

Shell Petroleum Development Company's Environmental Concern and the Restiveness in Bonny Rivers State, Nigeria

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Abstract: *The restiveness in Bonny of Rivers State has become worrisome due to the inability of SPDC to render Satisfactory Corporate Social Responsibility through environmental improvements and sustainability in the area. The research examined SPDC's Corporate Social Responsibility in terms of environmental development and the spate of restiveness in Bonny. To generate credible data for proper interrogation of the problem, primary and Secondary Sources were adopted. Thus, an accessible population of ten communities in Bonny was randomly selected and studies. The data were analysed using mean values to answer the research questions, while the hypotheses were tested using the Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient at 0.05 level of significance. The study found that the environment of Bonny was depleted due to the oil exploration and exploitation activities of SPDC, hence there were problems of environmental degradation and pollution. This led to the restiveness of the youths that manifested in Kidnapping, hostage taking, pipeline vandalisation, destruction of public and private buildings and so on. Again, the study found that the government has not mustered up strong political will to compel SPDC to be compliant with the extant laws on the environment so as to ensure global environmental best practices. However, the study has recommended that the Federal Government should come up strong with regulations on the environment which SPDC should strictly comply with. The study also recommends that SPDC should maintain environmental best practices in Bonny which are the equivalent of what happens in every part of the world where it operates.*

Keywords - Restiveness, Environmental Degradation, Pollution, SPDC, Regulations, Kidnapping, Hostage Taking, Pipeline Vandalisation.

1. INTRODUCTION

It has been argued that a meaningful development is difficult to achieve in the absence of a conducive environment, which has been traditionally defined as the total surroundings, which include natural and biological resources. However with the current trend of sustainable development, the definition of the environment has been widened to include natural and human resources and their interactions with each other (Emmanuel and Alakinde, 2006) McEachern (1997) identifies keys to development to include level of labour productivity, technology and education, level of efficiency in the use of labour, presence of capital, infrastructure, and availability and richness of natural resources. The components of development target productivity which if not properly managed (especially the available natural resources) will lead to a degenerated environment, unfit for both man and the ecosystem at large (Olujimi, 2010).

Environmental sustainability is critical to development. In countries of Africa, wide range of damages are meted out to the environment and this undermines human welfare efforts. Environment in this aspect consists of the ecological systems, the trees and grasses which provide fuel and fodder and which prevent erosion, provide water catchments, ameliorate climate changes, and provide wildlife habitats (World Bank, 1989). The entire environments of most countries in Africa are seriously abused, and this leads to loss of arable land wildlife, water supplies and climate changes. An example is the Sahara desert which is today spreading fast Southwards, and human activities that have brought about increased deforestation and which makes the region to be regarded as the largest area threatened by desertification.

The growing population, the growth towards more industrialization and the pursuit of other economic activities, all exert pressure on the land resources by converting forestlands to agricultural and other types of land use. These moves have inadvertent consequences, and over time would give rise to serious environmental problems such as soil erosion. Pesticides, fertilizers and other chemicals are major pollutants and they cause huge risk to the entire ecosystem. The exploitation of mineral resources has caused several environmental problems, erosion, habitat, destruction, mine waste, damage of crops, changes in terrain (Nnamai, 2009).

Akpotor (2012) avers that Bonny in the Niger Delta, which produces oil for the government of Nigeria, is being ravaged by ecological disequilibrium, which is a direct consequence of the destructive activity of Shell Petroleum Development Company. According to him, these include pollution arising from gas flares and oil spillage, and the resultant phenomena such as loss of farmlands, rivers, acid rain, contaminated air, spiritual desecration and the decimation of the flora and fauna. This, therefore, explains the pace of restiveness in the area.

2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The spate of killings, hostage-taking of Shell Petroleum Development Company's staff and government officials as well as oil pipeline vandalization by the youths in Bonny has become worrisome. According to the ICG (2006), some, SPDC's workers namely Mikka Nicheri (Bulgaria), Harny Ebanks (Honduras), Arnold Laundry (American) and Nigel Watson Clark (Briton) were kidnapped by December 2006, a total of 240 incidents involving 118 hostages were recorded in the area.

3. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- i. To establish a relationship between SPDC's environmental concern and the restiveness in Bonny.
- ii. To recommend solutions to the problem.

4. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Empirical Review

Literatures exist that have studied the effects of crude oil and oil pollution on the environment, soil and crops in Bonny in particular and Niger Delta in general and outside their borders (Bello, Aladesanwa, Akinlaban & Mohammed, 1999; Minai, Shariara, & Saragbebi, 2007, Abii & Nwosu, 2009 Idodo-Umeh & Ogeigbu, 2010; Ojumba, 2011 among others). Bello, Aladesanwa, Akinlaban and Mohammed (1999) examined the effects of gas flaring on the growth and yield of maize on farms located at some distances from gas flaring point. The experimental findings revealed that in the crop total leaf area monitored, mean percentage plant survival and grain yield were significantly reduced in all the locations compared to the compared area and concluded that those located 200m away from the flaring point failed to produce any yield.

Minai-Tehrari, Shariari, and Savagbebi (2007) observed the effect of different concentrations of *Festuca arrundieca* and the results show that germination number and dry biomass of the plant decreased by increasing light crude oil concentration in the soil. The light of the leaves reduced in higher crude oil concentration compared to the controlled.

On the other hand, Abii and Nwosu (2009) examined the effect of the soil of Eleme in Rivers State on two sides (Ogbale and Agbonchia) while another area (Alero) served as the controlled. The results include that oil spillage adversely affected the nutrient level and the efficiency status of Eleme soil and every other soil in Bonny and the Niger Delta generally. Idodo-Umeh and Ogeibu (2010) investigated the values of Total Petroleum Hydrocarbon (PTH) and heavy metals in soils, plantain fruit and cassava tubers harvested from farms impacted with petroleum and non-petroleum activities in delta state. The result revealed that the values of heavy metals are higher in cassava tubers, epicap and mesocap of plantain fruits harvested petroleum impacted soil than from non-petroleum impacted soil.

Similarly, Ojumba (2011) evaluates the social and economic variables associated With poverty in crude oil polluted crops in Rivers State farms. The study uses primary data (questionnaire) and employs Tobit censored regression found that the extent of income diversification reduced poverty drastically by 9.8 times in crude oil polluted farm-households and 12.7 times in non-polluted farm-households. Jike (2004) argues that the length and breadth of the Niger Delta inclusive of Bonny, the impact of oil and gas on the built environment is quite evident in the discolouration of corrugated iron sheets by constant gas flaring. This also means as House Owners Association asserted (and corroborated by the World Council of Mayors) that the life span of roofing materials in the Niger Delta generally is relatively shorter than in any other part of the larger Nigerian polity as a result of the frequent deluge of acid rain which is a part-consequence of gas flaring. At the slightest gale or tempest, buildings begin to collapse, as this has become a regular phenomenon as in the case of 2004 when the National Assembly had to pass a resolution to send relief to Delta State.

The Niger Delta Women Protesters especially the Warri Women in 2001 who besieged the headquarters of Shell Petroleum Development Company and Chevron clearly highlighted the deleterious impact of oil exploration on public health. The public health implications of oil spillage, especially gas flaring for the inhabitants of the region have not been empirically investigated fully. However, the preliminary survey by Akoroda (2000) indicates that an emergent trend of carcinogenic diseases in the Niger Delta is traceable to the exposure of the locals to the radioactive elements of gas flaring. The local communities suffer respiratory diseases, which are a consequence of long exposure to gas flaring (Jike, 2004). Skin rashes are also very widespread in these areas. The leaders of the protest of 2001 quite rightly traced the prevalence of bronchial diseases and eye abnormalities to unrestrained gas flaring by Shell Petroleum Development Company (SPDC) in the whole of the Niger Delta.

5. THEORETICAL REVIEW

There are number of theories on 'whether' or 'not' corporate social responsibility should be incorporated in firms activities by different scholars. The concept of corporate social responsibility means that organizations have moral, ethical and philanthropic responsibilities in addition to their responsibility to earn a fair return from investors and comply with the law. It has been argued by Friedman (1970) that the corporation's sole responsibility is to provide maximum financial return to shareholders, while others are of the view that business owes responsibility to a wide range of groups in the society.

This study is based on the Stakeholder's Theory as propounded by Freeman in 1970. According to him, the firm can be described as a series of connections of stakeholders that the managers of the firm attempt to manage. Stakeholder, according to Ofondu (2014) is a term, which denotes any identifiable group, or individual who affect or be affected by the products, policies and work process. Modern business is intimately integrated with the rest of the society. It is not some self-enclosed world, like a small group rather, business activities have profound ramifications throughout society and their influence on people's lives is hard to escape. Therefore, corporations like Shell Petroleum Development Corporation have responsibilities that go beyond making money because of their great social and economic power.

Efforts by Government to Mitigate Environmental Degradation by SPDC

Oil Pollution Act (OPA) of 1990

The Oil Pollution Act of 1990 (OPA 1990) is responsible for many of the nation's improvements in oil spill prevention and response. OPA 1990 provides guidance for government and industry on oil spill prevention, mitigation, cleanup and liability. The majority of OPA 1990 provisions were targeted at reducing the number of spills followed by reducing the quantity of oil spilled. OPA 1990 also created a comprehensive scheme to ensure that sufficient financial resources are available to clean up a spill and to compensate persons damaged by a spill. It also ensures that the federal response system is adequately prepared to manage the Impacts of oil spills 'that do occur; and mandates that Industry implement prevention and preparedness measures. The OPA also mandates that tankers and inland oil facilities develop individual response plans. Furthermore, the OPA also mandates enhancements to the national response' system and development of Area Contingency Plans

National Oil Spill Detection and Response Agency (NOSDRA)

A National Oil Spill Detection and Response Agency (NOSDRA) has been approved by the Federal Executive Council of Nigeria. The Ministry of Environment, which initiated the Agency, has also forwarded to the Federal Executive, Council, for approval, the reviewed draft National Oil spill Contingency Plan (NOSCP), which the Agency would manage (Alexandra Gas and Oil Connections, 2006) The establishment of the contingency plan and the agency was in compliance with the International Convention on -Oil Pollution Preparedness, Response and Cooperation (OPRC90) to which Nigeria is a signatory. The draft -bill' on the NOSDRA has been forwarded to the National Assembly for deliberation and enactment into law (Alexandra Gas and Oil Connections, 2006). Apart from intensifying efforts towards compliance monitoring and enforcement of oil and gas regulations and standards, the ministry is also mounting pressure, on the oil and gas operators for a gas flare-out. An effort is also being made, according to the sources, to ensure the use of environmental-friendly drilling fluid and mud systems (Alexandra Gas and Oil Connections, 2006)

The Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC)

To reduce the rate of oil incidents along the Nigerian Coast particularly as a result of vandalisation, the Federal Government through an act of the National Assembly in 2000 passed into law the Niger Delta Development Commission. (NDDC). The Act among other things established a Commission to carry out among other things the following tasks:

- a. Cause the Niger-Delta area to be surveyed in order to ascertain measures, which are necessary to promote its physical and socio-economic development;
- b. Prepare plans and schemes designed to promote the physical development of the Niger Delta area;
- c. Identify factors inhibiting the development of the Niger-Delta and assist the member states in the formation and implementation of policies to ensure sound and efficient management of the resources of the Niger-Delta; |
- d. Assess and report on any project funded or carried out in the NigerDelta area by oil and gas producing companies and any other company including non-governmental organisations and ensure that funds released for such projects are properly utilised;
- e. Tackle ecological and environmental-problems that arise from the exploration of oil in the Niger-Delta area,

f. Liaise with the various oil mineral and gas prospecting and producing companies on all matters of pollution prevention and control.

Essentially, items (e) and (f) deal with issues pertaining to oil exploration and production and the NNDC act is a strategic way of dealing with all forms of pollution from these activities in the Niger Delta.

Petroleum Related Laws and Regulations

Part of the means of managing the environment is to have in place the necessary laws, regulations, and guidelines. According to the Federal Environmental Protection Agency, Lagos Nigeria, the following relevant national laws and international agreements are in effect:

- a. Endangered Species Decree Cap 108 LFN 1990.
- b. Federal Environmental protection Agency Act. Cap °131 LFN 1990.
- c. Harmful Waste Cap 165 LFN 1990.
- d. Petroleum (Drilling and Production) Regulations; 1969.
- e. Mineral Oil (Safety) Regulations, 1963.
- f_ International Convention on the Establishment of an International Fund for Compensation for Oil Pollution Damage, 1971
- g. Convention on the Prevention of Marine pollution Damage, 1972
- h. African Convention on the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources, 1968
- i. International Convention on the Establishment of an International Fund for the Compensation for Oil Pollution Damage, 1971.

The Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) decree No 86 of 1992

The Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) decree No 86 of 1992 was promulgated to protect and sustain' our ecosystem. The law makes the development of an EIA compulsory for any major project that may have adverse effects on the environment (Ntukekpo, 1996; Olagoke, 1996). It sought to assess the likely or potential environmental impacts of proposed activities, including their direct or indirect, cumulative, short term and long term effects, and to identify the measures available to mitigate adverse environmental impacts of proposed activities, and assessment of those measures.(Ozekhome, 2001). The carrying out of EIAs is policed by the Federal Environmental Protection Agency, and by state environmental protection agencies.

6. METHODOLOGY

Primary and secondary sources of data collection were adopted. An accessible population of 10 communities in Bonny was randomly selected and studied. The data were analyzed using mean values to answer the research questions as the hypotheses were tested using the Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient at 0.05 level of significance. A total of 394 questionnaire were distributed across the 10 communities of Bonny and some selected offices in SPDC, and on the whole, 388 questionnaire were completed and returned.

7. TESTING OF THE HYPOTHESES

The hypotheses were tested with the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient, r . The value for r , the PPMCC r was obtained as $r=0.186$ which indicates an inverse linear correlation between Shell and Bonny communities in terms of degradation and pollution as a cause of Bonny youth restiveness.

Decision Rule at 0.05 level of significance

- i. Reject the null hypothesis where the t_{cal} is greater than the t_{tab} at 0.05 level of significance.
- ii. Accept the null hypothesis where the t_{cal} is less than the t_{tab} at 0.05 level of significance.

The Hypotheses:

Ho: There is no relationship between SPDC's environmental concern and the restiveness in Bonny

Ha: There is relationship between SPDC's environmental concern and the restiveness in Bonny

Data on SPDC's Environmental Concern and the Restiveness in Bonny

S/N	X	Y	X	Y
1	16	115	21	67
2	73	67	22	65
3	105	31	23	57
4	52	92	24	49
5	59	61	25	8
6	21	74	26	54
7	67	59	27	57
8	87	46	28	59
9	53	78	29	51
10	67	65	30	12
11	76	3	31	41
12	51	44	32	44
13	2	47	33	48
14	57	16	34	50
15	42	39	35	78
16	82	1	36	33
17	4	23	37	29
18	1	61	38	31
19	33	7	39	45
20	27	28	40	97

Source: Fieldwork 2018

The result of the PPMCC, r shows that $r = 0.186$ which indicates an inverse linear correlation between Shell and Bonny communities in terms of degradation and pollution as a cause of youth restiveness in Bonny.

Testing of the hypothesis using the result of $r = 0.344$ we obtained $t_{cal} = -5.96$, while the $t_{tab} = 2.024$.

We, therefore, reject the null hypothesis and the alternative is hereby concluded.

8. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This paper has been able to establish that due to the profit motive of SPDC, which made it unable to protect and preserve the environment of Bonny communities, the youths engaged in restiveness. Against this backdrop, the paper made the following recommendations:

- a) The federal government should come up strong with regulations on the environment, which SPDC should strictly comply with.
- b) SPDC should maintain environmental standards in Bonny, which are the equivalent of what happens in every part of the world where it operates.

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