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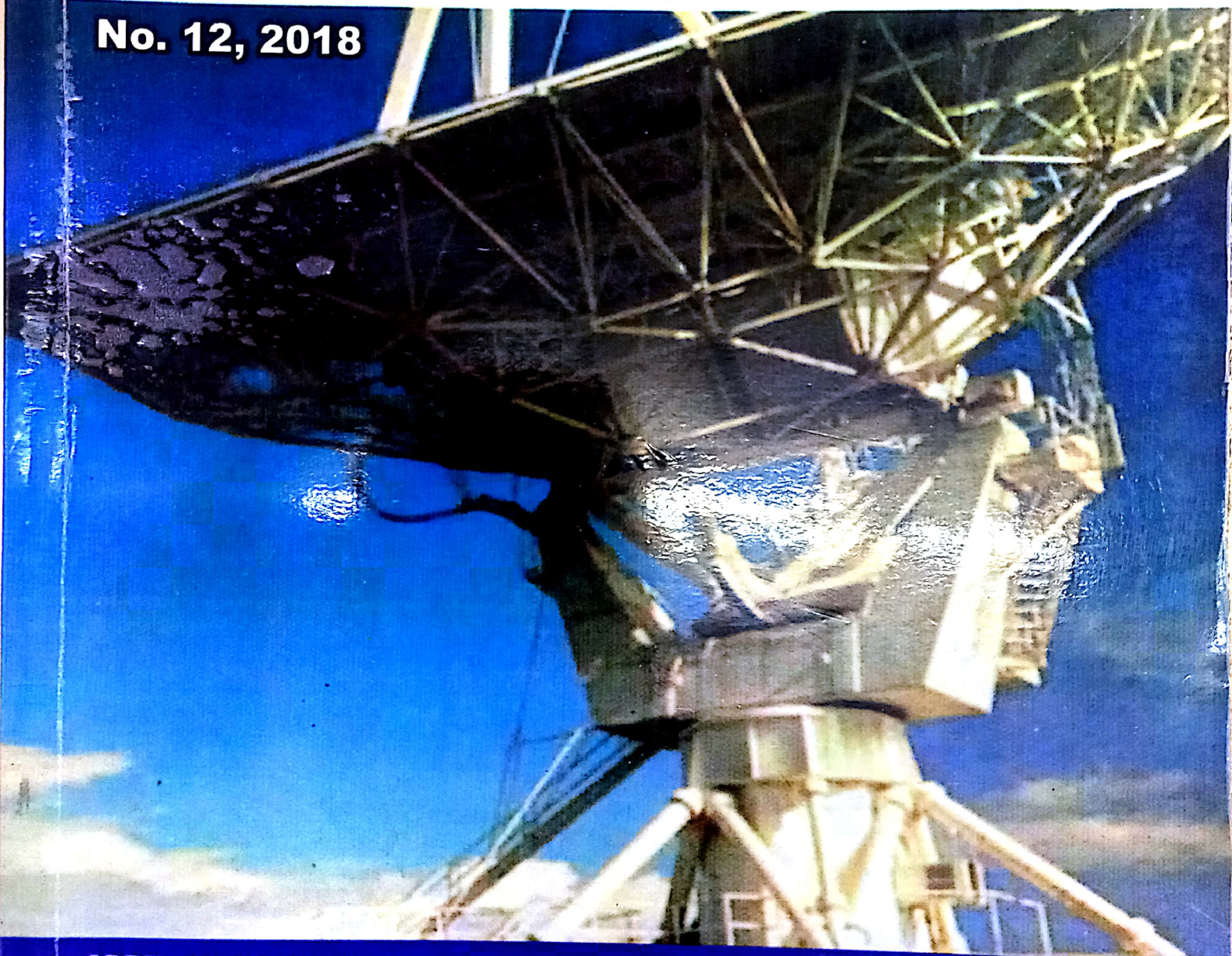

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# Corporate Social Responsibility in Conflict Management: The Perspective of the Niger Delta, Nigeria

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## Abstract

*The perennial conflict in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria has taken its toll on the smooth operation of oil companies, their peaceful coexistence with their host communities and by extension, the Nigerian economic survival, which depends largely on oil revenues. The impact of oil exploration activities has resulted in negative consequences on the environment and human life manifest in massive destruction and disruption of farming activities, unproductiveness of farmlands, reduction of fishing in the waterways and increased poverty of the inhabitants of the oil producing communities. These have led to negative reactions by host communities, leading to conflicts characterized by protests, kidnapping of oil expatriates and destruction of oil facilities. All of these could have been avoided or mitigated through appropriate corporate social responsibility (CSR) in view of the fact that it is a veritable strategy for managing conflicts between oil companies and their host communities. It is on this basis that this paper examines the place of CSR as a strategy which oil companies can adopt for managing conflicts in their Niger Delta host communities. The paper conceptualizes conflict, identifies its types and causes, discusses the concept of CSR and examines its application by oil companies in managing the conflicts in the Niger Delta. The paper concludes that although the oil companies are engaging in forms of CSR as a strategy to manage the crisis, such CSR programmes have been inadequate, ineffectively planned and implemented. It recommends a proactive approach to planning and executing CSR programmes and projects as well as identification of key stakeholders in order to involve them in the planning and execution of such programmes.*


**Key words:** Corporate social responsibility (CSR), Conflict, Conflict management, Niger Delta

## Introduction

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) as a business philosophy requires that corporate organisations, especially commercial oriented ones, invest part of their profits into developing their environments, particularly the host communities. It involves giving back to society through the planning and execution of development oriented programmes that will improve the lives of the citizens of their host companies. It has numerous benefits which include cordial and mutual relationship with the communities and good corporate image. The underlining

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philosophy is that modern business focus should go beyond that of profit making for investors and shareholders. There should be a recognition of the crucial contribution that host communities make in the overall growth and success of such business organisations. To this end therefore, CSR is a demand on business organisations to recognize the fact that there existence is dependent on a symbiotic relationship between the business organizations and the host communities. is embedded in the tenet of CSR (Amrakpoyeri, 2017).

Maintaining peaceful interaction and co-existence with members of the community where a business organization operates is very essential for the success of the enterprise. An organization that constantly encounters conflicts will no doubt find it difficult to survive. This is a major reason why business organizations should invest responsibly within their host communities. In this regard, CSR becomes a crucial conflict management strategy (Okere & Ogbemi, 2018, Ogbemi, 2017; Olajide, 2014; Mjenel, 2013;, Adekola & Ugoagu, 2012; Ikiriko 2012). The benefits of this in the long run can never be over-emphasized. As Igbara, Etu, Alobari and Naenwi (2014) observe, "CSR has emerged as a strategy to initiate and bring about development for host communities through programmes and projects that are responsive to their needs" (p. 92). The concept of CSR emphasizes the need for corporations to take into consideration the interest of their host communities, accepting willingly the effect of their activities on society, specifically the environment.

The issue of CSR in the Niger Delta goes beyond what the law stipulates; it is a moral obligation. The Niger Delta comprising Rivers, Delta, Akwa-Ibom, Cross River, Edo and Bayelsa states of Nigeria is the main seat of oil fields in the country. Since 1956 when the first oil well was discovered in Oloibiri in the present Bayelsa State, crude oil has steadily become the main stay and largest revenue yielding source for the government, accounting for more than 90 percent of the country's revenue (Cornelius & Kogut 2003; Prahalad, 2004). Despite its generous contributions to the Nigerian economy, the Niger Delta region has not benefitted sufficiently as claimed by agitators in the region. Instead, the area has continued to experience environmental degradation, abject poverty, lack of job opportunities, social development, oil spillages, destruction to aquatic life and crops and other such depravations as a result of oil exploration. The natural outcome of this is a strained relationship between the oil companies and their host communities since the oil companies have not adequately addressed the impacts of their business activities on the host communities. It is against this background that this paper considers CSR as a crisis management strategy which the oil companies need to adopt in their host communities.

**Statement of the Problem**

The activities of oil companies operating in the Niger Delta have affected the communities where they operate for decades. Some of the effects include greenhouse effects, extinction of valuable animal and plants species, massive destruction and disruption of farming activities depletion of the ozone layer, as well as the displacement of human beings. Most times, the host communities have responded to these problems through violent protests against the oil producing companies such that managing, solving or ending such conflicts seems impossible.

States such as Delta, Rivers and Edo in the Niger Delta region have in the past experienced one form of conflict or the other. The conflicts have been characterized by protests, kidnapping of oil expatriates and destruction of oil facilities, all of which have led to disruption of oil business activities. To reduce these conflicts between the oil exploring companies and the oil bearing communities, the companies have therefore resorted to introducing some form of development programmes which they thought would appeal to the host communities. The host communities on the other hand appraise these programmes of the oil companies from a perspective of displeasure. In view of this, this paper aims at discussing the relevance of appropriate CRS in conflict management as it pertains to the relationship between the oil companies and their host communities in the Niger Delta.

**Corporate Social Responsibility: Meaning, Purpose, Origin and Current Trends**

Corporate social responsibility (CSR) is a necessary issue that companies, especially those whose operations impact negatively on the environment must consider as a moral obligation. As good corporate citizens, business organisations need to take into consideration the interest and aspirations of their host communities. CSR centres on giving back to society some of the profits that corporations are making from operating in their place of operation. According to Carrol and Shabana (2010) more than 37 definitions were identified in a recent study. CSR "goes beyond the statutory, legal obligations but extends to deliberate yet voluntary programmes and policies initiated and sustained by corporate organisations to promote the wellbeing of all stakeholders in both the micro and macro environments of business organisations" (Olatunji, 2008 p.223). It means that apart from the duty to earn a fair return on behalf of investors and operate within the law, businesses have the ethical, moral and philanthropic responsibilities in addition (Corporate Social Responsibility Forum, 2015). The concept requires business concerns to have a broader view about their responsibilities and understand that their obligations are not limited to investors and shareholders, but extends to other stakeholders such as employees, customers, suppliers, environmental groups, local communities, government – federal, state, local - and other special interest groups. It is related to but not identical with business ethics and encompasses the legal, ethical, economic and discretionary responsibilities of organisations (Asemah, 2013).

CSR means that a company should be held liable for any of its actions that affect people, communities and its business, to behave well ethically and contribute positively to economic development, while impacting positively and improving the quality of the lives of the workers and their dependents as well as of the whole society (Asemah, 2013). It is the dedication of the organization to its environment and host communities and to contribute to their progress and wellbeing. It therefore requires the firm or corporation to go beyond selfish consideration of profit alone.

Companies that have taken to the practice of CSR are better off for it because it promotes and enhances their corporate image and presents them as good corporate citizens. According to Carroll and Shabana (2010), CSR can be

classified as legal, ethical and voluntary obligations. According to them, the economic responsibility states that organisations can achieve their various corporate objectives and long-run profit maximization by incorporating CSR into its business goals. The aspect that is legal entails expectations that businesses should 'play by the book' by carrying out its business activities within the legally prescribed framework. Most businesses subscribe to CSR voluntarily and the ideology is that business ventures and society are intertwined in an organic way. Carroll and Shabana (2010) said that, businesses are supposed to undertake various CSR projects to include important societal issues. This will improve their relationship with the host communities, create peaceful co-existence and conducive atmosphere for smooth operations. For instance, businesses which decide to be ethical and resolve to do that which is right must also be economical, not just seek profitability alone but also to allow the economy to inform clear-cut incentives and opportunities to do CSR. Businesses can also be legally responsible by following the extant laws of the nation as good and responsible corporate citizens. Business can therefore take part in philanthropic and voluntary obligations as a way to establish their responsibility.

The charity principle suggests that fortunate members of the society in terms of wealth should be charitable towards the under privileged and unfortunate in society. This is the reason why wealthy people over time are always expected to provide for the poor, as have been done by those people who from feudal times to the present, have vast holdings of property. Giving is supported by Christian preachers like Olusola (2018) who said that: "Givers never lack" (p. 1). This in modern times has become a responsibility shared by business ventures, their employees, and their very senior managers. CSR by organisations on other words is this kind of engagement in the affairs of the community and making charitable contributions to them. These two principles, stewardship and charity, are now the pillars of CSR. The stewardship principle, on the one hand encourages businesses to be trustees of public interest, which means that they should always act in the interest of members of society who are affected by their business activities. The charity principle, on the other hand, urges them to donate voluntary aids to the unfortunate or needy ones in the society. All business organisations that voluntarily adopts CSR and are guided by the two principles could be regarded as being socially responsible and are doing so in the general interest of the public.

Modern trend of business everywhere in the world shows that stakeholders are making more demands on managers to make more money available for CSR. This pressure, according to McWilliams and Siegel (2001) is most often driven by host community members, customers, employees, government and other stakeholders, including institutional stakeholders. The argument is that these demands have resulted to several goals and objectives that are conflicting thereby making the explanation of CSR as a very difficult concept. This notwithstanding, CSR can be defined as "actions that appear to further some social good, beyond the interest of the firm and that which is required by the law" (Mcwilliams & Siegel, 2001 p. 28). In other words, CSR is not what the law compels corporations to do, it is characterized by moral obligations. This definition suggests that CSR is not just doing what is required by the law, but going further to satisfy society. CSR should not therefore be mixed with legal activities and this confirms that it goes

beyond the law (Kakabadse, Rozuel & Lee-Davis 2005). The CSR discourse can be linked to Smith's (2010) proposal which states that when a business is not allowed entirely to pursue profit and efficiency in the interest of shareholders, the result is in the interest of all stakeholders. That is being useful to both business and society.

**Perspectives on Conflict and Conflict Management**

Conflict is inevitable is inevitable in any human relationship. It bothers on differing perspectives and perceptions. Managing it is very necessary in order to realize peace, growth and stability. Conflict management involves making efforts to minimize the negative sides of conflict, at the same time trying to accentuate the positive aspect. The whole essence of conflict management is to enhance experience and group outcome, which includes the effective performance of it in a business setting. It therefore promotes organizational harmony and peace and enhances cordial relationship between stakeholders in the industry. Conflict normally arises when one party perceives that its interest is being threatened or oppressed and the effect is negative by another interested party. It is simply disagreement between opposing parties and is dangerous to social life. It is a part of living since it is related to aspects of scarce economic resources, divisions of functions, power relations and role differentiation (Williams & Kinicki, 2003). In other words, conflicts are a situation of unfriendly and antagonistic interactions.

Conflict, according to Kilmann (2015) arises in a situation when two or more groups have differing objectives and their perception and behavior are in line with their incompatibility. It is therefore a social phenomenon that features in personal, group or organizational coexistence and has several dimensions. Rahim (2011) identifies five elements which cut across definitions of conflicts: opposing interest among individuals or parties in a zero sum situation; such opposed interest must be recognized for conflict to exist; it consists beliefs, by each side that the other will sabotage or has already obstructed its interest; it is a process that comes out of existing relationships between individuals or parties and reflects their past interactions and the context in which this took place; an implied action by one or both sides that do, in fact, produce obstructing each other's objectives. Miscommunication among and between people could be responsible for conflict. This is characterized by disagreement as regards their values, needs, goals, ideas or beliefs. The first and vital step towards managing conflict is a clear understanding of what it is involved, who are involved, why they are involved, and how they are involved. This can be referred to as the 5 Ws and H of conflict. With a clear understanding of these, it would be easier to approach solving the problem. Conflict if well managed has the potentials of positive and productive force for change that can result to growth and development (Ellis & Abbott, 2011; Olufemi & Adewale, 2012).

Conflict management is therefore the way of reducing the negative sides of conflict, while promoting and increasing the positive sides and its aim is to promote learning and positive group outcomes, including efficiency or performance in organizational settings. If well managed, it can positively enhance group results (Alpert, Tjosvaldo & Law, 2000; Dalung, 2013; Rahim, 2011). Conflict management is simply a method of proffering solutions to a disagreement

and getting the disputing parties accepts long lasting solutions, with all parties being satisfied to some extent. It is a give and take situation and also a win – win situation. According to Obegi and Nyamboga (2008), it is a "process that may take different patterns which include the use of force or authority of the state to enforce peace and the establishment of relationship among groups" (pp. 48 – 60). It therefore involves using skills of self-awareness about conflict, modes, conflict communication knowledge and skills, and putting in place structures for conflict resolution. All well planned and organised strategies, interventions and institutional members in curtailing and reducing the escalation of the situation must be involved. It must however be emphasized that resolution of conflict by force hardly brings lasting solution as it generates uneasy calm.

Depending on the circumstance, conflict can be resolved in many ways. It could be through peaceful approach which might involve dialogue, persuasion or through confrontation. However, whatever the approach adopted, the parties eventually end up resolving issues in a round table conference. The best approach if possible is to avoid conflict and the only way to do this is to be proactive and adequately approaching issues before they develop into conflict situation. This is issues management, which is far safer and better than crisis management. According to Ogbemi (2014) organisations respond in different ways to the environment. This depends on whether the organization is passive or active, reactive or proactive. Responding to the environment instead of remaining passive is very important because an organization can make adjustments when faced with an unfavourable environmental condition that possess threats to its very existence. Crisis management is very important in public relations, but it is better to avoid crisis situations by engaging in issues management. Engaging in CSR is a vital way in which organisations avoid conflict. Other conflict resolution strategies will be discussed below;

**The Role of CSR in Conflict Management in Niger Delta, Nigeria**

Conflicts are common occurrences in Niger Delta, Nigeria. These conflicts are mainly among the oil rich communities and the multinational oil producing companies. However, there are also conflicts within and between communities which can be referred to as intra and inter communities conflicts. Some of these are principally as a result of the struggle between groups for the ownership of land where there are oil deposits, and the issue in dispute is usually about who collects the compensation or other benefits from the oil companies. The result of such disputes or conflicts is the shutdown of oil facilities, wanton elimination of lives, destruction of property, kidnapping and total breakdown of law and order.

According to Igben (2008);

> Conflicts in the oil rich communities have taken different shapes and sizes. They include work disruption, hold-up or hostage taking, blockade to access way, demonstration, damage of facilities, violent seizure of facilities especially boats, shut down of flow stations, prevention of remedial measures, especially

clean-up exercise, demand of payment of salaries to unemployed members of the communities and most recently killing and hostage taking of oil companies staff (p.614).

Some of the reasons that have been advanced by members of the host communities to justify their actions include total neglect by the oil producing multinationals in the area of provision of infrastructures, good roads, scholarship for students from the areas and so on. Others, include lack of adequate compensation, payment of compensation to wrong persons, lack of consultation before projects are carried out degradation adverse problems created by their operations on the oil producing areas and environment, exploitation by the oil companies, non-provision of employment opportunities for qualified, community members lack of portable water, lack of contract opportunities for community members and so on.

However, most of the oil producing companies have argued that their efforts to provide facilities and execute projects have been hampered by several of difficulties which include false host community representation who pursue selfish interest to the detriment of the host communities, insistence by the host communities to engage unqualified members of the community even when there are qualified and competent people for the execution of projects, which result in poor quality jobs being done and cases of misappropriation of funds. Others include intra-community dispute in the project location site, endless demands and shift in the requirements of the communities, requests that are at times impossible to fulfil and government neglect which is perceived to be the responsibility of the tax paying companies (Igben, 2008).

Nations all over the world survive one way or the other and have some sources of foreign exchange. For some it is tourism while for others it is either agriculture or one form of mineral or the other. Before the discovery of oil, Nigeria relied on the export of groundnut, cocoa and some other agricultural products. That has become history since the discovery of oil in 1956 at Olobiri in Bayelsa state. Presently, the economy relies on oil and gas. This development has put the nation among the league of top oil producing countries in the league of nations and a prominent member of the Organization of Petroleum Exploring Countries (OPEC). The petrol dollars earned by the country has changed things to the extent that a former Nigeria military Head of State said that Nigeria's problem is not money but how to spend it. This "blessing" is however not without it negative effects. While the people at the seat of power are spending recklessly and looting the nation's resources the oil producing areas are bearing the brunt of oil production. What they experience daily are oil spillages, damage to economic crops, environmental degradation, constant pollution of sources of potable water, serious hazards to the health and well-being of the people, destruction of fish pods, low standard of living and object poverty.

There is no doubt that the frequent occurrence and reoccurrence of conflicts between oil producing communities and multinational oil producing corporations in the Niger Delta has brought negative attention and a lot of economic losses to the oil producing companies and Nigeria in particular. Due to its importance, the attention of local and international scholars has been

consequently drawn to it. There have therefore been a lot of studies and findings from such studies on the subject. For instance, Watts (2014) said that more of the works dwelt on politics of oil and gas, degradation and disempowerment of the indigenes of the Niger Delta. The focus has also been on the operations of the multinational oil producing companies with little or no emphasis on how the people who are at the receiving end of their activities feel. This is one area which this study is focused on and going to provide literature to fill. These studies also do not extensively and adequately handle areas that have to do with the numerous problems that are linked with the current community based development strategies that are focused linking with the host communities. They do not also adequately address the relationship between CSR practices of the oil producing companies and conflict resolution in the oil producing communities in the areas of studies.

Meanwhile, extant literature tends to focus more on inadequacy of CSR as a problem in the Niger Delta area, instead of making conscious effort to make pragmatic suggestions on the implementation of strategies that are environmentally friendly and can be used to manage oil related conflicts. Unfortunately, the oil bearing communities in the Niger Delta area putting up more resistance in spite the fact that multinational oil companies doing business in the area are currently increasing their efforts by investing more in CSR. According to available reports, Shell Petroleum Development Company (SPDC) invested about one billion naira on health related projects in early 2015 Oloibiri where oil was first discovered and exploited in 1956 was later abandoned when the oil dried up. SPDC present come back is viewed by the people as an afterthought and crisis management strategy to restore their estranged relationship (Nwankwo, 2015).

It was from the lesson learnt from Oloibiri that the Ogoni people resisted the operations of SPDC in the area which later led to the killing and execution of some prominent Ogoni sons. The recent effort by the Federal authorities of Nigeria and the multinational company (SPDC) to initiate a clean-up exercise is being taken by the people with a pinch of salt. To them it another ploy to resume oil exploitation from which the host communities will benefit little or nothing. From experience, the host communities know that despite the huge amount of money alleged to have been invested on CSR by the oil producing ventures the standard of living, extent of underdevelopment within the communities keep deteriorating. The consequence is the upsurge of conflicts (Aaron, 2012). This is a clear evidence that their CSR strategies are not working.

Oil conflicts are not peculiar to the Niger Delta region of Nigeria and oil producing areas, it has become one of the main features in nations that are blessed and endowed with one resource or the other. Such conflicts usually termed "resource – based conflicts" have become major source of instability and violence in developing nations such as Nigeria. It normally starts from community levels where exploration and exploitation of resources starts. According to Idemudia (2014) Nigeria's main source of conflict is the sharing of the "national cake" which begins with the restive youths in the oil producing areas trying to deliberately destroy the interest of the Nigerian nation in various ways, including the total vandalisation of oil facilities, particularly oil flow stations, the damage and obstruction of oil installations/gas pipeline and the looting of crude oil. Such violent responses and actions have turned the discovery of oil in paradox to the

host communities as it has resulted to repression, misery and unqualified and the unmoderated environmental devastation to the host communities (Aghalino, 2012; Evoh, 2009). The consequences have not been good and beneficial to the economy of the nation.

Humphrey (2005) has identified two main elements that can bring about conflict and these are the "rebel greed mechanism" and the "grievance mechanism". According to him, the former explains the perpetuation of violence by a set of people to coerce, compel or force the government authority and oil industry operators to meet various needs of the members of the oil producing communities, while the latter is based on the consequences of extraction, such as the compelled movement of fish, sea-bed destruction, social exclusion, marginalization, inequality and lack of employment. There is no doubt from the foregoing that the dependence on natural resources is the root of conflicts in most cases. Youths in oil producing areas because of the circumstances in which they find themselves are forced to use any means at their disposal to demand for and get what they want from the management of the particular oil companies that operate in their areas. Like in the Netherlands, the discovery and exploration of oil in Nigeria has led to an increase in the nation's earnings and reduction in diversification into the other economic sectors.

Nigeria has become a victim of the "Dutch Disease" model which John (2010) defines as "the economic concept that refers to the potential negative effects that natural resource wind falls, and accompanying appreciations of exchange rates can have on the rest of the economy" (p.8). Although the exchange rate of the Naira has drastically fallen, at a time it was high for this reason. At a time, Nigeria enjoyed what was referred to as the "oil boom". This was in the 1970s when the discovery of oil resulted to the neglect of other economic sectors, especially the agricultural that has sustained the economy. With the down turn in the world economy and the fall in oil prices in the international market, Nigeria is now feeling the pinch of the neglect of the agricultural sector which was the main source of export of the country. Okolie-Osemene (2015) is of the opinion that despite the fact that the agricultural sector of Nigeria still accounts for over 26.8 percent of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and responsible for almost two-thirds of job opportunities, it has suffered enormous lack of good management, poorly conceived government policies and lack of essential amenities. Unfortunately, the case is now so bad that Nigeria imports virtually everything and regrettably refined petroleum products including petrol (PMS) and Diesel (AGO).

CSR no doubt play very crucial and critical role in conflict management. The whole idea of CSR is to present the organization as a good and responsible corporate citizen and to create mutual and cordial existence between the organization and the oil bearing community where the business concern operates. Well planned CSR strategies will encourage the Niger Delta indigenes to adequately participate in their own affairs through dialogue, in the formulation or planning process and implementation (e.g the Niger Delta Master Plan) policies that affects them and adequate communication channels will enable the people to move from being passive recipients of externally generated initiatives to being initiative advocates and facilitators of strategies to resolve conflicts. (Asak, 2008; Ochonogor & Njoku, 2006).

There is a relationship between CSR and conflict management. Undoubtedly, the unfriendly environmental operations of the multinational oil producing companies in the area are major contributory factors to most of the conflict. Consequently, the genuine execution and involvement in CSR activities can prevent and quell conflicts. Conflict prone organisations and their management symbolize a necessary part of a combined effort to get a more peaceful world. In other words, if the oil producing companies in the Niger Delta honestly carryout well planned CSR activities with the involvement of members of the host communities, there will definitely be cordial relationship with the host communities. In addition, this will certainly affect changes or the result of conflicts in the local communities and society generally. It must be noted that positive and concrete CSR reduces considerably the negative impact of business activities and consequently the likelihood of conflicts. It also increases the advantage of good neighbourliness and mitigates the negative result of business operations on the environment. Of course society have and deserves the right to a healthy and decent environment. Society also has a right to a clean, safe and healthy environment and this is an undisputable human right. Oil producing companies therefore have a responsibility to ensure this right to prevent conflict between them and the oil producing areas where they operate.

Ineffective implementation of CSR programmes is a major cause of the constant clashes between the oil companies and their host communities. As Idemudia (2010) argues, the problem with CSR projects in the Niger Delta is that the people are only remembered by the oil companies when there is a major project to be carried out. The oil companies try to placate the communities so that they can carry out their business activities without interruption. It can therefore be inferred that CSR projects are not necessarily carried out in the area as obligations of the oil producing companies but just to calm the people. In such a situation, whatever CSR programme the oil companies introduce is often not intentionally planned and deliberately executed.

**Conclusion**

Conflict is an integral part of human existence which has to be managed. It can be productive or counter-productive, depending on how it is managed. Various attempts have been made to manage the perennial conflict between oil producing communities of the Niger-Delta region of Nigeria and oil companies operating in the area. The basic cause of the conflict is that the operations of the oil companies have negatively impacted on the environment and inhabitants of the oil-rich area, including plants and animals. Reactions of the host communities to these problems have been violent protests against the oil producing companies operating in the areas, such as kidnapping of oil expatriates and destruction of oil facilities, all of which have led to disruption of oil business and have impacted negatively on the country's economy. One of the strategies adopted in responding to the crisis by the oil companies has been introduction of development programmes mutually beneficial to both parties, through corporate social responsibility. Such CSR programmes and projects could be of benefit to the host communities in the areas of employment, empowerment, health, education to mention a few. They were also meant to make the oil companies give back to the communities where they operate

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and as such, enjoy the harmonious relationship with the communities, which would enable them carry out their business activities peacefully. In spite of these programmes, the host communities have continued to express their displeasure against the social responsibility claims of the oil companies, accusing them of being insensitive to their plights. This indicates the inadequacy in the strategy adopted in planning and executing the CSR programmes and projects. Thus, the oil producing companies face ineffective planning and implementation of CSR programmes and projects, leading to constant clashes between them and their host communities. Such conflicts have not just affected the oil companies' operations but have also led to dwindling foreign earnings of a country whose mainstay is oil.

**Recommendations**

In view of the issues raised so far, this paper therefore recommends the following:

1. There is the urgent need for the oil companies in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria to adopt a paradigm shift in the planning and execution of CSR programmes and strategies for their host communities.
2. The oil companies should be deliberate in designing a proactive approach to CSR that recognizes stakeholders' input in the planning and execution of programmes rather than a reactive strategy adopted as a post-crisis measure.
3. It is important that oil companies identify real stakeholders in the Niger-Delta region of the country and design appropriate CRS programmes to meet their needs.
4. All agreements regarding giving back to the communities in the region should be honoured in order to restore lasting peace to the region and by extension, stable economic climate to the country due to its dependence on oil for revenue.
5. Government should also live up to its responsibility of providing necessities of life for the people of the area. This would go a long way in ameliorating the hardship in the region, which often causes tension leading to negative reactions to oil companies and their workers.

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