OIL COMPANIES, CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY AND CONFLICT IN HOST COMMUNITIES: A STUDY OF COMMUNITIES IN SELECTED LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREAS IN RIVERS STATE

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Abstract
It has been observed that in spite of the several programmes and projects implemented under the corporate social responsibility initiatives by oil companies in Rivers State, conflict between oil companies and their host communities has persisted. This study examined the relationship between the level of community involvement in corporate social responsibility planning and implementation and conflict between the oil companies and their host communities in some selected Local Government Areas in Rivers State. Stakeholder theory was adopted as theoretical framework for this study. The study utilized survey research design to study 290 respondents comprising some categories of people from the host communities who were selected through cluster, stratified and purposive sampling techniques. The sample size of 168 respondents was determined through Taro Yamane scientific formula. Quantitative and qualitative data were gathered through questionnaire, key informant interview and personal observation. To analyze the data on the research questions, the statistical tool of criterion mean and Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) analytical tool were utilized while the hypothesis was tested through Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) tool. The study found that the level of community involvement in CSR planning and implementation in host communities is low and there is a significant positive relationship between the level of community involvement in CSR implementation and the persistence of conflict between the oil companies and their host communities. It is recommended that the General Memorandum of Understanding (GMoU) adopted by some oil companies should be designed to guarantee measurability and strict compliance; oil companies should maintain a higher level of community involvement in CSR implementation and efforts should be made to involve credible persons in the processes.

Key Words: Oil Companies, Corporate Social Responsibility, Conflict, Community Involvement.

Introduction
International Oil Companies (IOCs) in Nigeria have operated in the country for so many years dating from 1956 after the discovery of oil (Nwosu, 2017). The companies were welcomed by the host communities to carry out their activities without interference because the communities perceived that the presence of the companies would usher in more wealth which would transform their communities for good. However, a lot of unpleasant experiences emanating from the conflicting interests in the relationship between the oil companies and their host communities began to unfold

shortly before the eighties (Hamilton, 2012; Ogbuigwe, 2018; Olujobi, 2021). Mackintosh and John (2021) affirmed that some of these contradictions were antagonistic and manifested in diverse ways.

Over the years, agitations arose over the poor conditions of the host communities in Rivers State in the areas of both human and infrastructural development (Dike, 2017; Mackintosh & John, 2021). These manifested in peaceful and violent protests, pipeline vandalism, kidnap of foreigners and oil company workers, etc. The increasing demand for compensations to ameliorate the damaging effects of oil exploration on the people and the environment, in addition to the need for an all-inclusive stakeholder value creation to be captured in the IOCs' strategic plans eventually brought about some positive changes.

It is reported that the IOCs in Rivers State embarked on some development projects driven by their Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) schemes initiated for the purpose of managing the increasing incidence of conflict between them and their host communities (Ogbemi, 2020). However, observers maintained that these development interventions did not achieve the desired results (Gbali, Weli & Mmom, 2021). This conclusion is predicated on the understanding that the adoption of CSR policies by oil companies failed to reduce the occurrence of violent conflict between host communities and oil companies in Rivers State.

Some of the many risks organizations contend with include social and environmental responsibility risks. In Rivers State, the predominance of social and environmental responsibility risks triggered uncertainty among the IOCs as the rate of conflict between oil companies and host communities escalated. Some of the oil companies eventually pulled out from viable operations thereby causing unfavourable economic consequences (Ejibunu, 2007; Olujobi, 2021).
One of the oil companies, Elf Oil Company stated that its community relations policy meets global standards because it is proactive; has the ability to identify what the host communities are interested in to meet their socio-economic infrastructure needs. Furthermore, the policy is said to promote environment-friendly activities in collaboration with the Government and community representatives/organizations. http://www.hrw.org./reports/1999/nigeria/nigew991-06.htm#814_279. How did these translate to effective conflict management?

Shell Petroleum Development Company (SPDC) is considered a major player in the oil industry in Rivers State and operated in all the host communities studied, but empirical findings show that its CSR programmes implementation failed in fostering a better relationship between the company and its host communities with the effect that conflict persisted. In 2009, Amnesty International consistently accused Shell of not being transparent and fair in its CSR dealings. Even the Global Memorandum of Understanding (GMoU) adopted by Shell as CSR model was ineffective due to the poor approach in implementing it in host communities (Poroma, 2014). Shell eventually demobilized its onshore facilities and re-commissioned them offshore. Recent reports show that this action seems to have controlled its large-scale conflict experience with its host communities to an extent.

So many other oil companies did not take the same action. It has therefore become increasingly clear that organizational long term viability cannot be assured without reinforcing and sustaining some social value creation strategies adopted by the IOCs which yielded a level of favourable results after implementation such as involving host community. A lot of studies revealed that involving host communities in the planning and implementation processes of CSR initiatives of the IOCs yielded some positive results.

However, empirical studies have shown that in spite of the numerous CSR programmes adopted by IOCs in Rivers State, the feeling of disaffection, dissatisfaction and frustration is still high among

the people in their host communities (Poroma, 2014, 2020; Dike, 2017), especially among the youths who are more vulnerable to volatile tendencies. This study leaned on the findings of previous studies to further investigate the effectiveness of community involvement as organisational CSR strategy adopted by the IOCs' host communities in Ikwerre land, Rivers State.

Aim and Objectives

Against this backdrop, the aim of this study is to investigate the relationship between community involvement in organisational CSR planning and implementation and the persistence of conflict between oil companies and host communities located in Ikwerre speaking Local Government Areas in Rivers State. The objectives of the study are:

1. to determine the level of community involvement in Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) planning and implementation and
2. to ascertain to what extent level of community involvement in Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) planning and implementation influences conflict between oil companies and their host communities.

Research Questions

1. To what extent do host communities get involved in Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) planning and implementation?
2. To what extent does the level of community involvement in Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) planning and implementation influence conflict between oil companies and their host communities?

Research Hypothesis

1. H_0: Level of community involvement in CSR planning and implementation has no significant influence on conflict between oil companies and their host communities.

Scope of the Study

The study covered host communities and the activities of oil companies in four Local Government Areas (LGAs) of Ikwerre Ethnic nationality in Rivers State, Nigeria. The Local Government Areas are Port Harcourt LGA (PHALGA), Obio/Akpor LGA (OBALGA), Emohua LGA (EMOLGA) and Ikwerre LGA (KELGA). This study specifically examined how the level of Community Involvement in CSR planning and implementation has influenced the incidence of conflict between oil companies and their host communities in the above-mentioned Local Government Areas in Rivers State.

Operationalization of Concepts

Corporate Social Responsibility: Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is a concept which promotes the practice whereby corporate entities voluntarily integrate both social and environmental considerations in their business philosophies, operations and interactions with stakeholders. For the purpose of this study, the stakeholders of focus are the host communities of IOCs.

Conflict: Conflict is the disagreement between oil companies and their host communities because of differing interests. It is mainly between the oil companies who engage in oil exploration and exploitation and the aggrieved host communities who feel marginalised and exploited by the oil companies. The conflict could manifest in violent and non-violent confrontations.

Community Involvement (CI): Community Involvement entails that programmes for addressing rural poverty and social problems must be able to identify and target the most vulnerable by empowering them to participate effectively in decision making processes and development activities of the IOCs.

Host Communities: Host communities are those communities where oil companies are located. These include communities where any form of oil companies' property/facilities are located and

where their activities take place. Such property/facilities include pipelines, oil wells, flow stations, residential quarters, office complex, etc.

Theoretical Framework

Stakeholder Theory
Stakeholder Theory emerged as an opposing theoretical view to the stockholder/shareholder approach of Friedman and his associates. Stakeholder theorists believe that a firm has responsibility to protect the interest of stakeholders and maintained that even though shareholders have a stake in an organization, they do not enjoy supremacy as the interests and concerns of all recognized stakeholders are important and no set of interest is assumed to be superior to the others (Clarkson, 1995; Arevalo & Aravind, 2017; Alhumaymidi, 2021).

In this regard, stakeholders are described as those groups of persons whose support is germane to the survival of an organization and who are equally affected by the performance of the organization (Daubry, 2020). In essence, concerns of stakeholders must be integrated into the vision and mission of the firm, and the relationship between an organization and other legitimate stakeholders must be managed in such a way that it aligns with its strategic plan (Onaolapo, 2012). Stakeholder Theory leans on a business-social view of operating a business and emphasizes how managers act and de-emphasizes undue attention to the economic benefits of organizations (Ganescu & Gangone, 2017).

The management of organizations is driven by Board of Directors and managers. Stakeholder Theory implies that such persons must pay attention to all constituencies which affect the firm one way or the other. However, Alhumaymidi (2021) while disagreeing with the stakeholder concept argues that a firm that adopts stakeholder theory will encounter some challenges in their quest for survival because the stakeholder theory politicizes the corporation, and makes the manager more empowered to exercise their own preferences while spending the firm's resources.

Stakeholder theory however informs the various actors on how to make a choice among so many competing and consistent constituent interests coming from investors, employees, customers, suppliers and communities. To achieve this, the theory advocates that attention should be given to developing mutual relationships which can generate mutual benefits to all parties concerned (Ghosh, 2017). The onus is therefore on the management to come up with modalities to effectively manage these often conflicting demands from all stakeholders in order to sustain the organization.
A close examination of the theory shows that it builds on creating critical relationship between economic and social aspects of business. It suggests an investment in social dimensions which have the effect of improving the conditions of the host communities while strengthening a company's global competitiveness. Host communities are interested in receiving adequate charitable contributions and social responsiveness from the organizations which would positively impact on them. Ikwerre communities are located in the Niger Delta region of Rivers State and are among the areas which bear the monumental effect of the ecological damages which are being inflicted on the environment by the operations of the IOCs. Host communities, according to KPMG (2021) should be considered in the operations of IOCs which is far from the experiences of the Ikwerre speaking host communities in Rivers State.

Literature Review
Concept of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)
Corporate Social Responsibility is an old concept according to Okodudu (2008) who described CSR as the requirement placed on organisations to be accountable for the impact of its activities on all

stakeholders. The concept represents a strong commitment and sense of responsibility by organisations to give back to society in the form of local economic development.

Aguinis (2011) and Oladipo (2016) further explained that CSR is an agglomerate of business strategies adopted by organizations to operate their businesses by giving consideration to ethical, social responsiveness and development issues which are observed to be of benefit to the community. In recent times, the concept of CSR describes the obligations of organizations to take responsibility for the impact of their business operations on the stakeholders such as customers, suppliers, employees, shareholders, community and environment. Consequently, organizations are expected to comply with existing policies guiding their operations and be willing to take voluntary actions to protect and improve the wellbeing of employees and their respective families, the host communities and the general public (Gavas, 2016).

As an ethical strategy, Okodudu (2008) argued that CSR manifests in various forms. One of the most acceptable forms is when CSR is practised for the sake of achieving its purpose. In this regard, organizations perform what they are expected to do without selfish considerations or expectations from the host communities.

Conflict between Oil Companies and their Host Communities
Conflict between organizations and host communities in the Niger Delta region can be traced to the Akassa Raid of 1895 according to Soye (2011). It was reported that the situation further degenerated after oil exploration and exploitation had been carried out for many years in the region and the people of the region felt marginalized. In the 1990s, peaceful demands for better considerations in terms of development of the region were recorded.

The region is characterised by poor living conditions as the Government of Nigeria has not been able to adequately provide basic social infrastructure such as health facilities, potable water, electricity, and schools to communities impacted by oil related activities. The negative impact of oil resource extraction on the environment of the Niger Delta is very conspicuous (Ejibunu, 2007; Mackintosh & John, 2021).

The prevalence of such conditions engendered consistent conflict between host communities and oil companies which are borne out of disagreements over their differing interests. Host communities' demand for due compensation for the damaging impact emanating from the activities of the oil companies is resisted by the oil companies who debunk the basis of the demand or express a contrary view on the level of compensation to be made. The Umuechem – SPDC conflict of 1990 is one of such cases (Olarinmoye & Okhonmina, 2007; Soye, 2011). The Nigerian Government and the IOCs are consistently blamed for the alarming rate of social instability in the Niger Delta region occasioned by the long years of negligence and the complicit behaviour of both parties.

Community Involvement in CSR Planning and Implementation and the Incidence of Conflict between the Oil Companies and their Host Communities
Community involvement according to Wosu (2013) is described as a deliberate interface borne out of planned and sustained efforts to develop and sustain mutual understanding between organizations and their host communities. Idemudia (2009) conducted a study to assess the performance of community involvement tools adopted by the oil companies in Nigeria where he examined the GMoU initiated by SPDC. He concluded that the GMoU strategy is ineffective because host communities do not feel like the projects belonged to them on the grounds that they were not fully involved in the planning and implementation processes.

In another study conducted to ascertain the influence of community involvement in decision making processes and how stakeholders perceive conflict, Bristol-Alagbariya (2010) observed that there is a positive relationship between community involvement in CSR development and conflict. According to Bristol-Alagbariya, development proposals are more effective when the affected,

concerned and interested persons are enabled to take part in the decision/policy-making process of such proposals.

Furthermore, Bristol-Alagbariya stated that there are no other options when it comes to achieving organizational goals than through community involvement in the development of the oil and gas industry in Nigeria. It was also noted that host communities become marginalized when they are not allowed to participate in the planning and implementation of community projects and agitations and conflicts are some of the consequences (Bristol-Alagbariya, 2010). It was concluded that community involvement in organisational CSR planning and implementation becomes imperative since host communities are stakeholders in the petroleum industry.

Mackintosh and John (2021) also concluded from their study to ascertain the influence of the CSR strategies adopted by the IOCs to manage conflict that Governments and the IOCs should as a matter of policy make provisions for host communities to participate in the decision making processes and development programmes earmarked for communities. According to Mackintosh and John, this can engender peace in the region.

Another research was conducted by Gbali, Weli and Mmom (2021) to examine how CSR influences conflict management in host communities in South-South Nigeria. Data were gathered through questionnaire and Focus Group Discussion while other sources include books, reports and journals. The population of study was 2,358,000 with a sample size of 400 respondents comprising 27 communities located in three core oil producing States. It was found that some of the conflicts are triggered by inadequate CSR management and the study recommended among others that a realistic inclusive CSR strategy should be adopted by IOCs to promote community involvement in the planning and implementation of CSR projects.

Consequences of the Operations of International Oil Companies (IOCs) in Ikwerre Land
Ikwerre land is host to IOCs and oil servicing companies. Shell Petroleum Development Company (SPDC), Elf Oil Company and Nigerian Agip Oil Company (NAOC) are major oil companies operating in Ikwerre land, Rivers State. They also go into collaborations with one another and Nigeria with the Nigeria National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) representing the Federal Government (AGIP, 2009).

The occupations of the Ikwerre people are basically farming and fishing and the large expanse of land they inhabit is very fertile. Creeks and rivulets which flow into the Atlantic oceans are found in most of Ikwerre communities. An observer would quickly notice that Ikwerre land is a home to complex networks of oil pipelines and the community people have had to contend and live with the attendant environmental degradation including incessant pipeline explosions and fire outbreaks (Wahua, 1987). Gas flaring has existed in the land since the exploration of oil commenced in Nigeria.

Unfortunately, gas flaring and other associated activities at several oil locations displaced several Ikwerre communities. For instance, in the 1960s, a devastating inferno occurred at the Shell Apara Flow Station which burnt down several villages, degraded the environment and reduced the natives to internal refugees (A Declaration by Ikwerre Youths Convention: Ikwerre Rescue Charter, 2004). A similar incident occurred at Rukpokwu.

Rukpokwu is a vast rural community in Ikwerre land and the sources of livelihood of the people are fishing, farming and hunting. Shell started its operations in the community in 1963 with the laying of the Rumuekpe-Rukpokwu trunk line which runs through the heart of the community. It was reported that an explosion among other incidents, occurred in the community on December 3, 2003. Consequently, the community passed through great hardship (Oil Watch Alert, 2004). http://www.oilwatch.org.

Rumuekpe community in Emohua Local Government Area hosts Shell, which operates a very big manifold. Total, Elf and the Niger Delta Petroleum Resources (NDPR) also carry out their businesses there. The community is yet to recover from the widespread poverty, unemployment and frustrating experiences brought about by the destructive crises which broke out among its eight villages. Between 2005 and 2008, up to 100 persons lost their lives while 18,000 residents became homeless; homes, schools and churches were razed down. Different factions of armed groups killed one another over access to oil contracts and royalties which Shell was accused of distributing to whichever stronger group controlled access to its oil facilities (Amunwa, 2011, 2012; Ehizuelen, 2021).

In Obio/Akpor Local Government Area, oil wells, flow station and gas flare facilities were located in Elelenwo community which was invaded by Shell and the combined force of police and the military in 1999 after 42 years of neglecting the community. A peaceful protest by the people degenerated to a face-off between them and the oil company leading to the invasion, and at least five persons were shot in addition to the destruction of property (A Press briefing by Ikwerre Youth Convention on the invasion of Elelenwo Community by the Police). Similar incidents occurred in several communities in Ikwerre land.

Culture is both the material and non-material aspects of a people's way of life, which manifests in the way they produce their material goods and value system (Anikpo, 1999; Wolff, 1999 & Taylor, 1992). In a study on oil production and changing cultural pattern in Ikwerre ethnic nation carried out by Nsirim-Worlu (2012), it was observed that the cultural heritage of host communities in Ikwerre land has been eroded with the effect that even the local ikwerre dialect is endangered and has been replaced by the Pidgin English as a lingua franca.

Another effect of the presence of IOCs in Ikwerre land is the emergence of the squatter settlements where those who are less privileged or poor live because of the high costs of and insufficient accommodation for the ever increasing urban population. This situation has negative effects on the health of the people in the region.

In order to ascertain the percentage of cancer occurrence and the correlation of the occurrence with SPDC activities among inhabitants of Rivers and Bayelsa States, it was found that in Port Harcourt, Ikwerre and Ahoada Local Government Areas, the percentage of cancer occurrence is 39.77% of the reported cases. According to the study, the incidence of cancer in the communities has a link with the activities of oil companies. Some of these activities include oil spillages, dumping of harmful and carcinogenic wastes, burying of spilled oil and gas flaring (Nwankwola & Georgewill, 2006).

Methodology

Survey research design was adopted to study 20 host communities and the activities of oil companies operating in the communities. The study area is Ikwerre land. Ikwerre people are one of the major tribes which occupy the largest land mass in Rivers State (Ogoloma, 2013; Mackintosh & John, 2021). The Ikwerre ethnic nationality is made up of four Local Government Areas (LGAs) in Rivers State. They are Port Harcourt LGA (PHALGA), Obio/Akpor LGA (OBALGA), Emohua LGA (EMOLGA), and Ikwerre LGA (KELGA). Based on a percentage review of the 2006 Census, the four Local Government Areas have projected population distributions for 2014 as follows:

1. Port Harcourt LGA (PHALGA)   654,440
2. Obio/Akpor LGA (OBALGA)   541,717
3. Emohua LGA (EMOLGA)   235570
4. Ikwerre LGA (KELGA)   221,362
Total   **1,653,089**

The study population totalling 290 persons comprised Traditional Rulers, Community Development Council Chairmen, Youth Leaders, Women Leaders, Family Chiefs, Local Government workers and other decision makers in the communities like executive members of community development unions in the host communities. A sample size of 168 persons was determined through Taro Yamane scientific formula while the study adopted cluster and stratified techniques for sampling. Data were collected through questionnaire, key informant interview and personal observation. The statistical tool of criterion mean, Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) analytical tools were used.

Results and Analysis
Research Question 1: To what extent do host communities get involved in Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) planning and implementation?
Table 1: Level of Community Involvement in Corporate Social Responsibility Planning and Implementation

S/N	Items	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Criterion Mean
1	Involving community leaders in the strategic analysis of the problems in the host communities	28	23	7	82	28	2.65
2	Involving community leaders in the planning of any programme/project they intend to execute	14	19	9	87	39	2.30
3	Involving community members in the execution of programmes/projects	8	45	7	95	13	2.64
4	Involving community members in evaluating the effectiveness of programmes/projects	5	9	3	106	45	1.95
		13.75	24.00	6.50	92.50	31.25	2.38

Table 1 shows the result of the analysis on the four items designed to answer the question on the level of community involvement in corporate social responsibility planning and implementation by oil companies. The proposition on involvement of community leaders in the strategic analysis of the problems in the host communities was rejected by the respondents. This is evident from the mean criterion value of 2.65 (since the decision rule states that a criterion mean less than 3.5 implies that the proposition was rejected by the respondents when a five-point likert scale is used). Respondents again rejected the proposition on involvement of community leaders in the planning of any programme/project oil companies intend to execute in the host communities. This is so as the criterion mean satisfies the requirement for rejection (i.e 2.30<3.5). Respondents rejected the proposition on involvement of community members in the execution of programmes/projects by oil companies (i.e 2.64<3.5). Lastly, respondents rejected the proposition on involvement of community members in the evaluation of the effectiveness of programmes/projects executed ((i.e 1.95<3.5). The average of the criterion mean of all the items calculated as shown in Table 1 is 2.38. The value of the average of the criterion mean of all the items is used in answering the research question. Since 2.38<3.5, we can conclude that the level of involvement of community in the implementation of corporate social responsibility by oil companies in their host communities in Rivers State is low.

Research Question Two: To what extent does the level of community involvement in Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) planning and implementation influence conflict between oil companies and their host communities?

Table 2: Correlation Coefficient for Relationship between Level of Community Involvement in Corporate Social Responsibility planning and Implementation and Conflict between host Communities and Oil Companies

S/N	Variables	Mean	Correlation Coefficient
1	Conflict	3.5	
2	Involvement of Community In CSR planning & Implementation	2.39	
			0.80

Table 2 shows the output of the computation done by the researcher using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The decision rule for correlation analysis is drawn from the sign and magnitude of the coefficient. For there to be a positive and strong correlational relationship between two variables, the correlation coefficient must have a positive relationship and the magnitude of value should be 0.6 and above. The correlation coefficient of 0.80 therefore shows that there exists a positive and strong relationship between level of community involvement in corporate social responsibility planning and implementation and conflict between oil companies and host communities. We can therefore say that the low level of involvement by host communities in corporate social responsibility planning and implementation that was identified has a positive and strong relationship with conflict between host communities and oil companies in Rivers State.

Hypothesis Testing

H_0: Level of Community Involvement in CSR planning and implementation has no significant relationship with conflict between host communities and oil companies.

Table 3 shows the result of the test of significance between level of community involvement in CSR implementation and conflict between host communities and oil companies. The decision rule for analysis of variance (ANOVA) is drawn from the probability of the f-statistics. For there to be a significant relationship between two variables, the probability statistics must be less than 0.05 (i.e 95% confidence interval). The result presented in Table 3 shows that the probability statistics is less than 0.05 (i.e 0.00). We therefore conclude that there is a significant relationship between level of community involvement in CSR planning and implementation and the persistence of conflict between host communities and oil companies.

Table 3: Test for Significance in the Relationship between Level of Community Involvement in CSR planning and implementation and conflict between host communities and oil companies.

S/N	Variables	F-statistics (Between Groups)	Significance (i.e Probability)
1	Level of Community Involvement in CSR Planning & Implementation	132.37	

| 2 | Conflict | | 0.00 |
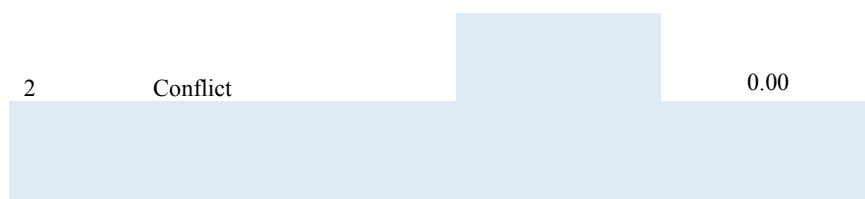
Discussion of Findings

The findings showed that the level of involvement of community members in CSR planning and implementation is low. However, the extent of host community involvement in the planning and implementation of CSR projects should be significant in order to improve the company-community relations. This agrees with Mackintosh and John's (2021) position that oil companies can achieve cordial relationships with their host communities when they allow host communities to become fully involved in the decision making processes on issues which affect and concern them. In doing so, they are given an opportunity to express their yearnings, needs and challenges; they develop a sense of belongingness and become prepared to take responsibility for the success of such projects.

The study also found that there is a positive and strong relationship between the level of community involvement in corporate social responsibility planning and implementation and the persistence of conflict between host communities and oil companies in Rivers State. In spite of the oil companies' claim that they are doing enough in terms of bringing development to the communities as part of their Corporate Social Responsibility, yet the host communities remain hostile and constantly in conflict with the oil multinationals. Poroma (2014) stated that the focus of CSR initiatives embarked on by the oil companies before 2006 was top-to-bottom in nature but acknowledged that after 2006, CSR projects have community involvement to an extent based on the GMoU framework. However, are the communities satisfied with their level of involvement in CSR efforts? The finding of this study suggests that host communities are not satisfied with their level of involvement in the planning and implementation of CSR projects of the oil companies in Rivers State.

Research Findings

(i) The level of community involvement in the planning and implementation of corporate social responsibility by oil companies is low.
(ii) There is a positive and strong relationship between the low level of community involvement in corporate social responsibility planning and implementation and conflict between host communities and oil companies in Rivers State.

Conclusion

Host communities in ikwerre land, Rivers State play host to many oil companies including SPDC and AGIP. Conflict between these communities and the IOCs has always existed even though the communities benefitted from CSR projects, including those being executed under the GMoU with provisions for community involvement. The study however concludes that the low level of community involvement in organizational CSR planning and implementation fosters conflict between the oil companies and their host communities.

Recommendations

(1) Since some oil companies have adopted the GMoU policy as a way of increasing the level of community involvement in organisational CSR planning and implementation, it should be designed to guarantee measurability in order to determine the level of effectiveness and sustainability to keep it going. Efforts should also be made to ensure strict compliance with the GMoU.

(2) The incidence of conflict can be reduced if oil companies maintain a higher level of community involvement in organisational CSR planning and implementation and efforts should be made

to ensure that in incorporating host communities in CSR project planning and implementation, credible persons should be involved to a large extent.

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