The Nigerian Oil Industry: Assessing Community Development and Sustainability

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Abstract

Purpose: The reoccurrence of loss in revenue generation from the oil industry which is due to the unstable and heated relationship between oil corporations and host communities in the Niger Delta (ND) region of Nigeria has spurred the strategic social permission of oil multinational corporations (OMNCs) to operate in the country. Thus, OMNCs have continually given attention to the challenges faced by the region through community development in terms of initiatives and projects. Community development (CD) and sustainability are core to viable social responsibility (SR) whether from the part of government or from OMNCs. However, since the independence of the country in 1960, a lot of development agencies and commissions have been established by the government towards social and infrastructural development in the ND region. These agencies and commissions often combine efforts with OMNCs to enforce development and sustainability in the region which consequently result in mutual benefits on both ends. The purpose of this paper is to critically examine CD and sustainability of host communities in the ND by evaluating initiatives conducted by government development agencies such as the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) and OMNCs such as ExxonMobil and Shell Petroleum Development Commission (SPDC) in the region.

Approach/Design/Methodology: The paper applied a qualitative research approach. It conceptualises CD and sustainability and examines the views of community members on initiatives from the NDDC and OMNCs. Instruments for primary data collection were the Focus Group Discussion, In-depth Interviews (IDIs) and observation. The research made use of thirty IDIs and five FGDs. Secondary sources of data were journal articles, reports and other documents from both the OMNCs and NDDC. It also made use of the Nvivo11 software to organise the data while a content-based analysis was used to set data into themes. The study puts into consideration the perspectives of different community members as well as the various concepts which exist in the literature.

Findings: Analysis reveals that there is positive impact when development takes place in host communities and sustainability attained but consequently, there are no probable and visible improvement of the OMNCs operations and business in the region, which is why there is reoccurrence of revenue loss in the country from the oil sector.

Value/Originality: This paper gives voice to participants in a social setting by highlighting the importance of CD and sustainability in the ND region. It does this by looking into the different initiatives conducted by the NDDC, ExxonMobile and SPDC.

Keywords: community, community development, corporate social responsibility, nigerian oil industry, sustainability

Abbreviations

CD: Community Development

CSR: Corporate Social Responsibility

EPA: Environmental Protection Agencies

EPNL: Elf Petroleum Nigeria Limited

FGDs: Focus Group Discussions

GRI: Global Reporting Initiatives

IDIs: In-depth Interviews

IUCN: International Union for Conservation of Nature and natural resources

MND: Ministry of Niger Delta

ND: Niger Delta

NDBDA: Niger Delta Basin Development Authority

NDDB: Niger Delta Development Board

NDDC: Niger Delta Development Commission

OMNCs: Oil Multinational Corporations

OMPADEC: Oil Mineral Producing Areas Development Community

OPCs: Oil Producing Communities

SPDC: Shell Petroleum Development Commission

UNEP: United Nations Environmental Programme

UNGI: United Nations Global Impact

WWF: World Wide Fund

1. Introduction

The oil industry is the one of the primary commercial industries in Nigeria and also a major source of wealth as it generates most of the country's revenue. Since the discovery of crude oil in the ND region in 1956 (Omofonmwa and Odia, 2009), exploration and exploitation has led to environmental degradation and social unrest (Eregha and Irughe, 2009).

A huge amount of wealth has been generated from the ND through OMNCs' activities on shore and off shore. However, a gruesome amount of environmental and social challenges has erupted in the region over the years (Duru, 2014; Okonta and Oronta, 2001; Oluduro and Oluduro, 2012; Omadjohwoefe, 2011) which has resulted in constant conflicts and war amongst communities, OMNCs and the government. Various communities have mounted pressure on both the OMNCs and the government for some sort of sustainable compensation for the devastation that has plagued the entire region. These demands have sometimes been acknowledged and granted in the form of initiatives and projects for community members.

Notwithstanding, there are challenges facing CD especially in areas where there is little or no support coming from OMNCs and the government. This has consequently resulted in civil rights groups, voicing out on behalf of communities. Thus, various questions have been posed on how the needs of communities can be met in such a manner that will not overly pressurize OMNCs but will at same time, give the government a sense of responsibility towards her citizens. The need for government and its development agencies to act in accordance to the aspiration of the communities can never be overemphasized.

The ND region has witnessed a rapid amount of initiatives and programmes designed for the sole purpose of meeting CD. Despite the huge sum of amount employed into CD initiatives, and the establishment of various development agencies at different points in time, socio-economic and structural development are still not visible in the region (Ikotun, 2002).

The main purpose of CD, is to improve the living conditions of individuals socially, economically and environmentally. The past decade has witnessed an extraordinary amount of public interest on issues of CD and sustainability in the ND region of Nigeria. Although the NDDC has recently been in collaboration with OMNCs in the organisation of various workshops for communities as part of CD for the entire ND region, it has over the years received criticisms on not playing its role as an efficient and effective development agency in the country (Jack-Akhigbe & Okuowa, 2013).

It has been argued that CD through development agencies and corporations yield better results (Montgouery, Stren, Cohen and Reed, 2003) and thus social and economic development takes place faster than it would have,

if it were an effort from a single organisation. CD is therefore seen as a basis or strategy for socio-economic development in societies (Cornwall, 2006; Robert, 2002). However, the term "CD" from a developing country perspective has no clear-cut definition as it is interpreted based on the uniqueness of the application processes when initiating development programs and activities (Bhattacharyya, 2004).

Definition of the term from a global context, is in no way lacking as it is viewed beyond its conventional conceptualisation by professionals and practitioners in the field (Christenson & Robinson, 1989). This is unlike viewing the topic from the developing world context. CD in the ND is considered from the initiatives put out by NDDC and the oil corporations.

Sustainability which is an important element of CD is used to evaluate initiatives conducted in the region as well as views from members of host communities. Project sustainability is significant for a country's economic, social and environmental wellbeing (United Nations, 2013). Sustainable development which plays a significant role in developing the ND region in terms of environmental protection, social and human development (Dafinone, 2007) encapsulates the whole idea behind community development in the region. Various government development agencies and commissions have been established since the country's independence. These have not stood the test of time as failure has taken a better part of their administrations at different times. Sustainability has been a huge challenge for development agencies set by the government over time.

Sustainability which is a bedrock for CD is at one point or the other short-lived due to the prevalent occurrence of socio-economic instability in the ND. In the light of the above, this paper examines the concepts of CD and sustainability in the ND. It takes into consideration how initiatives conducted by both the NDDC, and OMNCs - SPDC, Chevron and Exxon-Mobil are assessed by host communities, by examining the perspectives of members of some of the oil producing communities (OPCs) in Abia and Akwa-Ibom States of the region.

The study also examines the conceptual discourse of the concepts of CD and sustainability from a holistic point of view. It primarily draws on findings from interviews and discussions carried out in host and surrounding communities as well as OMNCs and the NDDC. News-letters, annual reports and other useful publications also served as important source of secondary data

2. Conceptual Considerations

2.1 Community Development

CD has been interpreted by professionals and practitioners in the field of Business and Management as *"locality development"* (Bhattacharyya, 2004). Scholars in the fields of social and management sciences believe it is the "most practical" agenda for societal change for people and their localities (Tan, 2009, p.6). It emphasizes the importance of an oppressed society in the course of dealing with superficially imposed social challenges.

According to Mendes (2008, p. 3), CD is the application of *"community structures"* to handle a society's challenges and empower its inhabitants. The importance of this definition is emphasized in the so-called community structures which got its roots from sociology. This is at a more macro level theory unlike the psychology theories which are at the micro level of definition.

CD is understood to be a strategy for bridging the gap between the micro and the macro levels of social works (Perkins, 2008). In some cases, CD theory outlines its tenets in terms of: the organization of various communities as clusters the bringing together of knowledgeable idea that will benefit all communities in a certain locality and the allow for social and structural change (Paiva, 1977; York, 1984). It also involves the strategies of "partnership, participative and integrative act of social involvement, as well as the willingness to promote human development (Pandey, 1981).

In another vain, Schiele (2005) explains CD as a cooperative and communal solution to social challenges, a type of support-system and an empowerment strategy. The concept models itself as more of a service and collaborative effort with the integration of individuals in the community (Estes, 1997). Therefore, a group of individual in a locality can get together to proffer ideas through social actions and activities (Gregson & Court, 2010) that will in turn cause a change for the benefit of the locality either economically, socially, and/or environmentally depending on the level of push for change that is being applied.

Currently, the concept of CD has gone beyond its conventional limits which are the development of localities, building the socio-economic environment of the people, towards the improvement of human development psychologically (Perkins, Hughey, & Speer, 2002). It is the coming together of members of a community towards working hand-in-hand with corporations, governments and non-governmental organisations to carry out initiatives and resourceful projects in the social setting of the community in order to promote welfare and the wellbeing of the inhabitants (Oyebamiji & Adekola, 2008). Consequently, this brings about social and

infrastructural development in communities with a moral sense of belonging.

One of the objectives of CD is to bring to reality the possibility of people having at least the basic necessities of life and making room for transition to take place in the moral sense where the people feel safe in their own domains at all times. Basic necessities could be in the form of provision of good roads, health centres, schools, basic adult education, capacity building and sensitization, etc (Oduaran, 1994).

According to Inuk and Obits, in Oyebamiji and Adekola (2008), some of the main goals of CD in Nigeria should be to:

i.	Aim towards a proper democratic nation state and work towards the improvement of human development

ii.	Bring about the strengthening and support of social and political consciousness in order to spur community members towards being responsible citizens to their own affairs and those of the nation state

iii.	To promote education and improve the value system of community members

iv.	To bring about positive change in various localities and in the country in general

v.	To improve on the living standards of the inhabitants

Anyanwu (1981, 1988 and 1992), summarized community development into the following:

i.	The provision of basic amenities for the inhabitants. These include education, health care, good roads, etc.

ii.	Provide community members the opportunity to take up leadership roles in the various communities

iii.	To indoctrinate into the inhabitants, a certain sense of civil awareness and consciousness

iv.	To improve and support democracy at the grass root level in the community. This is made possible through the establishment of institutions that give room for local participation

v.	To bring about peace and harmony among communities and their inhabitants

vi.	To cause a positive change in the lives of community members and a create a stress-free environment for all.

The essence of CD has gone beyond its contemporary meaning and measures towards a more strategic approach which involves a more psychological and emotional process of developing a community and creating peace and unity for its inhabitants.

2.2 Sustainability

Sustainability is a fundamental part of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) which is predominantly widespread. It emanates from the term: *"our common future"* which is also referred to as *"the Brundtland report"*. The concept emphasises the need for development to meet the need of the present without compromising the ability for upcoming generations to handle their own needs (IISD, 2010).

The concept of sustainability has been an important guide for CD due to its major dimensions: (i) social equality/structural development (ii) economic development (iii) environmental protection. The term has also brought about series of debates in the management and social science fields; and maintains two basic models: (a) the "needs" model, considering the needs of communities and their inhabitants (b) fighting the challenges that are consistent with current technology and its social background on the environment to hold on to present and future wants (Mebratu, 1998).

Accordingly, scholars from various scientific fields such as engineering, economics, ecology and the social sciences at the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) research laboratory emphasize on sustainability actually taking place when there is an improvement in the physical and social conditions of humans and their environment without having to exceed ecological gratification that support them (Sikdar, 2003).

Thus, CD is never complete without sustainability as projects are short-lived if sustainability is far from being feasible (Nwakwo, 2010). The major purpose of sustainability is the integration of all dimensions: social, economic and environmental into the successful attainment of CD (Hsueh & Yan, 2011). Sustainability is defined in the IFAD Strategic Framework for 2007 to 2010 as: the support of initiatives and projects as well as the gains realised at the end of the project (2007). IFAD further explains sustainability in terms of determining whether the results of initiatives and projects are short or long term without an external influence or assessment.

Considering the above explanation, sustainability therefore attempts to improve the living conditions of inhabitants through the prevention of pollution, limiting waste, and making use of local resources to full capacity

in communities (Nwakwo, 2010). Thus, making CD an introductory phase into lasting initiatives and projects which can be anticipated to last in communities for very long periods of time.

The term sustainability was first mentioned as sustainable development in the United Nations Stockholm Conference on Human Environment in 1972 (Basu & Van Zyl, 2006). However, in 1980, the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN), the World Wide Fund for nature (WWF), and the UN Environmental Programme (UNEP), all made a report finding on fisheries and nature, making the terminology formal and universal (IUCN, UNEP, and WWF. (1980). Hence, the initial and whole idea of sustainability is the push for environmental protection in order to bring about healthy living and economic growth in societies.

Consequently, the sustainability brings about socio-economic stability and other benefits to the society. Its lasting impact could range from having a less polluted environment to the improvement of the quality of life of individuals in communities (Gregson & Court, 2010 Ulluwishewa, 1993). It also embraces peace, reduces conflicts, wars and crimes, limits waste as well as welcomes a sense of oneness and unity in general (Lijing, Yonghong & Yanli, 2011). Economic, social and environmental concerns as well as other development objectives can be integrated towards sustainability through CD (Oluduro & Oluduro, 2012).

2.3 Efforts at CD in the Niger Delta

The social and economic development of Nigeria and the ND region in particular, has overtime been organised in different stages and phases to enable a decent standard of living for the country's inhabitants. This development has been supported by massive forms of industrialization which takes place from time to time (Omofonmwan & Odia, 2009) but with potential damages to the society. The ND region is most susceptible to this form of development; as it is most of the time, the inhabitants and the environment that are impacted by environmental degradation and other forms of health and human hostilities (Eragha & Irughe, 2009).

The ND region is well-known for the prevalent conflicts and wars between communities and oil companies-OMNCs. Notwithstanding its endowment in crude oil and its contribution to the wealth of the nation, the region has suffered horrendous lack, environmental degradation and other forms of poverty. With oil from the region being the major source of wealth for the country, there has been major controversies among communities, the government and OMNCs.

Important ideas have been delegated upon, on how the ND region can be developed since the independence of the country, due to the poor infrastructural landscape of the region (Ibeanu, 2008). As a result, development agencies have been established by the government from the late 1950s onward beginning with the Niger Delta Development Board (NDDB), which was established in 1959 to manage developmental problems in the country (Esikot and Akpan, 2013). The board came to a halt in 1967 due to the civil war at the time.

The Niger Delta Basin Development Authority (NDBDA) was set up in 1965 to oversee the process of development in the ND region (Ering, Bassey, & Odike, 2013; Osuoka, 2007). This was also a failure; reasons being attached to the mismanagement of resources in terms of funds. The establishment of the Oil Mineral Producing Areas Development Commission (OMPADEC) was also unsuccessful as it was unable to meet its goal on sustainable development in the region (Akinyele, 1998).

Correspondingly, the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) was set up in 2000. The major objective of this commission was to bring about a rapid improvement of CD in the ND. The commission has been criticised since inception for misappropriation of funds, fraud and the mismanagement of development projects (Oviasuyi & Uwadiae, 2010). In 2009, the Ministry of Niger Delta (MND) was formed to manage infrastructural development in the region but has not been effective so far. The ministry reported the major challenge to its non-effectiveness as being the lack of funds and efficiency in administrative support.

Development initiatives from the NDDC has been in inception since the early 2000s during the period of establishment of the commission. The commission is structured in such a way that its funding is derived from the 15% funds allocation by the government to the Oil Producing States (OPS), 3% annual budget funds allocation from oil companies operational (both on-shore and off-shore) in the ND, as well as 50% funds allocations to the OPSs due from the Ecological Funds Accounts (NDDC Act, 2001). Also, OMNCs have put in reasonable effort in seeing to the development of communities in the ND by collaborating with the NDDC enormously.

The likes of Shell Petroleum Development Company (SPDC), Chevron, Texacco, ExxonMobil (Mobil Producing Nigeria/MPN), Total (Elf Petroleum Nigeria Limited-EPNL), Agip etc have combined efforts with NDDC and state development commissions to bring lasting sustainability of CD initiatives in the ND region (Eweje, 2006; Ite, 2007).

Institutions and initiatives such as the United Nations Global Impact (UNGI), the Global Reporting Initiatives

(GRI), the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Rio Janeiro and Johannesburg have all made reference to the above assertion (Oviasuyi & Uwadiae, 2010). However, scholars such as Frynas (2005) and Akpan (2006) exert that collaborative efforts at community development by OMNCs and the NDDC are not visible enough.

Against this background, the major aim of this paper is to: critically examine the CD initiatives of some of the OMNCs – ExxonMobil, SPDC and Total (EPNL) and some of the views on how these initiatives have been carried out, as well as the roles sustainability play in all.

The research agenda is very imperative for the following reasons: first, at the conceptualisation level, the discourse of CD and sustainability are becoming highly significant to the way CSR is practiced in societies both locally and globally. Although emphasis is usually given to the discourse of CD, sustainability is seldom explained in the CSR mandates of business entities (Wilenuis, 2005), and even when explained, only few businesses act on their sustainability objectives.

The second point is that from a local level perspective, CD in the Niger Delta is on the down-low while sustainability seems to be a major challenge. It therefore becomes paramount for OMNCs and development agencies in the region to come up with lasting strategies to curb development and sustainability issues that have posed a challenge for not only community members but also OMNCs operational in these communities.

As earlier mentioned in the introduction above, the paper primarily draws on the findings from interviews and discussions carried out in the LGAs and host communities as well as OMNCs and the NDDC. News-letters, annual reports and other useful publications served as important source of secondary data for the study.

3. The Study Area

Located at the southern regional zone of the country, the borders of the ND are shared with the Atlantic Ocean and Cameroun. The region's surface area is about 112,110 square kilometres and has its population around 31 million inhabitants (Alabi & Ntukekpo, 2012). The region consists of nine states, namely: Abia, Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross Rivers, Delta, Edo, Imo, Ondo and Rivers states and the inhabitants are mainly Edos, Ijaws, Isekiris, Isokos, Ibibios and Urhobos.

The region is mostly blessed with humans and natural resources; however, it is plagued with years of economic and political mishaps from OMNCs' initial reluctance to properly relegate their social responsibilities towards communities and the government's nonchalant attitude towards social contributions in the region (Omofonmwa & Odia, 2009). A major concern of the region is oil exploration which has led to environmental pollution through oil spillage and gas flaring (Sagay, Edo and Avweromre, 2011); unsafe water for fishing, drinking and cooking, displacement of individuals, poor access to health care facilities, and poor access to education (Ikejiaku, 2009).

The study areas are the coastal host communities located in Abia and Akwa Ibom states in the south-east geopolitical zone of the country. The study population emanated from Uwaza and Ibeno communities of both states.

Uwaza community is one of the OPCs amongst others in Ukwa West LGA of Abia State. The LGA appears to be the only crude oil producing area in Abia state. However, some of its communities are lacking gruesomely in socio-economic and infrastructural development.

Ibeno community which happens to be on the Atlantic coastline of Akwa Ibom state is a large fishing community. However, the community has a potential threat of social and environmental challenge whereby more than half of its people have been displaced.

4. Methodology of the Study

The study adopted an interpretive, inductive approach that gives voice to those experiencing social, economic and environmental mishap in the ND region. It also allowed for the extension of theory from the perspective of those living with such experiences (cf. Lee, 1999). Target population for the study were adults above 18 years of age. Communities selected for the study were located in areas where projects have been carried out jointly by both NDDC and OMNCs.

In-depth Interviews, Focus Group Discussions and Observation were used as data collection instruments to gain a better understanding of the variety of ways CSR and government social contributions are being perceived. These instruments were more appropriate as they allowed for the openness to new, unpredicted phenomenon, and also allowed for detailed description of specific events, thereby granting a better insight into the intricacies surrounding such events (Kvale, 1996). Interviews involved thirty-five members of both communities; each comprising of both male and female participants. FGDs involved five members each of the groups from both communities.

Data obtained from the field were transcribed verbatim and organized with in themes using the Nvivo10 Software. This method was utilised to retrieve significant information put out by respondents. Other concepts with relative meanings and implications were used as descriptive and illustrative quotes.

5. Thematic Analysis, Results and Discussions

For qualitative researchers in the social and management studies fields, the validity, reliability and generalizability of data analysis is of huge significance as this may have an effect on the individual, organisation or phenomenon being studied (Bryman and Bell, 2007). It is therefore paramount that data collected from the field must undergo thorough and exhaustive writing to ensure good quality and reliability of results (McKinnon, 1988; Wood et al., 2001; O'Dwyer, 2002).

To this end, the main aim of the study was to critically investigate how CD and sustainability take place and how these can be achieved in full scale by both the NDDC and OMNCs – in this case, SPDC and ExxonMobil. Participants of the study, identified some of the initiatives put up by the NDDC and the OMNCs. However, some major pitfalls causing underdevelopment and unsustainable development in their environs were also pointed out. These issues were characterised into the following themes:

CD and Sustainability

- *Perspective on CD*

- *Collaborative Initiatives and projects by OMNCs and NDDC*

- *Corporate Partnership and Community Relations*

- *Impact of CD Initiatives*

- *Project Sustainability*

5.1 Participants' Knowledge on CD

Based on the findings of the study, it was discovered that respondents had a good knowledge on the concept of CD. CD is broadly seen as a method of participation by government, non-profit/voluntary organizations, public-private organizations and communities work to prevent harsh conditions or poverty and develop courage and strength towards providing for the community economically, socially and environmentally (Perkins et al, 2004).

During the interview session, when asked about their views on CD, a respondent in one of the communities had this to say...…"*it is the process of combining efforts with other organizations to see to the development of communities and society in general. Here, we take part in the development process of our communities, we do not leave the job to the oil companies and the development agencies alone*" [Opinion Leader]. In another scenario, a respondent was quick to point out that *"CD has a way of linking people and organizations together, which in turn promotes the socio-economic conditions of the community. It brings together effort from the oil companies, NNDC and us; to ensure proper execution of projects as they come and also create a lasting relationship amongst us"*. [Country Director, Nig. Rep. on EITI Board]. This brings to the fore, emphases from the definitional construct of the concept put by Pandey (1981) as a form of partnership participation of all parties (in this case: OMNCs, NDDC and the OPCs).

5.2 Collaborative Initiatives and Projects conducted by OMNCs and NDDC

Participants broadly identified types of initiatives that have been promoted and projects carried out in clusters of communities. They explained that initiatives and projects generally take different forms and sometimes involve non-governmental organisations as representatives of these communities. One of the respondents, a business man pointed out…...."*There are various groups or clusters of communities. Each community is different in terms of need but these needs are most of the time met. Some of these projects are boreholes/water, health care centres, electricity, scholarships for our pupils and students, etc"*.

A second respondent added that……"*NDDC and the OMNCs have combined effort to see that communities have at least some of their basic needs met. We have schools that have been renovated by these companies and NDDC through combined efforts and even assistance from us. They provide our secondary schools with laboratory equipment and books sometimes. And in other instances, they have provided us with a hospital, and given some neighbouring communities electricity"* [Male trader].

The study notes that while CSR projects are seen to have been carried out by the OMNCs, government have not done much in terms of social contributions to the communities. It is expected that government's response towards social responsibility will improve and be beneficial in the communities. However, scholars have argued

that OMNCs have not reached their full capacity in the CSR mandate of their corporations; much is being expected in the region (Edoho, 2008; Frynas, 2009; Akpan 2006; Tuodolo, 2009). Thus, arguments abound on the ground that projects and initiatives by the OMNCs are basically not as proportionate to the social and environmental hazards that exist in these communities due to the activities of the OMNCs (Lisk, Besada and Martin, 2013).

5.3 Corporate Partnership and Community Relations

As mentioned in earlier sections, initiative and projects conducted by OMNCs and NDDC have been done through different strategic means involving various actors in the field. Some of these actors are non-governmental organisations, community social groups, as well as the government through its development agencies like the NDDC.

In accordance with the relational theory, corporate partnership of ExxonMobil, Shell and NDDC are the following manner: "government-business relationship" and the "business-civil society relationship".

Respondents were quick to point out that collaborative efforts exist and that these were executed depending of the type of partnership and level of collaboration……*"In this community, we do not have the opportunity to negotiate with the NDDC and Shell on what we really need for our people. Sometimes, we act based on a "need to know" basis. They call for meetings and they tell us what they intend to do for our communities which is basically followed as a scale of preference on the project lists. This is the standard way in which Shell and NDDC work in our LGAs. In terms of how we relate, we do not get involved with project executions only on very rare occasions when they need the locals from the community to do carry out certain tasks; either because they (locals) know how to reach certain terrains or they (project executors) are short of labour.* [Community Representative].

Following the assertion above, from the respondents, SPDC is known for its CSR approach towards CD in the ND region. This approach is in two folds: the first approach puts into consideration, the ethical procedure of business activities of Shell in such a manner that benefits both the OPCs and other clusters of communities. The second approach considers Shell's contributions and initiatives towards CD as a social investment that not only benefits the OPCs but also surrounding communities (SPDC, 2004). This is however a paradigm shift from the former approach which the company adopted in the 1960s, which was seen and taken as mere philanthropic exercise carried out by the company towards the goal of CD.

In another discussion, respondents pointed out that project executions in their communities are basically done through a largely integrative approach. In other words, a cluster of communities is represented by NGOs and other civil/human rights groups. These NGOs collaborate with ExxonMobil to drive CD in the OPCs……*Projects in our LGAs are mostly drive by ExxonMobil in collaboration with some NGOs and civil society organisations. They sometimes involve the NDDC and other GDAs because some projects are huge and require a high level of labour force and manpower for them to be executed. The involvement of NDDC is quite unique, in the sense that, they basically do not involve community representatives in the decision-making process. But you find all parties working to see that there is development in our communities.* [Youth Leader: Association of Community Youths- Oron chapter].

5.4 Impact of CD Initiatives

Some of the project initiatives from both the OMNCs and the NDDC are still in their implementation stages but nonetheless, impact from these development projects is clearly witnessed at various levels and stages of implementation. A largely glaring impact is the high level of capacity building which is clearly evident in the area of social infrastructure. This is evident in the quality of lives of community members.

A respondent from one of the FGDs had this to say……*These initiatives have brought us some peace and relief. Our children can go to school and have seats and tables to make do with. A few years ago, this was difficult to accomplish. The state government is even contemplating giving our primary and secondary schools some school buses at very little amount and subsidized rates of transportation so that our teachers and students do not have to walk long distances to their schools anymore. This will be greatly appreciated when it comes to the limelight.* [Businessman].

Also from another respondent……*Giving electricity to the neighbouring community (OPC) has given us the opportunity to also have electricity in our locality. This was a big deal before now, but we are glad that it has been made possible and available to us.* [Community leader].

The microcredit scheme in some of the OPCs has great success owing to the partnership approach of ExxonMobil. Communities in Ukwa West LGA for instance, have potentially benefited from this scheme and

this has largely strengthened the capacity of business men and women in that LGA. The scheme has also brought about employment opportunities for community members as various trades are introduced into the business environment of community members. According to the one of the community members, ……*the job here does not only give me and other colleagues the opportunity to get paid but it also enables us to learn a skill that will benefit us on the long-run. This is what CD should be about…make us feel a sense of belonging in the society. I really thank the ExxonMobil and NDDC for making some of us responsible in the society. Some have started to trade and some have joined factories through this microcredit scheme* [Community chairperson].

Another beneficiary expressed his gratitude, thus……*through this scheme I was able to acquire a car which I use for my transportation business and this has benefited me and my family.* Data from one of the IDIs corroborates,.…*these projects have been on ground, some at their initial/first stages, others at their implementation or rounding up stages but important thing is that they are enhancing lives at the end of the day* [Community rep, Okagwe].

5.5 Project Sustainability

One of the major setbacks for CD in the ND region, is sustainability of initiatives and projects which is a highly important factor. As a major form of assessment, sustainability aids positive and negative criticisms in project evaluation. Hence, OMNCs use it as a means of continued business activities in the environment, having in mind the idea a consistent support towards the society. However, a society loses its value and there is reduction in the quality of life of individuals in that society when projects are left unfinished.

The explanation above is not unusual in the ND as projects are usually abandoned and not completed due to lack of funds. In some other cases, completed projects only last a few years due to lack of sustainability. Evidence from the data collection and analysis shows that in some areas, projects are not well sustained,.…*Some road construction that were started in 2013 have not yet been completed. The rains are now spoiling the roads, making it difficult for motorist and other community members to ply* [Farmer and trader].

Another respondent stated…...*in some areas in our community, electric poles have been mounted. This is because our neighbouring community (OPC) gets electricity directly from Shell but since we were promised electricity, we haven't seen light much. Shell has done well to put up these poles, the government (NDDC) should do its own part of the bargain* [trade clerk].

Unfortunately, the government has little or no questioning on its contributions towards the communities in the ND. Failure on the part of the government to meet its own part of the bargain in the General Memorandum of Understanding (GMoU) which is a model adopted by OMNCs in their CSR towards OPCs has rendered a lot of communities in the ND still underdeveloped. Hence, the unsustainability of various projects in the region.

6. Combination of Evolving Issues and Conclusions

A few issues can be pointed out from the above analysis, which needs re-examining in the light of the idea of CSR integration towards CD and sustainability in the ND region. The concepts of CD and sustainability as part of the CSR agenda of both OMNCs and the government can be seen from the point of view of scholars such as Dafinone (2007), where it is maintained that sustainability is a continued process of CD which has already taken place. Therefore, when there is lack of CD, sustainability cannot and will not take place; and consequently, the idea of CSR is then forfeited. This scenario is very consistent with what takes place in the ND region presently.

In terms of community involvement and partnership, community members tend to be left out in the execution of projects and initiatives carried out by both OMNCs and the government agencies.

Another issue begging for attention is in the area of production output in the oil industry. Lots of oil companies have either moved out of their areas of operations or relocated overseas due to the recent fall in the level of production. Restiveness in the ND has had its major effect on OMNCs' activities and the country's economy. While development takes place in terms of social responsibility to the communities, OMNCs in the region are running at a loss which is a negative impact on their operations and businesses. Corruption also contributes to this exertion and the fact that the government is seemingly nonchalant to what actually takes place between the OMNCs and communities in the region. The unstable and heated relationship amongst the OMNCs, government and the communities in the region has led to a huge loss of revenue not only for OMNCs but also for the government. However, OMNCs have continued to give their fair share of contributions through corporate partnership and other CSR approaches in achieving the development of the ND region.

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