

The Impact of Gold Mining on Disability: Experiences from the Obuasi Municipal Area

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Abstract : Despite provisions to uphold and safeguard the rights of persons with disability in Ghana, there is evidence that they still encounter several challenges which limit their full and effective involvement in mainstream society, including the gold mining sector. The study sought to explore how persons with physical disability (PWPDs) experience gold mining in the Obuasi Municipal Area. A qualitative research design was used to discover and understand the experiences of PWPDs regarding mining. The purposive sampling technique was used to select five key informants for the study with the age range of (24-52 years) while snowball sampling aided the selection of 16 persons with various forms of physical disability with the age range of (24-60 years). In-depth interviews were used to gather data. The interviews lasted from forty-five minutes to an hour. In relation to the setting, the interviews of thirteen (13) of the participants with disability were done in their houses, two (2) were done on the phone, and one (1) was done in the office. Whereas the interviews of the five (5) key informants were all done in their offices. Data were analyzed using Creswell's (2009) concept of thematic analysis. The findings suggest that even though land degradation affected everyone in the area, persons with mobility and visual impairment experienced many difficulties trekking the undulating land for long distances in search of arable land. Also, although mining activities are mostly labour-intensive, PWPDs were not employed even in areas where they could work. Further, the cost of items, in general, was high, affecting PWPDs more due to their economic immobility and paying for other sources of water due to land degradation and water pollution. The study also discovered that the peculiar conditions of PWPDs were not factored into compensation payments, and neither were females with physical disability engaged in compensation negotiations. Also, although some of the infrastructure provided by the gold mining companies in the area was physically accessible to some extent, it was not accessible in terms of information delivery. There is a need to educate the public on the effects of mining on PWPDs, their needs as well as disability issues in general. The Minerals and Mining Act (703) should be amended to include provisions that would consider the peculiar needs of PWPDs in compensation payment.

Keywords : mining, resettlement, compensation, environmental, social, disability

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