

**ASSESSMENT OF THE COMMUNITY RELATIONS STRATEGY OF TOTALENERGIES
EXPLORATION AND PRODUCTION NIGERIA LIMITED IN MANAGING HOST
COMMUNITIES' CRISES IN EGI**

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ABSTRACT

The study assessed the community relations strategy of TotalEnergies Exploration and Production Nigeria Limited in managing the host communities' crises in Egi. The work was motivated by the perennial crises that enveloped the company under study in recent past in the host communities of Egi and the current echoes and re-echoes of the drums of war against the company. The objectives of this study were to identify the community relations strategy adopted by TotalEnergies Exploration and Production Nigeria Limited in managing the host communities' crises in Egi; find out the situations that warranted the adoption of the community relations strategy by the company among others. The study adopted two theories stakeholders' theory and human needs theory. The study also adopted a survey research design. The population of this study consisted of indigenes of Egi and the company's staff in the Department of Community Relations. The study used questionnaire and focus group discussion guide as its research instruments. The sample size for this study was 396 respondents. Consequently, 396 copies of questionnaire were administered to the respondents and 303 copies were retrieved in good order. The retrieved copies formed the basis for the data presentation and analysis of this study using descriptive statistics. The study revealed that the company adopted multi community relations strategies namely gunboat-diplomacy, reactive, divide-and-rule and multisectoral community relations strategies in managing the host communities' crises in Egi. Similarly, the study found that violent agitations and stoppage of the company's operations warranted the engagement of the community relations strategies by the company. The study concluded that there should be a paradigm shift in the adoption of the community relations strategy of the company. In line with the findings, the following recommendations were made among others: the company should integrate and adopt the principles of CIDECS and BRICCS in its lexicon of community relations strategy to stimulate sustainable peace and symbiotic relationship with its immediate constituents devoid of crises and centre-periphery relationship theory in Egi.

Introduction

Public relations professionals and scholars are in consensus that community relations is a branch of public relations that is concerned with creating sustainable symbiotic relationships between organizations and their immediate constituents, and for the benefit of all the parties (Nkwocha, 2017; Brown, 2022; Biriowu, 2022). Therefore, every organization whether profit oriented or non-profit making has a community where such organization is located or its activities affect. This shows that to avoid crisis in a host community, a company is expected to cultivate and nurture the friendship of the host community. This practice of building and maintaining this kind of cordial relationship by a company is known as community relations. Community relations is driven by different strategies which include proactive strategy, reactive strategy, defensive/militarization strategy, laissez faire strategy, ambush strategy, multisectoral strategy, firebridgagge strategy, gunboat-diplomacy strategy, people-participatory strategy among others (Center & Jackson, 2007; Henrix & Hayes, 2007; Seitel, 2011; Brown, 2019).

These community relations strategies are explained briefly; proactive community relations strategy is a type of strategy that is pre-emptive in nature. It envisions the future from the inception of the relationship of a company or organisation with its immediate constituents to carry along the constituents in the scheme of things through closer collaboration in order to intensify the

developmental needs of the constituents and galvanized action towards addressing the needs without any form of agitation, conflict, crisis or litigation.

Similarly, reactive community relations strategy is akin to firebrigade activity. Reactive community relations strategy comes as a result of the intense, aggressive or violent agitation by the host community or immediate constituents. In reactive community relations strategy, organizations are reluctant and indifferent to the yearnings and aspirations of the immediate constituents until there is agitation, protest or violence emanating from the organisation's community neighbour.

On the other hand, defensive/militarization community relations strategy is a community relations strategy in which organization prefers to connect with the security agents such as the Army, Navy, Airforce, Police, Directorate of State Services, etc rather than connecting with the immediate constituents with the aim of intimidating the locales at the behest of the organization in order to have a hitch-free operation in the community.

This strategy guides the company against negative actions from its immediate constituents especially from their host community by the deployment of security personnel as their watchdogs in order to forestall the entry of host community's representatives into the organization or company premises for a complaint, protest or picketing of the company. This community relations strategy is presently adopted by almost all the multinational oil companies operating in Rivers State (Brown, 2018).

Under this strategy, the security personnel attached to the company can militarize the community by a little provocation. Classical examples are November 10, 2010 crisis between Total Exploration and Production Company vs. Egi youths and January 12, 1998 crisis between Shell Petroleum Development Company vs. Umuechem in Etche Local Government Area of Rivers State which consequences were monumental.

Similarly, Laissez faire community relations strategy is a strategy that does not have a clear defined community relations strategy and policy for building, operating and sustaining relationship with its immediate constituents or host community through effective community relations projects and programmes.

2.

In this strategy, an organization demonstrates a laissez-faire or lackadaisical attitude towards initiating community relations projects and programmes or corporate social responsibility to its immediate constituents particularly in its host community. Organisation or company here does not respect the doctrine of corporate social responsibility as a key community relations tool in winning and sustaining favourable public perception in its community of operation. But sometimes company embarks on infinitesimal project in the community without the input of the immediate constituents. Comparably, gunboat-diplomacy community relations strategy is a strategy in which organizations or companies use the threat of force by rolling out military arsenal to threaten their neighbours or host communities especially when the communities make incessant requests for community development programmes or projects. In reaction to these requests, organizations seek ways to instill fears into the people by the deployment of aggressive and combatant looking soldiers, armed policemen and other security agents without putting triggers to action. Here, threatening of the community indigenes is the target or goal of the strategy.

In like manner, divide-and-rule community relations strategy is a type of strategy in which an organization deliberately chooses to relate with a few elite or personalities in the community where it operates at the expense of the entire community for convenience and selfish interest rather than connecting with the entire community or its representatives like Community Development Committee (CDC), Community Town Council (CTC), Elite Group (EG), etc.

This community relations strategy encourages the empowerment of the so-called selected persons economically at the expense of the entire community. These groups of persons are used by the organization or company to influence public opinion or action in the time of crisis favourably towards the organization.

Multisectoral community relations strategy is a strategy in community relations practice that strives to establish multi-faceted relationships with diverse stakeholders in the community rather than a few elite group, members of Community Development Committee, members of Town Council in the community especially in initiating and execution of community relations or corporate social responsibility projects and programmes. 3.

People-participatory community relations strategy is people-centered, citizen-oriented and people-centric. Azaki (2008) (as cited in Nkwocha, 2011) notes that this type of community relations strategy is citizen-oriented. Azaki holds that this strategy enhances development of the host communities. In this strategy, organizations see the host communities or immediate constituents as key partners in the whole process of planning and execution of community relations or corporate social responsibility projects and programmes rather ambushing the communities with such projects and programmes.

Ambush community relations strategy is a strategy that strives to take the host community or immediate constituents by surprise. It is a strategy that extends organisation's hands of fellowship to its immediate constituents without prior information to them. In this strategy, organisation can appear on the occasion of a host community without an invite from the host or sponsors of the programme in the community with the aim of marketing its image before such publics.

Conversely, elitist community relations strategy is class-based, exclusive and discriminatory in nature. It is a type of community relations strategy in which an organization chose to establish and build a mutual relationship with selected elites based on their personalities, power, influence, intellect, wealth, authority, experience, etc., for personal aggrandizement rather than seeking for the socio-economic development and welfare of the entire community or the immediate constituents. This kind of community relations strategy is self-serving. In this type of strategy, the community relations managers of an organization strives to tap from the authority, power, influence, wealth, intellect and experiences of the elites in decision making. This kind of community relations strategy also influences opinions in the immediate constituents. It anchors its relationship on the elites in the immediate constituents because of their presumed influence, authority, power, intellect, experiences and wealth. This genre of community relations strategy is usually crisis prone. It can backfire in the long run. All things being equal, the type of community relations strategies an organisation or company especially the upstream oil company adopts determines the level of cooperation and harmony it enjoys from its immediate constituents. The neglect of host communities or immediate constituents of oil exploration and production companies is likely to cause a breach of peace or crisis in the short-run or long-run in the operations of the companies.

According to Hendrix and Hayes (2007), one of the most important neighbours of an organisation is the home of its operations and offices. Therefore, maintaining good relationship with the community usually entails management and employees becoming involved in contributing to the welfare and wellbeing of its immediate constituents or host communities. Similarly, effective community relations can set the tone and the barometer for assessing the corporate citizenship level of an organisation. Community relations can be the core of public relations programmes or projects because it also sets the tone of what an organization stands and known for. Community relations is not measured by words or rhetoric but by deeds or actions.

Today, the way corporate organisations especially the upstream oil companies conduct their activities in the host communities is becoming increasingly questionable and worrisome because of their attendant crisis in their operational base particularly in Egiland. This shows that for a corporate organization especially the upstream oil sector to exist peacefully in its host communities, there must be a meaningful relationship with its neighbour or immediate constituents. This relationship must have the capacity to stimulate harmonious and cordial relationship with its immediate constituents. Otherwise, the relationship becomes close to that of Russia and Ukraine if not controlled.

Seitel (2011) posits that it is the expectation of the community where organisation operates from to contribute positively to the socio-economic development of the immediate constituents without violence agitations. As a corporate citizen of the community, an organisation is expected to

participate responsibly in community affairs such as civic functions, infrastructural development, education, welfare, recreational activities, cultural festivals, etc (p. 256).

Seitel further posits that community wants organization to create employment opportunities, respond to its health-care, develop human capacity, protect the environment and help put the community on the map of development. . Community also wants an organization that helps build the community generally. Community equally wants firms that are proud to be residents and responds to the socio-economic needs of the neighbours without protest and agitations. This is the heartbeat of most host communities globally (p. 257).

Nkwocha (2017) making reference to (Ogedengbe 2007; Azaik 2008; Haastrup 2010; Orukari 2010) opines that corporate organisations should take their relationships with host their communities very seriously; and manage such relationships effectively to achieve good reputation. Nkwocha further states that good community relations fosters peaceful business operations for the company and development of host communities. In the opinion of Nkwocha, community relations practice is no longer the practice of oil and gas companies alone. Every corporate organisation that values its image now identifies with its host communities and relates with them for mutual benefits.

These host communities or immediate constituents of the upstream oil sector are now feeling a sense of neglect, marginalized, injustice, exploited, cheated, impoverished, neo-colonized and devastated environment both land, river, stream, sea and the atmosphere without commensurate remediation and corporate social responsibility. The consequence of this, is the geometrical rise in the agitations of better community relations strategies that are citizen- centered, community-centered and people-participatory rather than the present gunboat and militarization community relations strategies that are prevalent in TotalEnergies Exploration and Production Nigeria Limited in its host communities in Egi Clan of Ogba/Egbema/Ndoni Local Government area of Rivers State. Biriowu (2022) argues that there is a growing social injustice and neglect against the host communities in all parts of Rivers State by the multinational oil companies. Biriowu further argues that from Gbara to Bowei, Umuchem to Okuragwu, Ekpeye to Egi, Rumuekpe to Elele, Ibaa to Aluu, Igwuruta to Okoroagu, etc., the situation has been the same (pp. 5-6).

This ugly situation in the position of Biriowu (2022) has worsened the relationships between the upstream oil companies and their host communities Rivers State in particular and the Niger Delta in general. As a result of this, incessant protest and agitations have become a recurring decimal because the indigenes and residents of the oil bearing communities are becoming more sophisticated, more educated, more enlightened, more exposed, more conscious, more aware of their rights and privileges and even more informed of the activities and operations of the multinational oil exploration and production companies across the Niger Delta region of Nigeria (p. 7).

Therefore, they now seek for a better and improved socio-economic life. The people are now demanding for improved education, social services, good environment, improved well-being and welfare, employment opportunities, infrastructural development, economic equity, recognition, fairness, social justice and participation in the oil exploration and production in their communities in the place of total exclusion in the oil activities (Biriowu, 2022). These concerns are the inspirations behind this study.

Statement of the Problem

The role of community relations strategies of TotalEnergies Exploration and Production Nigeria Limited in managing host communities' crises has continued to generate a lot of debate and vitriolic criticisms among the watchdogs of oil industry, environmental critics and crisis mediators and arbitrators. In the same vein, the host communities of TotalEnergies Exploration and Production Nigeria Limited have often argued that the company's community relations strategies and policy thrust in Egi Clan are not in line with the global best standards vis-à-vis its relationship with its immediate constituents especially in the time of crisis. The youths of the host communities have

often argued that the divide and rule and the disconnect in communication between the youths and the management of the company are issues that need to be addressed if sustainable peace must be achieved between the company and its immediate constituents in Egi Clan. They argued that the non- implementation of Petroleum Industry Act of 2021 in the host communities of Egi is always heightening suspicion against the company hence the echoes and reechoes of drums of war against TotalEnergies Exploration and Production Nigeria Limited.

This ill-feeling has instigated a rise in discontent, misconception, misrepresentation, name-calling and labeling propaganda techniques between the company and its immediate constituents leading to violent agitations affecting the operations of the company and its relationship with the locales or local stakeholders in Egi. This situation needs a change in narrative to usher in a sustainable peace and development since peace is the path-way to development.

Research Questions

The following research questions are poised to guide this study:

1. Which community relations strategy was adopted by TotalEnergies Exploration and Production Nigeria Limited in managing the crises between it and the host communities in Egi?
2. What are the mutual benefits derived from the use of the community relations strategy adopted by TotalEnergies Exploration and Production Nigeria Limited in managing the crises between it and the host communities in Egi?
3. Which are the most effective communication channels engaged by TotalEnergies Exploration and Production Nigeria Limited that complemented its community relations strategy in managing the crises between it and the host communities in Egi?
4. How suitable is the community relations strategy adopted by TotalEnergies Exploration and Production Nigeria Limited in managing the host communities' crises in Egi?
5. Which situations warranted the adoption of the community relations strategy by TotalEnergies Exploration and Production Nigeria Limited in Egi?
- .6. What are the limitations to the community relations strategy adopted by TotalEnergies Exploration and Production Nigeria Limited in managing the crises in the host communities in Egi?

Theoretical Framework

This study anchored on two theories namely Stakeholders Theory and Human Needs. These two theories are supported by Carroll' Corporate Social Responsibility Pyramid Model.

Stakeholders Theory

This theory was propounded by Professor Edward F. Freeman at the University of Virginia, United States of America in 1984 in his book titled: "Strategic Management: A Stakeholder Approach." This is a theory of public relations and organisational management which holds that organisations should consider multiple constituencies or constituents that impact by their business activities like host communities, clients, employees, suppliers, creditors, etc as stakeholders in their business if they must survive and remain in business peacefully (Okoro & Ahaotu, 2013).

According to Okoro and Ahaotu, stakeholders' theory addresses moral values in managing an organisation. This theory recognises the different groups that constitute the stakeholders of a corporate organisation and recommends ways their interest can be given attention (p, 16). Therefore, corporate organisations must treat these groups with a sense of social responsibility, morality, equity, fairness and justice to avoid crisis and maximize profit.

The theory holds further that corporate organisations must see the institutions and constituents who are interconnected with them in business as partners in progress by exhibiting good corporate behaviour and attitude to them as this would promote good and cordial relationship between the former and the latter. This theory is more or less a capitalism philosophy that stresses the interconnectedness between a business entity and its immediate constituents, employees, suppliers, customers, investors and others whose stake in the organisation is profound.

The theory argues that corporate organisations should not just make profit for investors but should create value for all stakeholders and not just for shareholders. Freeman (1984, as cited in Okoro & Ahaotu, 2013) states that two core questions articulate the focus of the stakeholders' theory. The first question is what is the purpose of the company? The second question is what responsibility does management have for stakeholders? The idea here is that corporate organisations are not mere profit-generating robots for shareholders but must treat stakeholders with a sense of dignity, respect and care. The stakeholder theory recognises the dynamics and complex relationships between organizations and their stakeholders, and these relationships involve responsibility and accountability (Okoro & Ahaotu, 2013).

According to Carroll (1991), corporate organisation that wants to be seen as a good corporate citizen must anchor its operation on four major pillars of responsibilities as noted earlier, namely: "Philanthropic Responsibility, Ethical Responsibility, Legal Responsibility and Economic Responsibility. Carroll argues that corporate organisations must see their immediate constituents as critical stakeholders for the survival and sustainability of the organisations. Therefore, organisations must stretch their hands of fellowship toward their immediate constituent via philanthropic responsibility, in other words called corporate social responsibility to win the friendship of the stakeholders in their community of operation without agitations.

This in the wisdom of Carroll, should be blended with ethical responsibility. The ethical responsibility holds that organisation must be ethical in its operation to avoid public criticism and whistle blowing against the corporate entity. This implies that organisation is expected to be morally upright in the discharge of its roles in the society. Organisation is equally expected to protect the environment where it works and avoid environmental degradation and pollution of all kinds in order to be regarded as organisation that is environmentally and morally certified. But is this true of the host communities of the upstream oil sector in Rivers State especially TotalEnergies Exploration and Production Nigeria Limited?

In the same vein, the legal responsibility according to Carroll emphasizes that corporate organisation must carry out its responsibilities or activities in the immediate host community and the society at large with a sense of legality. This means that organisations must be legal in carrying out its activities within the ambits of the law and in the pursuit of profit for shareholders or investors who at least need their return on investment.

Carroll contends that the bottom-line of every business is to maximize profit for investors.

Therefore, business managers must strive to make profit that will sustain the investment of the investors in spite of the philanthropic responsibility or gesture of the organisation towards its stakeholders especially the immediate constituents. Carroll's corporate social responsibility pyramid believes in maximization of profit but the profit must be in concomitant with corporate social responsibility.

Carroll further argues that the profit of an organisation should not just be for the shareholders but a substantial amount of the profit should be given back to the society particularly the immediate constituents via value addition projects and programmes. Carroll's corporate social responsibility pyramid model is in line with the prescription of stakeholders' theory.

This theory stipulates that a corporate entity should find pleasure in ensuring that the interest of the stakeholders is respected and cared for and is kept in balance with that of the profit of business organisation. One of the main proponents of stakeholder theory, Freeman 1984 as cited in Usman, Thankgod and Alhassan (2019, p.131), identified the emergence of stakeholder groups as important elements to the organisation requiring the continuous cooperation of the stakeholders in its business. The stakeholders' theory seems to advocate for a symbiotic relationship between organisations and their immediate constituents hence discouraging the Centre-Periphery Relationship Theory of Lenin as cited in Okoko (2005). In this theory, the Centre is the government or corporate organisation that gets improving socio-economically, gets bigger, more nourished and richer while the Periphery in the relationship with the corporate organisation or the government gets slimmer, malnourished, weaker socio-economically and poorer in the midst of abundant natural resources. In this kind of relationship, only one party benefits at the peril of the other party.

Judging from the above, in the relationship between TotalEnergies Exploration and Production

Nigeria Limited and Egi Clan, can we regard the relationship as the Centre and the Periphery relationship? Chukwu and Akpeekon (2021) posit that the stakeholders' theory is a necessary theory that looks at the corporate social responsibility of firms vis-à-vis the stakeholders of which the host community is a major stakeholder. Therefore, for the activities of a corporate organisation to go unhindered and without protest or violence, stakeholders must be cared for. This implies that Egi Clan is expected to be a major stakeholder in TotalEnergies Exploration and Production Nigeria Limited oil business activities in Egi communities (p. 615).

Human Needs Theory

This theory was propounded by psychologist Abraham Maslow in 1943 and later refined the theory in 1954. This theory is concerned with the provision of basic human needs and which must be met in order to have peace and avoid discord in the society or organisation. The main assumption of the human needs theory is that all human beings have some needs which they seek to fulfill and maximize, and that any attempt to deny or frustrate people from getting and satisfying their basic needs is a clear invitation to crisis. For Maslow, basic human needs include food, water, shelter, safety, security, self-esteem, etc.

Human needs according to Burton (1990) include social recognition and social amenities for the well-being of the society. Discussing human needs (Maslow, 1943; 1954; 1971, as cited in Buchanan 2001) identifies other human needs: biological needs, affiliation needs, the need to know and understand, aesthetics needs, the need for transcendence, the need for freedom of inquiry and expression, the need for self-actualization among others.

Nkwocha (2017) sees human needs in different perspectives. For Nkwocha, human needs in host communities of the upstream oil sector are good road, drinkable water, employment opportunities, human capital development, effective health-care, electricity, environmental management and safety of the people. Deprivation of a particular basic need or physiological need may likely cause a conflict or crisis according to Nkwocha. The management of such situation depends on strategic action of the organisation to redress such needs.

Human needs theory seeks to explain the relationship between corporate organisations and their immediate constituents in terms of provision of basic human needs. In applying this to community relations, the upstream oil companies are obligatory to provide the basic human needs for their immediate constituents especially the host communities whose farmlands, seas, streams, rivers and living environment have all been polluted hence making life difficult to the locales as argued by (Sarowiwa, 1995; Koko, 2005; Nkwocha, 2017; Biriowu, 2022).

Alikor and Anele further argue that the basic human needs of the host communities are not provided by the upstream oil industry nor the government hence subjecting the people to poverty since their sources of livelihood have been taken away from them especially farmlands.

Giving credence to this, Adeyemi (1995) and Okoko (2005) have argued that to be landless is to be in hunger and sub-human because land is the source of food production, shelter, human wealth and attempt by any organisation, individual or group of persons to destroy land for business purposes without provision of basic human needs to the owners of the land is an injustice and inhuman. Similarly, agriculture production is earth or soil-bound. In the event of discovery of oil on a piece of land, the land is automatically lost to oil production activities and agriculture and other socio-economic activities suffer. When an oilfield is located on land, a large portion of the area is taken for such oil business, the owners of the land no longer have access to the area (Onyealor, 1995; Onyige, 1997, as cited in Adeyemo, 2005).

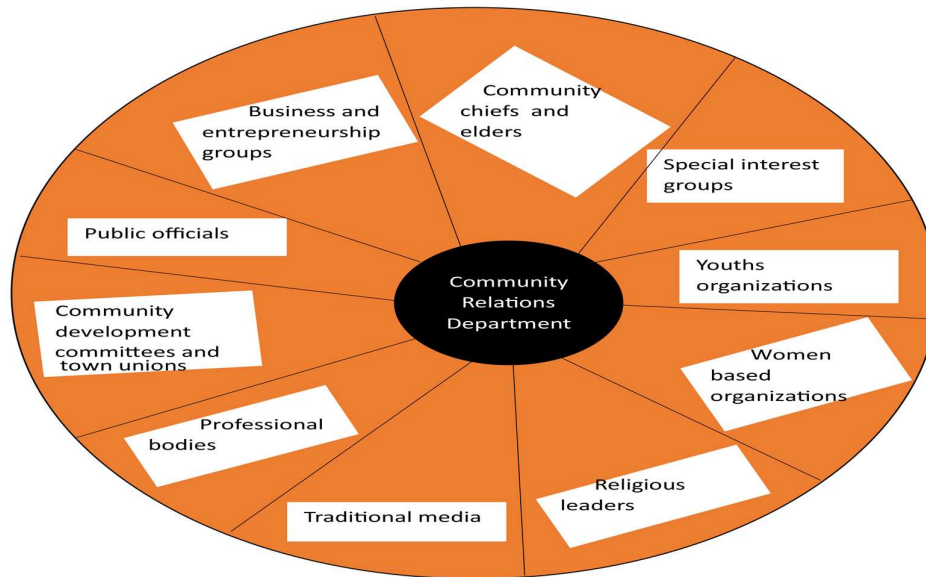
Of course, when this happens, the basic needs of humans (farming) will be denied because the supposed farming and other socio-economic activities can no longer be done on the acquired land. Crude oil spills on the existing farms contaminates the land and renders the soil unsuitable for plant growth, either because of the reduced availability of soil nutrients such as nitrogen or by the introduction of toxic contents into the soil. Gas flaring also causes thermal pollution and reduces fertility of farmland or farm-produce (Adeyemo, 2005).

Consequently, this has reduced the amount of agricultural activities in the oil bearing communities leading to food-insecurity and continuous demands for basic human needs such as food, shelter, good breath, social amenities, employment, security of lives and property among others. The near to absence of these human needs in most hinterland and coastal areas in the Niger Delta has brought the cat and dog relationship between the upstream oil companies and their host communities (Brown, 2018).

The deprivation of the sources of livelihood of the host communities like farmland, stream, river, water-well, forest, mangrove, etc., by oil producing companies without provision of basic human needs and compensation is likened to the assumption of the relative deprivation theory. This theory holds that people who feel deprived socio-economically, socio-politically and socio-culturally are likely to be dissatisfied with their current situation hence seek for better life and social change, and this quest for change of narrative often comes with violent agitation or crisis.

In this regard, Godknows and Asueni (2017) have argued that the hunger and poverty in the Niger Delta especially in the oil bearing communities can easily be attributed to the vast environmental degradation and social disequilibrium that trumped up several paradoxes including large scale unemployment in the midst of abundant natural resources that the international oil companies (IOC) have been exploring and exploiting for decades without the provision of basic human needs to the host communities, adequate compensation and corporate social responsibility. This implies that the host communities are often deprived of their God-given crude oil and its associated benefits. Their God-given product has become a national cake and the cow that survives the milk industry of the nation and shared without the recognition of the owner of the cake or cow that breeds the milk. This is akin to what Koko (2005) called Center-Periphery relationship theory, where the 'Centre' or the corporate organisation gets improving, growing better and getting fatter in the relationship while the 'Periphery' who provides the source of the nutrients for the nourishment of the Centre gets malnourished, slimmer and socio-economically weak.

Figure 1: Community Relations' Publics Cycle



Community Relations Publics Cycle

Community relations managers and officers who want to make a good name in its immediate constituents should consider various publics found in the communities or the immediate constituents as this will help in building a two-way communication and foster meaningful relationship (Brown, 2018).

Some of the key publics the community relations handlers of organisations especially in the upstream oil companies are expected to establish relationships with according to Brown (2022) are:

Chieftaincy institutions in host communities; Community development committees (CDC), in host communities; Town councils in host communities; Youth bodies in host communities; Women groups in host communities; Community chiefs and elders, Business and entrepreneur groups, Special groups e.g. widows; physically challenged persons, etc, Student bodies; Traditional and conventional media practitioners; The elite class; The religious leaders; and The political and economic leaders, Professional bodies. (p. 3)

These stakeholders are the chosen or elected indigenes of host communities saddled with the responsibility of relating with corporate organisations on behalf the communities in initiating and executing of community development projects. They group of persons liaise with corporate organisations, government and development agencies in terms of community development projects and programmes (Nkwocha, 2017).

In some communities, Community Development Committee (CDC) is called Town Council (TC) with the same mandate of liaising with community relations managers in conceptualizing and implementation of people-participatory projects in the community, especially if the organisation is adopting proactive and people-participatory community relations. So, a Community Relations Officer must relate with this group so as to carry the host community along in his or her organisation's scheme of things to avoid community relations induced crisis (Nwocha, 2017).

Igben (2007; Hendrix & Hayes, 2007; Alikor, 2015; Nkwocha, 2017; Brown, 2018; Biriowu, 2022) corroborate that community stakeholders exist in organizations' host communities. Some of the community-based-stakeholders in the oil bearing communities in the Niger Delta are:



Figure 2: Carroll's (1991) Corporate Social Responsibility Pyramid Model

Carroll (1991) conceptualized a pyramid known as Corporate Social Responsibility Pyramid Model. The structure of the pyramid reads: Philanthropic Responsibility, Ethical Responsibility, Legal Responsibility and the last but not the least is the Economic Responsibility. The Corporate Social Responsibility Pyramid Model functions in the following ways:

Philanthropic Responsibility

According to Carroll, at the top of the pyramid is the philanthropic responsibility. Carroll argues that for an organisation to be known as a good corporate citizen, the organisation must be willing and ready to play a philanthropic role to its immediate constituents through initiating, planning and implementation of projects and programmes that would transform the life of its immediate constituents positively without being cajoled. Corporate organisation must be philanthropic in nature to contribute to the socio-economic life of its immediate constituent to avoid crisis.

In the dynamics of this pyramid, the organisation's interaction with the immediate constituent must be a life changing experience for the community where the operations of the organisation depends on. The place of philanthropic responsibility (CSR) pyramid means that the first and the only purpose of a business is not just profit-making as advocates by proponents of Adam Smith's classical-economic model but the upliftment of the society through philanthropic gesture. This corroborates in parts Alexander and Matthews' Ten Commandments of Corporate Social Responsibility as reported in *Business and Society Review* (1984) and cited in Kreitner (1995) when they state:

- Thou shall get involved in appropriate social programmes.
- Thou shall help correct environmental problems.
- Thou shall monitor the changing social environment.
- Thou shall take needed public stands on social issues. (p. 136)

Ethical Responsibility: This means that business organisation is expected to carry out its roles with a sense of morality and professional ethics in order to be classified as an ethical organisation. Organisation must adhere to the ethics guiding its operation without compromise. It must consider the ethical dimension or implication of its operation to avoid unethical practice. This is also in line with the "Ten Commandments of Corporate Social Responsibility" which read in parts: "Thou shall

work to establish industry wide standards and sell regulation. Thou shall establish and enforce a corporate code of conduct.”

Legal Responsibility:

This is the third occupant of Carroll’s CSR pyramid model beginning from the bottom to top. The legal responsibility holds that organisation must respect the law of the land, local authority, state and the nation where it operates from despite the profit motive and the personalities behind its establishment and operation. This further holds that organisation must be obedient and loyal to the law governing and regulating its operation in order to be seen as a good legal entity. Anything short of this makes a corporate organisation legally lazy and disobedient to the law of the land.

Economic Responsibility

This is the baseline and bottom-line of Carroll’s CSR pyramid. This stage of the pyramid holds that business organisation must make profit on-going despite public expectation for philanthropic gesture or contributions to the socio-economic upliftment of its immediate constituents. This is because the investors or shareholders are expected to get their return on investment (ROI) after all. Giving credence to this, Alexander and Matthews’ Ten Commandments of Corporate Social Responsibility concludes: “Thou shall strive to make profits on an ongoing basis.” This implies that profit making is obligatory on the part of business managers and it must be sustainable in spite of corporate social responsibility efforts of an organisation, its charities and social investment towards its immediate constituents or host communities.

This further means that philanthropic responsibility of a company should not that the place of profit-making because it is only when a company makes profit that it can be sustained in business and extends its hand of fellowship to its immediate constituents. This also means that economic responsibility must be in concomitant with philanthropic responsibility.

Supporting the economic responsibility further, Center and Jackson (2007) argue that “the bottom-line of public relations practice is in the results that come from putting theories and principles to work in a way that benefits the organisation issuing the pay cheque and the society of which that organisation is a part.” (p. 1).

Consequences of Poor Corporate Social Responsibility

Organisations that relegate the place of corporate social responsibility in its community relations are likely to face some harsh consequences in business. Therefore, corporate organisation must be alive to its social responsibility to the society in order to be seen as a good corporate citizen (Seitel, 2007).

Alikor, Ukaegbu and Ben-Woke (2013, p.8) opine that lack of corporate social responsibility in the operations of a corporate organizations especially upstream oil companies can stimulate perennial violent conflict between corporate organizations and heir host communities, emergence of militia and resistance groups, frequent protest against companies by half-naked aged women and youths from host communities, it leads to whistle blowing syndrome in the operation of corporate organizations, it stimulates molestation, it can cause embarrassment and assault on companies personnel, lead to closure of company’s area of operations, loss of man-hour among others.

Alikor et al further argue that lack of corporate social responsibility can lead to stigmatization of corporate image of companies by host companies in the media of mass communication, introduction of unfriendly tax regime from the government against the corporate organizations, leads to increase in crime and criminality in the companies’ area of operations, leads to mass media searchlight on the operation of corporate organizations, stimulation of government unwanted policies and directives against the operations corporate organizations, leads to introduction of unfriendly tax regime from the government against the corporate organizations, leads to adoption of extra-judicial control methods to curb the excesses of the corporate organizations in their immediate constituents, it will lead to image and reputation problem and may lead loss of profit by corporate organizations (p. 8).

Nkwocha (2010, as cited in Nkwocha, 2017) in argues that organisation that does not recognise her host communities through corporate social responsibility is likely to offend the immediate constituents and the consequence of such bad corporate attitude and behaviour may trigger community hostility, negative media campaign against the company, hammer of regulatory authorities, encourage illegal oil bunkering, loss of revenue, picketing of company's premises and other actions against the company.

Brown (2018) argues that lack of corporate social responsibility in community relations practice may impact on the corporate organisation adversely in the following ways:

It stimulates crisis between organization and its immediate constituents. It leads to loss of corporate image and reputation in an organisation. It leads to frequent picketing of an organisation. It leads to loss of confidence in the operation of the organisation. It leads to loss of organisations profit. It leads to media and non-state actor criticism. It leads endemic complaints against the operation of an organization. (p. 6).

Brown (2019) argues the rationale behind the insensitivity of the upstream oil sector in the operationalisation of corporate social responsibility in the oil bearing communities in the Niger Delta. Brown argues further that "the consequence of oil exploration and production in the region has left some oil producing communities totally polluted, the atmosphere taken over by hydrocarbons and carbon monoxide. The immediate result of this is the degradation of the environment. Some communities can no longer farm and do their fishing exploit because the farmlands and the rivers are all polluted. Some have streams, rivers and local wells but cannot longer drink from them" (p. 3).

Brown argues that "youths have no paid employment or skill to put food on their tables because the sources of livelihood have either taken away from them or polluted by oil exploration and exploitation. This calls for deliberate recalibration of the corporate social responsibility efforts of the upstream oil companies operating in the Niger Delta in the oil bearing communities to minimize their stigmatized corporate image and reputation, and the endemic crisis with the host communities. Corporate social responsibility is the way to go by the upstream oil sector in the Niger Delta in order to promote and tranquility between the oil companies and their immediate constituents (p. 4).

Biriowu (2022) writing on the nature and scope of community relations in the Niger Delta argues that lack of corporate social responsibility in community relations can cause a corporate organisation a fortune. These may come in from of pipeline vandalism, blocking of access road, hostage-taking of company's personnel, kidnapping of company' staff, theft of company equipment, sabotage of the company's operation, war against the company, forceful occupation of company's premises, assault of company's personnel and sea piracy targeted at company's offshore personnel.

From the foregoing, consistent engagement between organisations and their host communities or immediate constituents is the sine qua non or ground norm for hostility-free operations of corporate organisations. This is against the backdrop that organisations, scholars and professionals in the field of public relations are in consensus that effective community relations practice in synergy with corporate social responsibility can stimulate a fruitful relationship between corporate organizations and their immediate constituents. This shows that the former and the latter are expected to be partners in progress.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted descriptive-analytical survey research design which culminated into the use of qualitative and quantitative research techniques also known as a mixed research method. Statistically, the population of this study is thirty nine thousand, three people (39,003). The population of this study consisted of the community relations staff of TotalEnergies Exploration and Production Nigeria Limited in Port Harcourt Head Office (47) and Obagi, Egi Operational Office (25) and the Egi Clan which is the seat of onshore operation of Oil Mining and Leasing (OML 58) activities

in Ogba/Egbema/Ndoni Local Government Area of Rivers State. The population covered the Egi Clan with the view of giving a sense of belonging to all the residents and indigenes of Egi. These communities are Akabuka, Obugu, Obite, Ogbuburu, Obagi, Erema and Obiyebe. Traditionally, The Egi people interface with TotalEnergies Exploration and Production Nigeria Limited through Egi Peoples Assembly, Egi Council of Chiefs, Egi Youths Federation, Egi Oil and Gas Elder, Egi Oil and Gas Women Wing, Egi Joint Community Development Committee, Egi Oil and Gas Youths, Egi Students Association and Egi Women Welfare Association. The population of Egi Clan is Thirty Eight Thousand, Nine Hundred and Thirty One (38,931) people according to 2023 Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) Voters' Register which served as the sampling frame for this study. This statistics was drawn from the aforementioned voters' register of the four wards in Egiland namely: Ward 7 (12,735), Ward 8 (12,597) Ward 9 (8,388) and Ward 17 (5,211) making a total of 38,931 people. The age bracket that participated in this study was between 18 and above. The choice of this age bracket for this study is based on 2022 Electoral Act of Nigeria as amended and the 1999 Constitution of Nigeria as amended that defined the acceptable age for voting in an election and the maturity age for prosecution as eighteen (18) years and above. The both documents hold that the age for maturity and participation in election shall be eighteen years and above. This study hinged on that to choose the participants for this study. Therefore, the total population of this study is the population of Egi Clan plus staff of Community Relations Operational Officers in Oil Mining Lease (OML 58) Obagi in Egi and Community Relations/Community Affairs Project and Development Office in Port Harcourt totaling thirty nine thousand, three people (39,003) as mentioned earlier. The study used questionnaire as its research instrument to elicit response from the respondents.

Results of Data Analysis

Three hundred and ninety-six (396) copies of questionnaire were distributed to the respondents from the host communities and TotalEnergies Exploration and Production Nigeria Limited based on the sample size of this study but 303 copies of the questionnaire were returned by the respondents. In the distribution pattern of the questionnaire, 324 copies of the questionnaire were distributed to the respondents in the host communities of the company under study but 237 copies of the questionnaire were retrieved while 87 copies were inadequately filled whereas some copies of the questionnaire were never returned by the respondents.

On the other hand, 72 copies of the questionnaire were distributed to the respondents in the company under study but 66 copies were returned by the respondents but 6 copies were not retrieved. The returned copies of the questionnaire laid the foundation for the data analysis in this study. The unused 93 copies of the questionnaire in this study were caused by inappropriate filling of the questionnaire on one hand. On the other hand, some respondents never returned their copies of the questionnaire in spite of the researchers' insistence on the retrieval of all the copies of the questionnaire administered to the respondents.

The percentage level of the returned copies of the questionnaire from the host communities and the company was 77%. The frequencies of responses to the questions raised in the questionnaire were collated, computed in tables and analyzed using descriptive statistics and focus group discussion guide report was also presented, and findings of this study were discussed extensively.

Questionnaire Results

Research Question 1: Which community relations strategy was adopted by TotalEnergies Exploration and Production Nigeria Limited in managing the crises between it and the host communities in Egi?

Table 4.1.1: Identification of Community Relations Strategy engaged by by TotalEnergies E&P Nig. Ltd in Managing the Host Communities' Crises in Egi

S/No	CR Strategies	No of Respondents (n_k) for each Score (W_k)				n_r	M_s	Standard Dev. $S = \sqrt{\frac{\sum d^2}{4}}$	Remark
		4	3	2	1				
						$N_x = 237$	4		
1	Proactive CR Strategy	15	21	87	114	237	1.73	42.4	Disagreed
2	Reactive CR Strategy	89	91	33	24	237	3.03	30.9	Agreed
3	Gunboat-Diplomacy CR Strategy	69	105	33	29	236	2.91	30.8	Agreed
4	Carrot and Stick CR Tactic	22	30	77	108	237	1.86	35.1	Disagreed
5	Laissezfaire CR Strategy	23	27	86	101	237	1.88	34.7	Disagreed
6	People Participatory CR Strategy	24	19	102	92	237	1.89	38.0	Disagreed
7	Defensive-Militarization CR Strategy	11	32	111	83	237	1.88	39.7	Disagreed
8	Situational CR Strategy	17	40	107	73	237	2.00	34.0	Disagreed
9	Ambush CR Strategy	31	26	90	89	236	2.00	30.6	Disagreed
10	Multi-Sectorial CR Strategy	76	83	49	28	236	2.88	21.9	Agreed

Source: Survey Data: 2023/2024

Maximum Value $N_x = 237$

Table 4.1.1 shows that TotalEnergies Exploration and Production Nigeria Limited engaged mainly reactive and gunboat-diplomacy and Multi-Sectorial community relations strategies in managing the aforementioned crises in order to instill fears into the hearts of the youths who were the primary parties and actors in the crises. The result showed that reactive, gunboat-diplomacy and multi-sectorial community relations strategies attracted the highest M_s of 3.03 and 2.91 and 2.88 respectively. These community relations strategies created room for further actions to achieve relative peace in the host communities. This implies that reactive, gunboat-diplomacy and multi-sectorial community relations strategies can be used as major tools for crises management by community relations strategists of upstream oil companies.

Table 4.1.2: The Most Preferred Community Relations Strategy in Managing the Host Communities' Crises in Egi

S/No	CR Strategies	No of Respondents (n_k) for each Score (W_k)				n_r	M_s	Standard Dev. $S = \sqrt{\frac{\sum d^2}{4}}$	Remark
		4	3	2	1				
						$N_x = 237$	4		

1	Multi-Sectorial CR Tactic	79	93	37	28	237	2.94	27.4	Agreed
2	Proactive CR Tactic	53	115	50	19	237	2.85	34.8	Agreed
3	People Participatory CR Tactic	92	102	102	34	330	2.76	28.3	Agreed
4	Carrot and Stick CR Tactic	22	46	49	119	236	1.88	36.2	Disagreed
5	Defensive-Militarization CR Tactic	11	32	111	83	237	1.88	39.7	Disagreed
6	Gunboat-Diplomacy CR Tactic	18	14	126	78	236	1.88	46.2k	Disagreed
7	Ambush CR Tactic	26	19	90	101	236	1.87	36.8	Disagreed
8	Reactive CR Tactic	25	47	36	129	237	1.86	41.0	Disagreed
9	Laissezfaire CR Tactic	21	25	90	101	237	1.86	36.5	Disagreed
10	Situational CR Tactic	19	29	83	105	236	1.84	36.0	Disagreed

Source: Survey Data: 2023/2024

A cursory examination of table 4.1.2 shows that the host communities of TotalEnergies Exploration and Production Nigeria Limited in Egi Clan preferred multi-sectoral, proactive and people-participatory community relations tactics in managing crises in the host communities of the company under study as they attracted mean scores of 2.94, 2.85 and 2.76 respectively. This implies that the engagement of gunboat-diplomacy and reactive community relations tactics adopted by the company in managing the aforementioned crises in Egi communities were despised and frowned at by the host communities.

4. **Research 2:** What are the mutual benefits of the community relations strategy adopted by TotalEnergies Exploration and Production Nigeria Limited in managing the crises between it and the host communities in Egi?

Table 4.2.1: Mutual Benefits Derived by Host Communities and the Company for the Engagement of Community Relations Strategy

S/No	Major Benefits	No of Respondents (n _k) for each Score (W _k)				Nr	Ms	Standard Dev. $S = \sqrt{\frac{\sum d^2}{4}}$	Remark
		4	3	2	1				
						N _x = 237	4		
1	Full implementation of Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) and Relative Peace	21	38	75	103	237	1.90	31.9	Disagreed

2	Introduction of new Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) projects, programmes and relative peace	72	97	48	20	237	2.93	28.5	Agreed
3	Feeling of sense of belonging to the operations of the company and relative peace	30	42	86	79	237	2.10	23.8	Disagreed
4	Proper Composition of members of PIA Host Communities Development Trust Fund	75	89	45	28	237	2.89	24.0	Agreed
5	Introduction of equity share to the Host communities	27	36	79	95	237	1.98	28.5	Disagreed

Source: Survey Data: 2023/2024

Table 4.2.1 shows that the introduction of new corporate social responsibility projects and programmes and relative peace and proper composition of PIA Host Communities Development Trust Fund are the major benefits derived by the host communities and the company as the Community agreed with the questionnaire on this. Similarly, the table depicts the composition of members of Petroleum Industry Act (PIA) Host Communities Development Thrust Fund as a recipe for relative peace between the two parties in the crises. This implies that corporate social responsibility projects and programmes can serve as a recipe for creating an atmosphere for relative peace and tranquility in host communities of companies especially in TotalEnergies Exploration and Production Nigeria Limited.

Table 4.2.2: Other Benefits Gained by the Host Communities and the Company for the Engagement of Community Relations Strategy

S/No	Other Benefits	No of Respondents (n_k) for each Score (W_k)				n_r	M_s	Standard Dev. $S = \sqrt{\frac{\sum d^2}{4}}$	Remark
		4	3	2	1				
						$N_x = 237$	4		
1	Seamless Symbiotic relationship between Host communities and the company	22	37	87	91	237	1.96	30.3	Disagree
2	Peaceful Relationship between the host communities and the company	19	27	99	92	237	1.89	36.4	Disagree
3	Roundtable discussion discussion between the host and company	62	92	45	38	237	2.75	20.8	Agreed

4	Relative Conducive working environment in the company and relative peace in the Community	61	79	52	45	237	2.66	12.7	Agreed
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Source: Survey Data: 2023/2024

Table 4.1.2.1 shows that the mutual benefits derived by the engagement of the community relations strategy were largely driven by round table discussion between the host communities and the company and relative conducive working environment in the company and peaceful environment in the communities.

This suggests that round table discussion can serve as a panacea for peace while conducive working environment can stimulate trust, mutual understanding, growth, peace and tranquility in the operations of TotalEnergies Exploration and Production Nigeria Limited.

1. **Research Question 3:** Which are the most effective communication channels engaged by TotalEnergies Exploration and Production Nigeria Limited that complemented its community relations strategy in managing the crises between it and the host communities in Egi?

Table 4.3.1: Most Effective Communication Channels engaged by TotalEnergies Nig Ltd in Managing the Host Communities' Crises in Egi

S/No	Communication Channels	No of Respondents (n_k) for each Score (W_k)				n_r	M_s	Standard Dev. $S = \sqrt{\frac{\sum d^2}{4}}$	Remark
		4	3	2	1				
						$N_x = 237$	4		
1	Social media Platforms	15	21	102	99	237	1.80	41.3	Disagree
2	Direct mail	25	45	72	95	237	2.00	26.5	Disagree
3	Face-Face Communications	119	78	21	18	236	3.26	42.1	Agreed
4	Phone Calls	41	49	72	75	237	2.24	14.6	Disagreed
5	Letter	45	52	69	71	237	2.30	11.1	Disagreed
6	Radio	40	45	70	81	236	2.19	17.0	Disagreed
7	Television	17	26	95	99	237	1.84	37.9	Disagreed
8	Newspaper	20	32	92	93	237	1.91	33.5	Disagreed
9	Magazine	2	12	91	132	237	1.51	54.3	Disagreed

Source: Survey Data: 2023/2024

The table 4.3.1 above depicts that face-to-face communication channel was the most effective channel of communication which complemented the community relations strategy in managing the aforementioned crises in Egi. This resonates with Marshall McLuhan's position when he writes that "the medium is the message." This implies that the channel of communication determines the effectiveness of a message to a greater percentage.

Table 4.3.2 above depicts that fact-to-face communication channel was the most frequent and prevalent channel of communication used by the community relations strategists of TotalEnergies Exploration and Production Nigeria Limited in managing the host communities' crises in Egi. This suggests that face-to-face communication can serve as a major instrument for crises mediation and arbitration. Better still, face-to-face communication can be seen as a catalyst for crises management in host communities of oil companies rather than the use of mass media.

Research Question 4: How suitable is the community relations strategy adopted by TotalEnergies Exploration and Production Nigeria Limited in managing the host communities' crises in Egi?

Table 4.4.1: Suitability of Community Relations Strategy engaged by TotalEnergies E & P Nig. Ltd in Managing the Host Communities' Crises in Egi

S/No	Items	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	Suitability	27	11
2	Insuitability	210	89
3	Total	237	100

Source: Survey Data: 2023/2024

Table 4.4.1 above shows the insuitability of the community relations strategy of TotalEnergies Exploration and Production Nigeria Limited in managing the host communities crises in Egi as perceived by the host communities. This result implies that the host communities were not comfortable with the tactics of community relations strategies engaged by the company in managing the aforesaid crises hence a change of tactics are needed in future crises management since crises are almost inevitable in human organisations.

Research Question 5: Which are the situations that warranted the adoption of the community relations strategy by TotalEnergies Exploration and Production Nigeria Limited in Egi?

Table 4.6.1: Situations that Warranted the Adoption of the Community Relations Strategy

S/No	Conditions that necessitated CR Engagement	No of Respondents (n_k) for each Score (W_k)				n_r	M_s	Standard Dev. $S = \sqrt{\frac{\sum d^2}{4}}$	Remark
		4	3	2	1				
						$N_x = 237$			
1	Hostile working environment/Host communities Attitudes	76	54	72	35	237	2.72	16.3	Agreed
2	Unstable Situation/ Unfriendly Relationships	65	66	57	49	237	2.62	6.9	Agreed
3	Violent agitations and stoppage of company's operations/work	80	84	43	29	236	2.91	23.6	Agreed
4	Harmonious Relationship/Host communities' Complaints	33	27	86	91	237	2.01	29.4	Disagreed

Source: Survey Data: 2023/2024

						N _x = 4			
						237			
1	Engagement of consistent Dialogue	72	93	28	44	237	2.81	25.1	Agreed
2	Adoption of multi-sectorial Peace move	62	67	42	66	237	2.53	10.1	Agreed
3	Tackling of Environmental constraints	42	54	88	53	237	2.36	17.3	Disagreed
4	Adoption third-party mediation and arbitration model	24	31	92	89	236	1.96	31.6	Disagreed
5	Adoption of peoples participatory Community Relations Strategy	65	80	52	40	237	2.72	14.9	Agreed
6	Adoption of ambush participatory Community relations Strategy	33	27	110	66	236	2.11	33.0	Disagreed

Source: Survey Data: 2023/2024

Table 4.5.2 shows that the engagement of consistent dialogue and adoption of multi-sectorial peace-move served as recipes for turning around the magnitude of the crises between TotalEnergies Exploration and Production Nigeria Limited and its host communities in Egi. This suggests that the blend of consistent dialogue and multi-sectorial community relations strategy can change the negative narrative of community relations or host communities' induced crises to a peaceful and harmonious relationship between companies and their host communities if properly managed.

Findings

The findings of this study are:

1. TotalEnergies Exploration and Production Nigeria Limited adopted a blend of multi or mixed community relations strategies namely gunboat-diplomacy community relations, reactive community relations, multi-sectorial community relations and seasonal relations tactics in managing the host communities' crises in Egi Clan.
2. The introduction of new Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) projects and programmes, and the composition of the members of the Petroleum Industry Act (PIA) 2021 Host Communities Development Trust Funds (HCDTF) are found to be the mutual benefits derived by TotalEnergies Exploration and Production Nigeria Limited and the host communities of Egi because they provided the leeway for the relative peace between the duo.
3. Face-to-face communication and social media platforms were the most effective and frequent channels of communication that complemented community relations strategies engaged by TotalEnergies Exploration and Production Nigeria Limited in managing the host communities' crises in Egi.
4. The most suitable community relations strategy that ought to be adopted by TotalEnergies Exploration and Production Nigeria Limited in managing the host communities' crises in Egi are proactive community relations strategy, people-participatory community relations strategy and multisectorial community relations strategy.

5. The study found that the frequent violent agitations and stoppage of the operations of TotalEnergies Exploration and Production Nigeria Limited in the host communities of Egi warranted the engagement of the community relations strategy by the company with the aim of tackling the perennial host communities' induced crises.
6. Divide and rule, selfish interest, poor communication management, excessive demands from the host communities and leadership conflicts among the host communities were the limitations that bedeviled the community relations strategy adopted by TotalEnergies Exploration and Production Nigeria Limited in managing the host communities' crises in Egi.

CONCLUSION

The study concluded that the community relations strategy of the company under study needs to be recalibrated and re-engineered to make it more strategic, more proactive, more people-participatory, more people-centred, more friendly, more result oriented and devoid of crises and suspicion. The above would help in peace-building and peace enforcement campaign between the company and its host communities in Egi.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In view of the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. TotalEnergies Exploration and Production Nigeria Limited should re-engineer and recalibrate its community relations strategy and tactics to make them more strategic, more proactive, more people-centered, people-participatory and multisectoral in operations to avoid toxic relationship that could trigger the militarization and weaponisation of the company or the host communities in Egi.
2. Community relations strategists of TotalEnergies Exploration and Production Nigeria Limited should strive to cultivate and adopt a corporate culture of proactive corporate social responsibility projects and programmes rather than reactive in dealing with its immediate constituents in Egi and as well implement the prescriptions of the Petroleum Industry Act (PIA) of 2021 in its host communities of Egi with a sense of utilitarian and deontological ethical principles of community relations which emphasize on the greatest good for the greatest number of people and golden rules than satisfying the interest of the few elite and the rich-class in the host communities. . Additionally, the company should ensure that the implementers of the PIA in both sides exhibit the virtues of truth, trust, transparency, transformation and fairness to all irrespective of class differences in the communities for the sustainability of the company and promotion of peace in the immediate constituents of the company.
3. To guarantee the suitability and acceptability of the community relations strategy of the company in subsequent managing of host communities' crises, the community relations strategists of the company should always consider the strategy that is people-participatory and community-engaging in nature coupled with the what the researcher coined and called the principles of **CIDE ECS** and **BRICCS** in their lexicon of community relations strategy of the company as a roadmap to navigating the trajectory of sustainable peace and symbiotic relationship with its host communities. In practice, CIDE ECS stands for communities' engagement; integration of the host communities through equity share; development of the host communities; economic empowerment of the host communities; environmental scanning, management and protection of the host communities; compensation of the host communities and social investment projects and programmes in the host communities. Similarly, in operations, the BRICCS principle stands for building sustainable relationship with the host communities; reparation and rebuilding of toxic relationship; inclusiveness of the host communities into the company's operations through partnership; communities' consent before embarking on major projects or programmes; corporate social responsibility projects and programmes and security of lives and property in the host communities and the company to stimulate peace driven relationship between the duo.

4. Community relations handlers of TotalEnergies Exploration & Production Nigeria Limited should always consider face-to-face communication and social media platforms as their strategic building-blocks for managing host communities' crises because of their capacity to bring together parties in crises for peace advocacy campaign, peace talk, peace building and peace enforcement in their immediate constituents.
5. Since it is revealed that the frequent violent agitations and stoppage of the company's operations warranted the engagement of the multi community relations strategies by the company, the study therefore, advocates for the establishment of non-discriminatory and classless relationship with its immediate constituents for TotalEnergies Exploration and Production Nigeria Limited in order to have a strong, healthy, virile and egalitarian host communities that have the socio-economic capacity to protect and defend the company's oil facilities and personnel seamlessly and devoid of proverbial Oliver Twist nature and whose demands are insatiable and unending.

6. To surmount the limitations to the community relations strategy adopted by the company, TotalEnergies Exploration & Production Nigeria Limited, the community relations managers of the company should discourage the divide and rule community relations strategy, elitist community relations strategy and selfish interest of community leaders in Egi but promote multisectoral community relations strategy, people-participatory community relations strategy and proactive community relations strategy to stimulate sustainable symbiotic relationship with their immediate constituents in Egiland to stimulate higher productivity and profitability on the side of the company.

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