

Who is Responsible? Mainstreaming Corporate Social Responsibility into Ecological Sustainability in the Niger Delta Region of Nigeria

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Abstract

The uniqueness of the Niger Delta region has made it imperative for International and National Oil Corporations to keep ahead of risks within their operating environment. One of such ways of doing this, is through the delivery of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). The issue of CSR is both theoretically and practically a significant departure from what is perceived to be the traditional responsibility of corporate entities- that of satisfying the economic interest of their shareholders, to now incorporating relevant stakeholders. This has been informed by the key assumptions of the shared value perspective adopted here as the theoretical framework. The paper focused on identifying the responsible actors in CSR as well as providing a working model that integrates CSR practices to ecological sustainability in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. To achieve these objectives, the paper relied on the philosophy of the shared value perspective as well as rigorous content analysis for relevant information that were analyzed qualitatively through the use of conceptual and thematic narratives. Following the analysis of data/information from many secondary sources, the paper provided a coherent image of the four direct responsible actors in a typical CSR scenario. These are corporations, communities, government and non-governmental organizations acting as technical or implementing partners. It is the submission of the paper that the absence of shared interest as well as a coherent deployment of CSR continues to undermine ecological sustainability. As a result, a working model to mainstream ecological sustainability into CSR practices in the Niger Delta was provided.

Background to the Study

The volatile security scenario as well as the political complexity currently being witnessed in Nigeria presents a unique situation where it has become imperative for International and National Oil Corporations working in the country to keep ahead of risks within their operating environments. Especially those that may impede their commercial activity and undermine the security of their personnel and assets (Menas Nigeria Focus, 2012). While these adverse social and political contexts can be historically traced to weak governance systems that have undermined the human development realities of the people in the country, the peculiar nature of the Niger Delta region makes it necessary to indict oil and gas companies alongside government for the massive level of socio-economic backwardness that has characterized the region over the years.

The dismal socio-economic and health conditions experienced in the region only serves to show that the source of the oil revenue has been deliberately neglected for a long time by successive governments in the country. Thus, the Niger Delta region which is home to oil and gas resources in Nigeria presents a unique social theater where business impacts have provided the impetus for multi-stakeholders' aggression despite several social investment attempts by businesses or corporations. According to Raimi, Onaolapo, Ige and Alfred (2015) the adverse human development realities in the region which are due to a long history of neglect have dovetailed to create both necessary and sufficient conditions for all forms of social vices that range from gang wars, militia activities, prostitution to illicit economic activities such as kidnapping and oil theft. However, while some of these social reactions are criminal (Ogadi, Raimi & Nwachukwu, 2012), some represent genuine agitations for better conditions of living, true federalism or resource control.

As a result, in the midst of the outcries concerning the relative neglect of the Niger Delta with regard to human and infrastructural development, a number of International Oil and Gas Corporations (IOGCs) operating within the region have been involved in development interventions through various Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) frameworks. However these development interventions have often times attracted mixed reactions from stakeholders as local activists and community members maintain that the projects are substandard and of little use to the communities.

It is important to note that the mixed reaction as to whether the CSR practices of IOGCs are genuine attempts to develop the Niger Delta region or not has a historical root in the not too healthy debate among scholars concerning the philosophy behind the practice. While a significant number of contemporary works on the subject have focused on analyzing the theoretical and practical trajectory of the application of CSR by firms within their operational environments, others have simply chosen not to see the claim to the fact that traditional capitalist exploitation especially by oil and gas producing companies generate social risks that require the attention of these organizations through CSR. This latter position is driven by the philosophy that companies operating where natural resources such as crude oil and gas are found pay royalties to host governments as such

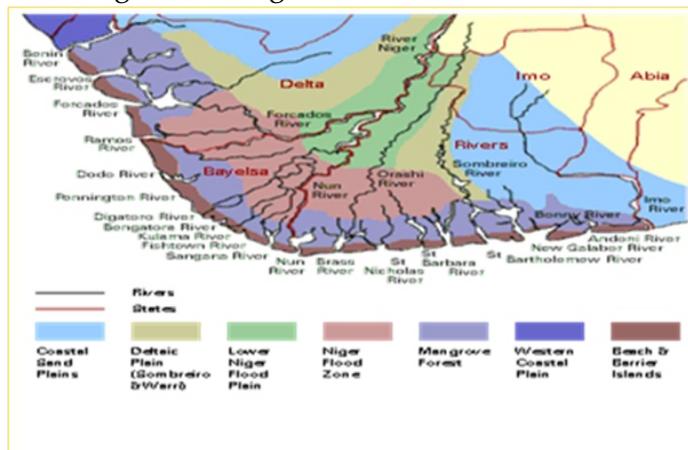
do not owe communities any form of CSR obligations. This notwithstanding, it is increasingly clear now that CSR practices are now mainstreamed into business strategies and no longer seen as philanthropic gestures.

The strategic integration of CSR practices into business objectives and goals in the Niger Delta region is clearly in response to the high level social antagonisms that huge IOGCs such as Shell Petroleum Development Corporation (SPDC), Nigerian Agip Oil Company (NAOC) and Chevron among others have encountered over the years. Clearly, these social antagonisms which mostly involve irate youths taking up arms in the region resonates with the widespread discontent in the area resulting from massive ecological decay popularly referred to as environmental degradation in the literature which continually threaten indigenous capacity for decent livelihood. The environment of the Niger Delta region has been adversely affected by the activities of the oil and gas multinational companies and has also imposed unhealthy social and economic cost on livelihood and therefore has become serious threat to sustainable development in the region.

The demand for IOGCs to engage in practices that reduce their adverse ecological impacts has from a social perspective increased corporations' strategic investment in human development within their host communities in the Niger Delta region. However, these CSR activities of corporations have attracted a duality of research outcomes evidenced in existing literature. There are those who have focused more on accusing corporations especially SPDC and NAOC of ineffective practices that endanger the physical and social environment of the people (see; Etekpe, 2009; Amnesty International, 2009; Omoweh, 2010; Amadi & Alapiki, 2014), while others concentrate on providing soft landings for corporations by arguing that businesses cannot and should not fill the space of government especially in the provision of basic needs (Makinde, 2016). Amnesty International remains at the peak of criticism of CSR in the Niger Delta accusing companies of neither being transparent nor fair in their dealings. The overall complain centre around the fact that CSR efforts are neither effective nor sustainable.

It should be stated, that while the above academic argument on CSR in the Niger Delta and Nigeria in general present a good knowledge on the subject matter, the polar discussions have one thing in common and that is the fact that they all seem to concentrate on fighting each other rather than providing best practice models on how CSR should be mainstreamed into addressing challenges in the region. It is based on the foregoing that this paper examines whose responsibility it is to carryout CSR as well as how the practice can be mainstreamed to achieve ecological sustainability in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. Essentially, the paper addresses two objectives. These are to (1) define responsible actor(s) with regard to CSR modelling and 2) provide a working model on how CSR can be mainstreamed into ecological sustainability in the region.

Fig. 1: The Niger Delta Region



The area which is described as the Niger Delta region of Nigeria lies between latitudes 4° and 6° north of the Equator and 4° and 8° East of the Greenwich. It comprises the states of Akwa Ibom, Cross Rivers, Edo, Imo, Rivers, Bayelsa, Delta, Abia and Ondo, making it coterminous with all Nigeria's oil producing states, stretching over $20,000\text{km}^2$ of swamp land in the littoral fringes of the country, it embraces one of the world's largest wetlands, over 60% of Africa's largest and one of the world's most extensive mangrove forests (Eyinla & Ukpo, 2006). This will be more appreciated given the richness of wetlands which are areas periodically covered by water that support unique assemblage of plants that can survive in water saturated soil. An attractive ecosystem, it is the most diverse and productive of all the ecosystems. This is because many species spend at least part of their life cycles in fresh water or salt-water wetland. However, oil exploration and exploitation has not been friendly to Niger Delta region, given its adverse impacts on the ecosystem. Despite the fact that the destruction of wetlands equally means loss of ecological services to the biosphere as well as loss of essential habitats for a myriad of species, it has and continues to hamper the people's livelihood (Ejumudo, Avweromre & Saga, 2012).

The Niger Delta region of Nigeria is one of the most blessed deltas in the world, both in human and material assets. It is estimated to have more than 32 billion barrels of oil reserve and about 104.7 million cubic feet of gas deposit but it is one of the most undeveloped regions in Nigeria with widespread and entrenched poverty (Ayodele, 2010). The region is home to the oil industry in Nigeria, a country which is the 7th largest net exporter of oil in the world. Despite the richness of this region with natural resources, Idemudia (2010) noted that 70% of the population lack access to basic amenities like good roads, tap water, electricity and the incidence of poverty is widespread. Most of the industry's onshore operations take place in rural communities where the people's main source of livelihood is subsistence fishing and farming. Omoweh (2010) also notes that, there is very high levels of poverty and lack of basic infrastructure in the region.

The environment of the Niger Delta region has been adversely affected by the activities of the oil multinational companies and has also imposed considerable social and economic cost on livelihood and therefore has become a serious threat to sustainable development in the region. This has resulted to hostility and violence, some of which include pipeline vandalization, kidnapping, shutting down of oil companies, militancy, and intra and inter community conflict. A lot of scholarly works have been written about the environmental problems associated with IOCG's activities in the Niger Delta. It is pertinent to note some of these findings so as to help us in appreciating the need for corporate social behaviour as a key factor in ecological sustainability in the region. According to Farinloye (2006) the Niger Delta region of Nigeria, for more than decades have been experiencing oil spillage problems with extended adverse effects such as; danger to marine wild life, modification of the ecosystem through species elimination and the delay in both (fauna and flora) succession; decrease in fishery resources, the loss of aesthetic values of natural beaches among others. Afinotan and Ojakorotu (2009) noted that oil prospecting activities are associated with the destruction of vegetation, farmlands and human settlements to allow for seismic cutting lines. Severe environmental hazards associated with this activity include destruction of fish and some other forms of aquatic life, both marine and freshwater around the prospecting sites.

Literature Review

Corporate Social Responsibility: The Ecological Management Perspective

According to Max Weber, every scholar must begin by first defining the concepts that he or she treats. It is in the light of this that the concepts of CSR and ecological sustainability are clarified here. However, it is important to note that CSR as a concept is broad and has thus attracted a riot of definitions basically drawing from the scholarly conviction of writers on the subject matter. Broadly, CSR requires companies to alleviate the negative impacts of their operations by acting in a socially responsible manner. However, its exact meaning and ambit is still rather ambiguous because what is perceived as CSR by various contributors is defined by several factors such as time, the nature of activity and the communities where they operated (Emeseh, 2009). The numerous definitions of CSR notwithstanding, a few are cited here because of their relevance to this paper. The World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD) defines CSR as the continuing commitment by business to behave ethically and contribute to economic development while improving the quality of life of the work force and the world at large (Alabi & Ntutekpo, 2012). Paul and Siegel (2006) define CSR as the advancement or promotion of some social good, while Amadi and Abdullah (2012) uphold that CSR is the duty for business to address social, environmental and economic demands from stakeholders. On his own part, Ejumudo (2010) contends that CSR is in tandem with the principles of justice that seeks to achieve an accommodation or balance between access to environmental costs or burdens (pollution, unemployment, social and economic dislocation and crime) and environmental benefits (nutrients, food, clean air and water, health care, educational assistance, skill acquisition and development, community development and transportation and safe jobs). Box 1.1 below highlights the four basic domains of CSR practitioners:

Box 1: Domains of CSR practices

Enterprise: Supporting and developing initiatives to mixture budding entrepreneurs and boost enterprise.

Education: Helping to bring new horizons into the lives of young people.

Arts and culture: Providing assistance to a range of artistic activities and bringing communities together.

Environment: Encouraging efforts to safeguard the environment and improve the quality of life.

Having defined the concept of CSR, it is necessary to clarify what ecological sustainability means at least within the context of this paper. This is important since the theory and practice of CSR is largely driven by the need for corporations to pursue behaviours that are consistent with reducing the damage already done to the environment as a result of economic development. Hence, as a working definition, ecological sustainability is viewed here as a capacity of ecosystems to maintain their essential functions and processes and retain their biodiversity in full measure over the long term. This clearly draws attention to the issue of behaving in responsible ways albeit carrying out ecologically sustainable development. Perhaps this is why the World Bank's Development Report (2003 cited in Afinotan and Ojakorotu (2009) cleared the air on the subject by pointing out that ecological sustainability is an evolving framework requiring societies to continually transform over time and since significant social stress and crisis is likely to lead to a breakdown in the development and preservation of all assets, intergenerational wellbeing is bound to be jeopardized. Thus ecologically sustainable development is using, conserving and enhancing the community's resources, so that ecological processes, on which life depends, are maintained and the total quality of life, now and in the future, can be increased.

From the foregoing, it is pertinent to note that ecological sustainability rests on the Brundtland Commission's notion of meeting the needs of people today, without harming the environment so that opportunities for future generation are destroyed. In this sense, the definitions provided above on the subject matters of CSR and ecological sustainability, makes it easy to see that the two are not mutually exclusive in terms of their theoretical and practical or even ethical positions.

Corporate Social Responsibility is a departure from what is perceived to be the traditional responsibility of corporate entities-that of satisfying the economic interests of their shareholders (Emeseh 2009). The concept of social responsibility as an important aspect of corporate organizations' mission received a major impetus following a theoretical shift from shareholders to stakeholders perspective in the late 1960s and early 1970s (Makinde, 2016). This trajectory from a more conservative model to a strategy that makes people outside the traditional shareholders of the firm count, represent a significant milestone in providing a human face for corporations noted for huge ecological

disincentives wherever they operate. Hence, it confirms the logic of moving the mission and strategy of business organizations from an exclusively economics orientation to a more sociological albeit humanistic character. The latter orientation of CSR opens a wide range of considerations for ensuring ecological sustainability at least within the operational environments of oil and gas corporations.

While it is clear that there is an ideological as well as theoretical link between corporations' CSR practices and ecological sustainability in the Niger Delta region, empirical literature on the subject matter are polarized into those that see this link as unsustainable (Amnesty International, 2009; Omoweh, 2010 & Idowu, 2015) especially in the light of the fact that these practices are geared towards just securing License to Operate (LTO) rather than constituting genuine effort to provide sustainable development. For instance, it has been consistently established that a significant number of the social investment interventions of companies like SPDC, NAOC and Chevron among others especially in the area of infrastructural development are not a true reflection of a sound needs assessment and by extension do not reflect the needs of the people and the environment where they operate. United in agreement, Omoweh (2010) and Idowu (2015) share similar discontent over the fact that 80 per cent of schools, roads and markets built under the CSR framework of the companies are products of inadequate or sectional engagements with local people thereby leading to duplication of efforts and by extension, little ownership by the people. This scenario leads to a situation where such CSR projects become abandoned due to little or no connection to the people's needs with the cumulative outcome of increasing rather than reducing ecological problems in their host communities. On the more extreme side, the Amnesty International (2009), maintains that outcomes of the CSR activities of multinational corporations operating in the Niger Delta region are to say the least unsustainable and misplaced when it comes to ecological management.

For Aderemi (2011), corporate investment in societies in recent time has become an apologetic medium for vagrant abuse of the CSR practice and protection of the environment in the scramble for maximizing profit. Companies usually, report very huge spending on their community development projects. For instance, SPDC reportedly spent US\$43 million in 2014 and Chevron about US\$ 112 million in the past three years (Makinde, 2016). Although laudable theoretically as an important aspect of CRS aimed at addressing the peculiar social issues in such poor communities, its practice in the Niger Delta is unsustainable as projects are selected ad hoc, communities have no real input, long term viability of projects not built into plans and thus no real impact is seen (Emeseh 2009). The point here is that 90 per cent of CSR activities do not have any relationship with finding solutions to environmental degradation which is the major problem that undermine the people's capacity for meaningful livelihood in the region. In this sense, Amnesty International considers CSR in the Niger Delta as diversionary and inconsistent with ecological management or sustainable development.

On the other empirical divide are those that show some degree of sympathy (Onaolapo, 2012; Makinde, 2016) for corporations. This category of scholars rest their position on the grounds that CSR activities of companies go a long way to promote ecological sustainability at least given the fact that these entities operate under a system where government does not provide the required enabling conditions as well as environment for CSR to produce the desired result of promoting ecological sustainability. For instance, Onaolapo (2012) was quick to align with the league of classical thinkers who ab-initio have argued that CSR and its implementation by corporations rest within the realm of philanthropy and cannot in anyway replace the statutory role of government in terms of providing basic needs for citizens of any society. One lesson to learn from the second position is that CSR should not be the sole responsibility of corporations but rather a complementary activity that thrives on enabling infrastructure provided by the government of the day. In any case, an extended view would mean that corporations are not in any way supposed to drive ecological management in place of government either through CSR or otherwise given the logic that government should ordinarily maintain a significant hold on the policy environment which by all standards provides enabling conditions to either undermine or promote a healthy ecosystem.

The ideological divide on CSR implementation notwithstanding, it became clear at some point in the history of corporate operations in the Niger Delta region that social investment must as a matter of necessity form an integral part of the strategy of businesses. This is mostly due to the fact that extensive social risks leading to youth agitations and restiveness in the region are likely to undermine the long term viability of businesses. For instance, the Royal/Dutch Shell Company, operating under Shell Petroleum Development Company of Nigeria (SPDC), began commercial production of oil in the Niger Delta in 1958 (Ikeje, 2004) but were never involved in strategic CSR. Emeseh (2009) noted that although the industry has operated for several decades with the first exports being in 1957, it was only in the early 1990s, following the Ogoni crisis, that commitment to CSR began in the real sense of it. Thus, in a bid to forestall the unhealthy relationship that exist between host communities and the oil companies, the oil multinationals embark on various projects aimed to ameliorate the sufferings of the people as well as the ecosystem that have been adversely affected by the activities and also to create an enabling environment for the continuation of business (Ejumudo et al, 2012). It is in this light that companies engage in building of classrooms, hospitals as well as provide support for education, encourage and provide for vocational learning or training, boreholes, provision of scholarship to selected students from the catchments communities and creating some level of employment opportunities.

Theoretical Framework-Shared Value Perspective

The paper is anchored on the analytical philosophy of the shared value theory as proposed by Porter and Kramer (2006). The uniqueness of the shared value theory especially when viewed in the light of related literature is that its analytical assumptions imply (and our emphasis is that this is very true) that people who dominate business policies and research across sectors in society have tended to focus more on the

contradictions that arise between stakeholders and not enough on the point of intersection (Porter & Kramer, 2006). This fundamentally suggest some degree of mutuality within a business ecosystem relationship.

As a result, the mutual dependence of corporations/businesses and society implies that both business decisions and social policies must follow the principle of shared values. According to the proponents of the theory, shared value as a social perspective is built on the foundation that business choices must benefit both sides and otherwise. In other words, they contend that “if either business or society pursues policies and goals at the expense of the other, it will find itself in a dangerous path. Consequently, a temporary gain for one will undermine the long-term prosperity of both. Therefore, to put these broad principles into practice, a company must integrate a social perspective into the core frameworks it already uses to understand competition and guide its business strategy” (Porter & Kramer, 2006:7).

A close examination of the theory shows that it rests on creating strategic relationship between economic and social aspects of business for corporations. It suggests an investment in corporate social responsibility activities or contexts that strengthen a company's competitiveness, which is believed, has the potential for creating a symbiotic relationship between business and society. This scenario is what Yunus (2007) captured as social business.

In the context of this paper, the shared value theory enables business and society especially government to intersect in such a way that a win-win situation is created to ensure ecological sustainability. Much as this is the case, shared value makes it easy to carry stakeholders along thereby reducing the level of discontent in communities where businesses operate which in itself is another medium of undermining sound ecological management. It is based on the above assumptions that the shared value theory is adopted here as the theoretical framework for this work especially in terms of its emphasis on galvanizing the efforts of all stakeholders either through CSR or other related social investment activities for the purpose of sustainably engaging the ecosystem.

Responsible actors in the CSR model

The analytical assumption of the shared value theory and the literature understanding of the relationship between businesses and ecosystem (Prahalad, 2011) makes it easy to logically see that the provision of CSR for the purpose of ecological sustainability is not a single sector affair. As a result, emphasis is on galvanizing efforts from all stakeholders as the best possible way to deliver effective CSR especially in the Niger Delta region. Much as this is the case, every stakeholder has one role or the other to play in the process of carrying out social investment activities that promote ecological and human wellness. For instance, in his study of CSR activities and how they are deployed by the Shell Petroleum Development Company in the Niger Delta, Makinde (2016) came to the finding that the real reason why some of the social investment programmes of the

company are not sustainable as they have been adjudged by mostly the Amnesty International, is because the company is not an expert in CSR or development related activities. As a result, they are handicapped on issues concerning technical aspects of the implementation of CSR. From this point of view, it becomes easy to see that the Shell Petroleum Development Company is in serious need of technical partners or stakeholders to drive genuine social investment in their areas of operation.

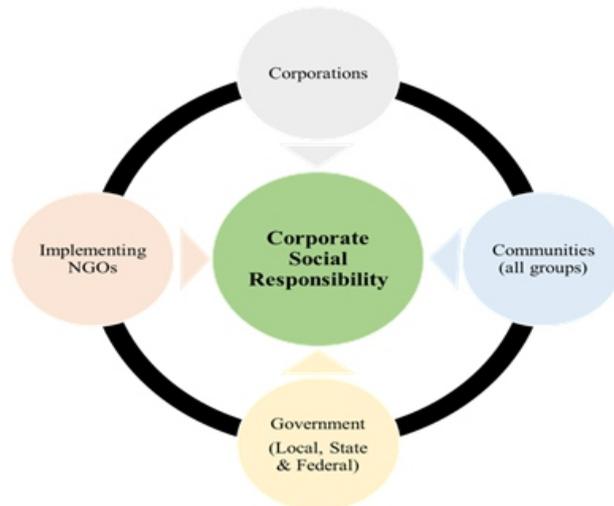
Similarly, Fadahunsi (2016) has argued that while technical partners are central to corporations in the delivery of CSR in communities where they operate, the input of communities is particularly very key in this regard. In any case, his point is that a corporation being funding entities with an implementing Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) taking the role of a technical partner is not both necessary and sufficient to produce the desired result required from any CSR project. Hence, there is the need for communities to make significant input at least in deciding the choice of CSR project to be embarked upon by corporations and their implementing partners. In this sense, communities become serious stakeholders that must share in the decision and value concerning the CSR activities of corporations in their communities. As a result, it is clear that the reason why corporations suffer significant operational setbacks resulting from community induced deferments is simply because the democratic foundation of CSR and its deployment in host communities are fundamentally flawed. As a result of this undemocratic process of deploying social investment activities, communities unite in most cases covertly but more overtly to provide support for youth agitations against these corporations with real negative consequences on the long term viability of businesses.

Also, within the shared value philosophy is the fact that government is obviously a major stakeholder when it comes to mapping out responsibilities for CSR conception and implementation in communities where corporations operate. In his study on the role of government on the issue of corporate social responsibility, Akande (2015) provided a telling revelation of the laxity of government in taking part in CSR activities especially in the Niger Delta region. From his own point of view, no meaningful outcome can be achieved by corporations on the delivery of CSR unless government not only provides enabling environment, but also regulates such activities through relevant policies and laws. In essence, he condemned the complete absence of government input in several CSR programmes and projects in the region pointing out that this has removed any form of regulatory frameworks that are considered necessary for any meaningful social investment to take place.

The analysis from the various scholars above, provides us with a clear and distinctive image of the responsible actors in any CSR endeavour. This is presented in Figure 1.2 below where four direct stakeholders share in the value creation chain involved in the deployment of social investment programmes and projects in host communities. However, this is not to say that there are no other stakeholders involved in the process but the point is that, the four identified, maintain a direct relationship with and share in the

values of CSR programmes or projects when compared to other stakeholders outside the frame of this diagram.

Figure 2: Responsible actors in a typical CSR delivery model



From the figure above, it is easy to see that four principal actors constitute the responsibility chain for CSR conception and implementation in any host community. As stated earlier, this is not to say that there are no other stakeholders but the point is that stakeholders outside this frame are not direct stakeholders in the provision of CSR. Hence, drawing from the diagram, it is important to note that the various stakeholders share different levels of involvement at least ideally, in the CSR delivery framework. For instance, corporations provide funding support and enlist the help of technical partners in the relevant area of the CSR say for instance health, but ensure that they get community input into the formation and implementation of the project or programme and this certainly happens within a governance space that provides enabling policy and regulatory environment for a single CSR intervention to be deployed effectively.

Mainstreaming CSR into Ecological Sustainability: A Working Model

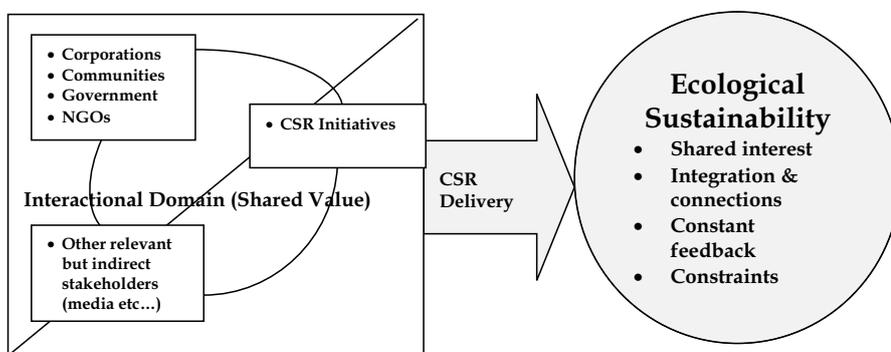
While it is easy to pick out a whole bouquet of CSR activities that have been implemented by corporations and or are still ongoing in the Niger Delta region, there is the need to mention that some of these social investment endeavours do not reflect a genuine attempt to address the ecological challenges resulting from the activities of oil and gas corporations. As a result, a significant number of the CSR programmes and projects seem rather like a social investment decoy where the main problem which bothers on environmental or ecological sustainability is almost entirely dwarfed as stakeholder's focus on petite CSRs. This has been attributed to a serious lack of harmony amongst the different level of stakeholders involved in the CSR delivery framework highlighted in Figure 2 above especially when viewed from the fact that corporations go about deploying CSR projects without input from communities, no government regulations

and devoid of technical partners such as NGOs. This lack of mutual reinforcement of roles and support by the stakeholders in the framework, continues to undermine genuine attempts at using CSR to address ecological sustainability in the Niger Delta region.

This is why according to Henderson (2004), despite prevalent business usage of sustainability rhetoric, critics have argued that the overall impact has been unremarkable in achieving real goals of sustainable ecological practice within organizations and in communities where they operate. Levels of understanding and genuine commitment to ecological ideals range widely across and within companies, as apparently does internal resistance. Yet other commentators, reporting impacts of initiatives such as the United Nation's Global Compact forum, have claimed that organizations are indeed changing to become more ecological and ethical in practice, although practice ranges considerably in scope and intent. Clearly there is lack of consensus about the implementation of CSR practices that are capable of triggering ecological sustainability.

In Nigeria's Niger Delta region, the issue is more complex given widespread poverty and weak regulatory environments which together creates enabling conditions for oil and gas corporations to go about CSR activities without necessarily ensuring that these social investment initiatives meet the needs of people and planet. The question then becomes; how can ecological sustainability be mainstreamed into CSR practices in the Niger Delta region? To respond to this, a simple modification of Figure 2 above is undertaken below as a working model for mainstreaming CSR into ecological sustainability activities.

Figure 3: A Working Model to Mainstream CSR into Ecological Sustainability



The literature on how CSR promotes ecological sustainability is particularly fragmented in terms of providing a coherent model to guide such as process. First, several studies are isolated in their CSR delivery focus in such a way that they either discuss corporations' (and this constitutes a significant part of the literature) social investment with little emphasis on the other interactional domains, while others simply discuss government, NGOs and little mention of communities in the initiation and delivery of CSR. However, the model in Figure 3 represents a collection and it is right to say a careful integration of various assumptions or positions on CSR delivery domains from the works of other scholars. So it is easy to see from the Figure, that all the four direct stakeholders in the CSR

framework shared in Figure 2 above reappear in Figure 3 but only this time, other relevant but indirect stakeholders are considered in the model.

It is important to note that within the above model, corporations represent not just a single business entity like SPDC, NAOC or Chevron, but a galvanized effort from all corporations operating in the Niger Delta region. Experience has shown that most CSR programmes and projects are done separately by a single corporation with little interaction or integration with other competitors operating in the area. In doing this, some efforts are duplicated creating more problems rather than good for the people and the ecosystem in general. Hence, while the first step is to have *shared interest* and values for ecological sustainability in terms of agreeing that CSR programmes and projects should address ecologically sustainable practices, the second step to achieving this is to ensure that efforts are *integrated and connected* in such a manner as to be robust enough to address critical ecological problems in the region. Doing CSRs piecemeal and disjointedly cannot provide the required or desired target of reducing ecological challenges in the Niger Delta region. That is why over six decades down the line, the region is still having a *dejavu* experience with environmental degradation. So to achieve a sound ecological sustainability through CSR, all corporations as well as government must unite resources to target specific projects or programmes that are relevant to addressing ecological problems.

Drawing from existing literature as well as study findings related to implementation of CSR, this paper supports the argument that constant *feedback* increases learning and education as these are critical to ecological sustainability. In particular, the challenge is not only helping people to learn practices of ecological sustainability, but also to learn a particular ethical orientation that improves CSRs in this regard. That is, getting stakeholders to focus on CSR that works for ecological sustainability appears to be closely linked to a general ethical commitment to the primacy of sustainability principles shared among all actors so as to consistently ignite and support the implementation of such practices.

Lastly, CSR practices must happen within some level of *constraints* usually championed by the government of the day. Government must ensure that every stakeholder plays by the rule of law especially those governing ecological sustainability and related matters. This would go a long way to not just restrict behaviours to ethical practices that promote ecological sustainability, but also ignite innovative behaviours that would enable growth without necessarily overwhelming and or suffocating the ecosystem of the Niger Delta region.

Conclusion

From the above discussions, it is obvious that CSR practices have moved along a trajectory of theoretical considerations and this has had some effect on its delivery or implementation in terms of tackling ecological problems in the Niger Delta region. This notwithstanding, the challenge has been not having a coherent model that provides both

theoretical and practical guide that links CSR initiation and delivery to ecological sustainability. This is what has been achieved in this article. Corporations, communities, government and NGOs as well as other relevant stakeholders must begin to work as partners with shared interests and values for ensuring ecological sustainability through CSR implementation in the region. As a result, if the model provided in Figure 1.3 above is genuinely followed, it is our belief that CSR delivery will begin to address the massive problem of ecological degradation that has characterized the Niger Delta region for decades.

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