

INDIGENIZATION OF CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY PRACTICES: RECIPE FOR COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA

GABRIEL, Justin M.O., Ph.D

Rivers State University, Nkpolu-Oroworukwo
Faculty of Management Sciences
Department of Management.

KOBANI, Doreen, Ph.D

Rivers State University, Nkpolu-Oroworukwo
Faculty of Education
Department of Adult Education and Community Development

ABSTRACT

This paper reviewed extant literature on Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) as a tool for Community Development. The Paper advocated indigenization as vital in the practice of CSR. Corporate Social Responsibility was described at the contributions of corporations towards the betterment of society. On the other hand, community development was seen as the actions that results in the advancement of the community with regards to positive improvements and wellbeing of members of such communities. Indigenization however was viewed as the involvement of locals in the development of their communities. It was concluded that CSR initiatives remains one way of fostering cordial relationships between host communities and corporations; as such corporations should be very thorough and deliberate in ensuring that indigenes are involved in deciding and executing community based projects.

Keywords: Indigenization, Corporate Social Responsibility, Practices, Recipe, Community Development.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Community development remains a buzzword among scholars, political leaders and community developmental enthusiasts who are conscious of the fact that communities constitute the parts that make up societies and the wellbeing of the communities is sine qua non for societal healthiness. A Community is a social entity consisting of a group of people with diverse background who share common values; interact regularly among themselves and work together towards the attainment of a common purpose (Celik, Abdul-Kareem, and Yilmaz, 2019). on the other hand, development reflects the state of advancing from height to height in line with relevant measurement indicators. In his view, Campfens, (1997a, p. 25) described community development as actions or processes for mobilising members of a community to join states or institutional initiatives that target poverty reduction, providing solutions to societal problems, promoting democracy, strengthening families, and attaining modernisation and socio-economic development (Campfens, 1997a, p. 25).

Indigenization according to Wikipedia, the free Encyclopedia (2021) is the act of making something more native; transformation of some service, idea, etc to suit a local culture, especially through the use of more indigenous people in public administration, etc. The word 'indigenisation' is derived from the root word 'indigene' which means 'native' or 'local': that is, not alien or foreign. In this sense, therefore, indigenization implies making an idea, practice or otherwise, native or localized: that is, adapted to the domestic environment (Onuegbu and Aniefiok, 2016). Indigenization thus, involves the continuous improvement upon what already exists and bringing it to a state of perfection within its genus.

Among others, culture, politics, religion, economy and corporate social responsibility practices could be indigenized. This means that imitation, borrowing from or adopting what is foreign and ignoring what is local would not help or constitute real development because it does not belong and cannot be integrated without leaving some ugly patches which would destroy the beauty of what is indigenous. In community development efforts, independent actions leading to successful accomplishment of small projects which usually enhance the pride and decisions of the community people are never and should never be teleguided from outside (Kobani and Alozie, 2019).

Corporate social responsibility according to Davis (1960: 70), is a, 'businessmen's decisions taken for reasons at least partially beyond the firms' direct economic or technical interest'. It comprises organisations actions that are aimed at befitting the society in ways that also create good atmosphere for her operations. The basic idea of CSR is that business and society are interwoven rather than separate entities; as such, the healthiness of businesses cannot be at the detriment of the society, rather, a healthy society can groom healthy businesses. Evidence of corporate giving, variously referred to as charitable giving (Brammer and Pavelin, 2006), philanthropic contributions (Seifert et al, 2004), can be traced back to centuries ago. However, formal writing on CSR is largely a 20th century work (Carroll, 1999), but it was in the 1960 that the CSR construct became ubiquitous and robustly embraced by scholars and industry practitioners.

Several studies have been done regarding the association of CSR with different aspects of corporate life or community developmental. Examples - Dziro (2014), Enwereonye, Ugorji, Alozie and Awurumibe (2015), Masum, Aziz and Ahmad (2020) all looked at CSR and community development either as a review discourse or empirical studies. However, we did not come across any study that investigated or discussed CSR practices and community development in the context of indigenization. Hence the purpose of this paper is to examine the association of CSR and community development with emphasis on how indigenization may contribute to the successful CSR practices in Nigeria. The paper has been necessitated by the need to emphasize the importance of involving community locals in CSR decisions that affect them as a way of improving the values of funds spent in CSR practices.

2.0 LITERATURE

2.1 The Concept of Indigenization

According to Onuegbu and Aniefiok (2016), indigenization is defined as the strategic handing over of the ownership and control of productive forces, once in the hands of foreign expatriates, to the indigenous elements, often petty local entrepreneurs. Thus, when the

means of production and distribution in a nation's economy are in the hands of its citizens, and not foreigners with competitive capital outlay, it is safe to say such economy is indigenized.

The same authors also (Onuegbu and Aniefiok, 2016) define indigenisation as economic reform process in a developing country to ensure increased participation of local factors in the production of domestic product. Put differently, indigenization lies in optimizing the local contribution to products: the local content of the product itself, in terms of the origin of the inputs, is even more important for the economy than mere juridical ownership and management. Much more relevant is the degree to which the ownership and management has effectively increased the participation of the locals in the production of the domestic output.

According to Law (2014) Indigenization policy is a deliberate government policy aimed at replacing foreign investors and personnel in certain industries with indigenes or the natives of a country that is, excluding foreign participation and resources in certain productive activities. This is different from nationalization which means taking over the ownership of an organization usually owned by a foreigner or foreigners. With nationalization, foreigners could still be employed in the firm involved but with indigenization, the natives become the only personnel both in administrative and subordinate capacities, that is, indigenes becomes the only participants in certain economic and development ventures (Law, 2014). This implies the effective use of local resources and considering the realities of the environment in development planning processes.

Indigenous Peoples are distinct social and cultural groups that share collective ancestral ties to the lands and natural resources where they live, occupy or from which they have been displaced. The land and natural resources on which they depend are inextricably linked to their identities, cultures, livelihoods, as well as their physical and spiritual well-being. They often subscribe to their customary leaders and organizations for representation that is distinct or separate from those of the mainstream society or culture. Many Indigenous Peoples still maintain a language distinct from the official language or languages of the country or region in which they reside. According to World Bank (2016) there are between 370 and 500 million Indigenous Peoples worldwide, in over 90 countries. Although, they make up just 5 percent of the global population, they account for about 15 percent of the extreme poor. Indigenous Peoples' life expectancy is up to 20 years lower than the life expectancy of non-indigenous people worldwide (Law, 2014).

Indigenous Peoples often lack formal recognition over their lands, territories and natural resources, and are often last to receive public investments in basic services and infrastructure, and face multiple barriers to participate fully in the development planning, formal economy, enjoy access to justice, and in political processes and decision making (World Bank, 2016). This legacy of inequality and exclusion has made indigenous communities more vulnerable to under development, use of substandard materials, equipment, facilities including schools, health care centers etc. World Bank (2016) further stated that Indigenous Peoples own, occupy, or use a quarter of the world's surface area; they safeguard 80 percent of the world's remaining biodiversity. They hold vital ancestral knowledge and expertise on how to adapt, mitigate, and reduce climate and disaster risks (Amirize & Kobani, 2020). In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, there is an opportunity to work through the traditional authorities and healers of Indigenous Peoples to provide accurate information on disease prevention,

distribute protective gear and hygiene supplies, and support traditional medicine, livelihoods and recovery in ways that are appropriate to Indigenous People's priorities and cultures. This is a window corporate organisations could use as part of her response to health related issues or during any disease outbreak.

2.2 Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Practices

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is a commitment to improving community well being through best business practices and contributions of corporate resources. The definition of this concept actually depends on how those who believe in it and those who do not, see it. To those that believe in it, it is the responsibility to plan and manage an organization's relationship with everybody involved in or affected by all its activities in all its ramifications of operations. It is a beneficial social investment and a socially responsible company is that, that do not take actions that might be perceived as unreasonable, callous or insensitive by the public.

On the other hand, those who do not believe in it, strongly argue that business cannot be responsible, only people can have responsibilities. To them, it is a loss of accountability to shareholders who have invested their hard-earned resources to make profit (Kobani and Amadi, 2021). This singular profit motive has made entrepreneurs, to exploit and neglect their host environment and community of operation to the extent that members of these host communities of operation become restive which in most cases culminates into clashes, demonstrations and work stoppage.

Most host communities have accused oil companies, especially in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria, of lack of concern based on the problems accessioned by oil spillages and failure to pay damages for destroyed natural habitats (Ogbemi, 2020). Accordingly, it is not news to recount that from Okolobi to Ogidigben; Ogbotobo to Bonnu; Ogoni to Iko, Egni, Omoku to Egbema, protests have often arisen as a result of CSR related issues. This development prompted some researchers and other stakeholders to submit that the primary objective of a business concern need not be profit only but that business should be made in relation to their environment and also be seen to be responsive to compensate environmental exploitation (Gabriel and Wadike, 2013, Kobani and Amadi, 2021). The idea of exploitation by business organizations is fast becoming unpopular as communities are becoming conscious of their rights (Kobani and Amadi, 2021).

2.3 Concept of Community Development

The concept Community is derived from Communis which comes from a combination of the Latin prefix com (which means "together") and the word munis probably originally derived from the Etruscan word munis (meaning "to have the charge of). The concept community no longer has geographical limitations such as a village, settlement or district, but also includes those brought together by lifestyle, circumstance, ideology, religion, hobby, interest, etc but as people who share common interests who can virtually gather regardless of physical location on an entirely voluntary basis (Beacons, 2008) in Kobani (2015) and Kobani and Alozie (2019).

Hearn in Oyebamiji and Adekola (2008) defined Community as a consciously identified population with common needs and interests; it may occupy a common physical space, engage in common activities and have some form of organization that provides for difference in functions, making it adaptive to its environment as a means of meeting common needs. Its components include individuals, groups, families and organizations within its population and the institutions it forms to meet its needs. A community group often pursues a common goal, concern or interest.

According to Anwanwu (2002) the concept of community Development lacks a precise definition that caters for its ever expanding field. Oyebamiji and Adekola (2008) support this view and observed that it is difficult to state briefly, adequately and fully what is subsumed by the concept of Community Development. This, by implication means that what constitutes Community Development cannot be fully described in a few meaning words called definition. To Ezimah (2004) Community Development is the economic, physical and social revitalization of communities led by the people who live in that community. Community Development today has gone beyond its traditional boundaries of developing the community and the physical, economic and social conditions of the people to include emotional and psychological development of the people. To this end, Community Development can be described as a process by which the efforts of members of a community are united with those of governmental and non-governmental bodies for a gradual and positive reconditioning process with which reliance is on local initiative, leadership and resource for development in the physical and social structures of the community and general well-being of the inhabitants (Kobani, 2014).

Community Development was first mentioned internationally at the 1948 Cambridge Summer Conference. There it was agreed that the compound word 'Community development' should be used in place of 'Mass education' and defined as:

A movement designed to promote better living with the active participation and if possible on the initiative of the community but if this initiative is not forth coming spontaneously, by the use of techniques for arousing and stimulating it in order to ensure its active and enthusiastic response to the movement (in Kobani and Alozie, 2019:28).

Notable among the Organizations is The United Nations Organization (UNO) who in 1963 gave a definition that today enjoys wider acceptability. It defined Community development as:

A process by which the efforts of the people themselves are united with those of governmental authorities, to improve the economic, social and cultural conditions of community, to integrate those communities into the life of the nation and to enable them contribute fully to national progress (in Kobani and Alozie, 2019:28).

Community development is also defined as:

Educational methods in which the efforts of the people themselves are united with those of governmental authorities to improve the economic, social and cultural

conditions of communities and integrate them into the life of the nation and enable them contribute fully to national progress (Onyeozu, 2007).

Community development is a structured intervention that gives communities greater control over the conditions that affect their lives (Bartle, 2009). This does not solve all the problems faced by a local community, but it does build up confidence to tackle such problems as effectively as any local action. Community development is a skilled process and part of its approach is the belief that communities cannot be helped unless they themselves agree to this process. Community development is crucially concerned with the issues of powerlessness and disadvantage: as such it should involve all members of society, and offers a practice that is part of a process of social change.

Development according to Amirize (1998) proceeds from the inside and then manifests on the outside in the standard and quality of what people say, do and think. Any development in an individual or a community which does not reflect in the ennoblement of the quality of speech, action, behaviour and thinking of the people both individually and collectively, is a development that is not rooted inside and can therefore be regarded as mere sham and pretence. Little and apparently insignificant things that people say or do often betray their inward development. Nobility of character is an expression of inward development in an individual.

The Community development process is collective, but the experience of the process enhances the integrity, skills, knowledge and experience, as well as equality of power, for each individual who is involved. Community Development is about developing the power, skills, knowledge and experience of people as individuals and in groups, thus, enabling them to undertake initiatives of their own to combat social, economic, political and environmental problems, and enabling them to fully participate in a truly democratic process. Onyeozu (2007) argues that one of the cardinal tasks of modern Community Development is the challenge to root out the causes and effects of the vicious cycle of poverty, ignorance, disease and illiteracy in our rural Communities, and also to stamp out the evils of corruption, violence, ostentatious living, drug abuse, lawlessness and greed in the urban areas.

2.4 Indices of Community Development

The Noble Economist Amartya Sen writing in 'Development as Freedom' sees development as being concerned with improving the freedoms and capabilities of the disadvantaged, thereby enhancing the overall quality of life. Sen pursues the idea that development provides an opportunity for people to free themselves from the suffering caused by: early mortality, persecution, starvation, illiteracy and poverty. Community development should be about increasing political freedom, cultural and social freedom as well as sustainability not just about raising incomes (Kobani and Alozie, 2019).

Anyanwu (1999) identified four areas which development is operational:

1. Social change, in which new ideas are introduced into a social system to produce higher per capital incomes and levels of living.
2. Man's capacity to expand his own consciousness and, therefore, his power over himself, his environment and his society.

3. The power of the people to solve their own problems, with their own wisdom, experiences and resources;
4. The optimum realization of the well being of individuals in their community.

He noted that in all cases, the emphasis is on people, because it is they who are stimulated, motivated, helped or encouraged to adopt new methods, and to learn new skills, for their well-being.

After a critical examination of the scholastic views of development, we agree with the submission of Okoli (2005) who sees development as man-directed and propelled socio-economic and political transformations of self and entire structure of a given political system from a comparatively low and/or remarkably improved form. These transformations have as their primary objective improvements of the living conditions and material standings of the citizenry. These subsequently improve man's potentials and capabilities and eliminate and/or reduce poverty, illiteracy, penury, inequality, unemployment, low self-esteem, low level of participation in community development, women disempowerment, environmental degradation and, generally enhance the conditions for human existence.

2.5 CSR and Community Development- Any nexus?

Ideally, every community would seek to enhance the general wellbeing of its people through education, training, empowerment, healthcare services and so on. Such strategies enhance development within the community. Community development is seen as initiatives undertaken by community with support from external organizations to empower individuals and group by providing them with the skills that they need to effect changes in their own community (Nwoba and Udoikah, 2016). External organizations include government and inter-governmental organizations; and various types of business firms are equally partners in any Community development agenda.

Business firms within a Community can actually initiate ideas and programmes that should benefit the community as one of its stakeholders. As firms interact with its stakeholders, different expectations arise. These expectations include but not limited to making profit for shareholders, demand to foster host community development, demand for improved welfare of workers, environmental friendliness, remittance of tax to government as at when due. The effort comes through corporate social responsibility (CSR). Corporate social responsibility is a deliberate effort of business organizations to act in a ways that promote the interest of its owners, employees, suppliers, consumers, government, host community, ecosystem, society at large generally referred to as "stakeholders". The practice of corporate social responsibility by firms toward its host community has far reaching benefits of bringing about community development.

It was argued that the neglect of CSR by business firms or organization are capable of resulting in conflict that may hinder the achievement of stated objectives of the business firm and undermine Community development (Nwoba and Udoikah, 2016). It is however not much of a controversy that CSR promotes community development, what is however a worry is the gap between the amount of money most organisations claim to have invested in CSR and the actual evidence of such expenditure in the life of the affected communities. This justifies the thinking that the policy making and implementation of CSR cannot be effective

without the deep involvement of the indigenous people who are well abreast of the needs and challenges of their communities.

2.6 Improving the value of CRS practices through indigenization

Most organizations, especially the MNCs have adopted the use of MOU as a tool for social change and the actualization of their CSR programmes. The MOU is described as a bilateral or multilateral agreement between two or more parties which expresses a convergence of will between the parties, indicating an intended common line of action (Osemeke, Adegbite, & Adegbite, 2016). These authors averred further that “the trajectory of using MOUs began with payments to community leaders as proxies looking after their communities, assistance to communities with surveillance jobs, scholarships, market stalls, water boreholes, jetties and roads, to establishment of community-based committees to prepare MOU based on community demands that were sub-optimal for several socio-cultural reasons and not achieving maximum benefit”. These use of MOU though well intended has not proven to have resolved all issues relating to poor or non-implementation of CSR budgets. There still exists complaints and agitations here and there over unsatisfactory relationships between host communities and corporations.

Therefore, it is advocated that corporations advance their rate of involving locals and community members in decision making relating to CSR. This can be achieved either by having such indigenes employed and posted to CSR prone departments and units. Where that is not feasible, they can be appointed on adhoc basis to work with the CSR departments of the companies in brainstorming and framing fitting programmes and projects that will adequately address the core needs of the Communities.

3.0 CONCLUSION

CSR initiatives remain one way of fostering cordial relationships between host communities and corporations. Corporate entities around the world ride on it to deal with all the challenges on global warming, climate change, poverty and hunger, depletion of natural resources, irresponsible management practices, and human rights abuses. However, it has also remained one avenue for funds abuse and wastage by company executives who are saddled with the task of implementing CRS projects; who turn around to convert such funds to their private pockets either by total abandonment or abysmal execution of the projects. It is concluded therefore that CSR is about business, government and civil society collaboration with the bottom line is the achievement of win-win situation among the three entities. From the social point of view, CSR should benefit community because the latter has a very complex structure as it consists of individuals with various levels of control of resources physically and intangibly. On this backdrop, it is advised that corporations be more deliberate in crafting ways of involving indigenes in CSR initiatives, in so doing, funds budgeted for CSR will be adequately channelled and utilized to the benefits of all parties.

4.0 SUGGESTIONS

From all that has been discussed, the following suggestions have been made so that Indigenization which has clearly been identified as a main recipe in Community development

through CSR practices can bring out the best in individuals to meet personal and communal needs of indigenes in host communities.

1. Corporations should give serious attention to their host Communities by injecting good initiatives for viable economic, self – generative, self-sustaining and enduring process of growth.
2. Corporations should put in place expedited measures to promote indigenous people's participation in their host communities by introducing and strengthening democracy through the creation and revitalization of Institutions and industries designed to serve as instruments for local participation. An example of this is the present clean-up in Ogoniland.
3. Corporations should endeavour to fulfil the major objectives of every genuine development initiative which is to educate and motivate the people for self- help, industry, creativity and self-reliance. It should be able to develop responsible local leadership and inculcate among the members of the community a sense of citizenship and spirit of civic consciousness and patriotism.
4. Mobilization of Indigenous people to maintain co-operative and harmonious relationships which in turn will bring about gradual and self-chosen changes in the lives of community members with minimum stress, disruption and conflicts.

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