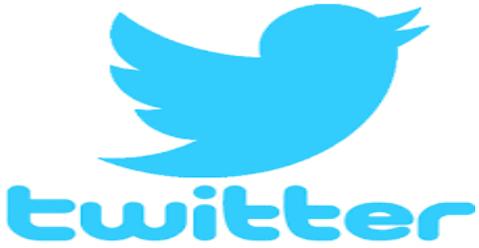
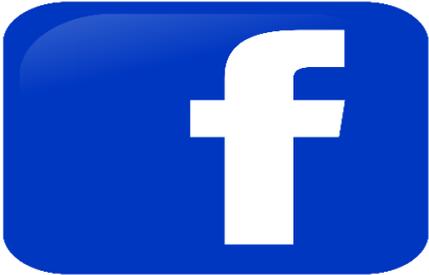


**GHANA LAGS BEHIND IN TECHNOLOGY USAGE OF THE EXTRACTIVE SECTOR
OF THE ECONOMY**



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1.0 Introduction

Ghana's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) over the past decade have been growing at a faster pace with Agriculture contributing 28.94% in 2006, the industrial sector also contributing 19.80% and the service contributing a huge total of 51.26% in that same year. The industrial sector's contribution is sub-divided into various categories where the mining and quarrying sub-sector contributed 2.66% to the GDP. These three sectors contribute to government revenue generation through foreign exchange, tax revenues and royalties for development.

The participation of the citizens of Ghana on national issues such as the politics, governance, economic and social issues have been gaining prominence over the past 10 years. The basic question that comes into mind is, how have citizens been participating in national issues and discussions?

Citizens over the past years have been contributing to national discussions through radio phone in programmes, writing in newspapers, the use of public town halls in rural communities and information centers all over the country.

In Ghana, radio programs constitute the largest participation avenues for citizens. While many rural farmers have limited access to communications technologies, radio reaches at least 70 percent of rural households.

Because small-scale farmers are often located in widespread, hard-to-reach rural areas, we believe that radio is a key tool to reach them most cost-effectively according to Mr. Ben Fiafor Farm Radio International regional field manager for West Africa.

For Ghana's extractive sector, the participation of citizens in discussing issues relating to the sector have been minimal unlike the agricultural sector which has 70% information dissemination from the radio.

2. Types of participation using technology

There are many forms through which participation in interaction can take place. Technology has allowed interaction to be much easier and more comfortable. Several applications such as ChannelME, search team, Mind42.com, Bounce, Wiggi, my simple surface, synchtube, and Dabble board et cetera. These applications allow people to contribute to discussions as they follow them online to share knowledge and ideas.

The world Energy council which has over 3000 members comprising of governments, private companies, Non-Governmental Organizations, policy think tanks, civil society organizations et cetera has avenues for its numerous members to participate in discussing global energy issues. With just a subscription, members all over the 90 countries can receive press releases and can also contribute to discussions through e-mails and newsletters. EY oil and Gas Company in Norway which is one of the leading oil and gas production companies allows citizens to participate in their activities through technology. The company has various social media applications which allows citizens worldwide to contribute to discussions going in the extractive sector in Norway. These technology driven applications include EY Insights apps for mobile devices such as Facebook, LinkedIn, twitter handle, YouTube, and webcasts. These are the various avenues for participation which have been created for the populace to use technology to contribute to discussions in the oil and gas industry.

Statoil another leading oil producer in Norway has technology driven avenues for citizens to participate in the oil and Gas extraction in Norway. The company has news subscription in the form of press release to allow people contribute to knowledge and information sharing in the extractive sector. The use of mobile apps like YouTube for their conferences to share knowledge and information, twitter handles for people to participate in discussions et cetera.

3. Types of participation using technology in Ghana

The extractive sector of Ghana which comprises of the mining sector and oil and Gas sector have been the backbone to Ghana's economy with revenue generation and payments in the form of corporate taxes and royalties amounting to \$978.87 million from the export of crude oil in 2014. The ability of citizens to participate and contribute to discussions relating to the extractive sector is relative low compared to other global extractive countries and even relative to agriculture in Ghana. Tullow Oil Company, one of the leading extractive companies in Ghana have 12,222 followers on Facebook, which allows people to contribute to discussions and post on their page. Participation in discussions do not even receive response from the company. Other technological applications like twitter, linkledn, YouTube and e-mail are used by the company for communication with the Ghanaian populace.

The National Petroleum Authority in Ghana do have relatively small avenues for participation in discussions. These include the toll free numbers and e-mails. Aside this avenues, people have no means of contributing to discussions that takes place in the organization. The Ghana National Petroleum Commission have 168 followers to contribute to their discussions that goes on. This is relatively very low for such a huge company in the country. Ghana National Gas Company has

680 likes on Facebook as a platform for discussions with citizens. The company has 81 followers in twitter while it follows 11 people with just 19 tweets as at 16th March, 2016. The Ghana Oil and Gas Service Providers have online discussion platforms that allow people to participate in discussions by sending messages to the company. The Natural Resource Governance Institute have various technological medium through which people participate in discussions relating to the extractive sector in Ghana. It has 7,996 followers on twitter. The institute also have a Facebook accounts that allows to people to participate in their events and discussions. The Public Interest and Accountability Committee have platforms that allow citizens to participate in topical issues. These technology driven avenues including twitter have 23 followers, Facebook and YouTube. The number of participants is however very low. The African Center for Energy Policy (ACEP) have 408 followers on twitter but their Facebook account has not be functional. ACEP also platforms such as our OilMoneyTV, Our Mineral Resource, OurOilMoney. These are avenues through which participation takes place on a large scale for citizens on issues relating to the extractive sector in Ghana.

4. Findings: participation using technology in Ghana

The participation in the extractive sector of Ghana using technological gadgets has been quiet low over the past number years. Unlike the international Oil and Gas companies like EY Oil and Gas which have 11, 200 followers on twitter that allow people worldwide to participate in discussions. Most extractive companies in the country like Tullow and stakeholders in the extractive sectors do not have enough technology friendly environments for people to participate in the activities relating to the oil and gas sector of Ghana. Simple means of information dissemination such as the use of SMS to share information through mobile phones is not been used in Ghana. Institutions like GNPC, GOGSPA and ACEP do not have WhatsApp groups to

allow citizens to participate in discussions relating to the extractive sector. Technology patronage has been low among stakeholders in the extractive sector of Ghana.

5. Conclusion

The extractive sector has been a backbone for Ghana's economy contributing about GH 3 billion in 2014 from crude oil at the Jubilee field. The ability of citizens to contribute to discussions in the extractive sector has been very minimal due to the absence of technological platforms such as WhatsApp groups which are easy for people to comment, Facebooks accounts that allow people to comments and like status of these major stakeholders are also lacking. Other hitches include the unavailability of networks country wide for people to have access to mobile especially in the extractive areas to follow the activities of the companies is major cause of low participation in the extractive sector too. As at 2008, the percentage of Ghanaians covered with mobile network was 73%. Citizens can only participate in the extractive sector when the stakeholders in the extractive sector create the technology enabling environments for people to participate in their events. Replies to comments should also be used by the stakeholders to engage citizens in the participation of their events relating to extractive sector.

Published by **Penplusbytes** , 2016

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