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The Political Challenges in Transitioning from Fossil Fuel to Renewable Energy in Nigeria: A Study of SPDC in Delta State

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ABSTRACT

The integration of renewable energy development in Delta State has faced significant challenges due to entrenched fossil fuel interests and the region's economic reliance on oil revenues. This study examined the political challenges in transitioning from fossil fuel to renewable energy in Nigeria: a study of Spdc in Delta State. The study is anchored in Political Economy Theory, which examined the interplay of economic and political forces in shaping policy decisions. This theoretical framework provided insights into how power dynamics, institutional structures, and vested interests influence energy transition policies. This study employed a qualitative methodology based on secondary data sources, including policy reports, legal frameworks, economic analyses, and case studies from regions with similar energy transition challenges. Data from government publications, industry reports, academic journals, and international energy organizations are synthesized to provide insights into best practices and potential barriers. The findings suggest that a just transition can be achieved through strategic workforce re-skilling programs, localized energy transition funds, and regulatory incentives to foster collaboration between government agencies, private investors, and local communities. Ultimately, the study underscored the importance of a comprehensive policy approach that ensures sustainable energy diversification while addressing socio-economic concerns in Delta State.

Keywords: Energy transition, Political economy, Renewable energy, Delta State, SPDC

Introduction

The transition from fossil fuels to renewable energy sources has become a global imperative due to concerns over climate change, environmental sustainability, and energy security. For Nigeria, a nation heavily reliant on oil and gas, this transition presents significant political and economic challenges. In Delta State, where Shell Petroleum Development Company (SPDC) operates extensively, oil production has shaped the local economy and contributed significantly to national revenue. SPDC's operations in Delta State account for a substantial portion of Nigeria's crude oil output, reinforcing the country's dependence on fossil fuels (NBS, 2022). This dependency underpins much of the national revenue and export earnings, creating political resistance to rapid energy transitions (Okonjo-Iweala, 2023). Stakeholders in the oil industry, including multinational corporations like Shell, play a pivotal role in shaping policy decisions that influence the trajectory of Nigeria's energy future.

One of the primary political challenges is the entrenched dependency of Nigeria's economy on fossil fuel revenues. This reliance fosters a rentier state dynamic, where oil wealth concentrates political power among a select elite, often at the expense of broader socio-economic development (Adunbi, 2021). Transitioning to renewable energy disrupts this structure, threatening established political and economic interests. In Delta State, host communities often view oil operations as both a source of employment and environmental degradation. Any move away from fossil fuels requires not only technological investment but also a redefinition of the socio-political contracts that sustain the current oil-based economy (Ibaba, 2022).

The role of multinational oil companies, particularly Shell, is central to understanding the political landscape of this transition. As one of the largest operators in Delta State, Shell's activities have historically been marked by controversies over environmental degradation and human rights abuses (Amnesty International, 2021). While Shell has announced plans to shift towards renewable energy, its continued investment in oil infrastructure raises questions about the sincerity of these commitments (Shell, 2023). Political alliances between oil corporations and government actors further complicate efforts to transition to renewable energy, as both parties have vested interests in maintaining the status quo.

Another critical political challenge lies in the governance of renewable energy projects. The lack of clear regulatory frameworks and policy direction has hindered the development of renewable energy in Nigeria (Okoro & Umoh, 2020). This issue is particularly pronounced in Delta State, where the dominance of fossil fuel activities overshadows investments in renewables. Moreover, the absence of political will to implement international climate commitments, such as the Paris Agreement, reflects broader governance deficits that undermine energy transitions (UNFCCC, 2023).

Public perception and community participation also play a significant role in shaping the political challenges of this transition. Many host communities in Delta State associate energy development with oil, creating skepticism toward renewable energy projects. Additionally, unresolved issues of environmental justice and revenue allocation from oil revenues heighten tensions, as communities demand accountability and compensation before supporting new energy initiatives (Eregba & Irughe, 2021). This resistance underscores the need for inclusive policies that address the grievances of marginalized groups while promoting renewable energy. In conclusion, the transition from fossil fuels to renewable energy in Nigeria involves navigating a complex web of political, economic, and social challenges. The case of Shell Petroleum Development Company in Delta State illustrates the entrenched interests and governance deficits that hinder progress. Without a clear policy direction, community engagement, and regulatory reforms, Nigeria's shift to renewable energy will remain slow and contested.

Objectives of the Study

The general objective of the study is to examine the political challenges in transitioning from fossil fuel to renewable energy in Nigeria: A study of SPDC in Delta State.

The specific objectives are to:

1. To analyze the political challenges hindering Nigeria's transition from fossil fuels to renewable energy, particularly in Delta State
2. To examine the role of multinational oil companies, such as Shell, in shaping energy transition policies and its impact on governance in Delta State
3. To assess the environmental and social consequences of fossil fuel dependency in the South-South and their influence on energy transition efforts.
4. To evaluate potential policy frameworks that can balance fossil fuel interests with renewable energy development in Nigeria.

Research Questions

1. What are the key political obstacles affecting Nigeria's transition from fossil fuels to renewable energy?
2. How do multinational oil companies influence energy policies and governance in Nigeria?
3. In what ways do the environmental and social impacts of fossil fuel extraction in the Niger Delta affect the energy transition process?
4. What policy strategies can effectively integrate renewable energy development while addressing vested fossil fuel interests?

Review of Related Literature

An Overview of Renewable Energy

Renewable energy refers to energy derived from naturally replenishing sources such as solar, wind, hydro, biomass, and geothermal power. These energy sources have gained significant global attention due to their sustainability and minimal environmental impact compared to fossil fuels (IRENA, 2023). The transition to renewable energy is largely driven by concerns over climate change, energy security, and economic diversification. Studies have shown that integrating renewable energy into national grids reduces greenhouse gas emissions and enhances energy access, particularly in developing countries (IEA, 2022). Despite these benefits, the adoption of renewable energy varies across regions due to differences in policy frameworks, technological advancements, and economic priorities.

One of the major drivers of renewable energy adoption is technological advancement. The efficiency of solar photovoltaic (PV) systems and wind turbines has significantly improved over the past decade, making renewable energy more competitive with fossil fuels.

Innovations in battery storage technology have also enhanced the reliability of renewable energy by addressing intermittency issues (Lazard, 2022). Furthermore, research highlights that decentralized renewable energy systems, such as mini-grids and off-grid solutions, play a crucial role in expanding electricity access in rural and underserved areas (IRENA, 2023). However, the high initial investment costs and infrastructure requirements remain major barriers to widespread adoption in developing economies.

Government policies and regulatory frameworks play a crucial role in shaping the renewable energy sector. Countries with strong policy support, such as subsidies, tax incentives, and feed-in tariffs, have experienced rapid growth in renewable energy capacity (IRENA, 2023). The European Union, for instance, has implemented ambitious renewable energy targets through its Green Deal, significantly increasing renewable energy's share in electricity generation (European Commission, 2023). In contrast, countries with inconsistent policies and fossil fuel subsidies often struggle to scale up renewable energy investments (IEA, 2022). Policy uncertainty and bureaucratic inefficiencies can deter investors, slowing down the transition process.

SPDC's Fossil Fuel Exploration Activities in Delta State

SPDC's fossil fuel exploration activities in Delta State have significantly influenced the economic and environmental landscape of the region. Studies indicate that oil exploration has contributed to economic growth through job creation and infrastructure development, yet it has also led to environmental degradation and socio-political tensions (Agbo & Okolie, 2021). Research highlights that while SPDC remains a major contributor to Nigeria's petroleum industry, its operations have raised concerns regarding oil spills, gas flaring, and community displacement (Adebayo & Nwankwo, 2022). These environmental consequences have sparked legal battles and community unrest, further complicating the company's operational landscape in Delta State.

The environmental impact of SPDC's activities has been extensively documented, with scholars emphasizing the adverse effects of oil spills on biodiversity and water resources (Eze & Uche, 2023). Several studies have examined the ecological footprint of oil exploration in the Niger Delta, revealing widespread contamination of farmlands and aquatic ecosystems (Olawale et al., 2024). This has led to significant disruptions in traditional livelihoods such as fishing and farming, intensifying economic vulnerabilities among local populations. Despite efforts by SPDC to implement corporate social responsibility (CSR) programs, scholars argue that these initiatives have not adequately addressed the long-term environmental consequences of fossil fuel extraction (Onyeukwu, 2023).

Recent research also explores the regulatory challenges associated with SPDC's operations in Delta State. Scholars point to weak enforcement of environmental regulations and gaps in policy implementation as key factors that enable ongoing environmental degradation (Adeyemi & Ojo, 2024). While Nigeria has enacted various policies aimed at mitigating oil-related environmental issues, studies suggest that political influence and economic interests have hindered effective enforcement (Ibrahim & Usman, 2023). As the global energy landscape shifts towards sustainability, researchers emphasize the need for stronger policy interventions and alternative energy investments to reduce the environmental impact of fossil fuel exploration in Delta State.

Political Challenges Hindering SPDC in Nigeria Transition from Fossil Fuels to Renewable Energy in Delta State

The transition from fossil fuels to renewable energy in Delta State is hindered by numerous political challenges, particularly regarding government policies, corporate interests, and local resistance. Scholars have noted that despite Nigeria's commitments to global climate agreements, political elites often prioritize short-term economic gains over long-term sustainability (Olawale & Okonkwo, 2022). The government's close ties with multinational oil corporations like SPDC create a conflict of interest, making it difficult to implement policies that could phase out fossil fuel dependence (Abiodun, 2023). Regulatory inefficiencies and weak enforcement mechanisms further exacerbate the challenge, allowing SPDC and other oil companies to continue prioritizing fossil fuel investments over renewable alternatives (Adeyemo, 2024).

Another major political challenge is the resistance from vested interests in the oil sector, including government agencies, political elites, and local power brokers who benefit from oil revenue (Ogunleye, 2023). The Nigerian economy remains heavily dependent on oil exports, and any attempt to transition towards renewable energy threatens the financial stability of these stakeholders. Research indicates that policymakers often face pressure to sustain oil-based revenue streams, leading to delayed or ineffective renewable energy policies (Ojo & Ibrahim, 2023). This political entanglement limits the incentives for multinational oil companies like SPDC to shift investments towards sustainable energy projects in Delta State.

Community skepticism and lack of trust in government-led renewable energy initiatives also pose significant barriers to SPDC's transition efforts. Historical grievances over environmental degradation, lack of fair revenue distribution, and socio-economic neglect have led many Delta State communities to view renewable energy projects with suspicion (Nwachukwu & Adebajo, 2024). Without adequate community engagement and compensation for past damages, local resistance to energy transition initiatives remains strong (Eze & Okorie, 2024). Addressing these political challenges requires comprehensive policy reforms, increased regulatory transparency, and active community participation in renewable energy planning.

The Role of Multinational Oil Companies in Shaping Energy Transition Policies and their Impact on Governance

Multinational oil companies (MNCs) like Shell play a crucial role in shaping energy transition policies through lobbying, investment strategies, and corporate social responsibility initiatives. As the world shifts toward sustainable energy sources, these companies have had to adapt their business models to balance profitability with global climate goals. Shell, for instance, has committed to achieving net-zero emissions by 2050 and has increased investments in renewable energy sources, including hydrogen, wind, and solar (BP, 2023). However, scholars argue that despite these commitments, MNCs often continue to prioritize fossil fuel investments due to the long-term profitability of hydrocarbons (Stevens, 2022).

The involvement of oil MNCs in policy formation raises concerns about regulatory capture, where private sector interests disproportionately influence government policies. Research by Van der Pijl et al. (2023) suggests that Shell, alongside other oil giants, exerts significant influence over energy policies through lobbying and strategic partnerships with policymakers. This influence often leads to policies that favor gradual rather than radical energy transition approaches, thereby slowing down global decarbonization efforts (Newell & Paterson, 2022). Additionally, the revolving door phenomenon, where executives transition between government and industry roles, further entrenches MNCs' power in shaping governance structures (Fuchs, 2021).

Environmental and Social Consequences of Fossil Fuel Dependency in Delta State and its Influence on Energy Transition Efforts

Delta State, located in Nigeria's oil-rich Niger Delta region, has experienced significant environmental degradation due to prolonged fossil fuel dependency. Oil exploration and production activities have led to frequent oil spills, contaminating water bodies and soil, thereby disrupting local agriculture and fisheries. For instance, studies have shown that gas flaring adversely affects soil quality, impacting crop productivity in the region. Additionally, the prevalence of gas flaring contributes to air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions, exacerbating climate change impacts (Agbogidi, Okonta & Dolor, 2006). The social consequences of this environmental degradation are profound. Communities in Delta State have reported increased health issues, such as respiratory problems, due to exposure to pollutants from oil and gas operations. The contamination of water sources and farmlands has also led to loss of livelihoods for many residents, fostering economic hardships and social unrest. Legal actions against oil companies, such as the case involving the Ocale community's lawsuit against Shell for decades of oil spills, highlight the ongoing struggles faced by these communities (Ewauma, 2024).

These environmental and social challenges have influenced Delta State's energy transition efforts. Recognizing the need for sustainable energy solutions, the state has developed a Renewable Energy Policy Roadmap aiming to diversify its energy mix and reduce reliance on fossil fuels. This initiative seeks to improve energy access for residents, promote economic development, and mitigate environmental degradation. However, the transition faces obstacles, including inadequate infrastructure, financial constraints, and the entrenched interests of the existing oil industry. Despite these challenges, the push towards renewable energy reflects a growing commitment to addressing the adverse effects of fossil fuel dependency in Delta State (Delta State Government, 2023).

Potential Policy Frameworks for Balancing Fossil Fuel Interests with Renewable Energy Development in Delta State

Nigeria's energy sector has historically been dominated by fossil fuels, particularly oil and natural gas. However, recent policy frameworks aim to balance these interests with the development of renewable energy sources. The Electricity Act of 2023 is a significant legislative measure in this regard. It empowers the Minister of Power to issue directives promoting renewable energy and mandates the Nigerian Electricity Regulatory Commission (NERC) to facilitate the growth of renewables. This includes simplified licensing for renewable energy companies and the establishment of standards for integrating renewable sources into the national grid (Mondaq, 2023).

Complementing this, Nigeria enacted the Climate Change Act in 2021, establishing a framework for carbon budgeting and creating the National Council on Climate Change. This council is responsible for formulating policies to mitigate climate change impacts, including promoting renewable energy initiatives. The Act also introduces a Climate Change Fund, sourced from appropriations, carbon taxes, and fines, to support sustainable energy projects (Chambers and Partners, 2024).

Despite these legislative efforts, challenges persist in harmonizing fossil fuel interests with renewable energy development. For instance, the Petroleum Industry Act (PIA) of 2021 has been criticized for lacking provisions that mandate a transition from non-renewable to renewable energy sources, indicating a potential conflict with energy transition goals. Nevertheless, initiatives like the Presidential Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) Initiative aim to leverage Nigeria's abundant gas reserves to reduce transportation costs and emissions by converting vehicles to CNG. While this strategy utilizes fossil fuels, it represents a step toward cleaner energy usage and reflects the complex dynamics of Nigeria's energy transition (Financial Times, 2024).

Theoretical Framework

The political economy theory was adopted for this study and it has its roots in the works of classical economists such as Smith (1776), Marx (1867), and Mill (1848). The theory analyzes how political institutions, economic systems, and power structures shape policy decisions, resource allocation, and social outcomes. The political economy theory offers a robust framework for understanding the

challenges Nigeria faces in transitioning from fossil fuels to renewable energy, particularly in the South-South region where Shell Petroleum Development Company (SPDC) operates. This theory examines the intricate interplay between politics, economics, and power structures, shedding light on how vested interests and institutional dynamics influence energy policies and environmental outcomes. The political economy theory explores the relationship between economic structures, political power, and policy-making, emphasizing how economic resources and power dynamics shape political decisions and societal outcomes. Several key arguments define this theory, including the role of class struggle, the influence of powerful actors, the impact of institutional frameworks, and the tension between state control and market forces. These arguments are essential in understanding issues such as Nigeria's energy transition from fossil fuels to renewable sources.

A fundamental argument of political economy theory is that economic power translates into political influence. Karl Marx (1867) argued in *Das Kapital* that capitalist societies are structured to benefit the ruling economic class (the bourgeoisie) at the expense of the working class (the proletariat). This argument is relevant in resource-rich countries like Nigeria, where multinational oil corporations such as Shell Petroleum Development Company (SPDC) exert significant influence over government policies to protect their financial interests (Pruwer, 2024). This explains why despite widespread environmental degradation, energy policies continue to favor fossil fuels over renewables (The Guardian, 2025).

Political economy theory explains how rent-seeking behaviour where elites manipulate policies to extract economic rents—stalls economic diversification. Richard Auty (1993) coined the term "resource curse," describing how countries rich in natural resources often suffer from economic mismanagement and poor governance. Nigeria exemplifies this argument, as oil revenues have fostered rent-seeking behaviors among political elites, who resist transitioning to renewable energy due to the economic benefits derived from crude oil exports (Pruwer, 2024). The result is a persistent dependency on fossil fuels, preventing investment in alternative energy sources.

Relevance of the theory to the Study

The Political Economy Theory provides a critical framework for understanding the challenges of energy transition in Nigeria. It explains how economic power, weak institutions, rent-seeking behaviors, global capitalism, and governance structures shape energy policies. Nigeria's economy has been heavily reliant on oil revenues for decades, creating a complex web of interests among political elites, multinational corporations like SPDC, and local communities. This dependency has fostered a rent-seeking environment where the state's legitimacy and authority are often undermined by corruption and mismanagement of resources (Pruwer, 2024). The entrenchment of these interests poses significant obstacles to policy shifts toward renewable energy, as stakeholders benefiting from the status quo may resist changes that threaten their economic advantages.

Research Method

Research Design

A case study approach was employed to provide an in-depth analysis of the role of SPDC and the broader political challenges affecting Nigeria's energy transition. This method is suitable for understanding complex governance dynamics, policy influences, and stakeholder interactions in the fossil fuel and renewable energy sectors. The study utilized descriptive and exploratory research techniques to examine how multinational oil companies shape energy transition policies and the consequences of fossil fuel dependency in the South-South region.

Sources of Data

The study relies on secondary data sources to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the research problem. Relevant literature, policy documents, reports from government agencies (such as the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation and the Ministry of Environment), journal articles, and publications from international organizations (such as the World Bank, the International Renewable Energy Agency, and the United Nations) were analyzed. Newspaper articles and industry reports from multinational oil companies, including Shell, were also reviewed.

Method of Data Collection

The study employed document analysis to enhance validity and reliability. Policy papers, government reports, company financial statements, and legal frameworks related to Nigeria's energy transition were reviewed to understand the regulatory and governance challenges.

Data Analysis Methods

The data collected was analyzed using thematic analysis, allowing the identification of key patterns and trends related to the political

challenges of energy transition. The steps in the analysis included coding of themes based on key research areas such as political resistance, multinational corporate influence, environmental and social impacts, and policy recommendations. Interpretation and discussion of findings to draw conclusions and policy recommendations.

Major Findings of the Study

1. Political Challenges Hindering Delta State Transition to Renewable Energy in Delta State

The study revealed that transition from fossil fuels to renewable energy in Delta State faces several key political obstacles, as identified in recent studies. Olawale and Okonkwo (2022) highlighted that entrenched political interests tied to the oil and gas sector have slowed policy implementation. The author stressed that many political elites benefit directly from fossil fuel revenues, leading to resistance against policies promoting renewable energy investments.

Abiodun (2023) also identified inconsistent government policies as a major challenge. While there have been efforts to promote renewable energy, frequent changes in leadership at both state and federal levels lead to policy reversals and a lack of continuity in energy transition programmes. The study also noted that corruption within government agencies responsible for energy regulation has diverted funds meant for renewable energy projects, further delaying progress.

Adeyemo (2024), Ogunleye (2023), and Ojo & Ibrahim (2023) emphasize the lack of political will and inadequate institutional frameworks. Adeyemo (2024) points out that despite international pressure and climate commitments, political leaders in Delta State prioritize short-term economic gains from oil rather than long-term sustainability. Ogunleye (2023) discusses bureaucratic inefficiencies and the slow approval process for renewable energy projects, which discourage investors. Ojo & Ibrahim (2023) further argue that political instability and conflicts over resource control in the Niger Delta create an uncertain environment that hampers energy transition efforts.

2. The Role of Multinational Oil Companies in Shaping Energy Transition Policies and Their Impact on Governance

Multinational oil companies (MNCs) play a significant role in shaping energy policies and governance in Delta State, often prioritizing their corporate interests over sustainable energy transitions. BP (2023) highlights how these companies maintain strong political ties with government officials, using lobbying strategies to secure favorable policies that protect fossil fuel investments. This influence has resulted in regulatory loopholes that allow oil companies to continue environmentally harmful practices, such as gas flaring and oil spills, with minimal consequences. Similarly, Stevens (2022) argues that MNCs leverage their economic power to resist stricter environmental regulations, often negotiating tax incentives and policy exemptions that undermine renewable energy initiatives.

Van der Pijl et al. (2023) and Newell & Paterson (2022) further emphasize how oil companies shape governance structures to maintain their dominance in the energy sector. Van der Pijl et al. (2023) discuss how corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives are often used as a public relations strategy to pacify local communities rather than genuinely address environmental degradation. Newell & Paterson (2022) note that oil companies frequently co-opt government agencies and policymakers, creating a governance system that prioritizes fossil fuel expansion over sustainable alternatives. Fuchs (2021) adds that this corporate influence limits public participation in energy decision-making, marginalizing voices advocating for a just transition to renewable energy. Collectively, these findings suggest that MNCs play a dominant role in shaping Delta State's energy policies in ways that sustain fossil fuel dependency while obstructing meaningful governance reforms.

3. Environmental and Social Consequences of Fossil Fuel Dependency in Delta State and its Influence on Energy Transition Efforts

Fossil fuel extraction in the Niger Delta has caused severe environmental and social consequences that hinder the region's energy transition process. Agbogidi, Okonta and Dolor (2006) highlighted the long-term ecological damage caused by oil spills, gas flaring, and deforestation, which have degraded arable land and water bodies. These environmental issues not only threaten biodiversity but also reduce the viability of alternative energy sources such as hydropower and biomass, as polluted water bodies and deforested areas diminish renewable energy potential.

Also, Ewauma (2024) and Delta State Government (2023) emphasized the social implications of fossil fuel extraction and how they delay the energy transition. Ewauma (2024) noted that oil-related environmental degradation has exacerbated poverty and unemployment, leading to frequent conflicts between local communities and oil companies. These social tensions have diverted attention and resources away from renewable energy investments, as both government and private sector actors prioritize conflict resolution and compensation efforts over clean energy development. Delta State Government (2023) acknowledges that while policies promoting renewable energy exist, the high dependence on oil revenues and the need to address widespread environmental restoration make it challenging to allocate sufficient funds for energy transition projects. Thus, the environmental destruction and socio-economic

disruptions caused by fossil fuel extraction have created structural barriers that slow down the shift towards a sustainable energy system in the Niger Delta

Policy strategies to effectively integrate renewable energy development while addressing vested fossil fuel interests in Delta State

Efforts to integrate renewable energy development in Delta State must navigate the entrenched interests of the fossil fuel sector while promoting sustainable policies. Mondaq (2023) highlighted that regulatory frameworks must balance investment incentives for renewables with transitional support for oil-dependent industries to avoid economic disruptions. Effective strategies include targeted subsidies for clean energy projects, tax incentives for renewable investors, and phased divestment policies to encourage gradual shifts in energy production. Additionally, Chambers and Partners (2024) emphasizes the role of legal instruments in mitigating resistance from fossil fuel stakeholders by enforcing emission reduction targets, mandating corporate sustainability commitments, and fostering public-private partnerships to drive clean energy investments.

Furthermore, integrating renewables in Delta State requires strategic engagement with oil sector actors to minimize opposition and ensure a just transition. Financial Times (2024) underscored the necessity of stakeholder consultations and collaborative frameworks that align government, industry, and community interests. Policy mechanisms such as carbon pricing, reinvestment mandates for oil companies in renewable infrastructure, and localized energy transition funds can create economic opportunities while mitigating resistance from vested interests.

Conclusion

This study has critically examined the political challenges hindering Nigeria's transition from fossil fuels to renewable energy, with a focus on Shell Petroleum Development Company (SPDC) in Delta State. The findings reveal that political resistance, vested interests, weak regulatory frameworks, and governance inefficiencies remain significant barriers to energy transition in Nigeria. Political elites and policymakers, largely influenced by the economic dependence on oil revenues have failed to create a stable and enforceable policy framework for renewable energy adoption. Furthermore, regulatory inconsistencies and corruption continue to undermine the effectiveness of energy transition policies. Also, multinational oil companies, particularly Shell, play a crucial role in shaping Nigeria's energy policies. The study finds that corporate lobbying, tax incentives, and regulatory capture have contributed to the slow pace of renewable energy development, as these companies prioritize their financial interests over environmental sustainability.

Recommendations

1. Delta State transition to renewable energy requires stronger political commitment and a stable policy framework to reduce dependence on fossil fuels. The government should establish a clear National Energy Transition Roadmap, **with** legally binding targets for renewable energy adoption, ensuring continuity across different administrations. The Petroleum Industry Act (PIA) should also be reviewed to incorporate enforceable provisions that support clean energy investments while reducing the dominance of fossil fuel interests.
2. To curb the excessive influence of oil majors like Shell on energy governance, the Nigerian government should strengthen regulatory agencies, such as the Nigerian Upstream Petroleum Regulatory Commission (NUPRC), and ensure their independence from corporate interests. Stricter transparency and accountability mechanisms should be enforced to prevent policy capture by fossil fuel companies.
3. The federal government having removed fossil fuel subsidies should redirect these funds to support renewable energy projects. Subsidy removal should be accompanied by mitigation measures, such as social safety nets and job creation programmes for communities dependent on the petroleum sector. Incentives such as tax breaks and grants should be provided for private investors in solar, wind, and hydropower development.
4. To enhance public trust in energy transition policies, the Delta State government must prioritize environmental remediation efforts in Delta State. Shell and other oil majors should be held accountable for oil spills and gas flaring, with stricter penalties for environmental violations.

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