

THE IMPACT OF CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY ON RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA. AN EXAMPLE FROM PRESCO PLC, EDO STATE

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Abstract

All over the world, corporate social responsibility is an integral part of development at national and sub-national. It is expected that industrial activities and operation will lead to improved socioeconomic development in the areas where such industries are situated. It was on this premise that this study investigated the impact of corporate social responsibility on rural infrastructural development in Nigeria, an example from PRESCO PLC in Obaretin Community in Edo state, Nigeria. A total of 291 respondents were selected employing systematic random sampling for this study. A simple descriptive analytical approach was utilized to address the research questions of interest. The results of the study indicated that more of the respondents agreed that the establishment of PRESCO contributed in alleviating poverty in the host community. Further findings revealed that PRESCO's corporate social responsibility impacted greatly to a high extent, on the host community. The study however, found that majority of the respondents agreed that establishment of PRESCO brought about high infrastructural development to the host community. Furthermore, it was found that an overwhelming majority of the responses were of the view that PRESCO had provided employment to host community to at least a high extent. It was recommended amongst others, that the company should scale up her provision of basic facilities, endeavor to continuously initiate programmes that will support and promote small scale businesses in the area, and improve social and economic development of host community.

Keywords: Social Responsibility, Industries, Infrastructural, Rural

JEL Classification: M14, O14, H54, P25

1. INTRODUCTION

Business organization do not operate in isolation or vacuum rather, it operate in an environment or community that harbors human beings who make up

the society and, the lifeline of business organizations depends upon successful interaction with the critical features of the community (Opusunju *et al*, 2016). Industrial revolution and industrialization are seen as a catalyst of economic growth, employment creation, poverty alleviation and main driving force for innovation in developing countries. All over the world, development at national and sub-national level has come to be the decisive role played in our society by both private and public sector. The need for development in global south, Nigeria in particular, is increasing everyday as the population of the country increases. Kuluma (2019) noted that the high rate of population in our society fundamentally put pressure on our environment, increased the incidence of poverty, deprivation, prevalence of diseases, and increase in the number of out of school children. To cushion the effect of this problem, Ogujiuba, Ohuche and Adenuga (2004) buttresses that, the creation of industries will to some extent ameliorate some of our confronting problem in recent years. Ihinodu (2004) stated that, in an ideal society, government and private sector has a critical role to play in the development of agriculture and manufacturing in the country; either at the small, medium or even large-scale level. Technological innovation will fundamentally spring up development even at the core areas of the country through corporate social responsibility. In recent years, the rapid technological innovation and industrialization of Asian countries today, can be ascribed largely to the establishment of small and medium enterprises (SMEs), has shifted focus from industrial development predicated on large-scale enterprises to small and medium scale enterprises as the foundation for the development of Africa (Gberevbie, & Isiavwe- Ogbari, 2008). Schemerhors (2000) cited in Folorunso (2011), noted that areas of social responsibility that company should considered imperative include: ecology and environment, community needs, consumption, government relations, minorities and backward communities, labor relations. Folorunso (2011) further stated that majority of business operators in the world; particularly in developed countries consider corporate social responsibility as a strong requirement of making their organization sustainable. According Adeyanju (2012) CSR can be viewed in a way that addressed the legal, ethical, commercial and other expectations society has for business, and making critical decisions that fairly balance the claim of all key stakeholders. In its simplest terms, it is: “what you do”, “how you do it” “and when and what you say”. According to this interpretation, corporate social responsibility (CSR) comprises an all-encompassing range of policies, practices, and initiatives that are incorporated into the company's supply chain, facility development, internal decision-making processes, and the business environment. Additionally, CSR is seen as a means of promoting and rewarding top-level management-endorsed businesses. A company's CSR priorities can differ depending on its type of business, size, industry, and even location. The leadership of organizations views it as more than just a collection of distinct procedures or sporadic actions driven by PR, marketing, or other commercial advantages.

Nevertheless, the same cannot be said for most developing countries, particularly Nigeria. Husted and Allen (2007) stated that much attention has been centered on corporate social responsibility in an attempt to demonstrate that

positive corporate social responsibility can be connected to improved financial performance. Nonetheless, there is a rising realization that preserving the environment, the community, and the people are all important for the long-term existence of businesses. Ijaiya (2014) reported that Niger Delta Region has continually suffered from environmental neglect, infrastructural degradation and services, increase unemployment, social deprivation, perennial poverty and widespread conflict.

The aforementioned situation has prompted demands for multinational corporations present in the oil-rich area to exhibit the worth of their multibillion-naira investments in Nigeria through expanded community development initiatives that yield immediate social gains like employment opportunities locally, updated infrastructure, better schools, and enhanced health care provision. Alabi and Ntukekpo (2012) examined the effect of oil companies on corporate social responsibility in Nigeria based on this realization. An Empirical Evaluation of the Niger Delta Community Development Initiatives by Chevron. The analysis showed that, despite its importance, Chevron's community development initiative was implemented in all three communities. Their efforts, meanwhile, were deemed insufficient or unrelated to the requirements of the local population. A socially conscious business actively looks for ways to improve the well-being of local people and groups within their social environment, going above and beyond the minimum legal obligations (Celik, Abdul-Kareem & Yimaz, 2019).

In view of the above survey, the objective of this study is to critically investigate the impact of corporate social responsibility on rural infrastructural development in Nigeria on an example from Presco Plc in Obaretin community, Edo State.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Research has elucidated the importance of corporate social responsibility (CSR) in the operations of businesses. Neoclassical economics argue that businesses should focus their efforts on providing their clients with goods and services in light of this. They should also aim to maximize profits while minimizing expenses. However, they should consider that every aspect of their business activity most take place within the laws and regulations of the land (Quazi and O'Brien, 2000; Jamali, 2006; Jamali and Mirshak, 2007 cited in Babalola, 2012). Babalola (2012) studied the impact of corporate social responsibility on firms' profitability in Nigeria. Results indicate that the majority of businesses gave social responsibility less than ten percent of their yearly earnings, and that variances in business performance are a result of shifting corporate social responsibility (CSR) policies in Nigeria. What constitutes corporate social responsibility and the reasons behind corporate bodies' pursuit of it are subjects of much ambiguity and controversy. Whatever are the motivations behind CSR, it is also interpreted as the concept of triple bottom-line ("Planet, People, Profit") which captures wide spectrum of values and criteria for measuring firm success; economic, environmental and social. Omotunde (2017) Study the impact of

corporate social responsibility cost on investment policy and performance of firms in Nigeria. The study shows that, the sample business social responsibility costs have positive impact on corporate profitability and societal development, while there is no significant relationship between CSR cost and investment policy. Social responsibility is a significant means of making sustainable competitive profit and accomplishing values for all stakeholders, environment, community development through facility provision as well as, creating a win-win opportunity for the society in general (Olaroyeke & Tabitha, 2015).

Mamidu, *et al* (2015) stated that corporate social responsibility is an essential part of the new firm model and that it is ever more known that the role of the firm sector is critical. Tactically speaking, business can only thrive when the host communities and ecosystems in which they operate are healthy. DeGeorge (2010) noted that CSR that embrace responsibility for the business's actions and support a positive impact through its actions on the environment, consumers, employees, communities, stakeholders and other people who may also be considered as stakeholders. According to a study by Abdulkadir at El (2022), corporate social responsibility (CSR) has a major impact on the advancement of human health, services, and education in the host communities of cement businesses in Nigeria. Businesses that support projects and engage in local community development by offering infrastructure and services foster trust and boost their bottom line. The prosperity of organization is not in isolation of societal prosperity, CSR is one of the major contributor to sustainable development in our society particularly the rural environment which often translate to societal prosperity. This view is supported by Kotler and Keller (2006) who in their study argue that all companies flourish when the society progress and would be better off if societal responsibilities are an integral part of any marketing decision. In the same vein, Utting (2005) view corporate social responsibility as voluntary initiative with so responsibility of improving a corporation's social environmental and human rights record.

Corporate social responsibility concept encourages organization to consider the interests of the host communities by providing social infrastructure such as schools, hospitals, roads, water supply in their area of operations as a way of contributing to the social economic development. The concept has been generally recognized and accepted as best practice that adds value to local communities by companies. Development across the globe is anchored on certain lay down goals to be achieved over a period of time with strong political will. It was on the realization of these goals particularly in developing countries that millennium Development Goals became a policy framework targeted towards various stages of taking people out of poverty line in Africa continent from United Nations. According to Magariños (2004), Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) encompasses a number of quantitative goals agreed by the international community to relieve severe suffering and deprivation. The author argued that, however the task is enormous; the major barrier for this to happen is not financial or technological but has largely to do with strong political will. To overcome this

challenge, he proposed three stages of action for the international community, including more development funding, reform in the UN and a renewed development agenda that will expressively have a clearer and better political dimension with the social and economic policy dimensions. He noted that, for this to occur, policies designed to deal with the basic needs have to be integrated with policies aimed at building up the capacity to prevent recurrent emergencies through sustainable productivity growth. Magariños, pointed out the relevance of United Nation Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO's) work on private sector development for capacity building, corporate social responsibility and productivity growth. Industrial development comprises of good communication, basic infrastructural facilities and transportation networks as well as all other resources for better production operations (Iwuagwu, 2011). Developing nations lack the basic infrastructural facilities needed to launch them into industrialization as a result of improper and unimplemented policies, thereby make their industrial development slow (Adejumo and Olaoye, 2012, Iwuagwu, 2011). Similarly, Agboli & Ukaegbu (2006) outlined that the business environment appeared to be frustrating for entrepreneurs and thereby made difficulties for industrial development to take place. In some northern part of Nigeria, cement manufacturing companies are essential to the region's economy but, understanding the effects of CSR activities undertaken by cement companies on the development of communities is necessary for a sustainable growth and social progress. Business organizations striving for long-term goals and sustainable growth collaborate closely with the local communities in which they operate (Celik et al., 2019).

In spite of all this potential studies reviewed on corporate social responsibility done by various scholars both in developed and developing countries. Various literatures have focused on CSR and firm profitability, investment policy and performance. However, none has been done towards addressing the fundamental issues in respect of CSR and poverty alleviation, high level of facilities provision geared towards rural development and employment to host community particularly in Obaretin where Presco Plc is located remain unknown. This paper therefore aims to bridge the gap in literature.

3. METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted in Obaretin community in Ikpoba Okhia Local Government Area, Edo State, Nigeria. Presco PLC is located in the Local Government Area. The LGA is surrounded by communities which are predominantly involved in Agriculture. The study employed the use of primary and secondary sources of data to elicit information that robustly address the fundamental issues concerning the impact of corporate social responsibility on rural infrastructural development in Nigeria, an example from Presco Plc in Obaretin community. Systematic random sampling technique was used in the selection of households. The workings of this method is that, in each streets or lane, the first residential house was pick, thereafter every third house were selected until the sample was covered. In order to achieve the goal of this study, descriptive

statistical techniques such as frequency counts and simple percentage were employed to analyze the data.

Furthermore, to obtain the sample size, the 1996 population of the community stood at 564 people as released by the National Population Commission and projected to year 2020 was 1089 people. Since it is practically impossible to study the entire population, the researcher adopted Taro Yamane's (1967) formula cited in Agheyisi and Ebinum (2019), Edohen and Aigbovo (2023) and Edohen and Egharevba (2024) for sample size calculation which is stated below

3.1 TARO YAMANE'S FORMULA

To systematically obtain the sample size of population of the study rural community, the researched thus introduced the above formula.

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where,

n= sample size ()

N= population of the study (1089)

e= error margin (0.05)

I is constant

The sample size is

$$n = \frac{1089}{1 + 1089 (0.05)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{1089}{1 + 2.7225}$$

$$n = 292.545$$

$$n = \frac{1089}{1 + 1089 (0.0025)}$$

$$n = \frac{1089}{3.7225}$$

$$n = 293$$

In view of the above, 293 copies of questionnaire were applied to respondents in Obaretin community.

3.2 STUDY AREA

Using a Presco PLC, the investigation was conducted in Obaretin, Ikpoba Okha Local Government Area, Edo State (Fig 1 & 2). Presco is an all-inclusive agro-industrial complex that includes oil palm farms, a palm oil mill, a crushing plant for palm kernels, and a plant for refining vegetable oil. As of right now, it is the only one in West Africa. Presco is an expert in oil palm farming as well as the extraction and refinement of crude palm oil into final products.

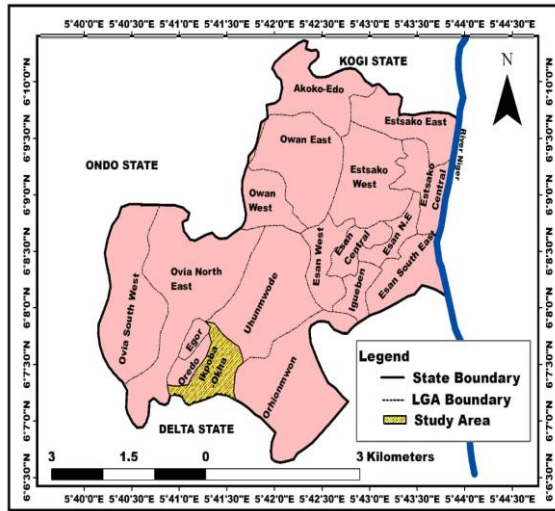


Figure 1: Edo State Showing Ikpoba-Okha
 Source: Ministry of Land and Survey, Edo State, 2021

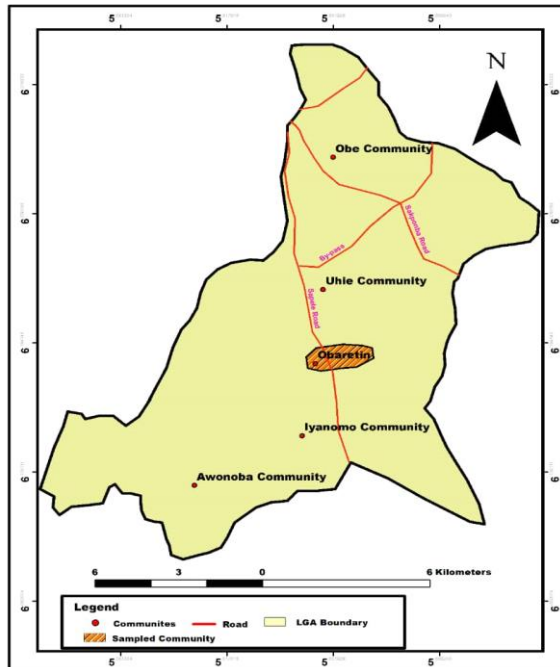


Figure 2: Ikpoba Okha Local Government Area showing the sample Area (Obaretin).
 Source: Ministry of Land and Survey, Edo State, 2021

4. FINDINGS OF RESULTS

In other to have holistic knowledge about the demography of the study population, the data in age, education and livelihood /occupation of the respondents were sorts. The result shows 291 participants in the survey, 56, 67, and 85 of them were in the age bracket below 25 years, 25 to 34 years, and 35 to 44 years, respectively. The study further shows that 63 and 20 of the respondents belonged to the age brackets 45 to 54 years and above 54 years respectively. This suggests that a larger proportion of the respondents (57.7%) were in the age bracket 35 years and above. In education, the study revealed that (6.2 %) of the respondents had non-formal education, whereas, (35.1 %) of the respondents had primary education. The result further shows that, (36.8%) and (21.6%) of the respondents had secondary and tertiary education, respectively. While in occupation, the study shows that 10.7%, 36.1%, and 18.2% of the respondents were civil servants, farmers, and traders, respectively. More so, (34.4%) of the participants belong to other occupation. Also, (58.3%) alluded that they were employees of PRESCO while (41.7%) were not.

The largest proportions of the participants were farmers. To have a clearer picture of the above results farming type were sort, the study investigated the types of farming practiced by respondents; it was revealed that majority (88.7 %) of the participants practiced subsistence farming while (11.3%) engaged in commercial farming. This finding attested to the fact that Obaretin community is clearly an agrarian community with majority of households involving in agriculture viz sa viz practiced subsistence farming. This also could be influenced by Presco Plc sited in the community. The study also investigated if Presco as a multinational company was recently sited in the host community, majority stated that Presco Plc has been in the host community for over three decades. The study also sort to know if the host community are given great opportunity by Presco to work in the company as part of their social corporate responsibility, overwhelming majority of respondents attested that their family member was employed as staff.

4.1. PERCEPTION ON WHETHER ESTABLISHMENT OF PRESCO PLC HAS ALLEVIATED POVERTY

Another fundamental reason for carrying out this study was to investigate if the present of Presco as alleviated poverty in Obaretin, the host community. The result indicated that about 288 responses were given, see Table 1. The finding shows that 6.6% and 70.8% strongly agreed and agreed respectively, that present of PRESCO has alleviated poverty in the host community. On the other hand, 20.8% and 1.7% of the responses disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively, that present of PRESCO alleviated poverty in the host community. Thus, cumulatively, (77.4%) of the responses agreed that the present of PRESCO contributed in alleviating poverty in the host community. This scenario clearly justifies the previous result revealed wherein majority of households attested to the fact that members of their family where employed by Presco as staff. This might be the reason why poverty has been significantly alleviated in the study area. However,

the above finding disagrees with the report of Ijaiya (2014) who reported that Niger Delta Region, Obaretin Community inclusive, has continually suffered and remain neglected with perennial poverty and widespread conflict.

Table 1: Perception on Whether Establishment of Presco Plc has Alleviated Poverty

Response	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	19	6.6
Agree	204	70.8
Disagree	60	20.8
Strongly Disagree	5	1.7
Total	288	100

Source: Fieldwork (2021)

4.2. RESPONSES TO THE EXTENT OF PRESCO'S TOWARDS CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY (CSR) TO HOST COMMUNITY

In other words, to achieve the main aim of this research, the above question was therefore important to the study. The study got 285 responses of respondents to the extent of PRESCO’s Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) impact on the host community. Table 2 result shows that 5.6% and 74.0% agreed that PRESCO’s CSR impacted on the host community to a very high extent and high extent, respectively. On the other hand, 16.8% and 3.5% of the respondents indicated that PRESCO’s CSR impacted on the host community to a low extent and very low extent, respectively. The responses suggest therefore that a larger proportion of the participants acceded that PRESCO’s CSR impacted, at least to a high extent, on the host community. The above result shows that majority of the respondents agreed that Presco has been engaging and giving back to the host community as part of their corporate social responsibility.

Table 2: Responses to the Extent of Presco's Towards CSR to Host Community

Response	Frequency	Percent
Very High Extent	16	5.6
High Extent	211	74
Low Extent	48	16.8
Very Low Extent	10	3.5
Total	285	100

Source: Fieldwork (2021)

4.3. RESPONDENTS IDENTIFICATION ON FACILITIES PROVIDED MORE BY PRESCO

In other to have brother knowledge about infrastructural facilities provided by Presco Plc to host community as part of this study robust objective, the respondents acknowledge the following. From the 289 responses provided see table 3, 21.1 %, 0.7%, 4.2%, and 3.1% of them suggested that borehole water, school, healthcare and road construction, respectively, were infrastructural facilities provided more by PRESCO. Moreover, 29.8%, 1.0%, and 40.1% of the

respondents indicated that electricity, market, and other facility like road maintenance in particular, respectively, were provided more by PRESCO. The implication is that majority of the responses from participants revealed that maintenance of road facility was provided more by PRESCO in the host community. This suggests that Presco might have quest for ease of movement of products from source of raw materials to industrial site and thereafter to markets places. The result suggested that Presco has significantly provided facilities to Obaretin community as part of it CSR buttressing the finding of Olaroyeke & Tabitha (2015) and Abdulkadir *at el* (2022) who study revealed that social responsibility is a significant means of making sustainable competitive profit and accomplishing values for all stakeholders, environment, community development through facility provision.

Table 3: *Respondents Identification on Facilities Provided More by Presco*

Response	Frequency	Percent
Borehole Water	61	21.1
Schools	2	0.7
Healthcare	12	4.2
Road Construction	9	3.1
Electricity	86	29.8
Markets	3	1
Others	116	40.1
Total	289	100

Source: Fieldwork (2021)

4.4. RESPONSES TO WHETHER ESTABLISHMENT OF PRESCO BROUGHT HIGH DEVELOPMENT TO HOST COMMUNITY

Table 4 of the study shows household’s responses on their level of perceptions to whether establishment of PRESCO in Obaretin had brought high development to host community. This was another fundamental aspect of the study that require holistic view of households thought concerning the establishment of Presco and high level of development as host community. The study revealed that 5.2% and 77.4% of 288 respondents provided strongly agreed and agreed, respectively, that establishment of PRESCO brought about high development to their host community. On the contrary, 12.2% and 5.2% of the responses disagree and strongly disagreed, respectively, that establishment of PRESCO brought about high development in the area. Therefore, majority of the responses (82.6%) cumulatively agreed that establishment of PRESCO brought about high development to host community. The attestations of the finding cumulatively by respondents align to the fact that the establishment of company (Presco) has brought high level of infrastructural development to Obaretin community. The finding support the earlier works of Abdulkadir *at el* (2022), DeGeorge, (2010) and Utting (2005) who study revealed that CSR has significant influence and huge development items of human health, services, employees and educational development of the host communities of cement companies in Nigeria.

Table 4: Responses to Whether Establishment of Presco Brought High Development to Host Community

Response	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	15	5.2
Agree	223	77.4
Disagree	35	12.2
Strongly Disagree	15	5.2
Total	288	100

Source: Fieldwork (2021)

4.5 TO WHAT EXTENT DOES PRESCO PROVIDES EMPLOYMENT TO HOST COMMUNITY

Thus, another critical investigation carried out was to know the extent at which the establishment of Presco as an industry in the community has generated and or provided employment to host community in line with their framework on policy implementation as regard corporate social responsibility. The result in table 5 shows 270 responses to the extent by which PRESCO had provided employment to the host community. Finding indicates that 10.7% and 84.4% of the responses suggest that PRESCO provided employment to host community to a very high extent and high extent, respectively. The result further shows that 2.6% and 2.2% of the responses assert that PRESCO had provided employment to host community to a low extent and very low extent, respectively. Thus, this implies that cumulatively, (95.1%) of the responses were of the view that PRESCO had provided employment to host community to at least a high extent. This again justify the reason Presco enjoy enormous relationship with the host community due to relative peace saw in the area and the discussion hard with some community leaders who attest to the fact that Presco has greatly impacted on their community. The results therefore align with the study of DeGeorge, (2010).

Table 5: To What Extent Does Presco Provides Employment to Host Community

Response	Frequency	Percent
Very High Extent	29	10.7
High Extent	228	84.4
Low Extent	7	2.6
Very Low Extent	6	2.2
Total	270	100

Source: Fieldwork (2021)

5. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The analyses above revealed some interesting findings discussed in this section. It was found that PRESCO had been sited in the host community for about 21 to 30 years. This implies that the company had been in operation for about three decades in the community and a lot of positive externalities are expected in this regard. One of such positive externalities is the relative peace enjoyed by the host

community and the cordial relationship and understanding between PRESCO and the community since her operations in the area.

The operations of the company have created employment opportunities for population of the host community as revealed by respondents of this study. Majority of the respondents of the study were working in PRESCO and they alluded that the company had contributed in reducing poverty in the community through job creation for the people. This can be seen in the high frequency of respondents that responded that PRESCO has provided employment to a high extent in the study area. So, poverty alleviation is one of the benefits of PRESCO's operations to the host community through job creations, which was observed in the high employment of residents by PRESCO. This employment can take the form of either a contract staff, casual workers, part-time staff and full-time staff.

It was also found that at least to a high extent, PRESCO's social corporate responsibility (CSR) had impacted positively to the host community as claimed by respondents household. The company had engaged in providing some basic facilities for the host community to enhance standard of living. Some facilities provided by PRESCO to the community include borehole water, healthcare, road construction and electricity. However, the study found that maintenance of road facility was provided more by PRESCO in the host community.

Interestingly, majority of the participants were of the view that establishment of PRESCO has brought about high development for the host community. This calls for further encouragement and evaluation of the activities of PRESCO in the community to further support in their development of the area. In any case some meaningful development had been recorded in the area from PRESCO's activities judging from the respondents household on further responses that PRESCO had provided employment to host community to at least a high extent. The participants also asserted that PRESCO had attracted small scale businesses to the host community.

6. CONCLUSION

The role of industry in the socioeconomic development of a nation remains a subject of interest in modern societies. It is expected that industrial activities and operation will lead to improved socioeconomic development. The credibility of study revealed that majority of the respondents agrees to the fact that the establishment of PRESCO has alleviated poverty in the host community. For instance, the employment opportunities created for host community has improved the income level, thereby mitigating the level of poverty among households in the area. These will also go a long way in enhancing the wellbeing of the people in the host community to a reasonable extent. The CSR of the company had also brought about the provision of some basic facilities including borehole water, electricity, and road maintenance amongst others. These are expected to drive the development level of the area positively.

However, the PRESCO's activities had met the expectations of the people in terms of creating and supporting small scale businesses in the host community.

The activities of these small scale businesses will further trigger economic development of the area. In view of the above and based on participants' responses, we conclude that PRESCO's activities in the area have contributed to the development of the host community to a high extent. Drawing from this evidence, the following recommendations were sort to address the limits of the study. It was recommended amongst others, that the company should scale up her provision of basic facilities, endeavor to continuously initiate programmes that will support and promote small scale businesses in the area, and improve social and economic development of host community. Also, it was recommended that, to have relative peace in most community in Nigeria particularly where industries are established, the give back mechanism to host communities should be part of policy framework initiative as in the case of Presco. This will not only create peace and foster relationship between the company and the people, but will also alleviate the suffering of the host community. It was further recommended that, government both in National and sub national should set up technical advisory board that will draw up policy framework on what each industry or firm should at yearly bases deliver to host community. Such board should also be saddle with the responsibility of checkmating the activities of industrial companies or firm as to if they are adhering to CSR rules outline for them. Furthermore, the study recommended that before establishing any industry or firm, the government should as a matter of necessity include CSR agreement as part of the MOU that will be signed and integration of the locals at the point of the agreement should be a matter of priority. It was also recommended that Presco should be encouraged not to relent in whatever they are doing to uplift the wellbeing of the host community.

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