

**LEGAL IMPACTS OF CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY ON
EMPLOYMENT AND EMPOWERMENT IN THE NIGER DELTA,
NIGERIA**

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ABSTRACT

The Niger Delta, Nigeria is very strategic to the national economy of Nigeria because of the petroleum and natural gas reserves of the region which accounts for over 90% of Nigeria's foreign earnings. Unfortunately, the resources of the region have not translated into socio-economic prosperity for the people. On the contrary, resources exploitation has occasioned environmental degradation and consequential unemployment and poverty. The aim of this paper was to examine the legal impacts of CSR on employment and empowerment in the region. The doctrinal research methodology was adopted. The paper found that employment of indigenes of host communities has often been for manual labour and temporary contract jobs which do not have any sustainable impacts. Furthermore, empowerments are essentially 'feeding-bottle' schemes usually in the form of grants, soft loans skills acquisitions that the participants do not need or are not properly equipped to employ profitably after the training. Empowerments lack strategic and sustained approach. This includes lack of basic infrastructure and facilities necessary to sustain the supposed empowerment. In addition, finance to set up the beneficiaries as self-reliant and support their growth in the long term is lacking. The paper concluded that CSR in the region lacks a strategic long-term approach but is often executed as one-off gift. Moreover, it does not adequately take into

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consideration the needs of the people. This is in addition to a lack of effective framework for monitoring and reporting on CSR initiatives. The cumulative effect is that CSR has failed to result in any sustainable long-term impacts for the people of the Niger Delta of Nigeria particularly in the areas of employment and empowerment.

INTRODUCTION

The Niger Delta region of Nigeria consists of different minority ethnic groups occupying predominantly the South-South geopolitical zone of Nigeria. However, Imo State in the South East and Ondo State in the South West are part of the Niger Delta because they are oil producing States.³³⁷ The region is blessed with abundant natural resources including petroleum and natural gas, extensive forest and aquatic resources. Statutorily, the States that make up the Niger Delta in Nigeria are: Abia State, Akwa Ibom State, Bayelsa State, Cross-Rivers State, Delta State, Edo State, Imo State and Ondo State and Rivers State.³³⁸

The Niger Delta houses the petroleum resources of Nigeria which Nigeria's economic backbone. The region is therefore analogous to the goose that lays the golden. It occupies a place of strategic economic importance in Nigeria. Regrettably, exploitation of resources has occasioned a near total destruction of the ecosystem of the region.³³⁹ Alfred and Others,³⁴⁰ observe that 'the Niger

³³⁷ Okonmah P.D., 'Right to a Clean Environment: A Case for the People of Oil-Producing Communities in the Nigerian Delta' [1997] (41) *JAL* 55.

³³⁸ Niger Delta Development Commission Act 2000 (as amended) s 2(1)(b).

³³⁹ Ogbonnaya U.M., 'Environmental Law and Underdevelopment in the Niger Delta Region of Nigeria' [2011] (5)(5) *International Multidisciplinary Journal* 62.

Delta is an epitome of the concept of resource curse'. This is because the abundant resources of the region have largely been a source of perpetual underdevelopment of the region. Associated environmental pollution has degraded the lands of the region and diminished its biological diversities. Because the Niger Delta people are largely into agriculture and fishing, the degradation of the environment has undermined their means of livelihood and contributes to unemployment in the region.³⁴¹ Legal obligations such as under the Nigerian Oil and Gas Industry Contents Development Act 2010 have been adequate to address the menace of unemployment in the region. This paper therefore examines the impacts of corporate social responsibility (CSR) on employment and empowerment in the Niger Delta.

LEGAL ANALYSIS OF CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

“Corporate” refers to business entities that are legal personalities usually in the form of corporations/companies.³⁴² Such corporate entity is distinct from its subscribers.³⁴³ “Responsibility” on the other hand refers to obligations or duties.³⁴⁴ “Social” underscores the nature of the responsibility as opposed to legal. From the above, corporate social responsibility (CSR), may be explained simply as social duties of a corporation. CSR generally refers to a commitment by businesses to contribute to sustainable development and to improve the

³⁴⁰ Alfred A.P. Nnanna V.P. and Ejekwu S.E., ‘Corporate Liability of Foreign Parent Companies for Environmental Degradation in the Niger Delta Region of Nigeria’ [2022] (2)(7) *The Journal of Law and Policyp*.41-42.

³⁴¹ Agbaez E.K. and Ukoha K., ‘Oil; a Blessing or a Curse: The Nigerian Experience’ [2018] (56) (3)

European Journal of Social Sciences p.262-270.

³⁴² *Salomon v Salomon & Co. Ltd* [1897] AC 22.

³⁴³ English Companies Act 2006, section 16.

³⁴⁴ Garner B.A., (ed), *Black’s Law Dictionary* (9th ed, Thomson Reuters 2009) 1427.

quality of life in the workplace and in society at large.³⁴⁵ According to Helg,³⁴⁶ CSR is the continuing commitment by business to behave ethically and contribute to economic development while improving the quality of life of the workforce and their families as well as of the local community and society at large. CSR is a form of social contract between business organizations and their host communities. In the Nigeria, it is often by way of memorandum of understanding with the host community whereby the host community gives the business organization a social licence to operate within its territory in return for mutual benefits.

It often includes duty on the business to preserve the environment and to make the community a better place to live in and to work within through charitable activities.³⁴⁷ CSR projects incorporate environmentally friendly exploration, a positive impact on the field or locality of a business activity. It suggests incorporating community sustainable thinking in the positive and profitable ways while carrying out business activities.³⁴⁸ This concept also has to do with getting the employees of the corporation to tune in to cutting waste, understanding the correct way to package company's product in a way that is friendly to the environment, and adapting productivity to the challenges of the environment in a developing and changing world. It includes a company's

³⁴⁵ Lanton G.P., 'The Boundaries of Strategic Corporate Social Responsibility' [2001] (7)(8) *Journal of Consumer Marketing* 595.

³⁴⁶ Helg A., 'Corporate Social Responsibility from a Nigerian Perspective' [2007] <<https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/16312757.pdf>> Accessed 25 March 2022.

³⁴⁷ Hurst N., 'Corporate Ethics, Governance and Social Responsibility: Comparing European Business Practices to those in the United States' [2004] <www.scu.edu/ethics/hurst/comparitive_study.pdf> Accessed 25 March 2022.

³⁴⁸ Makower J., *The E-Factor* (Penguin Books Limited 1994) 4.

direction to task itself to be responsible to the people by allocating resources to deal with environmental and general development issues.

Kotler and Lee,³⁴⁹ support the view that CSR is about operating in a manner that meets or exceeds the ethical, legal, commercial, and public expectations that society has of a business. This description of CSR presupposes that business decision should not only focus on profitability but should also be concerned about ethical values, legal requirements as well as respect for people, communities and the environment. They describe CSR as an organisation's commitment to improve community well-being through discretionary or voluntary business practices and contributions of corporate resources. Thus, from this perspective, CSR is more concerned about philanthropic responsibility, that is, voluntary contributions to uplift the living standard of the people, particularly within the immediate community than about profitability, ethics or compliance with appropriate legal provisions.³⁵⁰

Earlier than the above description, Carroll,³⁵¹ has classified CSR into four components: economic, legal, ethical and philanthropic responsibilities, with economic responsibilities forming the foundation of the CSR pyramid and the philanthropic responsibilities occupying the topmost level of the pyramid, which involve being a good corporate citizen and participation in initiatives or programmes that promote human welfare or goodwill. CSR is the holistic framework in which a business operates. This takes into account the needs of

³⁴⁹ Kotler P. and Lee N., *Corporate Social Responsibility: Doing the Most Good for Your Company and Your Cause* (John Wiley & Sons 2005) 1.

³⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

³⁵¹ Carroll A.B., 'The Pyramid of Corporate Social Responsibility: Toward the Moral Management of Organisational Stakeholders' [1991] (34) *Business Horizons* 39-48.

those involved in or affected by the company, beyond simple profit-seeking motive.³⁵² Furthermore the European Union Green paper on CSR offers an elaborate definition of CSR as “a concept whereby companies integrate social and environmental concerns in their business operations and in their interaction with their stakeholders on a voluntary basis.”

Contributing further, McWilliams and Siegel,³⁵³ define CSR as action that appears to further some social good, beyond the interests of the firms and that which is required by law. CSR could be traced back to the Quakers in 17th and 18th Centuries whose business philosophy was not primarily driven by profit maximization but by the need to add value to the society at large; business was established as part of society and not separate from it.³⁵⁴ This way, CSR is the conscious efforts by a business organization to maximize its positive impact and minimize its negative impact on society. Therefore, CSR policies in the Niger Delta region, whose environment has been degraded due to the harmful effect of the oil industry, would be aimed primarily at mitigating the devastating impact on the environment in order to engender sustainable and socio-economic development in the local economics.³⁵⁵

³⁵² Muthee J., ‘Is Corporate Social Responsibility Effective in Reducing Poverty in Africa?’ [2012] (23)(1) *BBC Focus on Africa* 48.

³⁵³ McWilliams A. and Siegel D., ‘Corporate Social Responsibility: A Theory of the Firm Perspective’ [2001] (26)(1) *Academy of Management Review* 127.

³⁵⁴ Moon J., ‘Corporate Social Responsibility: An Overview’ [2002] (1) *International Directory of Corporate Philanthropy* 14.

³⁵⁵ Dandago K.I. and Arugu L.O., ‘Corporate Social Responsibility and Environmental Concerns in Nigeria: A Critical Focus on Oil Producing Communities’ [2014] (8)(2) *Issues in Social and Environmental Accounting* 104, 108.

STAKEHOLDER THEORETICAL BASIS OF CRS

This theory acknowledges that corporations have vast power over our daily lives — from consumption to entertainment — and, to a great extent, the ability to exercise social decision-making power. Consequently, the theory holds that the responsibility of corporations should therefore not be limited to generating wealth for shareholders. The theory justifies and rationalizes CSR as a proactive strategy for promoting corporate morality and good corporate citizenship.³⁵⁶ It contends that businesses do not operate in a vacuum but within a social context to which they cannot afford to be insensitive or irresponsible to. According to Aaron and Patrick,³⁵⁷ in conflict prone zone like the Nigerian Niger Delta area, the oil corporations have shown much enthusiasm for social responsibility, primarily to secure the social license to operate (SLO) peacefully in the area. Oil corporations are becoming more sensitive to environmental issues, sustainable development and socio-economic development of their host communities. This is informed by the increasing pressure put on them by the host communities.

In contrast to the shareholder value theory, the stakeholder theory takes into account the individuals or groups with a stake in the claim on the organization. In a very general sense, stakeholders are groups and individuals who benefit from or are harmed by corporate actions.³⁵⁸ Stakeholders are commonly defined

³⁵⁶ Blowfield A., 'Reasons to be Cheerful? What We Know about CSR's Impact' [2007] (28)(4) *Third World Quarterly* 695.

³⁵⁷ Aaron K.K. and J. M. Patrick, *The Failure of Corporate Social Responsibility in The Niger Delta: Toward Re-Interpretation* (Harey Publications Company 2008) 234.

³⁵⁸ A Crane and Others, *The Oxford Handbook of Corporate Social Responsibility* (Oxford University Press 2008) 47.

as all actors that have an interest in the operations of a company because they are affected by it.³⁵⁹

It is argued that conflict results when business enterprises fail to accommodate societal goals alongside their corporate goals, like the situation in the Niger Delta region. Idemudia and Ite,³⁶⁰ add that the insensitivity of a firm to its business environment has a damaging effect on its corporate reputation and increases its operational cost. This way, CSR becomes an integral part of profit maximization. All these stakeholders are equally important for the company and any trade-off among the stakeholders should be avoided. Rather executives need to find ways that these interests can be integrated into the business model.³⁶¹ This theory is hinged on value creation for all as the overriding objective of corporations. Stakeholder theory posits that companies need to create value for all stakeholders. Realizing that business is about creating value for customers, employees, financiers, suppliers, and communities counteracts a temptation to use CSR for covering wrongdoing with some other stakeholders as the reason for wrongdoing some other stakeholders is weakened.³⁶²

The stakeholder theory contends that these are false dichotomies because the stakeholders are interdependent and creating value for one stakeholder also

³⁵⁹ Clarkson M.B., 'A Stakeholder Framework for Analyzing and Evaluating Corporate Performance' [1995] (20)(1) *Academy of Management Review* 92-117.

³⁶⁰ Idemudia U. and Ite U., 'Corporate/ Community Relations in Nigeria's Oil Industry: Times Challenges and Imperatives of Corporate Social Responsibility' [2006] (3)(1) *Environmental Management Journal* 206, 267.

³⁶¹ Freeman R.E. and Dmytriyev S., 'Corporate Social Responsibility and Stakeholder Theory: Learning From Each Other' [2017] (1) *Emerging Issues in Management* 1, 10.

³⁶² Freeman R.E. et al., *Stakeholder Theory* (Cambridge University Press 2010) 1.

contributes to creating value for others.³⁶³ In *Fulham Football Club Ltd . Cabra Estates*,³⁶⁴ the court held that “the duties owed by the directors are to the company and the company is more than just the sum total of its members.” Similarly, the Canadian case of *People’s Department Stores v Wise*,³⁶⁵ may shed further light on the distinction between the two types of interests. The Canadian Supreme Court held that the interests of the corporation should not be confused with the interests of the shareholders or any other individual stakeholder groups; the interests of shareholders, employees, suppliers, creditors, consumers, governments, and the environment should all be taken into account when acting in the best interests of the corporation.

LEGAL IMPACTS OF CSR ON EMPLOYMENT IN THE NIGER DELTA, NIGERIA

Section 17(3)(a) of the CFRN 1999 provides that the State shall direct its policy towards ensuring that all citizens, have the opportunity for securing adequate means of livelihood as well as adequate opportunity to secure suitable employment. The section does not necessarily mandate the State to create employment. What it requires is adequate opportunity for citizens to secure suitable employment. This includes creating enabling environment for businesses to thrive which will in turn create employment opportunities for the citizens. Although the State is the largest employer of labour in Nigeria, it lacks the capacity neither is it economically desirable for all citizens to be employed by the State. In any case, the inability of the State to create the enabling

³⁶³*Ibid*,13.

³⁶⁴ [1994] 1 BCLC 363, 379.

³⁶⁵ [2004] 3 S.C.R. 461 (Can.).

environment to promote suitable employment of all citizens has occasioned near unemployment crisis in Nigeria.

In the view of Udu and Agu,³⁶⁶ unemployment is a situation in which persons capable and willing to work are unable to find suitable paid employment. Relatedly to unemployment is the rising incidence of underemployment. This is a situation where people are employed only on part time or at work that is ineffective or unproductive, with a correspondingly low income that is insufficient to meet their needs and potentials. In addition, underemployment includes who are working outside their areas of specialization due to lack of jobs and so, could not be paid commensurately to their qualifications or expertise.³⁶⁷

It is admitted that the State has over time taken several steps to reduce unemployment in Nigeria. For instance, the creation of National Directorate of Employment (NDE) and its skills acquisition programmes, the SURE-P, YOU-WIN and N-POWER are some of the various intervention mechanisms aimed at addressing unemployment.³⁶⁸

Attention has continued to be turned towards the private sector in efforts to address unemployment. For instance, the Nigerian Oil and Gas Industry Content Development Act 2010 mandates that all regulatory authorities, operators, contractors, subcontractors, alliance partners and other entities involved in any project, operation, activity or transaction in the Nigerian oil and gas industry shall consider Nigerian content as an important element of their overall project

³⁶⁶ Udu E. and Agu. G. A., *New System Economics* (Africana First Publishers Ltd 2005) 12.

³⁶⁷ Anyanwuocha R.A., *Fundamentals of Economics, for Senior Secondary Schools* (Africana First Publishers Plc, 2010) 25.

³⁶⁸ Kayode A., Arome S. and Anyio S.F., 'The rising rate of unemployment in Nigeria: the socio-economic and political implications' [2014] (3)(1) *Global Business and Economics Research Journal* 68, 69.

development and management philosophy for project execution.³⁶⁹ The Act provides further that Nigerian independent operators shall be given first consideration in the award of oil blocks, oil field licences, oil lifting licences and in all projects for which contract is to be awarded in the Nigerian oil and gas industry. In addition, there shall be exclusive consideration to Nigerian indigenous service companies which demonstrate ownership of equipment, Nigerian personnel and capacity to execute such work to bid on land and swamp operating areas of the Nigerian oil and gas industry for contracts and services contained in the Schedule to the Act.³⁷⁰ Similarly, one of the objectives of the Petroleum Industry Act 2021 is provide direct social and economic benefits to host communities.³⁷¹

Corporations through CSR have accordingly impacted employment positively within their host communities. Employment as a function of CSR goes beyond meeting the human capacity needs of the corporation to strategically addressing unemployment.³⁷² Employment in the context of CRS is undertaken under a memorandum of understanding. A memorandum of understanding (MoU) is an understanding between two parties that isn't legitimately authoritative, yet which diagrams the obligations of every one of the parties to the understanding. MoU is a formal record portraying the expansive layouts of an understanding that at least two parties have come to through negotiations. It's anything but a lawfully restricting archive yet flags the expectation of all parties to push ahead with an agreement. MoU spell out the parties' comprehension of the pondered

³⁶⁹ Nigerian Oil and Gas Industry Content Development Act 2010, s 1.

³⁷⁰ *Ibid*, s 3(1 &2).

³⁷¹ Petroleum Industry Act 2021, s 234(1).

³⁷² Engle R.L., 'Corporate Social Responsibility in Host Countries: A Perspective from American Mangers' [2007] (14)(1) *Corporate Social Responsibility and Environmental Management* 16.

connection among them and can be the primary stage in the development of a formal contract.³⁷³ Shell adopts a Group Memorandum of Understanding (GMU) approach to implementing its CSR through which it provides employment.³⁷⁴

However, the impacts of CSR on employment have remained controversial. Employment of indigenes of host communities has often been for manual labour and temporary contracts.³⁷⁵ Indigenes of host communities are not employed in management hierarchy or top echelon of the corporations. Corporations often neglect the implementation of MoU regarding employment and rather offer indigenes employment as labourers and adjunct security officers despite availability of qualified persons from the communities.³⁷⁶

Edeh and Udoikah,³⁷⁷ insist that the root cause of unemployment in the Niger Delta region is the activities of oil companies. They observe that the oil-spills to the round-the-clock gas flares and effluents from industrial wastes, the fragile ecosystem of the Niger-Delta is under constant assault. The unbridled exploitation of crude oil and natural gas beneath the lands of the Niger-Delta has caused indescribable and irredeemable ecological devastation of the Niger-Delta land. Environmental impact of the oil industry in the Niger-Delta of Nigeria

³⁷³ Otekenari D.E., 'Global Memorandum of Understanding Policy Implementation and the much Desired Economic Advancement' [2019] (12)(2) *International Journal of Scientific Research in Education* 223, 224.
³⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁷⁵ Ogugbuaja C., 'Uzodimma Urges Protection of Shell's Facilities in Host Communities' [2021] <<https://guadian.ng/news/uzodimma-urges-protection-of-shells-facilities-in-host-communities/>> Accessed 30 August, 2022.

³⁷⁶ Oyandogha S., 'Community Threatens AGIP over Youth Unemployment' [2012] <<https://www.vanguardngr.com/2012/04/community-threatens-agip-over-youth-unemployment/>> Accessed 30 August, 2022.

³⁷⁷ Edeh J.N. and Udoikah J.M., 'Unemployment and Youth Restiveness in the Niger Delta Region: Interrogating Governments' Management Strategies' [2018] (11)(1) *African Journal of Politics and Administrative Studies* 1.

result to land deprivation, soil quality alteration, destruction of aquatic ecosystem and air pollution thus making indigenous agricultural and fishing industries less productive. The consequence is increasing unemployment which CSR has failed to adequately remedy.³⁷⁸

LEGAL IMPACTS OF CSR ON EMPOWERMENT IN THE NIGER DELTA NIGERIA

Empowerment has been defined as an intentional process centred in the local community, involving mutual respect, critical reflection, caring, and group participation, through which people lacking an equal share of valued resources gain greater access to and control over those resources; or a process by which people gain control over their lives, democratic participation in the life of their community, and a critical understanding of their environment.³⁷⁹ Active participation and greater access to and control over resources are definitive features of empowerment.³⁸⁰ Empowerment in this sense can also be thought of as the life and outlook-changing outcome of such a process for individuals, organizations, and whole communities. Empowerment is about the theory, science, and action of identifying and understanding all forms and sources of oppression throughout society and liberating those individuals, groups, and communities who are oppressed to reach their full potential.³⁸¹

³⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁷⁹ Perkins D.D., Hughey J. and Speer P.W., 'Community Psychology Perspectives on Social Capital Theory and Community Development Practice' [2002] (33)(1) *Journal of the Community Development Society* 33.

³⁸⁰ Perkins D.D., 'Empowerment' I R A Couto (ed), *Political and Civic Leadership: A Reference Handbook* (Thousand Oaks 2010) 207.

³⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 208.

Empowerment does not only mean to providing jobs alone to the youth but, also, extended to cover political, economic, intellectual and social power.³⁸² Chike and Onyene,³⁸³ note two critical dimensions to empowerment: addressing disadvantaged position of the affected person/group situation and taking action in order to improve their access to resources. Empowerment should therefore result in financial elevation as well as sustained increment of the standard of living.³⁸⁴ Empowerment incorporates equipping a person/group with various skills, values, attitudes, and orientation that will impact on their lives in the long term and make them more economically and socially responsible and self-reliant.³⁸⁵

When empowerment is understood in this proper context, it becomes self-evident that CSR has not impacted empowerment. What obtain are ‘feeding-bottle’ schemes usually in the form of grants, soft loans skills acquisitions that the participants do not need or are not properly equipped to employ profitably after the training. This is in addition to corruption, diversion of materials and nepotism in selection of beneficiaries.³⁸⁶ Inconsistency of empowerment policies

³⁸² Snehendu B.K., Catherine A.P., and Kirstin L.C., ‘Empowerment of Women for Health Promotion: A Meta-analysis’ [1999] (49)(11) *Social Science & Medicine* 1431.

³⁸³ Chike P.E. and Onyene V., ‘Youth Restiveness in the Niger Delta of Nigeria: Implication for Education and Leadership’ [2010] (18)(2) *European Journal of Social Sciences* 286.

³⁸⁴ Olatunle M.A., Gumus A.M., and Wanjuu L.Z., ‘Impact of Corporate Social Responsibility on Youths Empowerment in Niger Delta Region of Nigeria’ [2020] (8)(1) *Journal of Human Resource Management* 39, 40.

³⁸⁵ Ocran E., ‘The effect of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) on Profitability of Multinational Companies: A Case Study of Nestle Ghana Limited’ [2011] (8)(1) *Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology: Business Enterprises* 136.

³⁸⁶ Okonkwo E.et al., ‘The Challenges of Youth Empowerment Programmes in Nigeria: An Appraisal of N-Power Scheme’ [2021] (5)(7) *International Journal of Academic Management Science Research* 8.

and programmes are another major challenge. Empowerments lack strategic and sustained approach. This includes lack of basic infrastructure and facilities necessary to sustain the supposed empowerment. In addition, finance to set up the beneficiaries as self-reliant and support their growth in the long term is lacking.³⁸⁷

Felix and Osu,³⁸⁸ outline the following reasons for failure of empowerment schemes in Nigeria:

- a) Most anti-poverty programmes are planned by people wearing suits in air-conditioned offices. Many a time, the planners of poverty alleviation programmes are foreigners who may not speak or understand the local language of the people. Even when anti-poverty programmes are designed by indigenes of the country where they are to be implemented, they may not have an in-depth knowledge about the poor.
- b) Anti-poverty programmes are mostly Top-Down hierarchy in nature. Top-down development programmes by government, non-governmental organization or international agencies are always counterproductive because of corruption, bureaucratic bottlenecks and the gap between the planners and the purported beneficiaries.
- c) Efforts to eradicate poverty have only rarely been directed at poor people or the challenges they face. Rather than

³⁸⁷ Ekeowa Eet al., 'Managing the Challenges of Women and Youth Empowerment Programmes in Nigeria' [2019] (19)(5) *Global Journal of Human Social Science* 1, 4.

³⁸⁸ Felix J.M. and Osu A.K., 'Why Have Efforts to End Poverty Failed in Nigeria' [2014] (4)(19) *Developing Country Studies* 1.

working directly with the poor people, most of the efforts to end poverty adopted the indirect methods by seeking to change the economic environment rather than the poor.

- d) Give-aways breed dependence and self-doubt instead of social change. It is impossible to donate people out of poverty; the people need to invest their own time and money in bettering their lot. Teaching a man to fish may not be the answer if the person in question is not serious about fishing.
- e) There's never enough money available for foreign aid or philanthropy to expand successful anti-poverty programmes. Even the most promising and cost-effective conventional development projects that have real bearing on the poor, fail to make a headway against poverty because of financial constraint. Hence the persistence of poverty amidst several efforts put in place.
- f) Anti-poverty efforts have been scattershot and uncoordinated; hence much progress is not achieved at the end of the programme.

Consequently, CSR has not resulted in sustained empowerment of the people.

CONCLUSION

The Niger Delta region is the economic engine room of Nigeria. However, existing business models which focus on profit maximisation has continued to underdeveloped the region. The effects include unemployment and the

destruction of the means of livelihood of the people. The need for a stakeholder approach to business activities in the region cannot therefore be over-emphasised. This approach is in practice implemented through CSR. Corporations in the region have continued to embrace CSR in response both to the challenges of environmental degradation in the region and as a means to secure social license to operate. CSR in the region has covered areas such as employment and empowerment.

However, CSR in the region lacks a strategic long-term approach but is often executed as one-off gift. Moreover, it does not adequately take into consideration the needs of the people. This is in addition to a lack of effective framework for monitoring and reporting on CSR initiatives. The cumulative effect is that CSR has failed to result in any sustainable long-term impacts for the people of the Niger Delta of Nigeria particularly in the areas of employment and empowerment.

Recommendations

This paper recommends as follows:

- a) Specific Statutory Provision for CSR in Nigeria

The National Assembly should amend section 27(1)(c) of the Companies and Allied Matters Act 2020 to require the business objects of all companies to take into consideration all stakeholders and particularly the people and environment. In addition, the section should fix a certain percentage of the net profit for every company to meet the company's CSR obligations. This will address the issue of funding for CSR while also ensuring the companies are not overburdened by

CSR obligations. It will also make accounting for CSR more transparent. It further recommended in this regard that host communities should be statutorily entitled to CSR report of the company which should include comprehensive CSR expenditure. This will promote transparency in the execution of CSR.

b) Development of Strategic CSR Master Plan

In order to institutionalize CSR for sustainable positive impacts, it is recommended that companies in consultation with host companies develop strategic CSR master plan which should cover a defined period of time between 5-10 years. The plan should be based on a comprehensive assessment of the developmental needs of the host communities. This will allow every CSR project to be a consolidation or build-on on the previous project. It will also make for sustainable impacts.