

The Ethical Imperative of Corporate Social Responsibility Practice and Disclosure by Firms in Nigeria Delta Swamplands: A Qualitative Analysis

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Abstract : As a mono-product economy, Nigeria relies largely on oil revenues for its foreign exchange earnings and the exploration activities of firms operating in the Niger Delta region have left in its wake tales of environmental degradation, poverty and misery. This, no doubt, have created corporate social responsibility issues in the region. The focus of this research is the critical evaluation of the ethical response to Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) practice by firms operating in Nigeria Delta Swamplands. While CSR is becoming more popular in developed society with effective practice guidelines and reporting benchmark, there is a relatively low level of awareness and selective applicability of existing international guidelines to effectively support CSR practice in Nigeria. This study, haven identified the lack of CSR institutional framework attempts to develop an ethically-driven CSR transparency benchmark laced within a regulatory framework based on international best practices. The research adopts a qualitative methodology and makes use of primary data collected through semi-structured interviews conducted across the six core states of the Niger Delta Region. More importantly, the study adopts an inductive, interpretivist philosophical paradigm that reveal deep phenomenological insights into what local communities, civil society and government officials consider as good ethical benchmark for responsible CSR practice by organizations. The institutional theory provides for the main theoretical foundation, complemented by the stakeholder and legitimacy theories. The Nvivo software was used to analyze the data collected. This study shows that ethical responsibility is lacking in CSR practice by firms in the Niger Delta Region of Nigeria. Furthermore, findings of the study indicate key issues of environmental, health and safety, human rights, and labour as fundamental in developing an effective CSR practice guideline for Nigeria. The study has implications for public policy formulation as well as managerial perspective.

Keywords : corporate social responsibility, CSR, ethics, firms, Niger-Delta Swampland, Nigeria

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