

Corporate social responsibility (CRS) system and practice of Chevron Vigeria Limited in the Niger Delta

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Abstract

This study examined the corporate social responsibility (CSR) system and practice of Chevron Nigeria Limited in the Niger Delta. The data utilized in the study were derived from both primary and secondary sources. While the primary data were obtained through focus group discussions, the secondary data were sourced from relevant textbooks, journals and corporate documents. The findings of the study indicated that the pre-disposition of Chevron Nigeria Limited to CSR in the Niger Delta oil-bearing community is poor. The findings of the study also revealed that the organization has a fairly low level of commitment to corporate social responsibility in the oil-bearing communities in the Niger Delta region where it operates. The findings of the study equally showed that the attitude of Chevron Nigeria Limited typified by the relatively poor levels of pre-disposition and commitment to corporate social responsibility in the host communities of the Niger Delta has not only largely influenced, dictated and defined the existing CSR culture, it has also been affected

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by the poor leadership and development climate created by the Nigerian state. Finally, the study made some useful recommendations including the exigency of recognizing and accepting corporate social responsibility culture and practice as a going concern by oil multi-nationals and the integration of CSR into the decision-making processes of the multi-national oil conglomerates.

Keywords: Corporate social responsibility, attitudinal pre-disposition, commitment, Chevron, Niger Delta.

Introduction

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is a controversial issue that has captured the attention and interest of business managers and consultants, professionals, government administrators and agencies, academics, researchers and consumers (Davidson, 2011). There is, in fact, an increasing focus on the need for both business and government sector organizations to take concrete and proactive steps in the area of corporate social responsibility. Government and shareholders alike challenge public and private organizations to show more interest in and play social responsibility roles at the local, national, regional and global levels (Levin, 2012). The challenge focus on critical areas like

environmental protection and management, education, health and safety, community development, human resource management, employment generation, women and youth empowerment as well as general infrastructure.

The challenge of corporate social responsibility also demands voluntary action by business organizations to demonstrate responsible behaviour by responding to social and environmental issues and corporate leadership by the public sector that is expected to utilize various policy tools to encourage corporate social responsibility and behaviour in society. The corporate social responsibility strategy or tool is in tandem with the principle of environmental justice that seeks to achieve an accommodation or balance between environmental costs or burdens and environmental benefits (Ejumudo, 2010). This growing concern for the use of CSR as a veritable tool for the private sector to take a lead in addressing those issues that the government at different levels has not been able to provide adequate solution has been highlighted in the literature on corporate ethics and management (Walton, 2013).

The importance of corporate social responsibility in developing countries like Nigeria cannot be over-emphasized. The truism of this assertion is evident in the reasoning that CSR can perform the dual role of compensating the operating environment of multi-sectorial stakeholders and complementing the process of closing the existing developmental gaps as Ejumudo (2014) succinctly posited. The imperative and inevitability of corporate social responsibility practice in Nigeria's Niger

Delta region with its myriad of environmental devastation, socio-economic dislocation and impoverishment, long history of neglect and multi-faceted developmental problems is even more compelling. Equally worrisome and compounding the developmental challenge in the rich-oil region is the largely failed developmental efforts of Nigeria's interventionist agencies like the Oil Mineral Producing and Development Commission (OMPADEC) and the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC).

At the heart of the efficacy of the corporate social responsibility philosophy and practice in Nigeria and particularly its Niger Delta region as well as other developing societies in the globe is the entrenched attitude and ingrained culture of governmental institutions, business organizations, non-governmental groups and individuals. This notable reality implies that the efficient and effective operationally, functionality and workability of CSR transcends beyond merely recognizing and accepting corporate social responsibility as a social philosophy to integrating same into the mentality, decision making processes attitude and culture of sundry organizations and individuals. The pragmatic success of CSR therefore depends largely on actions, activities and practices that reflect discernable high-level commitment, positive predisposition and genuine in-grained culture.

Despite the seeming usefulness and applicability of corporate social responsibility, opinions and views range from the position of the purely competitive economic model to the philanthropic parlance of social

activists who are largely concerned with social goals. While proponents of CSR argue that in so far as business organizations benefit in diverse ways by operating with a perspective that is broader, larger and longer than their own immediate, narrow and short-term profits, the critics posit that the philosophy distracts from the fundamental underlying economic role of organizations and therefore a fraudulent move by the government to abandon its responsibility to the state (Watson, 2012). In between these two strands of argument and practice, there exist several CSR permutations and approaches as Ejumudo (2010) explicitly stated.

The contention in this study is that the major factor constraining the efficient and effective corporate social responsibility practice in Nigeria's Niger Delta is the attitudinal predisposition and commitment level of the multi-national oil companies operating in the region accentuated by the poor leadership and developmental environment created by the Nigerian state. Arguably, it is largely the nature and character of organizational predisposition and commitment to corporate social responsibility that determines the ensuing CSR culture and practice that will permeate the system and influence its human operators.

Statement of the Problem

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Arguably, while the need for corporate organizations to be socially responsible is not in doubt, corporate social responsibility practices suggest that most organizations are yet to imbibe CSR as a culture and take concrete steps to integrate it (CSR) into their decision-making processes (Abrahamson, 2012).

In the Niger Delta region of Nigeria, the argument for corporate social responsibility seems very compelling. This view point is premised on the understanding that CSR is expectedly supposed to play a critical role in closing the development gap necessitated partly by the degrading and devastating operations and activities of multi-national oil corporations that started in 1956 when the then Shell–British Petroleum (BP) struck oil in commercial quantities at Oloibiri in the Niger Delta after an investment of more than N30 million in 1950 (Aturu, 2007). All the same, corporate social responsibility practices in Nigeria, especially in the Niger Delta region, seemingly shows that there exists a weak CSR culture and poor response to corporate social responsibility issues and concerns.

Nwachukwu (2001), for instance, attributed the neglect of social responsibility in Nigeria to the relative small size of Nigerian business organizations, large number of foreign enterprises, lack of professionalism in management style, the expectation of the Nigerian society and the fact that large enterprises belong to the society. Assessing corporate social responsibility of the oil companies in Nigeria, Yomere (2002) also argued that multinational oil companies are nonchalant toward the legitimate demands from their host communities and they employ divisive strategies. Examining the corporate social responsibility problematic in Nigeria, Adewale (2011) equally lamented the poor response to CSR issues by business organizations and posited that the efforts of corporate organizations in compensating their operating environments through developmental projects have been largely inadequate.

At the heart of the corporate social responsibility problem in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria, it is argued in this study, is the poor predisposition and poor commitment to CSR issues and concerns by the oil multinational companies operating in the region as well as the poor development environment created by the Nigerian state. This study therefore examines the corporate social responsibility activities of Chevron Nigeria Limited in the Niger Delta.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study are:

1. To assess the impact of the predisposition of Chevron Nigeria Limited (CNL) to CSR on its corporate social responsibility activities in the Niger Delta.
2. To examine the impact of the commitment of Chevron Nigeria Limited (CNL) to CSR on its corporate social responsibility activities in the Niger Delta.
3. To investigate the impact of the poor leadership and developmental environment created by the Nigerian state on the corporate social responsibility activities of Chevron Nigeria Limited (CNL) in the Niger Delta.

Research Questions

1. Is there a significant relationship between the predisposition of Chevron Nigeria Limited (CNL) to CSR and its corporate social responsibility activities in the Niger Delta?

2. Is there a significant relationship between the commitment of Chevron Nigeria Limited (CNL) to CSR and its corporate social responsibility activities in the Niger Delta?
3. Is there a significant relationship between the poor leadership and developmental environment created by the Nigerian state and the corporate social responsibility activities of Chevron Nigeria Limited (CNL) in the Niger Delta?

Research Methods

This study adopted a qualitative case study method. This research method, according to Yin (2003), has three aspects viz: investigation of a contemporary phenomenon within its real life context, the existence of boundaries between the phenomenon and the real life context and the use of multiple sources of evidence. The qualitative case study method also lends itself to exploratory, descriptive and explanatory methods. Yin emphasized that exploratory research attempts to find out about a situation, while the descriptive and explanatory research types respectively seek to know “what happened” and how and “why it happened.” This study which examines the corporate social responsibility practice of Chevron Nigeria Limited in Nigeria’s Niger Delta region utilized both primary and secondary sources of data.

Primary Data

The primary data utilized in this study were derived from focus group discussion sessions conducted by the researcher. Whether to test ideas for new projects, to uncover attitudes to volunteering or understand the needs of the community, focus groups are a straightforward way for research into topical issues that can benefit from the vast ideas and experiences of experts and significant others from different or related fields of study. Focus groups have proved to be a highly insightful research technique for engaging a group of people with a question, product or idea. Bringing together a group to discuss a particular topic provides a more natural setting than one-to-one interviews, as it allows participants to share their ideas and experiences and through discussion new strands of thought can emerge (Stone, 2013). This qualitative research method can generate rich data in a less resource intensive manner than interviewing. Using focus group discussion technique to engage with questions of local, national or global significance can form part of the design process of a wider survey, or it can uncover the opinions of key stakeholders.

In order to ensure the fruitful use of the focus group discussion (FGD) technique, a topic guide was planned in advance and the areas for discussion were outlined with key ideas and questions to be discussed. The topic guide was constructed with some degree of flexibility because the topics may be covered in a different order. To guarantee robust and insightful discussion sessions, the mix of individuals that participated

was carefully determined by the researcher who facilitated during the discussion sessions. The importance of this approach is evident in the fact that more interesting ideas can emerge from a diverse range of individuals, as their experiences and attitudes may be broader as Bolt (2011) rightly articulated.

Four sessions were conducted with four different groups made up of seven (7) participants each. There is no optimal number of participants advocated in the literature, but in order to fully involve every participant and avoid uncontrollable discussion sessions, Frich-Lyon, (1981) recommended 8-12 participants, Viassof (1990) recommended 6-12 participants, Oke and Oluwadare (2002) recommended 5-8 participants and Andrew (2010) recommended 6-8 participants. In this study, the researcher used seven (7) persons.

Three of the four groups were made up of executive committee members who are equally leaders of oil-bearing communities under the Itsekiri Regional Development Council, Egbema/Gbaramatu Regional Development Council and Ilaje Regional Development Council, while the fourth group comprised of senior staff members of the Public Affairs Department of Chevron Nigeria Limited. The four FGD sessions were conducted in four different days during the month of September, 2014. Before the FGD commenced, the researcher discussed fully the issues with the participants to ensure they clearly understood them. The discussion was guided by the selected topic "Chevron Nigeria Limited and Corporate Social Responsibility in Nigeria's Niger Delta region" and it

was introduced by the researcher as the facilitator. Different questions relevant to the above topic were asked and the discussions took place in a friendly and productive manner with an observer in each of the three focus group discussion sessions.

Secondary Data

The secondary data in this study were derived through the content analysis instrument. This instrument was utilized in collecting relevant data from texts, journals, newspapers and magazines in an analytical manner that is fruitful for the study. Content or textual analysis enables a researcher to carry out an in-depth analysis of existing data and to provide explanation for them in a manner that is useful and fruitful as Richard (2012) rightly emphasized.

Data Analysis

Analyzing focus group discussions involve firstly revisiting your aims and objectives and looking through the detailed notes or a full transcript if you have had the time to produce one. The analysis is aimed at identifying key themes and points of consensus or disagreement as well as noting useful quotations which reflect the purposes of your research

(Woods, 2012). In this study, all the notes taken at the focus group discussion sessions were read and transcribed. The transcribed versions of the focus group sessions were compared with the notes taken during FGD sessions to fill the identified gaps. The consensus in the opinions and the commonality in the ideas expressed and presented during the focus group discussion sessions constituted the basis for answering the research questions raised in this study. This process was supported with the qualitative data generated in the study through in-depth content analysis of cognate text books and journals (Richard, 2012) premised on the thematic discourse "Chevron Nigeria Limited and Corporate Social Responsibility in Nigeria's Niger Delta region".

Corporate Social Responsibility: A Conceptual Understanding

Corporate social responsibility (CSR), also known as social responsibility or corporate citizenship is the obligation of decision-makers to take actions that protect and improve the welfare of society as a whole along with their own interest (Aswathappa, 2012). It is a concept whereby organizations consider the interest of society by taking responsibility for the impact of their activities on environmental stakeholders like customers, suppliers, employers, shareholders, communities and significant others (Aswathappa, 2012). It can also be viewed as the responsibility to plan and manage organizational relationships with all those involved in and affected by its activities (Ajala, 2005). It is equally a

devise that encourages private, voluntary and public sector organizations to take account of their economic, social and environmental impacts and take complementary action to address key challenges based on their core competencies locally, regionally, nationally and internationally. In his own thinking, Ezeani (2006) noted that corporate social responsibility has to do with how an organization responds to its employees, shareholders and host communities as well as the code of conduct expected from both the management and other employees within the organization.

In the same vein, corporate social responsibility refers to management's consideration of the social as well as economic effects of its decisions (ACCA, 2007). Corporate social responsibility is essentially the voluntary action that organizations can take, over and above compliance with minimum legal requirements to address both its own competitive interests and the interest of the wider society (Webb, 2012). It is, by implication, the way that organizations contribute to sustainable development goals by taking account of their operations that are geared towards maximizing benefits and minimizing downsides for the good of society.

Ejumudo (2010) also posited that corporate social responsibility is the socially responsible and voluntary thinking, philosophy and practice that engenders the concern for private, voluntary and public sector organizations to be sensitive to and seek a balance between the actualization of their micro goals and the macro goals of the larger

society for the purpose of development on a sustainable basis. Kotler (2005) opined that corporate social responsibility is a commitment to improve community well-being through discretionary business practices and contributions of corporate resources. A key element in this definition is the word discretionary. It is not referring to business activities that are mandated by law or that is moral or ethical in nature and therefore expected, but the voluntary commitment a business makes in choosing and implementing these practices and making these contributions. Such a commitment must be demonstrated in order for a company to be described as socially responsible and will be fulfilled through the adoption of new business practices and contributions either monetary or non-monetary.

Corporate Social Responsibility as a Philosophy

Philosophical movements like scientific management and human relations have influenced business concerns. The earlier social philosophies of business attempted to explain or rationalize the existence of the business organizations as a profit making institution (Unamka and Ewurum 2011). According to them, the objective of profit maximization can be achieved through the process of traditional analysis and that profits are at a maximum in line with the traditional economics at the point where a firm's marginal cost equals its marginal revenue. The philosophy of social responsibility tends to subordinate the idea of

maximum profits to the performance by business of a worthwhile role in society (Bello, 2010). Organizations have resultantly felt the power that public opinion can wield in determining survival and respond with increasing social awareness both inside and outside the organization. One reason why the philosophy of social responsibility is gaining currency is the acceptance of the idea that organizations by fighting to correct social inequalities today, it is ensuring that an environment in which it will operate profitably in the future exists (Unamka and Ewurum 2011). For example, by training and educating the poor and hard-core unemployed, organizations are helping to create a new pool of labour for employment in the future and new purchasers for its output.

The Strategic Importance of Corporate Social Responsibility

The traditional conception of business organizations is that their main function is to create value through the production of goods and services that the society demands so as to generate profit for its owners and shareholders as well as welfare for society particularly through an on-going process of job creation (Webb, 2012). All the same, new social and business realities and pressures are culminating in a change in the values, orientation and horizon of business activities. This development has necessitated the recognition among business organizations, policy makers and other stakeholders of corporate social responsibility as an important element of new and emerging forms of governance that can

help them to respond to fundamental changes that are germane for the growth, renewal and development of societies (Bello, 2010). A graduation from the past into the present understanding of CSR is the desirability and necessity for organizations to adopt and apply strategic management techniques and instruments which means a business approach that puts the principle of continuous improvement and innovation at the heart of organizational strategies, operations and activities.

Also, because of the volatile, hostile and dynamic nature of the environment of organizations, a central social responsibility of management is to be cognizant of the factors that can influence the effectiveness of the organization. The inputs of resources needed for output creation are obtained from the environment and the outputs of organizations are exchanged with consumers in the environment (Webb, 2012). A system view of the interactions between organizations and their environments is useful as Bello (2010) clearly highlighted. And the onus of constantly meeting the different wishes or satisfying the aspirations of their various publics which they serve rest upon the managers. Some of such publics are employees, governments, customers (customers), communities, competitors, creditors and the public at large. The responsibility of management is thus necessarily social to the extent that these publics have their goals. This brings into view the importance of environmental scanning by organizational managers so that they can take appropriate decision that will enable them achieve their short-term and long-term objectives including

interacting with and serving the various publics in the environment. The publics, according to (Pickle and Abrahamson 2012) include customers, employees, suppliers, creditors, communities, governments and competitors.

Attitudes: A Conceptualisation

Conceptualising attitude is no doubt a herculean task. This is because of the complexity involved in any attempt at a definition of such a concept, which has been described as the “fly-wheel” of social psychology (Robbins, 2012). Notably, the derivation of the word “attitude” creates real problems of definition. It was derived from the Latin word “aptus” meaning fitness or adeptness and was thus defined as a subjective or mental state in preparation for action. The word “aptus” was first used by Herbert Spencer in 1862 to describe a mental concept (Robbins, 2012).

Rao and Narayana (2007) viewed attitude as an internal state of a person that is focused on objects, events and people and it can exist in the person’s psychological world. According to them, an individual’s behaviour is also a function of attitudes and it is a cognitive element. They asserted that an individual’s attitude towards any object is indicative of his apathy or enthusiasm towards the said object. They also opined that attitude could in a simplistic parlance be described as

the way we feel about something. They added that a notable feature of attitude is that, it varies in direction (favourable – unfavourable), intensity (how strongly they are held) and the extent of consciousness (awareness of any individual concerning his attitude).

In his own thinking, Kolasa (1998) stressed that attitude is a pre-disposition to respond to certain set of facts. Building upon this premise, Mitchell (2000) stressed that attitude has to do with a pre-disposition to respond in a favourable or unfavourable way to objects, persons, concepts, etc. as the case may be. From this definition, three assumptions can be made. First, attitude is related to behaviour and based upon one's inclination to something, and an individual is pre-disposed to behave in a particular way. Second, attitude is tied to one's feeling about an object. Third, attitude is a hypothetical construct, that is, something which one carries around. Although, the consequences of attitude can be observed, attitude itself may not. Also, Conor (2003) stated that attitudes have to do with our feelings, thoughts and behavioural tendencies towards a specific object or situation.

Raising some of the objections which are inherent in the concept of attitude, Fishbein and Ajzen (2003) came up with an alternative definition. According to them, attitude can be described as a learned pre-disposition to respond in a consistently favourable or unfavourable manner with respect to a given object. Although the core of this definition is the same as that of Mitchell, Fishbein and Ajzen have, in addition, introduced the notions of learning and consistency. Bothered

by the problems involved in conceptualising attitude, Atkinson and Atkinson (2005) emphasized that a precise definition of attitude is difficult. This, they, attributed to the conviction that attitudes overlap with other kinds of psychological preparation for response. They further added that attitude represents both an orientation towards or away from any object, concept or situation and a readiness to respond in a pre-determined manner to such or related objects, concepts or situations. In their perception, both orientation and readiness to respond have emotional, motivational and intellectual aspects and they may in part be unconscious.

In spite of the controversy that efforts at conceptualising attitude have generated, attitude is still one of the most distinctive and indispensable concept in contemporary social psychology as Allport (2005) clearly articulated. In fact, the disagreement over the direct relationship between attitude and behaviour notwithstanding, majority of social psychologists agree that there exists a relationship. They are, however, of the opinion that the relationship is somewhat more complex than was originally thought of. From the foregoing, it can be inferred that social psychologists perceive of attitude as an internal and mental state of readiness as well as an orientation with a pre-disposition to respond in a favourable or unfavourable manner towards any object, person or situation.

Having attempted an extraction of a general conception of attitude from a seemingly varying, yet convergent ideas and views expressed by

different social psychologists and theorists, it is necessary to add that, for purpose of this study, attitude is conceptualised as pre-disposition and commitment towards corporate social responsibility in Nigeria's Niger Delta by Chevron Nigeria Limited (CNL). The importance of this conceptualisation rests primarily on its contextual definitional specificity as opposed to the rather relatively generic idea or conception of attitude. While pre-disposition in this context refers to inclination, readiness and support for corporate social responsibility, commitment has to do with the orientation towards and consequently, the identification with, involvement in and support for corporate social responsibility in CNL

The Relevance of Attitudinal Pre-disposition and Commitment to the Effectiveness of Corporate Social Responsibility

Attitudinal pre-disposition and commitment are very critical to the effectiveness of corporate social responsibility in organisations, institutions, societies and environmentally degraded and developmentally deficient regions like Nigeria's Niger Delta. This is because the pre-disposition and commitment of organizations such as multi-national oil corporations to CSR may seriously enhance or constrain its effectiveness in the organizational environments where they operate.

In order to make the discourse of the relevance of attitudinal pre-disposition and commitment to the effectiveness of corporate social responsibility meaningful and useful in this study, two attributes or indicators of pre-disposition and three attributes or indicators of commitment as identified by Ejumudo (2010) have been adopted. The attributes or indicators of pre-disposition are: the degree of self-awareness about the value and potential benefits of corporate social responsibility as well as support and co-operation, while the attributes or indicators of commitment are: level of participation, supportive organisational climate and level of resources

Attributes of Pre-Disposition

Degree of Self-Awareness about the Value and Potential Benefits of Corporate Social Responsibility

This attribute has to do with the realisation and consciousness of the purpose and value of corporate social responsibility plans, schemes and projects. Such a realisation and consciousness about the value and potential benefits of corporate social responsibility by organizations like SPDC and CNL in oil-bearing and environmentally devastated regions such as the Niger Delta is not only a reflection of a

favourable pre-disposition, it (the pre-disposition) is also crucial for the success and effectiveness of CSR plans and programmes. It therefore implies that, CSR plans and schemes can hardly be successful and effective if organizational actors do not see the benefits that will flow from them. Thus, there is the likelihood that such a pre-disposition may stifle corporate social responsibility plans and resultantly work against good company/ community relations.

Support and Co-operation

Support and co-operation by organizational actors is essentially a corollary of the degree of self-awareness about the potential benefits and value of corporate social responsibility plans, schemes and programmes. This is because self-awareness and consciousness by organizations about the value and purpose of corporate social responsibility will necessarily produce support and co-operation in respect of the CSR plans. Therefore, support and co-operation by organizations and their actors is critical to the efficacy of CSR plans, schemes and activities.

The critical role of self-awareness and realisation of the value and potential benefits of corporate social responsibility and the resultant

support and co-operation by organization like CNL for the success and effectiveness of CSR plans and schemes in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria cannot be over emphasised.

Attributes or Indicators of Commitment

Level of Participation

Of all the attributes of commitment adopted and considered in this study, the level of participation can be said to be very important and crucial to the effectiveness of corporate social responsibility by Chevron Nigeria Limited (CNL) in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria like any other region in the world. Participation, in this context, has to do with involvement and it consists of inter-related elements which manifest in the decision-making processes of any organisation in a wide variety of ways (Ejumudo, 2010).

Evidently, one of the ways by which multi-national oil corporations like CNL can communicate its commitment to corporate social responsibility activities, is to be involved. Involvement in this context connotes continuity and it is borne out of the realization by oil conglomerates in Nigeria of the importance of corporate social responsibility activities in their areas or regions of operation. It therefore follows that it is not enough for organizations to say that corporate social responsibility is

good without taking the lead, by showing good example. Such exemplary actions are necessarily indicative of their supportive attitudinal commitment to the task of corporate social responsibility. In fact, participation by organizations in corporate social responsibility should not terminate at the level of handing down policies; organizations should equally be concerned about the implementation of CSR policies and plans as well as the evaluation of CSR results. Thus, lack of participation by organizations has the potency of constraining the effectiveness of corporate social responsibility.

Supportive Organisational Climate

This attribute of commitment refers to the environment in which corporate social responsibility plans, programmes and activities are executed. It (organisational climate) also has to do with a set of characteristics which are relatively enduring over time, typifying an organisation and distinguishing it from other organisations as Knowles (2010) clearly expressed. Such a set of characteristics create a distinctive atmosphere or climate within any organisation and it has the tendency of influencing the attitude of its (the organisation) members as Pritchard and Karasick (2011) as well as Forehand and Gilmer (2012) rightly noted. The kind of organisational climate in which corporate social responsibility is conducted is therefore critical to its (CSR) effectiveness.

Essentially, corporate social responsibility is most likely to succeed and be effective, if it is conducted in an atmosphere of trust and support. It is instructive to assert therefore that more important than the people who conduct and execute CSR plans and programmes, is the organisational climate in which it occurs. Such a climate has to be created by top management in any organisation, if corporate social responsibility plans and programmes are to achieve the desired results. Evidently, top management cannot create such a supportive organisational climate, unless a tradition is established whereby they (top management) truly accept CSR as an integral part of the organization corporate plan and resultantly one of the as one of their prime responsibilities. The absence of such a supportive organisational climate will naturally undermine the efforts of organizations in the area of efficient and effective CSR practices.

Level of Resources

Resources, here, refer to both money and relevant projects and schemes (Knowles, 2012). Also, the amount of resources ploughed into CSR plans and programmes is necessarily a reflection of the level of commitment by organizations with in-grained corporate social responsibility culture. Therefore, since CSR is an investment in the light of compensation to host communities in the operating environments of both oil and non-oil related organizations for which returns in the context of good

company/community relations are expected. Notably, the commitment of organizations to CSR can be deduced from the amount of backing for the plan, not only with respect to money, but tangible developmental projects and schemes as well. Commitment on the part of organizations in terms of resources availability and development projects and schemes, will not only filter down the organisational hierarchy, but it is crucial for the success and effectiveness of CSR plans and practices.

Theoretical Framework

Although there exists several theories for explaining the facts generated in corporate social responsibility studies such as the artistic-culture, vendor, investment, household, austere and civic, the investment and civic theories have been adopted for this study.

The investment model of Anderson (1989) justifies the involvement of organizations in social problems on the basis of a cost-benefit comparison. This view encompasses the doctrine of enlightened self-interest and recognizes that if the corporation is to survive beyond the predictable tomorrow into the uncertain future, relations with institutional investors, industrial buyers and the organization at large must be viewed as more than transitory. The theory adds that temptations to make the fast buck must be weighed against a possible loss of good will. Such considerations are relevant when considering

contributions to higher education, which has recognized long-term indirect benefits (Anderson, 1989). The investment model believes that organizations should involve themselves in social problems that go beyond the self-interest of profit making and this view is in tandem with standard corporate social responsibility culture (Anderson, 1989).

The civic model of Eddyson (1992), on the other hand, holds that the corporation must play the role of a good citizen who volunteers service to the community in advance of and to avoid being drafted. Serious considerations, the theory asserts, should therefore be given by managers in compliance with government requests for voluntary restraints to lower spending in order to reduce inflationary pressures and balance-of-payment problems (Eddyson 1992). In line with this theory, a commitment is given to support the political system of democracy by helping to alleviate unemployment during depressions and entering into discussions of social issues; an awareness of possible social cost. The civic model is also very useful for it underscores the need for organizations to have a moral conscience and act responsibly in line with the ethics of corporate social responsibility.

A mix of the investment and civic theoretical perspectives is very realistic largely because it provides a utilitarian basis for adequately explaining the facts generated in corporate social responsibility concerns like this study, which neither of the two theories possess. Moreover, the complementary role of a blend of the two theories is at the heart of the philosophy and practice of sustainable development initiatives and

enterprises that is predicated on partnership and collaboration by public, private and voluntary groups.

Discussion, analysis, conclusion and recommendations

Discussion

The discussion aspect of the section three of this study is done in a manner that the issues raised, the views expressed and the commonality in the points made during the four focus group discussion sessions reflect the three major specific objectives in this study. As stated in section one, the objectives of the study are to: assess the impact of the predisposition of Chevron Nigeria Limited (CNL) to CSR on its corporate social responsibility activities in the Niger Delta; examine the impact of the commitment of Chevron Nigeria Limited (CNL) to CSR on its corporate social responsibility activities in the Niger Delta and investigate the impact of the poor leadership and developmental environment created by the Nigerian state on the corporate social responsibility activities of Chevron Nigeria Limited (CNL) in the Niger Delta. In order to accomplish the above-stated objectives, relevant data were derived through focus group discussion instrument. Accordingly, since the scope of the study is Delta and Ondo State operational areas of

Chevron Nigeria Limited, three focus group discussion sessions were conducted. Each session involved seven executive committee members/community leaders from the Itsekiri Regional Development Committee (RDC), Egbema/Gbaramatu Regional Development Committee (RDC) and Ilaje Regional Development Committee (RDC).

While the Itsekiri RDC is made up of twenty-three oil-bearing and impacted communities: Ajudaibo, Aja-Amita, Bateren, Deghele, Ebrohimi, Eghoro, Gbokoda, Ijaghala Jakpa, Kolokolo, Madangho, Omadino, Ode-Ughorodo, Ogidigben, Obaghoru, Sagharatie, Tebu, Tisun, Usor, Udo, Ugboegungun, Ugboeegin, Ureju, the Egbema/Gbaramatu RDC is comprised of twenty oil-bearing and impacted communities: Dumok, Opia/Ikenyan, Dinkoru, Ogbudugbudu/Adagbarasa, Tsekelewu, Polobubor, Opuama, Benikrukru, Makaraba, Gbaramatu, Kokodiagbene, Kenyagbene, Okoyitoru, Polobubou, Tebujor, Opuedebubor, Okifamba, Ogbinbiri, Ikpopko, Pepper-Ama and the Ilaje RDC is made up of eight oil-bearing and impacted communities: Awoye, Molutehin, Jirinwo, Odofado, Gbagira, Messe, Opoakaba, Akinsolu.

In addition to the above three focus group discussion sessions with the Itsekiri, Egbema/Gbaramatu and Ilaje RDCs, a fourth focus group discussion session was conducted with seven senior staff of the Public Affairs Department of Chevron Nigeria Limited. This fourth session provided the opportunity to have a balanced understanding of CSR plans and activities of CNL in the selected oil-bearing and impacted communities from both the community and CNL perspectives.

In respect of the first objective of this study: to assess the impact of the predisposition of Chevron Nigeria Limited (CNL) to CSR on its corporate social responsibility activities in the Niger Delta, the three separate focus group discussion sessions with community leaders of the Itsekiri, Egbema/Gbaramatu and Ilaje Regional Development Committees (RDCs) revealed that before 2005, the CSR policy of Chevron Nigeria Limited provided for a skeletal assistance to the oil-bearing communities in its operational areas. This policy direction, in line with the views expressed by the discussants, favored schemes and projects like secondary and university scholarships, town-hall and class-room block construction solely determined by CNL without any needs assessment involving the beneficiary communities. The discussants also noted that CNL's CSR policy included selective settlement of some community leaders to the detriment of the community development philosophy they were expected to pursue. The old CSR regime, according to the discussants, was prone to crisis precipitation.

Although the focus group discussion participants from the Itsekiri, Egbema/Gbaramatu and Ilaje Regional Development Committees noted that the new CSR regime that commenced in 2005 introduced the Global Memorandum of Understanding process between CNL and its oil-bearing and impacted host communities with improvement in funding through the discretionary annual contributions of the company, they observed that the funding level is still somewhat inadequate. Under this

new regime, ten percent of the total annual fund provided by Chevron Nigeria Limited was between 2005 and 2008 allocated to General Administration, with the remaining ninety percent earmarked for community development project. With the present arrangement that commenced in December 2008, General Administration takes fifteen percent, while projects receive eighty-five percent of the funds provided annually by CNL

The discussants stressed that with the present improved funding level that enabled the communities to participate in the determination of the projects that were and are to be fully executed by them, it will be difficult for the RDC's to carry out mega projects like sand-filling, canalization, shore protection, electricity, water and the like. Specifically, community leaders and discussants from the Itsekiri Regional Development Committee observed that a total of seventy projects were awarded for the 2008- 2010 project circles and the projects were mainly housing units spread across twenty-one communities. They further opined that although the projects are meaningful, they are not critical to the socio-economic reproduction by the indigenes of the beneficiary communities.

All the same, corporate social responsibility practices in Nigeria, especially in the Niger Delta region, shows that there exists a weak CSR culture and poor response to corporate social responsibility issues and concerns. Nwachukwu (2004), for instance, attributed the neglect of social responsibility in Nigeria to the relative small size of Nigerian

business organizations, large number of foreign enterprises, lack of professionalism in management style, the expectation of the Nigerian society and the fact that large enterprises belong to the society. Assessing corporate social responsibility of the oil companies in, the responses and views of the three discussion groups representing the Itsekiri, Egbema/Gbaramatu and Ilaje RDCs shows that in their assessment, CNL's predisposition to CSR in host oil-bearing communities was largely unfavorable. For instance, the level of funding provided by Chevron Nigeria Limited for community development projects, the discussants emphasized, was not only very poor and inadequate considering the basic survival and developmental needs of the poor and neglected environmentally degraded communities, it is equally a reflection of the level of consciousness by CNL of the potential benefits of CSR and their support for CSR schemes and projects in the oil-bearing host communities.

Concerning the second objective of this study: to examine the impact of the commitment of Chevron Nigeria Limited (CNL) to CSR on its corporate social responsibility activities in the Niger Delta. In line with the three indicators of attitudinal commitment (level of participation, level of resources and supportive organizational climate) as contained in section two of this study. In this direction, the community leaders and discussants from the Itsekiri, Egbema/Gbaramatu and Ilaje Regional Development Committees (RDCs) posited that Chevron Nigeria Limited has corporate social responsibility policy and participates in its CSR plan and programme through the provision of fund on an annual basis for the

execution of community development projects that are determined by the communities themselves and re-negotiation of the global memorandum of understanding process started by CNL in 2005, there is poor monitoring and evaluation practice. Worse still, there was agreement among the discussants about the level of funding provided by Chevron Nigeria Limited for CSR projects which in their opinion is inadequate. The poor level of funding, the discussants stressed, is evident in the under-development and poverty that has persisted in the oil-bearing communities. As a matter of fact, organizations that are genuinely committed to a well-crafted CSR policy and action plan should not only put in place the necessary machinery for monitoring the various stages of corporate social responsibility activities and projects, but should be committed to and be involved in a committee that will periodically review the progress of CSR in the light of its contribution to the development of the environment in which oil conglomerates exist and operate.

Below is a table showing the level of funding provided by CNL for both administration of the Itsekiri, Egbema/Gbaramatu and Ilaje RDCs and execution of community development projects and schemes:

YEAR	ITSEKIRI RDC	EGBEMA/GBARAMATU RDC	ILAJE RDC
2009	455,952,700	358,830,000	88,882,000
2010	557,610,000	450,030,000	105,282,800
2011	555,610,000	404,590,000	113,262,800
2012	560,872,123	520,684,109	141,403,360
2013	661,238,219	535,566,794	121,499,509
2014	661,238,219	542,566,000	121,499,509
TOTAL			

Source: Department of Public Affairs, Chevron Nigeria Limited, 2014.

As far as supportive organizational climate in relation to the CSR policy, plans and programmes of Chevron Nigeria Limited in the Itsekiri, Egbema/Gbaramatu and IlaJe host communities is concerned, CNL, according to the focus group discussants, has over the years provided some level of support in terms of finance, projects and programmes. The projects and programmes, the discussants emphasized, include town halls, classroom blocks, upgrade of schools and science laboratory, training centres, portable water, scholarships, employment (both main-stream and contract) and health care services. Typical examples of executed projects include the Benekrukru multipurpose town hall, Bateren walkway and jetty and Perowo portable water, the discussants added. All the same, while there was a congruence of opinion among the focus group discussants that the present CNL's community-driven development policy and strategy has significantly improved the

relationship between Chevron Nigeria Limited and its host communities, the level of development achieved so far is clearly low and below the expectations of the beneficiary oil-bearing and impacted communities. The level of commitment in the light of the environment in which CNL's corporate social responsibility plans, programmes and activities are executed is therefore, according to the discussants, relatively poor. Notably, atmosphere or climate within any organisation has the tendency of influencing the attitude of its (the organisation) members as Pritchard and Karasick (2011) as well as Forehand and Gilmer (2012) rightly asserted. The kind of organisational climate in which corporate social responsibility is conducted is therefore critical to its (CSR) effectiveness.

The absence of a highly supportive organisational climate, the focus group discussants posited, has largely undermined the efforts of CNL in the area of efficient and effective CSR plans and practices in the Itsekiri, Egbema/Gbaramatu and Ilaje oil-bearing and impacted communities.

In relation to the third objective of this study: to investigate the impact of the poor leadership and developmental environment created by the Nigerian state on the corporate social responsibility activities of Chevron Nigeria Limited (CNL) in the Niger Delta, the focus group discussants from the public affairs department of Chevron Nigeria Limited stressed that the operating environment (the Nigerian State) has become largely hostile and dis-enabling. They hinged their assertion on their argument that the Federal Government of Nigeria is failing to meet its own

obligations as far as the NNPC/CNL joint venture agreement and operation is concerned. To this end, the discussants noted that CNL's business fortunes are dwindling and this has resulted in cuts in its operations and staff size. In the same vein, the discussants opined that the leadership environment created by the Nigerian State and the absence of a genuine development agenda at the Federal Government level and among the Niger Delta States as well as their (Federal and State) development agencies like Niger delta Development commission (NDDC), Delta State Oil Producing Areas Development Commission (DESOPADEC) and Ondo State Oil Producing Areas Development commission (OSOPADEC) are constraining Chevron Nigeria Limited's genuine desire for and the actual CSR plans and activities. Moreover, the discussants emphasized that the Nigerian state and its multi-layered levels of government and their development agencies are, as a matter of obligation, required to initiate and execute development plans programmes and projects based on a genuine development agenda, while CNL is expected to support the development process in the Niger Delta so as to compensate its operating environment.

Analysis

The central aim and objective of the focus group discussions was to identify the key areas of consensus or disagreement among the discussants. In the above light The out-come of the three focus group

discussion sessions on different aspects of the central theme “Corporate Social Responsibility in Nigeria: A Study of Chevron Nigeria Limited in the Niger Delta” involving community leaders from the Itsekiri, Egbema/Gbaramatu and Ilaje Regional Development Committees shows that the pre-disposition of Chevron Nigeria Limited to corporate social responsibility plans and activities in the oil-bearing and impacted communities of the above regional development committees. All the discussants agreed that the level of funding provided by Chevron Nigeria Limited for community development projects, was not only very poor and inadequate considering the basic survival and developmental needs of the poor and neglected environmentally degraded communities, it is equally a reflection of the level of consciousness by CNL of the potential benefits of CSR and their support for CSR schemes and projects in the oil-bearing host communities.

In a similar vein, there was convergence of opinion by the discussants on the level of commitment by Chevron Nigeria Limited to its CSR plans and activities in the selected oil-bearing and impacted communities of the Niger Delta, which they had judged as poor. This poor level of commitment is evident in the level of participation by CNL in the development of the selected oil-bearing and impacted communities of the Niger Delta, the level of resources allocated for community development projects and programmes and the existing organizational climate in which the CSR plans, projects and programmes are executed.

Essentially too, the consensus in the opinions and the commonality in the ideas expressed and presented during the fourth focus group discussion session involving seven Chevron Nigeria Limited's representatives from its public affairs department revealed that the leadership and development environment created by the Nigerian state has largely affected the organizations business fortunes, scope of operations, staff strength and CSR plans and efforts.

From the foregoing, it is evident that there exist a significant relationship: between the predisposition of Chevron Nigeria Limited (CNL) to CSR and its corporate social responsibility activities in the Niger Delta, between the commitment of Chevron Nigeria Limited (CNL) to CSR and its corporate social responsibility activities in the Niger Delta and between the poor leadership and developmental environment created by the Nigerian state and the corporate social responsibility activities of Chevron Nigeria Limited (CNL) in the Niger Delta.

Conclusion

The importance of corporate social responsibility in both developing and developed societies cannot be over-emphasized. This is because of the utilitarian value of CSR culture and practice in the compensation of the environment and the development of society. Central to the success of corporate social responsibility in Nigeria's Niger Delta is a favourable

predisposition and genuine commitment by corporate actors in a fashion that goes beyond legal and fiscal frameworks as well as the creation of a genial leadership and development climate by the Nigerian state. The CSR challenge in Nigeria is a great one considering the fact that there exists a general climate of poor attitude to CSR concerns. This obvious reality explains the urgency for a climate change engineered by socially responsible government policy direction and action programmes that are not only discernable by private and voluntary actors, but will also engender cooperation and partnership among stakeholders that will culminate in the creation and application of integrated and innovative sustainable development solutions. To develop, embed and promote CSR in Nigeria, particularly its Niger Delta Region, the multi-layered levels of government and private sector organizations must believe in and identify with corporate social responsibility as a long-term investment that has a significant role to play in addressing pressing developmental issues in Nigeria.

Recommendations

To ensure the success and workability of corporate social responsibility in Nigeria, particularly in its Niger Delta region, there is the need for the recognition and acceptance by government, private sector and non-governmental organizations of CSR culture and practice as a going concern. In this direction, corporate social responsibility policies and

public actions that will encourage and promote socially and environmentally responsible practices are highly desirable. This focus will require a recognition and realization that organizational activities have a wider social, economic, environmental and human rights impact on the larger society which makes it necessary to seek to achieve benefits by working in partnership with other social actors. At the heart of the above, is a favourable attitudinal pre-disposition and commitment to CSR by the multi-layered levels of government in Nigeria, their development agencies and private sector organizations, especially the oil conglomerates operating in the Niger Delta environment as well as the creation of a genial leadership and development climate by the Nigerian state.

Besides, there is the urgency for transparency as a key element of CSR that will help organizations to improve their operations, practices and behaviour, knowing that there exist benchmarks against which their social and environmental performance can be measured by themselves or third parties. In fact, corporate social responsibility practices, tools and instruments will be more effective if they are part of deliberate concerted efforts by all stakeholders and if there are transparently verifiable criteria or benchmark.

Finally, CSR should go beyond token support or peripheral or philanthropic involvement to integration of corporate social responsibility into the decision-making process of organizational actors by focusing firmly on high impact actions that will take full account of

opportunities to increase the adoption of corporate social responsibility as part of the normal core practice.

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