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Socio-health impact of social corporate responsibility services of oil drilling companies on their host communities in Ogbal clan in Ogbal-Egbema-Ndoni LGA, Rivers State

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Abstract

The study investigated the socio-health impact of social corporate responsibility services of oil drilling companies on their host communities of Obirikom and Egi in Ogbal clan in Ogbal-Egbeme-Ndoni LGA. The study used 250 respondents, selected using stratified random sampling techniques: 100 respondents from each of the two communities, and 50 respondents from oil drilling companies operating in the communities: The Agip, and Total oil companies. Twelve-item self-structured questionnaire, titled Socio-Health Implications of Social Corporate Responsibility Services Questionnaire (SHISCRSQ) was utilized for data collection. Four research questions guided the study, and two hypotheses were postulated and tested at .05 level of significance. The findings of the study showed that the oil drilling companies provided some social corporate responsibility services in the communities. They also revealed that social vices in the communities were significantly reduced due to the services. However, the study found out that the provision of the services by the companies had no significant impact on the health status of the people of the host communities. The study recommended among others that there should be aggressive public health awareness and education on access and utilization of available health facilities and services to improve health status of the people in communities.

Keywords: Socio-health impact, social corporate responsibility services

Introduction

The history of exploration of crude oil in Nigeria could be traced back to 1908 with the pioneering exploration activities of the then Nigeria Bitumen Corporation owned by the Germans. In 1956, Shell D' Aray known today as the Shell Petroleum Development Company of Nigeria (SPDC) discovered crude oil in commercial quantity at Olobori community in Bayelsa State (Enegbu & Irughe, 2009) [7]. Since then, many other communities in Niger Delta region have been hosting different oil drilling companies. In Ogbal clan in Ogbal-Egbeme-Ndoni LGA, there are Nigeria Agip Oil Company that explores oil in Obirikom community in the Usomi South of Ogbal, and The Total Energy and Petroleum Company that operates in Egi community in the northern part of Ogbal clan.

Oil exploration activities in Niger Delta region in Nigeria have generated immense wealth and financial benefits to the nation. It has at the same time created serious environmental, social and health challenges to the people of the region. These challenges arise as a result of oil spills and gas flaring. Oil spills are often caused by natural causes, such as natural disasters, movement of tectonic plate shift, inadequate trap system, and human causes, such as carelessness, oil bunkering, sabotage and oil siphoning, terrorism, tanker accidents, and accidents during production operations (Uwem & Enobong, 2017) [16]. According to Emam (2015) [4] and Ibitoye (2014) [8], Nigeria flares 17.2 billion M3 of natural gas per year in conjunction with the exploration of crude oil in Niger Delta, and this high level of gas flaring is equal to approximately one quarter of the current power consumption of the African continent.

Oil spillage and flaring of gas are recurring decimal in Delta-Delta, where exploration activities in the downstream petroleum sub-sector has often led to degradation of the

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environment in many ways, especially in the creeks and the environs. The release of oil pollutants into environment results in death of aquatic life, devastation of mangrove forest, Unbalance in the ecosystem, economic and occupational losses in farming and fishing, contamination of ponds and streams thus polluting sources of drinking water and food for the people in the host communities (Enegba & Irughe, 2009) [7]. Other notable consequences of oil exploration and exploitation, according to studies include impairment of human health, eutrophication of water bodies, loss of fish and other aquatic animals, oil degradation, ecological damage, acid rain, extermination of organisms and many endangered species, such as medicinal plants and herbs (Onumbu 2005; Achalu & Achalu, 2004) [12, 1].

According to Ibrahim (2013), past attempts to unravel the real culprits responsible for the despoliation of the environment, including the destruction of flora and fauna, has remained one jigsaw puzzle, as most of the multinationals operating in the region have always found it convenient to pass the bunk elsewhere. Levels of degradation and devastation of the environment and the health of the host communities by oil exploration have caused significant tension between the host communities and oil drilling companies, often, resulting in strained relationship between the two parties.

The tension between oil drilling companies and their host communities at one time or the other has generated to protests and demonstrations, intense media attention, political uproar and struggle, youth restiveness, destruction of facilities of oil companies, hostage taking, kidnapping, militancy, and brutal force against the protesting host communities by the government security agencies. In addition, these create conditions of social disharmony, unemployment, squabbles and rivalry due to intense competition for scarce farmland or fishing ground, general disaffection, and anti-government protests (Effiong & Etava, 2012) [3]. Other resultant social problems arising include rise in criminal activities, divorces, alcoholism, drug abuse, prostitution, and social unrests (Nwilo & Badejo, 2008) [10].

Many people including prominent personalities, like Ken Saro Wiwa and youths have lost their lives in their fight for the protection and survival of the people of the oil producing communities against corrosion and erosion of their environment by the activities of exploration and exploitation of oil companies. One of the worst of such cases of mayhem and violence was one that happened in Odi community in the year 1999, where government security agents demolished the entire community. Their residential buildings, churches, health facilities, schools, banks, markets, and other infrastructure were burnt down. Thousands of the residents were killed and maimed; others tortured and imprisoned (Emmanuel, 2000) [6]. It is believed that confrontations and crises between oil companies and their host communities could be avoided if oil companies carry out their social corporate responsibility services, and most importantly if governments and regulatory agencies ensure that world standard environmental protection measures are adopted by the oil companies for the protection of the immediate environment and the health of the host communities.

Social corporate responsibility involves provision of basic social and health facilities and services or goods, and developmental programmes by an organization in its place of operation to improve the social and health status of the people of the host communities and protect of the immediate environment and ameliorate or mitigate effects due to its operational activities. Social corporate responsibility is an

obligation which an organization owes its host community. The social corporate responsibility services could come in form of construction of accessible roads, provision of portable water, provision of electricity, construction of schools, health facilities and other needed infrastructure, offer of employment opportunities and scholarship to the indigenes of the host community, and reaching and implementing the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the host community. However, this is not often the situation in most cases of the relationship between oil companies and their host communities in Niger Delta region (Enahoro & Ehi-Ebewele, 2008)

[5].

Human Right Watch and other both local and international organizations identify non-compliance to world standard environmental safety protection measures, non-provision of social amenities and healthcare provision to the host communities to alleviate and mitigate the effects of oil activities, failure of oil companies to respect and implement MOU reached with their host communities, lack of commitment and will power on the part of federal government to enforce the minimal environmental laws, and the neglect of the host communities' complaints and agitations by the oil companies and the government as the causes of tension between oil companies and their host communities (Eregha & Iregha, 2009; Manby, 1999) [9]. The lacunae in Nigeria's law on the regulation and implementation of oil activities and standard environmental safety protection measures in oil sector have given oil companies the impetus to explore crude oil in Nigeria without due regard to environmental safety and health of the host communities (Udok, 2014; Otiotio, 2013) [15, 13].

To create and sustain working and peaceful relationship between oil companies and their host communities, and improve the environmental, social and health wellbeing of the communities, all parties, including the companies, host communities and federal government have their specific roles to play (Ayoola, 2011) [2]. In carrying out their operational activities, oil companies should endeavor to prevent or reduce environmental pollution of the immediate environment by adopting safety measures and providing basic social amenities and health care services. More so, these companies should stop the divide-and –rule techniques they often adopt in their host communities to have their way. If these are done it would go a long way in assuaging the feelings of the people, and establishing cordial relationship and interactions with the host communities. On the part of the host communities, the people should be hospitable and friendly to oil companies, and dialogue on the provision of the social corporate responsibility services and utilization and protection of the facilities and services provided and also the oil company workers. The community leaders should be transparent in their dealing with the management of the companies and their accountability to their community people. In addition, community stakeholders should not be making frivolous, unreasonable and untenable demands on the companies. Government as its responsibility should intervene promptly in settling disputes as they arise between the oil companies and their host communities.

Aim of the Study

The aim of the study was to investigate socio-health impact of social corporate responsibility services of oil drilling companies in their host communities of Obirikom and Egi in Ogbia clan in Ogbia-Egbema-Ndoni LGA, of Rivers State

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What are the basic social amenities and services provided by oil companies in their host communities of Obirikom and Egi in Ogbal clan?
2. What are the health facilities and services provided by oil drilling companies in the host communities of Obirikom and Egi in Ogbal clan?
3. What is the impact of provision of basic social amenities by oil drilling companies on reduction of level of social vices in the host communities?
4. What is the impact of provision of health facilities and services by oil drilling companies on prevention and control of communicable diseases in the host communities?

Hypotheses

The following hypothesis were postulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance:

1. Provision of social amenities and services by oil drilling companies has no significant impact on reduction of the level of social vices in the host communities.
2. Provision of health facilities and services by oil drilling companies has no significant impact on prevention and control of communicable diseases in the host communities

Method

A sample size of 250 respondents was used for the study, selected using stratified random sampling techniques (100 respondents selected from each of the two communities, and 50 respondents from both the Agip and the Total Oil companies).

Self-structured questionnaire with 12 items was used to elicit information from the respondents. A split-half reliability

Table 2: Health facilities and services provided by oil drilling companies in the host communities of Obirikom and Egi

S/N	Item	Mean (x)	SD
2	Construction of health centres	2.60	1.38
	Provision of drugs and medical equipment	2.79	1.24
	Free health and medical outreaches (for health awareness and education, check-up, diagnosis, treatment)	3.86	1.18
	Overall Mean	3.08	1.27
	Criterion Mean	2.50	

Table 2 showed the item Mean values and the overall Mean of 3.08. The data showed that the oil drilling companies provided health facilities and services in the host communities of Obirikom and Egi in Ogbal clan.

method was used to test the reliability of the instrument for data collection, with Spearman's Brown Prophecy Correlation coefficient of 0.72.

Mean and Standard Deviation were used to answer the research questions, while Chi-Square was used to test the hypotheses.

Results

Research Question 1

What are the basic social amenities/services provided by oil drilling companies in the host communities of Obirikom and Egi in clan?

Table 1: Social amenities/services provided by oil drilling companies in the host communities of Obirikom and Egi in Ogbal clan

S/N	Item	Mean (x)	SD
1	Access roads	2.43	1.38
	Portable water	3.20	1.12
	Electricity	3.08	1.09
	Employment	2.27	1.71
	Scholarship awards	2.86	1.07
	Overall Mean	2.77	1.27
	Criterion Mean	2.50	

Table 1 showed item Mean values and the overall mean of 2.77. The data indicated that the oil drilling companies provided social amenities/services in their host communities.

Research Question 2

What are the health facilities and services provided by oil drilling companies in the host communities of Obirikom and Egi in Ogbal clan?

Table 2: Health facilities and services provided by oil drilling companies in the host communities of Obirikom and Egi

S/N	Item	Mean (x)	SD
2	Construction of health centres	2.60	1.38
	Provision of drugs and medical equipment	2.79	1.24
	Free health and medical outreaches (for health awareness and education, check-up, diagnosis, treatment)	3.86	1.18
	Overall Mean	3.08	1.27
	Criterion Mean	2.50	

Research Question 3

What is the impact of provision of social amenities/services by oil drilling companies on reduction of level of social vices in their host communities of Obirikom and Egi in Ogbal clan?

Table 3: Impact of provision of social amenities/services by Oil drilling companies on reduction of level of social vices in the host communities of Obirikom and Egi

S/N	Item	Mean (x)	SD
3	Criminal activities like robbery, kidnapping, etc.	2.30	1.01
	Alcoholism	2.84	1.82
	Drug abuse	2.87	1.91
	Social unrest	3.02	1.09
	Prostitution	3.16	1.07
	Overall Mean	2.78	1.38
	Criterion Mean	2.50	

Table 3 showed the item Mean values and the overall Mean of 2.78. The data indicated that provision of social amenities had no positive impact on reduction of criminal activities in the communities; however, the overall Mean value showed that provision of social amenities had positive impact on the reduction of social vices in the communities.

Research Question 4

What is the impact of provision of health facilities and services provided by oil drilling companies on prevention and control of communicable diseases in their host communities of Obirikom and Egi in Ogbal clan?

Table 4: Impact of provision of health facilities and services by oil drilling companies on prevention and control of communicable diseases in their host communities of Obirikom and Egi

S/N	Item	Mean (x)	SD
In the last one year, the following diseases have been common among the people of these communities:			
4	Cholera	3.34	1.09
	Measles	3.32	1.08
	Dysentery	2.74	1.38
	Typhoid	3.08	1.12
	Tuberculosis	2.11	1.21
	Ringworms	2.64	1.34
	Scabies/craw-craw	1.96	1.28
	Malaria	3.47	1.07
	Overall Mean	2.82	
	Criterion Mean	2.50	1.19

Table 4 showed the items Mean values and the overall Mean of 2.82, indicating that the people of the communities suffered from various types of communicable diseases in the last year. This result suggests that provision of health facilities and services by oil companies in their host communities had no positive impact on prevention and control of communicable diseases in the communities.

Hypothesis 1

Test of hypothesis 1 using Chi-Square (χ^2)

The calculated Chi-Square (χ^2) value is 4.223. At. 05 alpha levels, and df of 1, the χ^2 critical value is 3.841. Since the χ^2 calculated value (4.223) is greater than the χ^2 critical value (3.841), the null hypothesis is rejected, indicating that provision of social amenities/services by oil companies had significant influence on the low level of social vices in the host communities

Hypothesis 2

Test of Hypothesis 2 using Chi-Square (χ^2)

The calculated Chi-Square value is .646. At. 05 alpha levels, and df of 1, the χ^2 critical value is 3.841. Since the χ^2 calculated value (.646) is less than the critical value (3.841), the null hypothesis is accepted, showing that the provision of health facilities/services by oil companies had no significant influence on the prevention and control of communicable diseases in the host communities

Discussion

Table 1 shows that the oil drilling companies provided some social amenities/services in their host communities, such as accessible roads, portable water, employment, scholarship awards, electricity. This may be an attempt in solving the common problems of oil producing communities where schools are dilapidated, no healthcare centers or health facilities with drugs and necessary equipment, bad roads, no accessible safe and portable water, no electricity, high level of illiteracy, and youth unemployment. Provision of these facilities/amenities and services could be part of their social corporate responsibility to their host companies and fulfillment or implementation of the Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) with the host communities, which according to Eregha and Iregha (2009), and Manby (1999)^[9] are the obligations of any oil companies to their host communities

Many studies reports have linked non-provision of social amenities and services to high rate of conflicts, confrontations and understanding between oil companies and their host communities in many parts of oil-producing states. The findings of this study revealed that provision of social corporate services by oil companies had significant influence

on low level of social vices in their host communities. These findings corroborated the observations of Nwilo and Badejo (2008)^[10] that non-provision of social corporate responsibility services in the face of devastation of the people's means of livelihood by oil activities result to various social problems, such as rise in criminal activities, divorces, alcoholism, drug abuse, prostitution, social unrest, youth restiveness and intense competitions for scarce resources and services.

Data on table 2 indicated that the oil companies provided some health facilities and services in their host communities such as building new health centers or renovating existing ones, supplying drugs and equipment to health facilities, free health and medical outreaches for medical check-ups and diagnosis and treatment, and health awareness and education. This may be in response to the realization of health effects of oil exploration and exploitation on the environment and people of the host communities. Okereke, Obiekezie and Obasiko (2007)^[11], Uwem and Enobong (2017)^[16] and reports of international and local organizations have recommended that to alleviate and mitigate the harmful effects of oil exploration, provision of health facilities and services should form the bedrock of the oil companies social corporate responsibility to their host communities. Studies have noted that oil activities such as oil exploration and exploitation cause a lot of havoc to the health of the people such as breathing difficulties, increased blood pressures, heart rhythm changes, skin diseases, stomach irritation, muscle weakness and changes in nerve reflexes, swelling of brains, liver and kidney and heart damages, gastro-intestinal diseases, and respiratory problems (Udok, 2017; Emam, 2015; Effiong & Etowa, 2012)^[15, 4, 3].

However, table 4 and the test of hypothesis 2 showed that provision of health facilities and services by oil companies had no significant influence on the prevention and control of communicable diseases in the host communities. These findings are contrary to the popular opinion that provision of health care would improve health, especially those in areas where oil drilling and gas flaring are carried out. These unexpected findings could be as a result of non-utilization or under-utilization of existing health care facilities and services, perhaps due to certain factors such as inaccessibility, inappropriateness, inadequate drug or drug related problem, cost, lack of knowledge and awareness, or ignorance, proximity or nearness, attitude of healthcare personnel, bad health and illness behavior, cultural, and religious beliefs factors. According to Udoh (2002)^[14], provision of health care facilities and services is one thing and the utilization of such provisions is another thing. Udoh further observes that in some cases, healthcare services and facilities in rural areas are not properly utilized because of inaccessibility, proximity, cost, inadequate personnel, unfriendly attitude of health

personnel, lack of proper awareness and education and ignorance of the existence and benefits or values of such healthcare facilities and services.

Conclusion

Organizations, including oil companies are obliged to carry out their social corporate responsibilities in their areas of operation or host communities, such as provision of basic needs of the people of the immediate environment in terms of construction of access roads, health care facilities, schools and other needed infrastructure; provision of healthcare services; offer of educational and employment opportunities; and putting in place environmental and health safety measures to mitigate the impact of the companies activities, these are key to having a cordial working relationship and understanding between companies and their host communities. When these are done, it ensures improved productivity on the part of the companies, improved social and health profile of the people of the communities, and reduction in the levels of social vices, criminalities, social disharmony and health problems.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are proffered:

1. There should be legislations that would compel oil companies to carry out their social corporate responsibilities, reach and implement Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with their host communities. This would ensure that environmental and health hazards people are exposed to could be prevented, or reduced and mitigated through the provision of basic social amenities and healthcare facilities and services. More so, these provisions would improve social and health profile of the host communities, and consequently, strengthening cordial relationship between oil and the host communities, and reducing social vices such as social unrest and disharmony, alcoholism, substance abuse, and criminal activities, among others.
2. Health awareness and education programmes should be organized in school and community settings, such as churches, mosques, training centers, health facilities, hall and community meeting places. This will enable people to have access to proper and accurate and adequate health information, and acquire appropriate health knowledge, develop positive health attitude and good health behaviour, adopt healthy lifestyles, including utilization of available health care and social services, seeking help from the appropriate sources and personnel, and adopting health-promoting daily life practices.
3. In planning and implementation of social corporate responsibility services, the intending benefiting communities should be involved, so that people of host communities would have the sense of ownership of such provisions. This would encourage utilization and protection of the services and facilities by the host communities.
4. Federal government should wake up to its responsibility of protecting the environment, property, health and life of the people of the host communities and these oil companies. This should be done by compelling oil companies to comply strictly and religiously with the best international standard environmental protection practices, in order to prevent and mitigate high degree and magnitude of devastation and degradation of the immediate environment and health of the host

communities by the activities of oil companies.

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