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Corporate Social Responsibility Policy of Petroleum Sector: Implications for Niger Delta Development

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Abstract: Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) has been viewed as a vital policy instrument in addressing the socio-economic and environmental challenges associated with petroleum exploration and production in Nigeria's Niger Delta. Despite the region's dominant to national revenue generation, decades of oil exploitation have produced environmental degradation, poverty, infrastructural decay, and persistent conflict. This study critically assesses CSR policy in Nigeria's petroleum sector and analyses its implications for sustainable development in the Niger Delta. Anchored on stakeholder theory, the paper adopts a qualitative and analytical approach, drawing from existing literature, policy documents, and empirical studies to provide a comprehensive assessment of CSR and development outcomes in the Niger Delta. Focus prominently on the contributions of scholars such as Elensi et. al (2024), Idemudia (2011), Frynas (2005), Watts (2008), and Obi (2010), the study argues that CSR in the Niger Delta has largely remained philanthropic, fragmented, and poorly aligned with community development priorities. Though, recent policy reforms particularly the Petroleum Industry Act and local content policy have improved community participation and employment outcomes, CSR practices still fall short in addressing environmental remediation, inclusive governance, and long-term economic transformation. The study concludes that CSR can contribute meaningfully to Niger Delta development only when integrated into enforceable policy frameworks, community-driven planning mechanisms, and transparent accountability structures. It recommends among others, that CSR obligations should be fully integrated into statutory frameworks, with clear benchmarks, sanctions, and monitoring mechanisms.

Keywords: *Corporate Social Responsibility; Petroleum Sector; Niger Delta; Sustainable Development; Local Content Policy; and Host Communities*

1. Introduction

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) has become a prominent feature of corporate governance and public policy discourse, particularly in resource-rich developing economies. In Nigeria, the petroleum sector occupies a strategic position as the mainstay

of national revenue, foreign exchange earnings, and macroeconomic stability. However, the concentration of oil and gas activities in the Niger Delta has become a contradiction of wealth and deprivation, where abundance of resources is merged with

environmental degradation, poverty, and underdevelopment.

Watts, 2008;& Obi, 2010, argued that the Niger Delta represents a classical example of the resource curse phenomenon, where extractive activities undermine local development rather than enhance it. In response to persistent community agitation, militancy, and international criticism, multinational oil companies operating in the region have increasingly adopted CSR policies with the view mitigating the negative externalities of their operations. These policies typically involve community development projects, social investments, environmental management initiatives, and stakeholder engagement programmes.

Despite the increase of CSR activities, development outcomes in the Niger Delta are nothing to write home about. CSR interventions have failed to translate into sustainable socio-economic transformation or environmental recovery (Frynas, 2005;& Idemudia, 2011). This has raised critical questions about the nature, orientation, and effectiveness of CSR policy in Nigeria's petroleum sector.

Recent study by Elensi et al. (2024) adds an important dimension to this discourse by demonstrating that policy-driven approaches such as the petroleum local content policy can yield measurable development outcomes in terms of employment generation and local capacity building in the Niger Delta. Elensi's work suggests that when corporate obligations are embedded within enforceable policy frameworks, they are more likely to contribute to meaningful development than discretionary CSR practices.

Against this background, this study examines CSR policy in the petroleum sector and its implications for Niger Delta development.

2. Conceptual Issues And Clarification

Corporate Social Responsibility and the Petroleum Sector

The concept of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) has evolved significantly over time, moving from voluntary corporate philanthropy to a more structured approach that integrates social, environmental, and economic responsibilities into corporate governance. Early CSR thinking emphasized charitable donations and goodwill gestures, particularly in developing countries where state capacity was weak (Frynas, 2005). In the extractive sector, CSR emerged as a response to mounting criticism of multinational corporations for environmental degradation, labour exploitation, and social dislocation.

Frynas (2005) argues that CSR in oil-producing regions initially functioned as a risk-management strategy aimed at protecting corporate reputation rather than fostering sustainable development. This position is reinforced by Idemudia (2011), who observes that CSR initiatives in the Niger Delta were often reactive, short-term, and disconnected from local development planning.

Watts (2008) situates CSR within the broader political economy of oil, contending that oil corporations operate in alliance with state elites, thereby limiting the transformative potential of CSR. According to Watts, CSR cannot substitute for effective governance and equitable resource distribution, especially in regions where institutional weakness prevails.

Corporate Social Responsibility is broadly defined as the obligation of corporations to account for the social, economic, and environmental impacts of their activities on society (Frynas, 2005). In the extractive sector, CSR encompasses community development, environmental stewardship, ethical labour practices, and stakeholder engagement.

Hond et.al,(2007:1-14) argued that under Corporate Social Responsibility, the people of Niger delta region are seeking employment for the youth, reduction in environmental damage to their farmlands, economic and social development of the entire region

Corporate social responsibility is the noble businesses' responsibility to conduct activities in a lawful manner in a particular community to enhance sustainable social ideals with the view to achieve a peaceful environment within that society. It is the general idea whereby companies voluntarily taking decision contributing a suitable, peaceful society and a cleaner environment. (Helg,2021)

In Nigeria's petroleum industry, CSR has historically taken the form of corporate philanthropy, including the construction of schools, health centres, boreholes, and access roads in host communities. However, scholars argue that such interventions often lack sustainability, community ownership, and alignment with long-term development planning (Idemudia, 2011).

Petroleum Sector is Oil and Gas industry responsible for petroleum resources exploration. Petroleum \sector has three different sectors including upstream, midstream and downstream sectors. Upstream sector performs the activities of exploration and production. This involves searching of underwater and underground natural fields or crude oil fields and the drilling into established well to recover oil and gas. Production involves extraction of oil and gas from the ground. It also involves refining of crude oil in usable product like gasoline, diesels and jet fuel. Midstream sector entails the transportation, storage and processing of oil and gas. Once resources are recovered, it has to transport to refinery. While downstream performs the duty of distribution and transportation to the consumers. (Petroleum Industry Act, 2021)

In the Niger Delta, upstream operations dominate, exposing local communities to environmental risks such as oil spills, gas flaring, and land degradation. These impacts have direct consequences for livelihoods, public health, and social stability.

Csr And Niger Delta

The Niger Delta Region comprises nine states out of thirty six states in Nigeria. They constitute what has been referred to as the "south-south" geo-political zone of Nigeria. Niger Delta undisputedly inhabits Africa's oil and gas reserves and it is Africa's largest producer and the 7th largest exporter of crude oil in the whole world where oil accounts for about 90% of Nigeria's export earnings and 80% of federal government revenue.

The region is very rich in natural resources, said to be the world's third largest wetland and the largest wetland in Africa (Akpan, 2005). The region has been drawn into serious environment degradations, economic hardships and conflicts simply referred to as 'Resource Curse'. Regions that are richly blessed with an abundance of resources like oil and gas turn out to have poorer economic growth than countries and regions with fewer natural resources. (Ross, M. L. et.al,1999).

The Niger Delta has attracted extensive scholarly attention as a testing ground for CSR effectiveness in resource-rich regions. Obi (2010) characterizes CSR in the Niger Delta as a "contested terrain," shaped by conflicting interests between multinational oil companies, host communities, and the Nigerian state. He argues that CSR initiatives often fail because they do not address the structural drivers of underdevelopment, including political exclusion and environmental injustice. Idemudia (2011) provides one of the most comprehensive critiques of CSR in the Niger Delta, arguing that CSR projects frequently lack sustainability because they are externally designed and imposed. He emphasizes that community participation is essential for CSR effectiveness, noting that projects such as water schemes and health centres often collapse due to poor maintenance and lack of local ownership.

Similarly, Eneh (2011) contends that CSR in the Niger Delta has been shaped by corporate priorities rather than community needs. According to Eneh, the absence of enforceable CSR standards allows oil

companies to define development narrowly, resulting in fragmented and symbolic interventions.

Niger Delta development refers to the improvement of socio-economic conditions, environmental quality, and institutional capacity within oil-producing communities. Development indicators include employment, income levels, infrastructure provision, environmental sustainability, and social cohesion. Persistent underdevelopment in the region has been attributed to governance failures, environmental degradation, and ineffective corporate and state interventions (Watts, 2008; Obi, 2010).

Niger delta development entails sustainable improvement of livelihood through economic empowerment, environmental remediation, social infrastructure provision, and inclusive governance and participation. Niger delta development should be people-centered, environmentally sustainable, and institutionally accountable. (Elensi, 2019). In terms of economic development, Niger Delta development entails job creation and skill acquisition, diversification beyond oil (agriculture, SMEs, blue economy), and local content development must reduce poverty, inequality and unemployment simultaneously. (Todari & Smith, 2015)

3. CSR And Sustainable Development

CSR as a development driven competitive strategy rather than a cost has connected to sustainable development underscoring long-term societal impact, innovation, and inclusive growth. CSR contributes to sustainable development when companies redesign products, value chains, and local economic clusters to benefit both society and business. (Porter and Kramer, (2006; 2011).

CSR is a vehicle for system-wide change, especially in addressing climate change, inequality, and poverty. It can supplement weak state capacity in achieving sustainable development in developing economies. (Visser, (2010).

Sachs (2015) views sustainable development as integration of economic development, social inclusion, and environmental sustainability, institutionalized through United Nation Development goals.(SDGs). This requires Good governance, institutional capacity, and global and local partnerships. In the related development, United Nations Development programme(UNDP) describes sustainable as development that improves human well-being, reduces poverty, protects the environment, and ensures institutional sustainability.

From a sustainable development perspective, this contribution is significant because it shifts CSR analysis from short-term social investments to long-term capacity building. Frynas (2005) previously argued that CSR should support local productive capacity; Elensi's findings provide concrete policy pathways for achieving this objective.

4. CSR Policy And Local Content Policy Local

Local content policy refers to regulatory and institutional frameworks that mandate the participation of indigenous labour, firm capital, and technology in extractive and strategic sectors of the economy. In Nigeria, the Nigerian oil, and gas industry content development Act (2010) institutionalize local employment, local procurement, and capacity development.

Corporate social responsibilities(CSR) on the other hand, involves voluntary or regulated corporate action aimed at promoting social welfare, environmental sustainability, and ethical business conduct beyond profit maximization , (Carol, 1991)

One of the most significant policy innovations in Nigeria's petroleum sector is the Nigerian Oil and Gas Industry Content Development Act (2010). Although not originally framed as a CSR policy, local content legislation embodies core CSR principles by promoting indigenous participation, employment, and capacity building. In their submission, Porter and Iramer (2006) argued that local content

policy exemplifies strategic CSR because it integrate social responsibility into production process, reduce social conflict by promoting community participation, and enhances corporate legitimacy and license to operate.

Ovadia, (2016) postulated that oil companies that comply with local content regulations often experience improve community relations and reduced operational disruptions, indicating CSR effectiveness. Supporting the view, Eneh (2011) argued that local content promotes employment generation, reduces youth restiveness, enhances technology transfer, and build local institutional capacity. Similarly, Ogbemi (2010) contends that CSR without local content companies perpetuates dependency, while local content-driven CSR promotes self-reliance and economic resilience.

Elensi et al. (2024) demonstrate that local content policy has a positive and statistically significant impact on employment generation in the Niger Delta. Their findings suggest that when corporate obligations are legally enforced, development outcomes are more sustainable than those achieved through voluntary CSR.

This aligns with Frynas's (2005) argument that CSR must be embedded within national development strategies to be effective.

5. CSR And Host Communities

Host communities are the communities with the following features including direct exposure to environmental, social and economic impacts, stakeholders status but often lacking formal decision-making, vulnerability due to weak institutional protection and limited compensation mechanisms, and dependence on local natural resources for livelihood (farming, fishing, and forestry) . Host communities are indigenous or local populations residing in areas where resources are extracted, noting that these communities frequently lack ownership over resources but suffer the costs of exploitation. (Akpan, 2006). In Nigeria, particularly the Niger Delta, host communities

are commonly seen as Oil-producing communities where petroleum exploration and production take place.(Watt, 2008). Idemudia (2010) views host communities as local communities that bear the direct social, economic, and environmental consequences of corporate operations, particularly extractive activities. This communities often experience both potential benefits (employment, infrastructure) and adverse impacts (pollution, and displacement).

Corporate social responsibility refers to the obligations of business organization to pursue policies, make decisions, and undertake actions that are desirable in terms of societal values and objectives.(Browwn,1953). This contribution underscores CSR as responsibility of businesses to align their actions with societal expectations. It provides the basis for understanding why firms owe responsibilities to host communities particularly those directly affected by their operations.

Carroll (1991) argued that corporations must first be economically viable, obey the law, act ethically, and contribute voluntarily to society. This implies that within a locality are expected not only to generate CSR profits but also to comply with environmental and social regulations, act fairly toward community members, and contribute to community development initiatives such as education, health care, and infrastructure. CSR initiatives that fail to reflect community priorities often result in mistrust and resistance.(Idemudia, 2011). Supporting the view, Eweje (2006) observed that CSR failures are often linked to environment neglect and lack stakeholders' engagement. He argues that meaningful CSR requires transparency, dialogue, and long-term commitment to host community development.

6. Methodology

The study adopted a qualitative and analytical approach drawing data from existing literature, policy documentations, internets, government, and corporation publications, newspapers, text

books, journals and other official records. Observation methods were also adopted to complement the secondary data. The paper is organized into six segments. The first segment is the introduction which provides a comprehensive background to the study. The second part contains conceptual issues and clarification that treats the salient concepts used in the study of discourse. Methodology is the third segment which provides information on how data were sourced, analyzed, and organized in the study, while the fourth segment contains theoretical framework that anchor the study. The fifth segment treats the implications of CSR policy for Niger Delta development, and the challenges confronting the policy, while the sixth segment contains conclusions, and appropriate recommendations.

7. Theoretical Framework

The study is anchored on Stakeholder theory proposed by Freeman, (1984). The theory argued that corporation have obligations to all stakeholder affected by their operations, including the environment, host communities, government, and the employees. This theory emphasizes the moral and strategic obligation of oil companies to address community grievances arising from petroleum exploitation. It also emphasizes inclusive growth, participation, and intergovernmental equity.

This theory is appropriate to the study by recognizing multiple stakeholder interests; CSR becomes a mechanism, through which firms contribute to social cohesion, environmental stewardship, and long-term development. According to Freeman et al (2007) stakeholder theory transform CSR into a development- oriented strategy, aligning corporate behavior with sustainable development goals. Supporting the view Idemudia (2011) argues that failure to meaningfully engage host communities undermines corporate legitimacy and fuels

conflict. CSR policies that ignore community voices tend to be perceived as imposed, inadequate, or exploitative.

8. Implications Of Csr Policy For Niger Delta Development

It is interesting to note that corporate social responsibility policies have created positive and negative implications in the Niger Delta region. According to Ite, U.. E. (2007), multinational companies have provided social infrastructures, agriculture ventures, employment and economic and empowerment schemes through CSR programs in the Niger delta. However, these were found inadequate by many community members.

Job creation and local employment

Employment creation has been one of the most persistent demands of Niger Delta communities which the petroleum sectors have endeavored to justify regarding CSR. Multinational corporations in Nigeria often justify CSR by emphasizing employment generation for host communities, particularly in extractive industries. (Amaeshi ,et.al, 2006).. Elensi et al. (2024) argued that local content policy has expanded employment opportunities for host community residents, thereby reducing youth unemployment and social unrest. Supporting the view, Idemudia (2011) notes that CSR enhances livelihoods when firms prioritize local content and indigenous employment .CSR policies when aligned with local content legislation have the potential to improve socio-economic conditions in the Niger Delta, Employment generation, skills training, and indigenous contracting contribute directly to income growth and poverty reduction (Elensi et al., 2024) . **See table. 1**

Nevertheless, several scholars criticized CSR employment outcomes as insufficient and exclusionary. As postulated by Akpan(2006), that employment benefits from CSR are often monopolize by politically connected individuals , excluding ordinary youth.

Local Workforce Employment Generation in Six (6) Selected States in the Niger Delta Region between 2010-2023

State	Abia	Akwa Ibom	Bayelsa	Cross River State	Delta	Rivers	Total
Period	28	70	76	22	322	273	791
2010	47	286	80	25	352	398	1,188
2011	48	162	85	42	359	422	1,118
2012	62	95	99	59	598	452	1,513
2013	75	273	110	77	685	559	1,779
2014	78	295	112	80	698	559	1,822
2015	76	208	123	83	798	538	1,817
2016	80	311	145	105	875	542	2,058
2017	85	322	208	136	895	552	2,198
2018	99	598	314	355	1,234	966	3,566
2019	110	859	653	595	1,142	1,332	4,691
2020	112	998	723	633	1,253	2,002	6,721
2021	141	1,538	981	722	1,345	2,223	7,950
2022	140	1,688	2,234	839	1,234	2,666	10,801
2023	228	2,663	3,123	1,964	1,234	5,289	17,501
Total	1,409	7,966	9,066	5,737	13,024	18,773	55,184

Source: Local Content Monitoring Development Board records, 2023

The table above shows the numbers of local workforce employment generation in the six selected in the Niger Delta region between 2010-2023. From the table it is discover that out of 55,184 local workforce employed by the oil companies in the six States in the Niger Delta Region between 2010 to 2023, 1,409 are from Abia State, 7,966 from Akwa ibom State, 9,066 from Bayelsa state 5,737 from Cross River State, 13,024 from Delta State, and 18,773 from River State

Infrastructure Development

As positive implications, CSR has become a critical intervention in the infrastructural development in Niger Delta having been historically experience poor road networks, inadequate electricity, and limited access to potable water, weak health facilities and undeveloped educational infrastructural facilities prevalence in the host communities. Responding to host communities' agitations and demands, petroleum sectors adopted CSR as mechanisms for infrastructural provision. (Idemudia, 2011)

As noted by Ite,(2007) infrastructure development has become the centerpiece of CSR practice in the Niger Delta due to persistent neglect by the state. Infrastructure

development remains the most visible outcome of CSR in the Niger Delta. Roads, schools, and health facilities provided by oil companies have contributed to improved access to basic services in some communities (Frynas, 2005).

However, Obi (2010) argues that infrastructure-focused CSR is insufficient for sustainable development, particularly when projects are not integrated into local government planning frameworks. In many cases, CSR infrastructure duplicates government efforts or remains underutilized due to lack of staffing and maintenance.

Health Outcomes

Regarding health care, CSR involves corporate action intended to improve access to medical activities, supporting health infrastructure, promoting diseases prevention and health education, and enhancing occupational and community health outcomes. Supporting view, McGuire (1963) argues that corporations extend their responsibilities beyond profit-making to include society and public welfare. Health care CSR initiative often designed to meet the health needs of stakeholders particularly in areas of affected by corporate operations. Firms have to

consider the interest of the stakeholders particularly in areas affected by the operations. (Freeman, 1984)

Companies invest in the construction and renovation of hospitals, clinic, and primary health centers, donation of essential drugs, ambulances, diagnostic equipment, and medical supplies. Such interventions help to improve service delivery in underserved communities. (Idemudia, 2011). Supporting the view, Frynas (2005) submits that multinational corporations in extractive industries often provide health facilities in host communities to address gaps left by the state.

CSR plays a complementary role to government health services in the developing regions. Its programs frequently support immunization campaigns, material and child health services, HIV/AIDS awareness, malaria control, and sanitation programs reducing social and economic costs. Preventive health CSR reduces long-term social and economic costs. (Vesser, 2008). Health-related CSR initiatives in the Niger Delta include medical outreaches, clinic construction, and donation of medical equipment. While these interventions provide short-term relief, scholars argue that they fail to address systemic health challenges caused by environmental pollution (Aaron, 2012).

Aghalino (2009) highlights the link between oil pollution and respiratory illnesses, waterborne diseases, and reduced life expectancy in host communities. CSR programmes that do not prioritize environmental cleanup are therefore limited in their capacity to improve public health outcomes.

Csr, Technology Transfer And Sustainable Development

Technology has become one of the most visible and powerful ways organization now expresses their corporate responsibility (CSR). It is noted that CSR without technology engagement is increasingly inadequate in this era of digital economy. Technology represents

the application of scientific knowledge to solve practical problems and improve efficiency. (Castells, 2010)

Corporations engage in CSR by providing ICT infrastructure, offering digital literacy, and supporting innovation hubs in host communities. Warschauer (2004) argues that access to information and communication technology (ICT) enhances social inclusion, education, and economic opportunities. Similarly, Morsing & Schultz (2006), postulate that technology strengthens CSR by improving inclusiveness, participation, and accountability.

Elensi and Mboho (2024) extend the CSR discourse by focusing on local technology development. Their study demonstrates that petroleum sector policies promoting indigenous participation enhance technology transfer and innovation capacity in the Niger Delta.

However, disparities persist across communities due to uneven implementation, weak oversight, and elite capture (Idemudia, 2011).

9. Environmental Degradation And Livelihoods

Oil exploration has enhanced ecological damage to include oil spills, soil and water contamination, loss of livelihoods, and diminished traditional farming, and fishing. CSR policies disrupt the livelihood by ignoring the social and economic oil activities. These environmental harms could be meaningfully addressed by CSR efforts. Despite CSR investments, environmental degradation remains widespread. Oil spills, gas flaring, and contaminated water sources continue to undermine livelihoods and public health (Aghalino, 2009; Aaron, 2012). Jacob & Akintola (2014) argued that despite CSR rhetoric, environmental protection remains poorly implemented and many oil spills and ecosystem degradation issues are not satisfactorily addressed through CSR. See **table 2**

Environmental degradation remains one of the most critical dimensions of CSR failure in the Niger Delta. Decades of oil spills, gas flaring, and ecosystem destruction have undermined traditional livelihoods such as fishing and farming. Studies by Aghalino (2009) and Aaron (2012) demonstrate that environmental damage has contributed significantly to poverty, food insecurity, and health challenges in host communities. Aaron (2012) argues that CSR initiatives often prioritize visible social projects over environmental remediation, thereby neglecting the root

causes of community grievances. This observation aligns with Frynas's (2005) critique that CSR tends to address symptoms rather than structural problems.

Recent empirical studies confirm that environmental sustainability remains weakly integrated into CSR frameworks. According to Aye-Agele et al. (2023), CSR projects in the Niger Delta rarely include long-term ecological restoration or community-based environmental monitoring, limiting their contribution to sustainable development.

Environmental Hazard/Disasters in the Niger Delta Region from 2010 to 2025

S/nos	States	Date/Year	Nature of Disasters	Locations	Companies
1	Akwa Ibom State	1 st May, 2010	Oil Spill	Qua Iboe Oil Export. Ibeno L.G.A	
	=	20 th Dec., 2011	=	Coastal line	Shell's Bonga Offshore Facility
	=	13&24 th August, 2012	=	Qua Ibom Oil Field, Ibeno L.G.A	
	=	14 th July, 2014	=	Iben L. G. A	Mobil Producing
	=	29 TH June, 2014	=	Ibeno L. G. A	=
	=	21 st & 23 August, 2023	=	Ikot Ebidang Community, Onna L.G.A	Sterling Oil
	=	October, 2023	=	Iba Oku, Uyo L.G.A	
	=	16 th August, 2024	Oil Spill	27 communities across Ibeno, Eket, Esit Eket, and Onna L.G.A	
	=	June, 2025	=	Emere-Oke and Akpabom communities. Eastern Obolo	Sterling Oil
2	Abia	Aug./sept., 2011	=	Umurbulungwu, Unuorie, Umuitiri, Umukalu.Obohia, and Obahu in Ukwa West L.G.A	
	=	June, 2015	=	Acha Community, Ukwa West L.G.A	

	=	July, 2016	=	Owaza Community. Ukwa west L.G.A	
	=	Feb, 2020	=	Imo River,Ogala pipe line. Ukwa west L.G>A	
	=	Oct., 2020	=	Isietitiohl Owaza. Ukwa west L.G.A	
	=	May, 2023	=	Eze Iyi River. Isuikwuato	
	=		=	=	
3	Bayelsa	20 th Dec., 2011	==	350 shopping line communities in Bayelsa	Bongo Oil field
	=	16 th January, 2012	=	Koluama in southern Ijaw L.G.A	Cheveron
	=	Aug., 2015	=	Nembe creek, Nembe L. G.A	Shell Dev. Company
	=	3 rd Oct.,2023	=	Permabiri communities southern Ijaw L. G. A at Diebu creek	
	=	June, 2024	=	Nembe swampy facility	Aiteo
	=	Sept., 2024	=	Ogboinbiri community in Ijaw L.G.A	
	=	Nov., 2024	=	=	
4	Cross River State	1997	=	Offshore facilities. Cross river estuary	
5	Edo State	Aug., 2017	=	Etsako L.G.A	
	=	May, 2015	=	Umoghunnorkhua community. Orhionmwon L.G.A	
	=	=	=	Ikara, Ajatifon and kolokolo communities. Akha L.G.A	
	==	Nov.,2023 early 2024	=	Kokodiagbene communities Ikpoba Okha L.G.A	
6	Delta State	June, 2012	=	Bodo Creke	

	=	Aprl, 2021	=	Ikarama community	
	=	March, 2022	=	Sapele & Okpe L.G.A	
7	Imo State	May, 2021	=	Obiakpu, haji/Egbema L.g.A	
	=	June, 2021	=	Mmahu, Ohaji /Egbema L.G.A	
8	Ondo State	April 18, 2019	=	Ojumole	
	=	April , 2020	=	Awoye, Muse, Gbakwa	
	=	April 12, 2025	=	Ilaje	
	=	April 25,2025	=	Ilaje	
9	River State	Aug. 21, 2024	=	Rumuodunwere community	Spdc
	=	June 13 &18, 2023	=	Eleme, Ara, Eteo community, and Oke-Olebo stream	
	=	May 11, 2024	=	Asarama community, Andoni L.G.A	
	=	Nov.3, 2024	=	Ilome community, bonny L.G.A	
	=	Dec.14, 2024	=	Loading terminal, bonny	
	==	May 5 & 19, 2025	=	Ahoda East & west L. G. A	
	=	May 6, 2025	=	D-Camp community Gokana L.G.A	

Source: oil Spill Detection and Response Agency (2025)

The above table shows the environmental hazard and disaster occurred in the Nine (9) States of the Niger Delta Region from 2010 to 2025 respectively.

10. Challenges Confronting Csr Policy In The Niger Delta

One of the most persistent challenges undermining CSR effectiveness in the Niger Delta is weak governance and limited institutional capacity. Regulatory agencies

responsible for environmental protection and CSR oversight often lack the resources, autonomy, and enforcement power required to hold multinational oil companies accountable (Aghalino, 2009; Watts, 2008).

Idemudia (2011) argues that the absence of robust monitoring mechanisms allows oil companies to implement CSR selectively, often prioritizing public relations objectives over sustainable development outcomes. This governance deficit weakens the transformative potential of CSR policies.

Amongst the prominent challenges facing CSR are corruption and elite capture and this significantly constrain CSR outcomes in the Niger Delta. CSR projects Negotiation and implementation are always dominated by Community leaders and intermediaries who always diverting benefits away from intended beneficiaries (Eneh, 2011; Obi, 2010).

Victor (2022) documents cases where CSR resources are monopolized by local elites, exacerbating intra-community inequality and fueling conflict. This undermines trust in both corporations and government institutions.

CSR programs fail to align with community priorities including employment, sustainable livelihood, and regular stakeholders' engagement. Lack of community involvement in CSR decision-making resulting to conflict rather than harmony..Projects are frequently designed without adequate consultation, resulting in low relevance and sustainability (Idemudia, 2011).Elensi et al. (2024) highlight that policies mandating community participation—such as local content requirements are more effective in promoting inclusion and ownership than voluntary CSR practices.

Environmental neglect and lack of regulatory process enhance environmental degradation which continues to destroy development gains in the Niger Delta. Watts (2008) contends that without strong environmental governance, CSR will remain incapable of addressing the ecological foundations of underdevelopment.

11. Conclusion

The study examined Corporate Social Responsibility policy in Nigeria's petroleum sector and its implications for Niger Delta development. The findings reveal that while CSR initiatives have contributed to limited improvements in social infrastructure, they have largely failed to deliver sustainable socio-economic transformation or environmental recovery. Based on scholar's contributions, it also discovers that CSR effectiveness depends on its integration into

enforceable policy frameworks. Elensi's empirical evidence demonstrates that policy-driven corporate responsibility through local content legislation offers a viable pathway for enhancing employment, capacity building, and social stability in the Niger Delta.

The study concludes that CSR must evolve from discretionary philanthropy to a development-oriented, legally embedded, and environmentally restorative framework. It is only through strong governance, community participation, and policy coherence can CSR contributes meaningfully to sustainable development and peace in Nigeria's oil-producing regions.

Recommendations

The study recommended among others that:

- 1) CSR obligations should be fully integrated into statutory frameworks, with clear benchmarks, sanctions, and monitoring mechanisms.
- 2) CSR initiatives should complement local content policy by prioritizing employment generation, skills acquisition, and indigenous enterprise development to enhance sustainability and address structural exclusion in the petroleum sector.
- 3) 3) CSR frameworks should prioritize environmental cleanup, ecosystem restoration, and community-based environmental monitoring to restore livelihoods and public health.
- 4) There should be transparency in the report of CSR expenditures, project outcomes, and environmental impacts to reduce corruption and elite capture.
- 5) Host communities should be actively involved in CSR planning, implementation, and evaluation to enhance legitimacy, ownership, and sustainability.

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