An exploration of health and safety management issues in Nigeria's efforts

All organizations have a duty of care to ensure that employees and other persons who may be affected by the company's undertakings remain safe at all times. This paper examines the background of occupational health and safety (OHS) practices in Nigeria, and highlights the importance of mitigating the OHS challenges identified from the moral, legal, financial and other dimensions. In the Nigerian context, the need to reinforce health and safety management (HSM) issues is exemplified from the unsavory recurrent reports of plane crashes in the aviation industry, high rates of motor vehicle accidents, numerous cases of deaths due to poisoning in the solid mineral sector, frequent accounts of disasters in the petroleum sector arising from oil spills, pipeline vandalism as well as accidents involving petroleum tankers. More effective and efficient management of these issues is a sine qua non to the industrialization efforts of an economy. Against the background of extant HS legislation in Nigeria, some reasons for frequent violations of OHS standards and norms by operators were identified as bribery and corruption in the system, the 'Nigerian Factor', inadequate funding of monitoring institutions, low levels of education of employees as well as problems of persistent unemployment in the country. While recommending ways to mitigate the OHS flaws in Nigerian institutions, the relative duties and responsibilities of stakeholders in the OHS business were identified. The paper concludes by noting the importance of a virile HSM environment to the overall economic development of the nation.