

Contract Disclosure: Role of Access to Information law to journalists in promoting citizen participation and accountability in the Extractive Sector in Tanzania.

Dr. George N. Mwita

Monitoring & Evaluation Manager, Tanzania Media Foundation (TMF),
Email: gnsorani78@gmail.com

Abstract

The media has a vital role to play if Tanzania citizens are to benefit extensively from the extractive industry as provided for by law in terms of knowledge on the industry, benefits and challenges expected. Besides and at basic level, informing and educating people about the nature of the sector is a necessary requisite for participation in decision making process on issues affecting the local communities. For the media to effectively play its watchdog role, a more in- depth, investigative approach to coverage of the extractive sector is required. This will require that the media hold the National Government, Local Governments, mining stakeholders and mining companies to account in mining processes, management of returns and environmental & social impact. However, this should be done in line with the requirements of the laws and the Code of Conduct for the Practice of Journalism in the united Republic of Tanzania.

Contract disclosure, Citizen participation, Accountability

1.0 Introduction

Journalists in Tanzania just like in the rest of Africa face a number of challenges and hindrances that prevents them from effective reporting of the extractive industry. They are poorly trained and equipped with specialists' knowledge, poorly paid, have limited technological support and face political and editorial interference. In countries where oil, gas or mineral production is new, such as in Tanzania, journalists face the additional problem of having little knowledge about the industry and related economic/ social issues.

To report fairly, accurately and comprehensively on the extractive, journalists need a sound knowledge of the sector and the ability to analyse and report on its complexities. The observance of ethical and professional principles in covering the extractive industry is very important because of the nature of the industry itself. The stakes are always high because of the stakeholders involved, the amount of revenue involved and also the possible short term and long term effects on the country's economic, political and social aspects.

The media coverage of the extractive industry in Tanzania is not a new phenomenon. From pre independence, the media has consistently covered issues of mining albeit in a small way with little excitement compared to what has been witnessed in the recent past. Journalism covering the extractive industries including oil, mining and gas is of particular interest to anyone who believes that transparency in governance, business and politics is an important aspect of development in Africa.

The backdrop of this study is that good journalism will help citizens to be better informed about the relationship between the extractive industry, government, communities and the broader economy. The media is further expected to help manage the expectations of the people with regard to proceeds from extractive industry. Journalists can reveal revenue flows and decision-making processes that affect the entire country. With this knowledge, citizens can play more active roles in their countries' destinies and make their resources a blessing rather than a curse.

1.1 Objectives

The objectives of the study are:

- i. To assess the quantity and quality of extractive industry (Oil, gas and other minerals) reporting in Tanzanian media (Print, Radio and TV) for the period of one year (2017).
- ii. To establish the adequacy or rarity of content, and the style as well as the nature of reporting in the extractive industry in Tanzania.
- iii. To assess the journalists' perception of challenges, opportunities and lessons learnt on media coverage of the extractive industry in Tanzania under the ATI law.

1.2 The extractive sector in Tanzania

Tanzania is endowed with a vast and very valuable extractive resource industry consisting of forestry, petroleum and minerals. It is ranked fourth in terms of diversity and richness of mineral resources in Africa, after South Africa, Democratic Republic of Congo and Nigeria. The mineral wealth of Tanzania, although well known for decades, has remained essentially untapped and under exploited until the late 1990s when the country experienced a mineral exploration and exploitation boom, following the liberalisation and privatisation of the economy. (Malyamkono and Manson, 2006) Since then the sector has grown, and there has been an increase in the value of mineral exports

The extractives sector (oil, gas, and mining) continues to be an important subject for journalists, particularly in developing countries. This is because revenues from oil, gas and mining contribute substantially to GDP and in many cases make up the bulk of government revenue.

The mining sector in Tanzania includes both small– scale operations characterised by the deployment of manual and rudimentary technologies; and large-scale mechanised mining dominated by nine major mines: six for gold and one each for diamonds, coal and Tanzanite. Gold accounts for 90 percent of the value of Tanzania's mineral exports.

Therefore, there is a great deal of scope for journalists to do investigative reporting on the extractive sector in Tanzania. There are innumerable instances of outright corruption as well as bad practices, where countries fail, for instance, to garner for themselves the full value of their resources and/or when the revenues raised are not used for public purposes in ways they should. There are more complex stories, exposing how well-intentioned actions can have unintended adverse effects. Such reporting is necessary if the media is to fulfil the role of the watchdog, particularly needed in this complex and often opaque industry.

1.3 Providing Information to the Public and Responding to Citizen Concerns

Good governance of oil, gas and mining resources and the revenues they generate require effective oversight. An active and knowledgeable press plays a critical role in helping inform and engage the public, citizen groups and parliaments and thus help them hold government and companies accountable. The media also acts as a watchdog on resource allocation and distribution and effective utilization within the extractive industry.

But in many countries, citizens lack basic knowledge of the extractive sector, including information on industry operators' obligations to the state, government revenues from these sources and how those funds are allocated, disbursed and reconciled. In the most extreme cases, this lack of information exacerbates already weak relations between citizens and their governments (*Shari & Barrie, 2007*).

Public dialogue facilitated by an informed media on the management of national extractive industries stimulates improved transparency and oversight by governments. A critical role of the media is to give the people access to balanced information so they can make informed social, economic and political choices that affect their lives. Open and inclusive systems of governance make it more difficult for injustices to occur. The media with oversight responsibility will complement the work of the oversight institutions on the sector to strengthened accountability and highlight the negative implications of the non-transparent sector governance to the economy, host communities and the larger society (Dyke, Nash, Redd & Sukkarieh, 2014)

This is because the media plays a very important role in both explaining complex issues to the public and in monitoring the government's handling of the energy sector. The oil and gas industry has a shady reputation. Rightly or wrongly, many citizens assume that international oil companies compromise host governments by paying bribes to government officials as well as prioritizing profit over protecting the environment and respecting local communities. In countries with poor transparency track records and high levels of corruption, revenues from oil and gas are often mismanaged.

1.4 Media's Role: Transparency and accountability in extraction industry

In the absence of transparency and other controls, ruling cliques use resource profits to enrich themselves and consolidate power through corruption and patronage, while the general citizenry remains impoverished. In countries like Angola, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Nigeria and Sierra Leone, mineral and oil wealth has fuelled conflict, with devastating consequences for their societies. This is because the extractive industry is one of the most lucrative and financial mines of many economies in the world. Large and unregulated inflows of funds into government accounts serve as great temptations for those in power (*Shari & Barrie, 2007*).

To tackle this challenge of transparency, civic groups, media practitioners, government reformers and representatives of the international community are increasingly pushing for more accountability and fiscal transparency in a number of sub-Saharan African countries. Effective transparency initiatives must foster cooperation beyond governments and multinational corporations to include the participation of legislative bodies, political parties, civic organizations and the media.

Accountability and good governance in the extractive industry require a well-informed citizenry, skilled civil society watchdogs, facilitated access to information and efficient communication channels, in short, favourable legal frameworks.

1.5 Extractive Sector, Conflict and the Role of the Media in Tanzania

It's evidenced in some regions in African, countries rich in minerals are often marred by corruption, price manipulation, authoritarian repression, militarization and civil war. Most of the proceeds end up offshore, where mineral wealth is exported rather than shared or ploughed into the areas where it is needed most to meet local development needs such as infrastructure (*UNDP,2014*).

The extractive sector has the potential to significantly transform environments, communities and economies. At times, such transformation may manifest in conflicts or disputes between a resource developer and local communities, or even complete breakdown of the company's social license to operate (Acacia Mining Company)—with associated costs for the company, local communities, and the broader public (*Davis & Franks,2011*).

Acacia Mining Company, Tanzania's No.1 gold producer, is in the midst of a bitter dispute with the Eastern African's country's government, which among other things has accused Acacia of tax evasion and illegal operations. Acacia, which owns and operates Tanzania's three major mines, is also facing a lawsuit in the UK from relatives of miners who died at North Mara. Law firm Deighton Pierce Glynn is acting on 10 cases, most of which relate to incidents since 2013, and one as recently as last year.

1.6 Role of journalists in reporting the extractive industry

The link between an effective media and economic development is illustrated by the level of coverage of the extractive sector. From varied experiences from Africa, the wealth from the extractive sectors poses challenges for African governments.

According to Schifrin (2009), the media can not only expose wrongdoing but can also help decide and prioritize development policy by pursuing relevant issues on the agenda for public discussion and covering topics in a way that educates the public and policymakers and help societies decide how they want to approach certain developmental questions.

Journalists should be able to undertake objective writing in the extractive industry using balanced sourcing, incorporating in-depth research, and proper article structure. Journalists can fulfil their oversight role only through informed analysis and reporting, high quality and thoughtful commentary and investigative efforts. However, this requires good reporting skills, understanding technical issues and being accessible to relevant information from experts.

In this way, the media can effectively play its fundamental role in spreading knowledge about, raising awareness of and highlighting potential flaws in the management of the extractive industry. To this end, journalists need to understand the sector's technicalities as well as the economic and political implications of management decisions. Moreover, they need to help the general public make sense of the figures and the technical details in an accurate, impartial, transparent and independent way (Dyke, Nash, Redd & Sukkarieh, 2014)

There is a great deal of room for journalists to do investigative reporting on the extractive sector. This is because there are innumerable instances of outright corruption as well as bad practices, where countries fail, for instance, to garner for themselves the full value of their resources and/or when the revenues raised are not used for public good. There are more complex stories, demonstrating how well intentioned actions can have unintended adverse effects (as in the case of the Acacia Mining noted earlier). Such reporting is necessary if the media is to fulfil the role of the watchdog, particularly needed in this complex and often opaque industry (Schifrin & Rodrigues, 2014).

2.0 Methodology

The study used two research methodologies namely content analysis and survey. Content analysis was done on the five major daily newspapers and five other magazines that carried stories on the extractive industry in the year 2017.

2.1 Content Analysis

One of the acknowledged methods for assessing quality of media reporting is content analysis. Content analysis is applied very systematically (all media reports are assessed by the same criteria) and rather objectively (all assessors of media reports are distant from the media and trained to apply the codebook). The requirement for content analysis is that assessment criteria are clear and do not involve too much subjective judgement (TMF Report, 2017)

Selection of 168 journalists' works from 84 journalists who has been in the journalism field between 5-10 years from various media houses in Tanzania mainland and Zanzibar who were selected randomly. This are mainly journalists who have been reporting on the extractive sector since 2007.

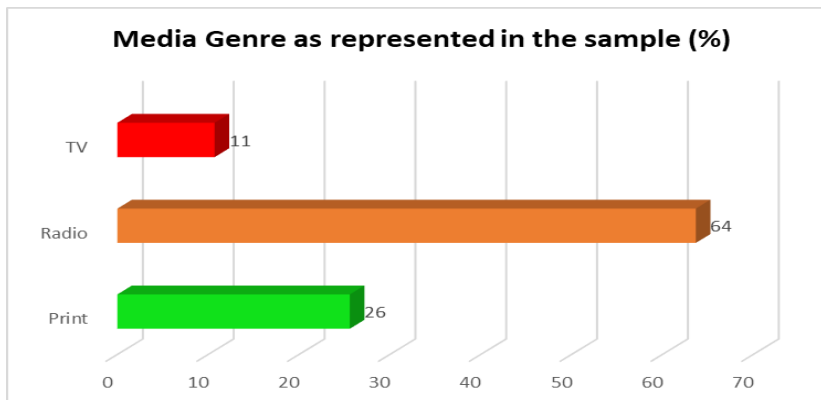
Trained coders were trained on the use of codebook (few variables) that aimed at achieving the above stated objectives. The following were the variables considered: -

- a) Media genre
- b) Topical issues covered in relation to the extractive industry
- c) News actors in articles analyzed
- d) Sources and diversity of news stories on the extractive industry
- e) Number of view points

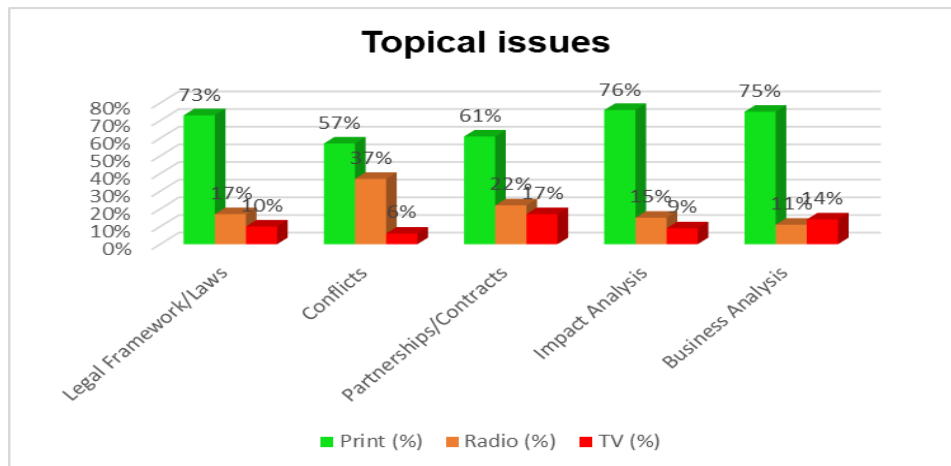
3.0 Findings

3.1 Sample/Media Genre

After cleaning the data, the actual sample consists of 168 units (print, radio and TV) as indicated below



3.2 Topical issues covered in relation to the extractive industry



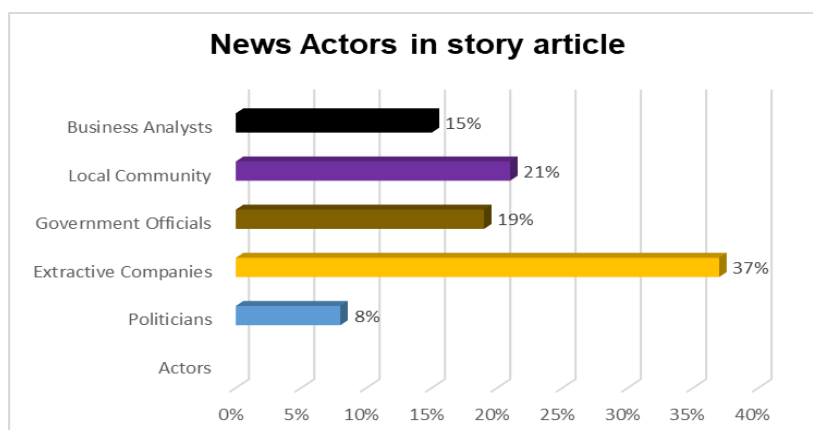
The analysis shows that a lot of reporting on the extractive sector is done by the print media in all topical issues of analysis.

3.3 Diversity of perspectives and sources

It is an explicit aim of any reporting to provide the audience with the perspective of ordinary people (in contrast to elite or pure politics perspective) and with a diversity of other perspectives (economic, political, or science) on the issue elaborated in an article. The table below indicate approximately 50% of the articles shows more than one perspective. Over 76% of articles contained multiple sources.

| Number of perspectives | Article analysed | CF |
|------------------------|------------------|-------|
| No perspective | 6 | 6 |
| | 3.5% | 3.5% |
| 1 perspective | 86 | 92 |
| | 50.2% | 53.7% |
| 2 perspectives | 53 | 139 |
| | 30.5% | 84.2% |
| 3 and more | 29 | 168 |
| | 16.2% | 100% |
| Total | | N=168 |

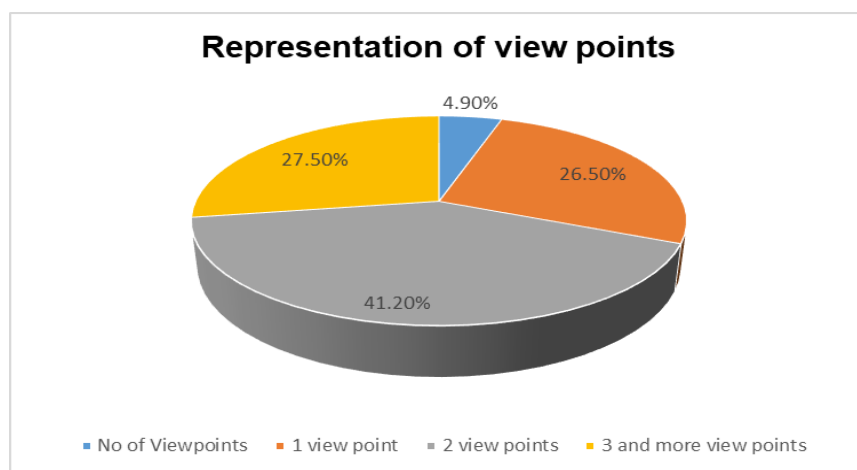
3.4 News actors in the story article



The major focus of news coverage was mainly on mining companies and this constituted 37% of the articles analyzed. Local communities were covered in 21% of the articles and consisted mainly of mentions and CSR related programs that were intended to affect them. 19% of the coverage concerned government officials while 15% were on business analysts

3.5 Number of viewpoints

One quality criterion of good journalism provides the audience with balanced stories, i.e. not only a diversity of viewpoints, but additionally also mentioning the opposite viewpoint to make a story balanced (TMF Report, 2017)



As illustrated in the table above, 41.20% of the stories analysed had two viewpoints while 27.5% of the articles had three or more viewpoints. 26.5% of the articles published only had one viewpoint and only 4.90% had no viewpoint.

In order to address objective 3 about the perception of journalists on the challenges, opportunities and lessons learned, a survey with the following were presented to a random sample of 113 journalists through online questionnaire (google forms).

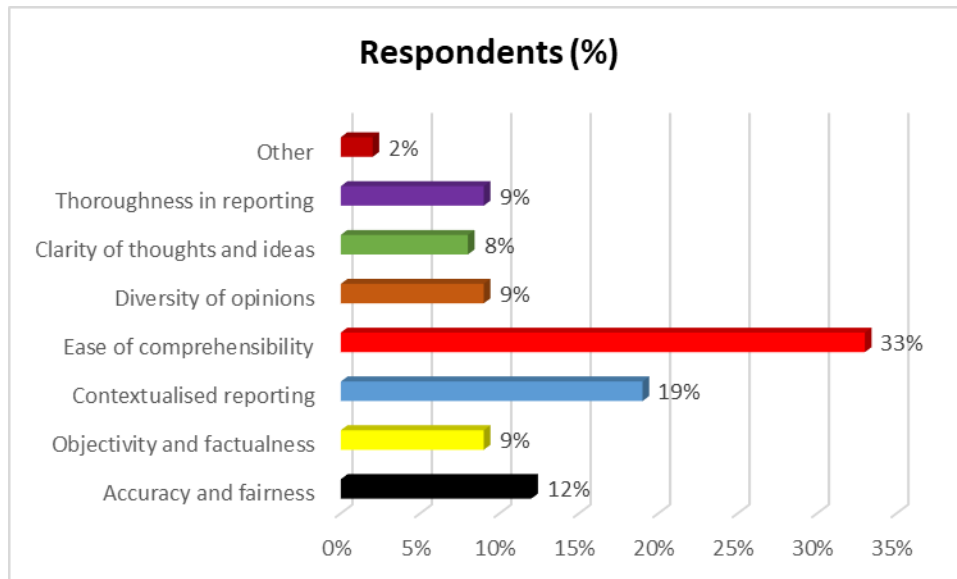
- a) Journalists' perception on various issues in the extractive industry.
- b) Priority elements to be considered when packaging stories on the extractive industry.
- c) Ways of improving transparency and accountability in the extractive industry; Journalists' perspective

3.6 Journalists responses on perception on various issues in the extractive industry

| Statement | Strongly Agree | Agree | Don't Know | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
|---|----------------|-------|------------|----------|-------------------|
| The media has failed to manage the expectations of the country as relates to the benefits of extractive industry and this can potentially cause misunderstanding and conflict | 45% | 17% | 4% | 17% | 17% |
| Reporting for the extractive industry is far much more different than reporting for other business sections and requires more training which they do not have | 51% | 15% | 8% | 16% | 10% |
| My training in journalism did not prepare me to adequately deal with special reporting of issues like in extractive industry and this is a big challenge to me in my daily practice | 41% | 27% | 6% | 11% | 15% |

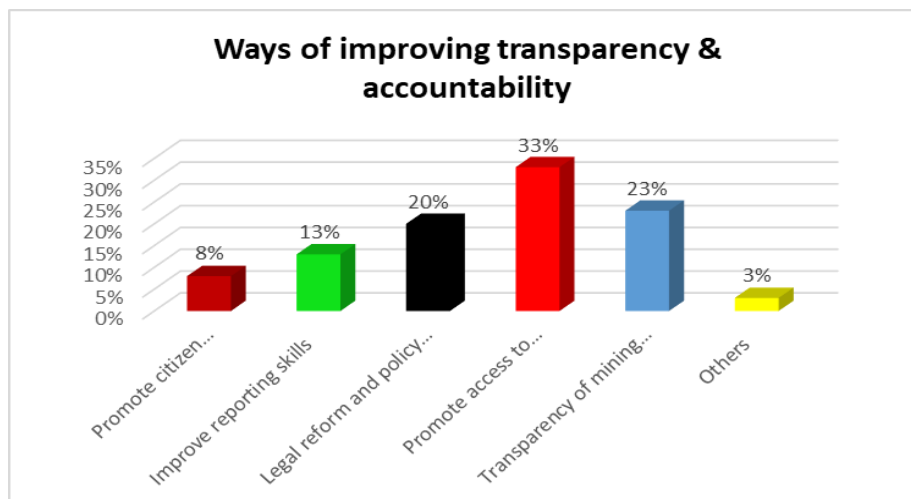
Sixty-two per cent (62%) of the respondents agreed that media has failed to manage the expectations of the country as relates to the benefits of the extractive industry. 66% indicated that reporting for the extractive industry is far much more different than reporting on other business sectors and requires more training. Meanwhile, 68% agreed that their training in journalism did not prepare them to adequately deal with specialized reporting of issues such as the extractive industry posing serious difficulties in reporting.

3.7 Priority elements to be considered when packaging stories on the extractive industry.



Thirty-three per cent (33%) of the respondents indicated that easy comprehensibility was the main focus in creating stories on the extractive industry. 19% indicated that contextualized reporting was a very important element that all journalists should embrace while 8% said that clarity of issues and ideas during reporting was an element they considered essential in their reporting.

3.8 Ways of improving transparency and accountability in the extractive industry; Journalists' perspective



Thirty-three (33%) of the respondents indicated that access to information, 23% indicated ensuring transparency by mining companies was very important for overall transparency and accountability in the extractive industry. 20% indicated that proper legal and regulatory reforms coupled by stringent policy implementation in the extractive industry would enhance transparency and accountability. 13% said that improving the economic reporting skills of journalists and improving their general understanding of the industry would help in improving the transparency and accountability in the sector.

4.0 Conclusions

The contribution to Development in Tanzania resulting from the extractive industry can only be realized when we have a hawk-eyed, development oriented media in our society. While it is evident that some African governments face serious policy challenges, and many government institutions do not function effectively, the media can aid in reversing such trends and negative tendencies that might lead to a resource curse.

High-quality journalism, which is necessary to highlight the problems that need solving, digs deep and explains the topics of the day in clear language. Despite these needs there are grave deficiencies in the quality of professionalism and ethical journalism in Tanzania.

Journalism in Tanzania faces a myriad of challenges resulting from the difficult conditions under which our journalists work. Unfortunately, such challenges are often glaring when reporting on sensitive issues such as those arising in the extractive industry. This has naturally affected the quality and quantity of reporting. Underpaid, poorly trained and working under both political and commercial pressures, many Tanzania journalists seem to suffer from the devaluing of their profession, which has left them vulnerable and isolated. The greatest and the most glaring challenge is the lack of financial resources to undertake training and research necessary for analytical and in-depth coverage of the extractive industry.

It is important to note that transparency and accountability are very important for effective management of natural resources in Tanzania. The issue of transparency can only be solved once we adopt open contracting that will allow stakeholders to participate in the whole procurement process. Otherwise, the extractive industry remains largely shielded by the interests of many players who want to exploit it away from the public eye.

Journalism covering the extractive industries is therefore, of particular interest to anyone who believes that transparency in governance, business and politics is an important aspect of development in Africa. Very few countries disclose the contracts made with private companies to develop natural resources, but pressure for more transparency has been on the rise. The media therefore, should exert more pressure on the government to ensure that it discloses all the mining contracts which should be published for public information. Furthermore, the contracts should be published on time and made simple for easy understanding.

5.0 Recommendations

Journalists in Tanzania have indicated how hard it is to report on government management of oil, gas, and mining revenues. This is not an experience of Tanzanian journalists alone. In other countries, a shortage of information about extractive sector projects a lack of technical competency, short deadlines, and government repression of the free press have been known to undermine the quality of reporting on these issues.

Journalists are usually not trained economists or engineers and do not have the background in economics, engineering, geology, corporate finance, and other subjects helpful to understanding the energy industry and the effects of resource wealth. Lacking this kind of knowledge and access to information, reporters are often unable to cover natural resource stories in a meaningful way.

Lacking this kind of knowledge and access to information, reporters are often unable to cover natural resource stories in a meaningful way. In addition, some often underpaid journalists succumb to gifts and payments from local companies, a situation that compromises their integrity and objectivity as well as their willingness to report honestly and accurately.

Based on the above understanding, the following are some of the recommendations of the study: -

1. Transparency and accountability (open contracting) need to be enhanced in the extractive industry, where the entire procurement process from planning to implementation. This will involve partnership with the media and other stakeholders. Without effective management of resources and disclosure of information in the industry, tensions in Tanzania are likely to be exacerbated by extractives issues like lack of transparency, illicit financial flows, land grabbing, pollution, community distrust, lack of government agency coordination.
2. Media has a critical role to play especially in sensitizing the public on what is happening in the extractive industry in Tanzania including how the benefits from various resources are being allocated and used. To this end, the media houses in collaboration with other stakeholders should continuously invest in training some of its reporters to do stories on extractive industry in a way that reflects Indepth understanding of the industry.
3. There is need for more use of community radios in information dissemination in the extractive industry. A lot of information on the industry is obtained from PR firms based in major towns in Tanzania, and therefore not responsive to the local needs and realities relating to the extractive industry in Tanzania.
4. There is need and necessity for increased capacity building and involvement of media on discussions in the industry and emerging issues. Some of the technicalities in the extractive industry can better be reported journalists understand the issues clearly.
5. Media houses should also ensure that they train some of their journalists to specialize in the reporting on the extractive industry. Such specialization will assist in creating a pool of reporters who are better placed in discussing and authoritatively interpreting issues in the extractive industry to the audience.

6. The government and mining companies need to establish clear communication strategies to ensure communities and other stakeholders are continuously and effectively apprised of the happenings in the industry. Some governments and private-sector interests avoid media scrutiny by remaining silent on public interest issues, such as royalty and tax agreements, budgets and spending among other issues.

References

Carpenter. L (2012). Conflict minerals in the Congo: Blood minerals and Africa's under-reported first world war.

Colmery et al (There will be ink. A study of journalism training and the extractive industries in Nigeria, Ghana and Uganda.

Davis. R. Franks. D (2011). The costs of conflict with local communities in the extractive industry. First International seminar on social responsibility mining.

Dyke. J, Nash.M, Redd. B. Sukkarieh.M (2014) Lebanese media coverage of the oil and gas sector. Center for Media and Cultural Freedom.

Holder. A (2004). Forgotten or Ignored? News media silence and the conflict in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). London School of Economics

Koning. R (2011). Conflict Minerals in the Democratic Republic of the Congo Aligning Trade and Security Interventions. Stockholm International Peace Research Institute. SIPRI Policy Paper No. 27

Shari.B, Barrie.H (2007). Transparency and Accountability in Africa's Extractive Industries: The Role of the Legislature, National Democratic Institute for International Affairs

Schiffrin. A (2009). Power and pressure: African media and the extractive sector. Journal of International Affairs, Spring/Summer, Vol. 62, No. 2

Schiffrin.A, Rodrigues.E (2014). Covering Oil: Big Data, New tools and Journalism. Global Investigative Journalism Conference. Columbia University UNDP:<http://www.ke.undp.org/content/kenya/en/home/presscenter/articles/2014/Media-Training-On-Extractive-Industry/>