

**OPTIMIZING THE POTENTIALS IN NIGERIA'S EXTRACTIVE  
INDUSTRY: THE ROLE OF LIBRARIANS**

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## **ABSTRACT**

Nigeria's extractive industry has great potentials to grow and further enrich the nation's economy. To optimize the potentials however requires that factors, such as technology and human capitals, be developed. This paper elucidated the technical and vocational education and training (TVET) as a means of achieving the required development and the role of librarians in this laudable programme as purposed to boost the industry. The paper also highlighted the problems hindering librarians from contributing maximally to TVET and suggested ways of making them more productive.

**Keywords:** Extractive Industry, TVET, Librarians

## **INTRODUCTION**

Nigeria is a nation with great and valuable endowments in human capital and mineral resources. The presence of these treasures has attracted and are still attracting investments from within and outside the country. Unfortunately, the industry, particularly, technologically demanding ones like the extractive industry, lack technological experts to drive them despite the large human resources. To meet the demand, the polytechnic education was introduced. Initially polytechnic were mandated to produce middle-level manpower; now, polytechnics produce graduates through programs that are more technical and practically based than the university (Appah, D, 2004).

In furtherance to the government's pursuit of human capital development, Technical, Vocational Education and Training (TVET) program was also launched. This programme takes skills acquisition beyond the formal conventional school curriculum and is tailored towards self-reliance. But it is worthy of note that for any effective and life-long learning to take place, the all important role of librarians and libraries must be recognized.

In the light of the above, this paper considers the extractive industry and its potentials; how librarians, through the library and its resources, partner with other stakeholders to develop an adequately equipped workforce to drive the optimization of the potentials in the nation's extractive industry, and what can be done to spur this group of educators to greater and sustained productivity.

The extractive industry is one of the main stay of the Nigerian economy. The industry deals with physical extraction of metals, minerals and aggregates from the earth. Appah described the process as the mining of fossils.

Quarry (2014) posited that it is made up of mining, quarrying and dredging of natural resources. However, each participant may differ in what, how and where it extracts. In Nigeria, extractible minerals include oil and gas, limestone, coal, iron-ore, bauxite, gold, etc.

The extractive sector plays and possesses the potentials to further play vital roles in expanding economic opportunities in a nation. The economic opportunities as highlighted in the corporate Social Responsibility Report by John Kennedy School of Government, manifests through:

- The development of local supply chain for goods and services needed by the industry
- Development of product distribution and sales channels;
- Employment generation and economic empowerment; and
- Corporate social and community investment (CSR)

The report equally states the business strategies for expanding economic opportunity, among them is 'development of human capital'. This refers to the systematic planning and application of training and other activities to provide a person with the whole range of knowledge, skills and attitudes needed for effective performance now and in the future (Iheama, 2010). Economies develop based on natural resources. Chigbu and Nzoagba (2011), agreed with this position when they described human capital development as the process of requiring and increasing the number of persons with skills, education and experience which are critical for development of the individual and societal development. It is the economic value knowledge experience, skill and capabilities of effective workforce within an organization or institution that speed up the economic and capital growth of the institution Gruff and Jones (2003).

Technical, vocational education training (TVET) leads to human capital development through the acquisition of practical and applied skills as well as basic scientific knowledge. It is comparatively a new phase of vocational education which is designed to meet complex technological needs of modern industries (Ezeani et al, 2014). According to Aliyu and Dabban (2009), technical and vocational education has seen to the production of skilled manpower in engineering, design, construction and operation of industries, petrochemical, electrical/electronic, etc.

To sustain human development, Blarabe (2009) submitted that teacher and knowledge workers generally have valued to play valuable roles. Teachers and knowledge

workers generally impart knowledge, attitudes and skills to learners who put in place and operate the social, economic, scientific and technological systems in the society thereby moving humanity forward and ensuring survival. According to the Nigerian national policy on education, functional libraries remain a major component of qualitative education.

The library is a repository of the world's intellectual property and disseminator of knowledge assets. A library is a place with collections of books and other information materials, systematically organized, preserved for the use and benefit of its community; and managed by specially trained personnel. There are types of library – National, Public, School, Private, Special and academic. The fact remains that each type of library functions in tandem with its parent institution or authority that establish it.

### **The Role of Librarians in Optimizing the Potentials of Nigeria's Extractive Industries**

Librarians are specially trained to obtain and apply expertise in the selection, processing, storage, preservation and dissemination of information resources for teaching, learning and self-development. They are trained to be multi-disciplinary, that is, they must possess at least some phantom of knowledge in various fields – art, sciences, engineering, health sciences, etc. This kind of knowledge enables the librarian as are offered in his domain; and to also classify them appropriately lest such materials is wrongly placed in the library and eventually lost to the possible users.

A librarian should possess academic qualifications and should be professionally certified by the Librarians' Registration Council of Nigeria (LRCN). He/she can function in any type of library, as a result, his/her functions depend on the mandate of the type of library where his/her service is employed.

Librarians in academic environment, as in polytechnics, monotechnics and universities, contribute immensely to the achievement of the mandate of the institution through the following function:

- **Implement the Academic Curriculum:** Librarians do this indirectly and directly. The indirect role is played out in the selection, acquisition, cataloguing and classification of books, journals, and other information materials based on the curriculum thus, facilitating effective direct implementation of the same by other knowledge workers who teach, assess and undertake research activities. On the other hand, librarians directly implement the curriculum through teaching and assessment of library skill and with the
  - Provision of reference services for researchers
  - Selectively disseminating educative and research information
  - Provide current awareness service on major public issues (e.g. the EBOLA Virus saga)
- Collaboration in drawing up national development plans
- Contribution to research and development through publications
- Information gate keeping in every field of endeavour.

### **Problems Militating against the Role of Librarians**

Some factors have been found to be militating against this key-player in human capital development. In a research carried out by Chigbu and Uzoagba (2011), the following problems, among others, were identified.

- Lack of funds for subscription to world class information resources; inadequate ICT infrastructural facilities
- Insufficient exposure of scholars to viable assets for effective research and development;
- Non-involvement of librarians in proactive human capital development;
- Sidelineing of librarians in National development programme
- Employment of non-librarians in the teaching of library skills.

### **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION**

The extractive industry remains the main stay of the Nigeria economy. The key drivers to the potential, optimization in the industry are source extraction, population

with the right skills to manage the resources and technological infrastructure to sustain the economy. Nigeria's most precious natural resource in its teeming young population. Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) is a sure way of developing the much needed drive and to make this effective. The role of librarians must be recognized, the problems militating against their effectiveness must be addressed so that the laudable TVET program Nigeria's extractive industry can be herniated properly.

To keep abreast of developments in information and communication technology, librarians need to be trained and retrained. Institutions and the government should sponsor librarians to conferences and workshops. They should be involved in the design of curriculum for human capital development. Adequate funding should also be provided for subscription to world class information resources so that librarians could have adequate and current collection with which to perform their role.

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