivers State. Shell, Petroleum and Development corporation started oil production and exploration at the rate of 5,000 barrels, per day as recorded by Lukeman (1998:31-37). Infact, the main hub of Shell's operation is the Niger Delta where it has its colossal producing oil wells.

The operations or activities of these oil exploration companies are very enormous in the development of Nigeria and not specifically in the development of the communities where they operate in terms of capital projects. Much of the troubles in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria have come by dint of the oil exploration and exploitation as emphasized by Eshagberi, (2003) Ogoni Saga, (2003). These companies operate in so many communities where oil is found and explored. In fact revenue generated from oil exploration caters for over 95% of foreign exchange earnings in Nigeria as recorded by George, Y. (2006). The combined operations of Shell petroleum and development corporation, Chevron, Mobil, Agip have accrued billions of foreign exchange earning to Nigeria.

However, the combined operations of these oil companies' operations cannot be measured against their corporate social responsibility programs for the communities where they operate. This has resulted to youth restiveness in the oil communities, which is of serious concern across the nation and internationally. The instability caused by the youth restiveness in the region has necessitated the fluctuations in the price of crude in the international market. Not only crude price fluctuation, the country has also witnessed losses in the number of barrels of oil as a result of vandanization of pipelines by angry youths which has metamorphosed into Niger Delta militants and many other social vices.

The level of poverty among owners of these communities is recorded very highly (NDDC, 2004). These people live very close to oil terminals which are prone to danger. They depend on water as mean of transportation have polluted water and air caused by gas flares, oil spills on land, thus rendering the land practically impossible for farming.

2.3 OIL COMPANIES

With the feeling of extreme happiness and confidence on the discovery of crude in Niger Delta in commercial quantity, necessitate the influx of oil companies in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. Compared to the magnitude of their operations, these companies have not shown adequate care with respected to corporate social responsibility programs to their hosting communities. As a result of unprecedented amount of youth restiveness exhibited through agitations for compensation, these companies resorted to showing trivial responses to the threats by paying insignificant amount on spills of oil which eventually damaged economic vegetation, creating minimal job opportunities, award deceitful scholarships, built schools, clinics and insufficient provision of water schemes to host communities.

Shell petroleum and Development Company as part of their "general principle" acknowledges and accepts society as one of its major groups that it owes strong responsibility. In the mission statement of Chevron, it reiterates that it foster long time emotional understanding with the host communities. Mobil also asserts that it will pay serious attention to the public, especially the hosting communities, surprisingly these interesting all embracing statement are devoid of realities e.g. payment made as compensations to owners of leased land as stipulated by the petroleum Act of 1969 is very trivial and donot reflect the extant market value.

It has been established that oil companies in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria have created unusual economic havocs and ignored the adequate development of the communities Nzimiro (1999). In other words, in their desire for profit maximization, they resort to deceive the government and people by releasing fake information concerning their actual profit. The hosting communities in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria have not consistently have a cordial relationship with these oil companies. The level of oil exploration and exploitation, host communities have envisaged alarming improvement in their conditions of living. According to (Aborbo 2000), the colossal expectation is seen to be an issue of non-expectation. Apart from the ecology being devastated, the oil companies activities have greatly affected health conditions of owners of the leased areas where they operate. (Sokoh, 2006: 333) as cited in Claniyan Raman Abubakri, lift Ogobo, and Florence Iyadunni Adedowole, identified acne as a special skin disease caused by oil exposure, cancer, reduced infertility and many others including fever, cough, abdominal pains as being common in the area. Thus, in line with the social exchange theory, expectations are high as an exchange which does not come to reality.

The oil companies operating in the Niger Delta area of Nigeria are hosted by communities that are different from other parts of the country because of their surrounding environment. Year of refusal of the oil companies operating in these regions to be responsive to their social responsibility program contributed immensely to the present level of poverty in the region. Their policies on affecting social responsibility program have been identified in the region (World business council for sustainable development). To explain this assertion more George (2004:4-5) posits that the region witness mass killings, hostage taking, theft, sabotage, destruction as a result of regular clashes between the communities and security personnel guiding their operations, personnel and properties of these oil companies.

2.4 PROGRAMS EVALUATION

The envisaged under development and the extent of devastation of the ecology are identified as the major reasons for incessant conflicts in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria, particularly in Edo, Delta, Bayelsa and Rivers-State. Oteh and Eze; (2012), Okonta, (2006). Idemuda; 2009, He; 2007, Zalik; (2004) posits that irrespective of the scholarly work in these states, not much is known about the extent to which these oil companies have taken serious their corporate social responsibilities with respect to the sustainable development of their areas. This is in view of the fact that host communities and the oil companies have consistently been involved in claims and counter claims on compliance with corporate social responsibility practices and initiatives.

In June-July 2001, Terisa Turner, and authority on political economy of oil companies made open the enormity of falsehood by Shell on Sabotage. The company had expressed that major oil spills in the region and explosion of pipelines were as a result of sabotage. She posited that no available facts to prove their stance, and thus concluded that all are lies, distractions and only meant for them to shy away from their responsibilities. It has also been established that the amount of money shell spends on corporate social responsibility program in the Niger Delta is very trivial as against the extent of risks to the environment caused by its operations.

Communities have vehemently claimed that the only social responsibility programs undertaken by these oil companies includes creation of jobs, scholarship awards, provision of social amenities such as the building of schools, hospitals and roads that only links their oil wells. For instance, according to (Aghalino, S. O. 2004), Shell petroleum Development corporation made known to the public an amount worth \$7.4m that was spent on roads, but the company did not reveal that fact that part of the money was involved in building roads that only leads to their oil fields. In fact, these roads are of no value for the communities who live far away from the oil fields. In 1986, a substantial table for operation was presented to hospital at Eku which only showed a good number of refurbished hospitals in Sapele, Ozoro and Agbarho in Edo State. It is worthy to note that when they build dispensaries, they are called hospitals which are most often not provided with adequate amenities.

In 1988 and 1991, Shell petroleum development corporation spent millions of Naira for the establishment of modern cassava factories at Akieowe and Uvniause. Also built farm centre in Agbarho in Edo State for seed multiplication and research centers. To reduce youth restiveness, it established the youth development scheme which has a duration of 3-4 years, but the duration period was reduced to only six months in order to reduce cost and suffer the youths.

To achieve active involvement of women as part of a sustainable development program, Shell petroleum Development corporation established women's program, built cold room at Rumuokrushu in partnership with women who sell fish. As regards payment of compensations, oil companies maintain that they have satisfactorily made payments to the host communities adequately and in fact, above government approved rates.

The obvious data given by these oil companies on community development projects are only intended to give a face life to the companies as being fully socially responsible to their host communities. According to Fregene, as Chevron produce \$2.30bm of oil from Itsekiri land, the amount spent on developing the community is nothings to write home about.

In Scotland, less than thirty years after Shell petroleum and Development corporation established business, there was noticeable economic transformation with cities and settlement well modernized. In Italy, Shell no longer involve itself in corruption or pollution of the ecology. In Denver, it does not also dump hazardous waste in Ireland or Spill oil in San-Francisco. It has also stopped flaring gas in US. According to (Tuodolo, 2009), these oil companies are still involved in corruption, pollution, dumping hazardous waste, spill oil and flare gases in the host communities in the Niger Delta.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research is more of a description research. The population of the study consisted of educated people in the four subjectively selected states comprising of Bayelsa, Delta, Edo and Rivers State in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. The research design adopted was the quasi-experimental research design by dint of the complex nature of the study elements that are not subject to manipulation. A sample size of 120 respondents who have the educational knowledge of corporate social responsibility programs were drawn from the entire population using the Taro-Yamene formula. The simple random sampling technique was employed to ensure that all members of the study elements have equal chances of being selected. The use of personal interview and questionnaire

were extensively employed for data gathering and to complement with data sourced through secondary method. The questionnaire was subjected to validity and reliability tests. With the use of Cronbach alpha test, the instrument yielded a value of 0.07 which indicated internal consistency and thus, reliable

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The result of this research is subject to the data generated from the review of literature and survey instrument an presented in the tables below:

TABLE 4.1: POPULATION OF RESPONDENTS

STATES	SAMPLE POPULATION	COMMUNITIES	RESPONDENTS	% RESPONSE
Bayelsa	30	Imiringe	14	46.66
		Beniseide	16	53.33
Delta	25	Iwherekan	13	52
		Gbaramatu	12	48
Edo	20	Gbelegele	12	60
		Ologbo	8	40
Rivers	45	Rumuekpe	21	46.66
		Aluu	24	53.33

Table 4.1 shows the sample population of the respondents from each of the communities in each of the states. The respondents are 14 and 16 from Imiringi and Beniseide in Bayelsa state representing 46.66% and 53.33% respectively. In Delta state, the respondents are 13 from Iwherekan representing 52% and 12 from Gbaramatu representing 48% of the respondents. In Edo state, we have 12 respondents from Gbelegele representing 60% of the respondents and in Ologbo community, we have 8 respondents

representing 40% of the respondents. In Rivers state, 21 respondents are from Rumuekpe, representing 46.66% and 24 respondents from Aluu, representing 53.33% of the respondents

TABLE 4.2: OIL COMPANIES CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY PROGRAMS

This table addressed the question “could you classify the corporate social responsibility programs of oil companies in your community?”

OIL COMPANY	MAJOR PROGRAMS	MINOR PROGRAMS	STATE	COMMUNITIES
Agip	Road construction	Provision of educational facilities	Bayelsa	Imiringi Beniseide
Chevron	Bridge building	Water scheme	Delta	Iwhereka Gbaramatu
Mobil	Human capital development	Scholarship award	Edo	Gbelegele Ologbo
Shell	Electricity	Compensation	Rivers	Rumuekpe Aluu

Table 4.3: PREFERENCE RESPONSE BY HOST COMMUNITY.

This table addressed the question “which of the corporate social responsibility programs do you prefer most?”

STATES	COMMUNITY	MAJOR PROGRAM	% Response	MINOR PROGRAM	% Response
Bayelsa	Imiringi Beniseide	14	96.66	1	3.33
		15 29			
Delta	Iwherekan Gbalamatu	12	92	2	8
		11 23			
Edo	Gbelegele Ologbo	9	90	2	10
		9 18			
Rivers	Rumuekpe Aluu	20	95.55	2	4.44
		23 43			

Table 4.3 shows community responses on their preferences for major and minor corporate social responsibility programs by the oil companies. In Bayelsa state, we had 29 respondents from Imiringi and Beniseide representing 96.66 % of the total population in the state who preferred major programs and only 1 respondent from both communities preferred minor program representing 3.33% of the total respondents. In Delta state, we had 23 respondents from Iwherekan and Gbaramatu which represented 93% of the respondents who preferred major programs as against 2 respondents for minor program and represented only 8% of

the respondents. In Edo state, we had 18 respondents from Gbelegele and Ologbo representing 90% of the population who preferred major programs as against 2 respondents for minor programs representing 10% of the population. In Rivers state, 43 respondents from Rumuekpe and Aluu representing 95.55% of the population preferred major programs and 2 respondents representing 4.44% indicated preference for minor programs. The implication is that the desire for major programs outweighs the need for minor programs, thus the management of the oil firms must be concerned with execution of major programs to satisfy the communities' salient desires and to avoid hostilities.

Table 4.4: HOST COMMUNITIES LEVEL OF SATISFACTION WITH OIL COMPANIES CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY PROGRAMS.

This table addressed the response to the question “Are you satisfied with corporate social responsibility programs of the oil companies operating in your community?”

STATE	POPULATION	COMMUNITY	NOT SATISFIED (MAJOR)	% Response	SATISFIED (MINOR)	% Response
Bayelsa	30	Imiringi	13	93.33	1	6.66
		Beniseide	15 28		1 2	
Delta	25	Iwherekan	12	88	2	12
		Gbaramatu	10 22		1 3	
Edo	20	Gbelegele	9	94.44	1	16.66
		Ologbo	8 17		2 3	
Rivers	45	Rumuekpe	18	88.88	2	11.11
		Aluu	22 40		3 5	

The table indicates the level of satisfaction of the communities on corporate social responsibility programs of oil companies in their areas. 13 respondents from Imiringi and 15 respondents from Beniseide in Bayelsa state representing 93.33% of the total population are strongly not satisfied while 2 respondents, representing 6.66% of the population are satisfied with Corporate Social Responsibility Programs of oil firms in their areas. In Delta state, 22 and 10 respondents from Iwherekan and Gbaramatu respectively, representing 88% of the population showed dissatisfaction, while 3 respondents representing 12% of the total population of 22 respondents indicated satisfaction with companies social responsibility programs. In Edo state, 9 respondents from Gbelegele and 9 respondents from Ologbo having a 94.44% response rate are not satisfied, while 3 respondents from both communities felt satisfied. In Rivers state, 18

respondents from Rumuekpe and 22 respondents from Aluu with 88.88% response rate of a total population of 45 indicated not satisfied, while 5 respondents, representing 11.11% of the total population of 45 indicated satisfied.

An overwhelming number of respondents are not satisfied in respect of major programs, while the trivial number indicated satisfied with the companies’ execution of minor programs. These communities have constantly cried aloud and painfully regretting hosting these oil firms who are preoccupied with the decisions of paying no attention to executing major programs that could impact greatly on their wellbeing. The existing roads have degenerated to deplorable conditions and causing unprecedented menace and social vices to communities. Power supply and human capital development agitations sounds as omen to the management of these firms.

TABLE 4.5: COMPARISON WITH SHELL OIL COMPANY’S ACTIVITIES ABROAD

COMPANY	LEVEL OF ACTIVITIES	ABROAD (ENCOURAGED)	NIGER DELTA (ENCOURAGED/ NOT ENCOURAGED)
Shell	• Corruption	Zero	Encouraged
	• Economic transformation	Encouraged	Not encouraged
	• Theft culprit	Zero	Encouraged
	• Dumping of hazardous waste	Zero	Encouraged
	• Flaring of gas	Zero	Encouraged
	• Pollution	zero	Encouraged
	• Oil Spills		

The table shows the level of activities of Shell Company in Scotland, Italy, Denver, San-Francisco and United States of America as compared with Niger Delta region of Nigeria. It shows the same activities arising from its operations, but with different corporate social responsibility initiatives to curb the inherent environmental effects and to create a conducive working relationship with the host countries when compared with their operations in the Niger Delta. From the table, it is obvious that these activities which are responsible for the degradation of the environment, causing social vices and disruption of operations are not encouraged in foreign countries they operate, but are erroneously seen to be part of life of the Niger Deltans by these oil firms, and as a consequence, have given rise to agitations and youth restiveness in the communities under study.

5. CONCLUSION

Summary – Corporate social responsibility has varying definitions with one school of thought emphasizing that companies should be socially responsible to the communities where they operate, and the other school of thought emphasizing that the only responsibility of business is to make profit. It is only on the basis of the enormosity of environmental degradation occasioned by the operations of oil companies in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria that this article is focused upon.

Corporate social responsibility is an indispensable business strategy because of its commitment in continuous ethical behavior towards contributing to the development of employees, families and communities where companies operate. It is very obvious that the oil companies in the Niger

Delta region of Nigeria are involved more in the provision of minor programs for community development. There is no doubt that these companies have vested interest for community development efforts but the problem is the extent of their commitments to major programs as listed in table 4.2, which serve the needs of the communities more.

Given the enormous ecological devastation which nobody can have any doubt, and the response of the host communities, it is obvious that the host communities are not satisfied with the oil companies compared to the wealth created through their operations. In fact, evidence has shown that their financial commitments to the minor projects are seen as insignificant. The problem in the Niger Delta is seen to arise in part from the differences between companies' practices in the implementation of corporate social responsibility programs in host communities in the Niger Delta and those done overseas.

6.RECOMMENDATIONS

It is on the strength of these differences that it was recommended that companies should attach importance to social and environmental considerations as much as the importance given in making decisions concerning shareholders wealth. A considerable and feasible corporate social responsibility policy should be part and parcel of company's daily function capable of addressing the impacts of company's operation on the environment, hence to involve more on execution of major programs for peaceful relationship and existence in the communities.

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