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The logo for the International Institute of Social Studies, featuring the word "Erasmus" in a stylized, cursive script.

Graduate School of Development Studies

**Gender Norms Perspectives: Women Labour and
artisanal small-scale gold mining in Wa East**

District of Ghana

A Research Paper presented by:

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List of Acronyms

AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
ASGM	Artisanal Small-Scale Gold Mining
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GAD	Gender and Development
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
ILO	International Labour Organization
MA	Master of Arts
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OECD	Organization for Economic and Cultural Development
PNDC	Provisional National Defense Council
SSM	Small Scale Mining
UN	United Nations
WAM	Women Artisanal Miners
WID	Women in Development

Abstract

Women participation in the ASM has gained worldwide recognition especially in Ghana. Despite the fact that women are highly represented in the sector, forming close to about 50% of the labour force, yet their activities are often discriminated against.

Through a case study of artisanal mining in Wa East District of Ghana, this paper explores the political dynamics of gender roles in the ASM sector in ascertaining the impact of mining on women and their immediate surroundings. To achieve this, the study dwelled on a number of approaches such as gender and development (GAD), labour feminisation and occupational sex segregation in examining the issue.

Findings from the research revealed that, artisanal mining presents a paradox: as more women are venturing in to the sector, more and more are being discriminated, stigmatised, and treated unequally with their male counterparts, partly because of the prevailing social norms and the culture of the community. This warranted the adoption of various off-farm and farm income diversification strategies by the women in augmenting their income levels for survival. Such strategies include: Pito brewing, Shea-butter production, trading, and some re-investing in to farming in an attempt to secure sustainable incomes. However, the state laws and policies are very silent about women involvement in the sector

Relevance to Development Studies

Research has shown the need for women participation and contribution to sustainable development in developing countries such as Ghana.

However, women are faced with socio-cultural barriers towards their participation in the labour market based on their gender.

Women involvement in the artisanal small-scale mining is relevant in providing a better understanding of issues that can furnish sustainable development efforts.

Keywords

Artisanal, Ghana, labour, mining, participation, small-scale mining,

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

The research seeks to explore the political economy of mining focusing on the roles of female artisanal miners in Wa East district in Ghana. It interrogates the impact of mining on the social, economic, and cultural life of women and the society around them. Women are usually discriminated and stigmatized upon. However, the activity has taken a new dimension recently, despite the fact that women are stigmatized, yet close to 50% of the labour force are women. So, this problem has worsened the lives of many more women in the community

While literature on artisanal small-scale mining and women and mining (WAM) in Ghana exist, the role of gender in artisanal small-scale mining (ASM) and labour dynamics involving women is often overlooked (Hinton et al. 2003:1). Men and women are often treated differently in the artisanal mining sector and in most cases women are usually failed to be recognized as miners (Yakovleva 2007:30). Women barely had the same decision-making positions as their male counterparts and are often more disadvantage and marginalized than men in the artisanal small-scale mining sector in Ghana (Hilson and McQuilken. 2016:17). Stereotype is the most established hindrance to the eradication of sexual inequalities (discrimination) against women ingrained in patriarchal societies (Lahiri-Dutt 2006:8). The study therefore uncovers many of the gray areas that have been ignored.

1.1 Background

Artisanal small-scale gold mining (ASGM) started days back the colonial era, where labour was sourced from the northern parts of the country who were hunters and believed to be physically fit for mining operations and were then taken to the southern part of the country where gold deposits were first identified and mine by the colonial master (British) (Koomson 2011:53). Some of the labor force that were sent to mined in the southern corridor of the country later came back to engaged in artisanal mining activities and were found to be supported by their spouses by fetching water and cooking for them at the site.

The district being one of the youngest in the region is heavily endowed with mineral resources and as a result attracts lots of migrants in to the district. Several factors accounted for women participating in ASGM in the district. Agriculture which used to be the main livelihood for the district has deteriorated so fast owing to poor rain fall patterns and lack of market opportunities for their food produce. To cope up with the situation, both men and women have been compelled to actively involved themselves in to other non -farming ventures such as artisanal mining in order to survive. Poverty, the desire to get rich syndrome and economic freedom, coupled with the anticipation of meeting their future husbands, is pushing women in to the sector but they are faced with so many social barriers.

The economic dependency on men by women has been the norm in the district. Culture and religion had it that women should stay in the house and provide care services as taking care of the children, cooking and the general well fair of household services. Because culture had it that when a man pays the dowry price of the woman, the woman automatically become his and it

becomes his responsibility to provide all that the woman needs. The woman by tradition, takes care of the household maintenance. This really has relegated the female role and had undue pressure for women which therefore necessitated them in seeking for economic freedom.

The Ghanaian Culture also had it that when a woman reaches the age of puberty (16-18 years), she is being prepared for marriage. So, if after 18 years and above a lady is not married, it becomes a stigma on her and the entire family. Therefore, most young women who are in dire need for marriage usually rush to the mining camps in an anticipation of getting their future husbands when they feel their time of marriage is fast approaching or elapsing.

The activities of female miners in the community haven't been well acknowledge and their involvement and contribution are often concealed and therefore not conspicuous. Tradition had it that when a man dies, one of his brothers marries his wife/wives and provide care for her and the children if available, weather this poor woman likes it or not, but she is obliged to remarry from the same family lineage. This and many other cultural beliefs pushes women both married and unmarried in to the sector in the district. However, economic expansion and development had made it possible for lots of women to move in to the sector but faced with labour inequalities and social stigmatization, despite the fact that they have been able to attain economic freedom and the ability to provide income for their families' upkeep.

Both men and women play a critical role in the ASGM sector in the community and their direct involvement in the sector varies. Typically, women in this community are heterogenous and perform distinctive roles throughout, usually serving as labourers-providing all kinds of services including being cooks. Unlike men, whose roles are digging and amalgamation (application of mercury to the washed particles of the gold pieces to allow it to crystalize), women are alienated from such roles in the community though elsewhere women also perform such roles. They occupied marginal roles in the running of mining operations in the community such as panning, crushing, pounding, drawing water, sieving, washing, and cooking. Women can't attain the same decision -making positions as men, including concession owners, mine operators, dealers and buying agents.

As a result of all these challenges women go through in the labour mining economy, both married and unmarried still faced similar challenges at their matrimonial homes. Some men think their wives are now being bossy after attaining economic independency. Men who can no longer provide for the family because of bad harvest and other bad climatic conditions look up to their wives for support but with shame for not been able to shoulder his responsibilities as head of the family.

The society or community is not left out when it comes to social stigmatization for women artisanal miners. The society perceived women artisanal miners who usually embark on mining expedition as whores. And as a result, women who have the ability and opportunity usually leave the mining site after gaining enough income to set up or expand their business but quiet a

chunk of them find it difficult in leaving the activity because of non-available livelihood alternatives.

The involvement of women in ASGM is either direct or indirect (i.e. primary involvement in the mining activities or rendering their services at the mining sites (Yakovleva 2007:30). Gender bias plays a key role in limiting women access to livelihoods in the Wa east district of Ghana. Male-headed families are the norms, even in a household where no male is present- women are still not qualified as heads within such cultural settings. As one of the respondents during the field work indicated: “Even if a woman has all the financial resources in terms of capital, yet she can’t acquire mineral concession to mine on her own” (interview with women miners, 2017). Women roles in the productive economic circles are quite different. People within the district frown upon the female who strive very hard to put something on the table for her family by actively engaging in artisanal and small-scale mining, attributing negative tendencies surrounding their involvement with the act. As Mishra and Reddy (2012:11) noted: Perceptions and cultural barriers hinders women’s independency and mobility.

In the mining sector, particularly among artisanal small-scale gold miners, lots of beliefs surrounding minerals and indigenous deity exist and this most often impact on their actions and practices (Awuah-Nyamekye and Sarfo-Mensah 2012:165). In some cases, women are not allowed to enter mining pits, for the believe or fear that their presence especially during their menstrual periods will make the gold ore disappear, notwithstanding that, women who have the courage to visit this ‘galamsey’ sites and back home are often seen as outcaste and in some cases divorce by their husbands if they are married. Cultural views towards what constitute male or female jobs result in occupational exclusion, and its level differs according to the specific nature of the job and the country in which the activity is situated, ironically Africans depend on women for the production of food, and yet opposed to the employment of women especially from underground work (Mishra and Reddy 2012:9-12).

The activity is of much development importance in many developing nations, more especially in places where economic substitutes and income opportunities are critically limited (Hilson and Banchirigah 2009:5). According to the authors small-scale gold mining plays an amazing role towards poverty reduction in most countries especially on the African soil (ibid:6)

The sector could be very productive depending on how one visualizes it. It provides employment for a greater proportion of the unemployed populace. In most small-scale gold mining communities in Ghana, the activity has really enlarged the choices of numerous individuals hence the resultant positive effects on the standard of living of the beneficiaries. With respect to the country’s vision of attaining the sustainable development goals, especially the goal on the eradication of severe hunger and poverty is of perilous significance. Small-scale gold mining communities around the world are diverse, dynamic, and well defined. They differ from tradition to tradition, or place to place and

mine to mine, and change over the progression of time (Hinton et al.2003:2). The research therefore seeks to answer the following questions.

1.2 Research questions

Main research question:

In what ways are women laborer's integrated in ASGM mining economy in the Wa East district of Upper West Region of Ghana and how does that impact their socio-economic and cultural life and the society around them?

1.3 Sub-questions

1. What are the roles of women in ASGM?
2. To what extent does ASGM allow them to create a livelihood?
3. How are women affected in their households and communities by their involvement in ASGM?
4. In what ways are women prevented from engaging in ASGM because of their gender?

1.4 Research Methodology

The study is mainly on the roles that artisanal miners play in the mining sector, focusing on women artisanal miners (WAM) and the socio-cultural, and economic impact this has on them, their households, and the society in general as a result of their involvement towards poverty reduction and the understanding of how social norms influence their acts, vilifying and stigmatizing their participation. The research is an empirical study and qualitative approach was deployed in conducting the research where primary and secondary data were sourced through a case study approach in an area with little publicized information (DUU in the Wa East district of Ghana). This community was chosen because of its accessibility in terms of security reasons (which is explained in the challenges column)

The data collection exercise lasted for four weeks due to some challenges and limitations encountered by the researchers (male and female). One being a qualified research assistant at a renowned public university (University for development studies) who has attained a degree in M.Phil. related to mining. The other researcher is a lady with a master's degree (MA) from the same university. Both researchers had experienced in data collection, but the data was collected based on my directive. Questionnaires and interviews for the primary data were drafted by myself through the help of my supervisor which the researchers used for guidance.

This research would bring empirical evidence to the existing body of literature relating to issues of mining activities surrounding women and how that impact development leading to poverty reduction for people living in mining communities whose livelihoods are shaped by traditional gender norms and values. Purposive sampling and snow-balling techniques were used to determined 'informants' within the target population. According to O'Leary (2014:189), purposive sampling allows a researcher to study populations perceived of difficulties in sourcing information from different groups.

This is an important technique for the researchers because it enables easy access and representations of women artisanal miners, their husbands and the traditional authorities in the data collected. Also, the snowball technique was used for objects of study that cannot be easily determined (O'Leary 2014:190). This technique was very beneficial to the study because it allowed the researchers to get access to the defined populations that were not readily available.

As a case study research, interviews and observation of the target population was carried-out. Two steps sampling was used purposively in seeking answers to the interview questions. The key respondents (women miners) were first interviewed in groups and later individually at the site by the female researcher. This technique was adopted alongside the female researcher because it made it easier for the WAM to cooperate and willingly give out information to the researcher. And at the community level, the traditional chief was interviewed and through his help, husbands of the women miners were also individually interviewed through snowballing technique.

In all, a total of 35 respondents were sampled, comprising 25 women miners, 2 chiefs and 8 husbands of the women miners. All interviews were documented and presented to me by the researchers in the form of audio, pictures, and in video format. The interviews were structured, meaning questions that were asked was prepared beforehand through the help of my supervisor.

Focus group discussions comprising two groups of 7-9 participants each between the ages of 18-60 years were also conducted through structured and semi-structured interviews with the miners at the site. The focus group discussion was pertinent to the study because it allowed the miners to openly share their ideas among themselves regarding their working situations and also makes it possible to probe in to further details, their perceptions regarding ASGM and its impacts to their households, communities and on them as miners, "since participants feel comfortable to express their views in FGD" (Hennink et al. 2011:136)

Additionally, to elucidate and discover much information or the truth about issues raised by the respondents, participant observation was used by the researchers and a written observation notes was handed over to me. This method was very much useful to the research process because matters relating to ASGM activities involving women were noted-women's roles or activities were clearly spelt out from men while other women were noted offering services such as petty trading (food vending and selling kiosk provisions). This offers first-hand information on matters associated to the study to the researchers and an in-depth data was produced by the application of this technique. As O'Leary (2014:231) clearly did indicated: Observation allows the researcher to gather both rich, in-depth qualitative data- including verbal and non-verbal information. This method aided in noting down precise and complete data.

All activities concerning mining and the respective roles performed by women miners such as panning, fetching water, crushing, pounding, sieving,

and washing of the powered rock particles were fully observed by the researchers and notes were taken to that effect. Phone calls by WhatsApp, yahoo messenger and emails were the medium of communication with the researchers during all this 4 weeks in the field.

Existing literature came from the internet mostly from google scholar and ISS library search kit and books. The rest were from reports and government policy documents with regards to mineral resource laws in Ghana.

1.5 Challenges and limitations

Regarding the Limitations and challenges encountered, the first was my inability to conduct the primary data by my own. The level of prejudices or competency which might have affected authenticity of data gathered through a third party was managed through the usage of audio, pictures, and video recordings remotely. I was in constant close communication with my carefully chosen research assistants throughout the research process. For the fact that one of the researchers was a female, helps me achieved my goal in acquiring the right information from my key respondents who are women, because they were willing to interact with her as a female researcher.

Additionally ,the initial location or community under which the study was to be carried out had been changed because of the unwillingness of respondents to divulge information to the researchers following the government of Ghana's interest in re-designing holistic policy instruments in developing the informal artisanal mining sector thereby deploying security services tagged as 'operation vanguard' to areas that operates illegally without mining concessions, thereby posing threat to the environment. But operations by the 'operation vanguard' were centered in the southern part of the country.

Notwithstanding that the miners in that part of the northern corridors were very skeptical about the situation and threaten to beat-up the researchers. But through the help of a family brother (Iddrisu), the researchers were able to undertake the research in a different community (Duu). Being an opinion member at that site made entry very easy for the researchers. Before they enter the community and to the site, the man had already informed the miners and other leaders concerned.

Thirdly, communications delayed for at least five days before I could respond to interviews conducted with husbands and some of the women miners. Though they were assured of anonymity, yet they were not willing to owe up to be interviewed especially the husbands. It was also very difficult in getting them because some of them goes to the farm very early at dawn and back very late in the evening. It took persuasions and professionalism to get some to respond to the questions especially husbands of the miners.

Again, it was cost involving, fueling the researchers back and forth for 4 weeks. Recording materials such as USB drives, a mobile phone and a power bank rechargeable was purchased to support the research because there is no electricity in the community.

Moreover, collection of the primary data took place during the rainy season which makes access to the mining site unmotorable and very difficult considering the poor road network.

As a result, the research was not able to capture all the total number of respondents it initially intended to cover, however responses from those that were interviewed were constructive and were useful in the analysis of the impact of mining on women miners' influence by gender norms and cultural values prevailing in the community.

Furthermore, it was a strenuous task in managing the primary data collected, in terms of transcribing from the local language to English and the literature review within a very short time interval, which may have some attended consequences for both the conceptual and empirical depth of the research.

1.6 Organization of the study

This research is organized in six chapters. Chapter one provided a brief and orderly background to the study together with the research questions and methodology. It also discusses the challenges and limitations of the research.

Chapter two, delves into the theoretical approaches and a critical discussion about women participation in the labour market and the impact to the economy.

Chapter three presents a description of the demographic features of the study area, a historical and contextual background of artisanal mining and labour dynamics (roles) of artisanal miners. It also looks at the market demand and the legal framework of ASGM in Ghana.

Chapter four analyzes and discusses research findings with respect to how ASGM creates livelihood opportunities for rural women through the adoption of off-farm income strategies.

Chapter five also analyzes and discusses the findings regarding challenges of WAM and how that prevents them from engaging in artisanal mining.

Chapter six draws on conclusions of key findings.

CHAPTER TWO

Theories of gender and mining

This section adopts Gender and development (GAD), occupational sex segregation and labour feminisation approaches as gender lens in theorising the issue in a political economy perspective to analysing the integration of women artisanal miners (WAM) whose livelihoods are shaped by mining activities. The conceptual framework of Gender and development is aimed at pointing to the underlying principles of gender in ensuring development, while focusing on women through empowerment in achieving equality and equity with men in rural communities (Moser 2012:9)

The emphasis on gender rather than women makes it imperative because of the stereotypic labour relations between the two categories in the artisanal mining environment (Bryceson et al. 2013:34). The adoption of occupational sex segregation will closely help in determining the subordinate positions of women and how they are discriminated and stigmatised in the sector. With the aim of exploring the political economy of mining with the context of women, labour feminisation is an essential concept which serves as one major theoretical pillar for this study in determining women position in the labour market.

In most developmental works, gender matters generally appeared to be associated with women issues, and discussions about gender usually point towards tackling only women concerns because of their unique role to development issues most especially in developing countries (Overholt et al. 1984: XI)

This universal perception can be ascribed to two main reasons. First being the hegemony of women in Development (WID) discourse, and the position of women in the society which is usually placed unequally and at disadvantage position equated to men. These two major reasons justify the concern that greater attention needs to be given to these underprivileged members of society most especially in the rural communities whose endeavour to achieve livelihoods depends on men (Connell and Connell 2005:2).

2.1 GENDER AND DEVELOPMENT(GAD)

The focus for this paper is on women, but it is necessarily to look at ‘gender’ rather than ‘women’ because of the manner in which problems for women in the ASGM sector had been perceived - their biological sex orientation-in terms of their gender, for which they have been systematically subordinated and stigmatised against. Though there are different understandings of gender, this paper focuses mainly on the gender division of labour and gender roles in relation to social norms rooted in the traditional institution.

Women and men have varied positions within the household and control to resources differently in society. They do not only perform varied changing *roles* in society, they also frequently have diverse *needs* (Kanji and Menon 2001:4). It is often this role and needs diversity that propels the woman for economic dependency and emancipation.

The man as the 'breadwinner', is mainly involved in productive work outside the home, while the woman as the caretaker of the house. And these stereotypical norms of the household structure and the gender division of labour in most rural communities reflect in the 'natural order in the economy of the labour force (Moser 2012:15)

The inability to realize that low income households are not homogeneous with regard to family structure is still common. Though nuclear families are the most dominant in developed countries, other structures still exist especially in the African culture. In the African extended households or family size, the man is mostly presumed to be the breadwinner and the head of the family even when the man does not work. The extended family system still exists, despite the increasing rate of modernisation. Where it remains a significant survival strategy for very low-income households undergoing severe conditions of livelihoods sustenance as a result of unavailable alternative livelihoods couple with bad climatic situations (Moser 2012:15)

2.2 Gender

Gender, as a social construct can be understood in different context. According to Baden and Goetz (2000:30) gender is "how a person's biology is culturally valued and interpreted into locally accepted ideas of what it is to be a woman or man". But with regards to this research, Gender is referred to what (Hinton et al. 2003:1) described as the "behaviour's, attitudes, values and beliefs that a sociocultural group considers appropriate for males and females". The authors noted that gender roles are fluid and can change in due time, space and in different situations. In relation to this, gender is a social broad practice not just about performing feminine and masculine distinctives in accordance to the body orientation and sexuality, but also, requiring the normative identities (menfolk and womenfolk) of social interactions of power (Butler 2011:35). Sex according to March et al. (1999:17) is the "biological difference between men and women and sex differences are concerned with men's and women's bodies".

Thus, the construction of gender along power relations occur in varied forms. As Friedl 2009:29) argued that power and authority in the gender hierarchy put men on-top of women in all societal endeavours and people exercise power and authority differently. Besides that, gender which constitute social relationships act alongside other elements such as race, ethnicity, and sexuality linked to one another-contributing to the development of power relations(Scott 1986:1054). Firstly, are individual characters-men and women with prejudice tendencies highly irresistible to change (Foucault 1978:21).

Another constituent element of gender are symbols that culturally underpin various forms of contradictions to each other and thirdly are beliefs or views which are formed by religious, political, and scientific dissertations that play a vital part in the construction and representation of the symbols related to gender (Scott 1986:1058). The last categorisation are establishments or institutions linked to market, education, kinship, and the state that regulate the

creation of the diverse features of gender and social relation. Under these elements, the household is specified as among the institutions where the gender relationships are constructed and administrated (ibid)

Again, gender relations are not specifically cultural and static in nature, but also changes over time. Changes in gender relations are triggered by internal and external factors such as economic modernization, the development of technology and urbanization (Standing 1989:1077). For instance, at the initial changes in the history of the artisanal small-scale mining, the woman role was either to be cooking for the husband at the site or to work on their own family mines, but recent activities of capitalism had modified and transformed their roles as miners working alongside their male counterparts for wages.

Likewise, Connell (2002:70) in her poststructuralists work, asserts that gender divisions are essentially not stable. Thus, such instability in gender groupings are also cited as the reasons for new ways of flexibilities in both sexes, and these new forms or changes that create social processes in the socio-cultural environment can affect and stigmatised the individual (Kleinman and Hall-Clifford 2009:2)

Since gender forms the main theme for this study, it will be used as such throughout the discussion. The conceptual framework is pertinent for this study because it outlines all the marginalized differences in gender roles in relation to the labour economy of the artisanal mining industry. Since the research is on the socio-cultural and economic impact of mining on women artisanal miners and the society around them, it is imperative to look in to the political economy of gender roles at the household level since that translate or have an influence on the wider productive labour economy.

In most low-income third world countries, women have a triple role (Moser 2012:27). The woman's work does not only include the reproductive role of childbearing and house routine responsibilities. It also includes productive work as income earners usually in the informal economy in most rural areas.

Reproductive roles here do not only refer to the biological reproduction of childbearing but also include the social reproduction or domestic responsibilities of the women (Beneria and Sen 1981:290). The reproductive work by women contribute in stagnating and making their position inferior within the labour market, thereby attributing to their low wages and poor circumstances as wage labours (Moser 2012:29). Traditional households are built by the biological definition of gender, with economic relations around them also organised by gender, which therefore explains the rigidity of gender divisions of labour around human reproduction, though the feminist partly had a different perspective-they argued that the rigid division of labour for women reproductive roles is a consequence of capitalist's activities (ibid)

Even though low-income women play a significant productive role in the traditional society in most developing economies, however, the inflexibility of gender divisions of labour has created room for inequality between men and

women based on patriarchal ideological assumptions ((Moser 2012:29). Productive work in this study are activities that generates earnings or incomes for a work done for both men and women, which therefore has an exchange value in material form or in cash (March et al. 1999:19)

The idea of reproductive work is a challenged for the feminists as many are of the view that reproductive work is also productive since quite a lot of productive responsibilities are involved. As this study is on gender, and in developing gender ideologies as Mehra and Gammage (1999:535) indicated, it is critical to distinguished between both productive and reproductive roles which invariable will pinpoint to the degree of the reinforcement of the subordinate positions of women by gender divisions of labour. According to Beneria and Sen (1981:284), productive work is usually an extension of domestic work in to the labour market economy, and women's role is often times not recognised as work and compensated for. And for this extension of roles, women in the artisanal mining sector, are not usually considered as miners (Hinton et al. 2003:2)

2.3 Occupational sex segregation

The ILO in June,1998 enacted the Declaration on the Fundamental Human Rights Principles on the right to work-which gives the duty to all member countries within the ILO in promoting, respecting and full realisation of the freedom of association and acknowledgement of the right to mutual bargaining treatment and the complete eradication of all kinds of discrimination, stigmatisation and other inhuman propensities in respect of equal employment and occupational opportunities (Anker et al. 2003:III).

Occupational sex segregation is defined as the differentiation of men and women into varied jobs or employments (Emerek 2008:14). This description is in line with the study, and will be used as such.

Occupational sex segregation is a pernicious form of inequality in the labour economy, as it is commonly aligned with low pay and worsening situations of employment. It exists at all stages of developmental endeavours-political, religious, social, and cultural situations (Silvera 2008:10).It would be interesting to know what causes occupational sex segregation, types and its impact relating to the study. Anker et al. (2003:1) had identified two types of occupational sex segregation, namely: horizontal and vertical Segregation and acknowledged the following factors as causal agents for occupational sex segregation:

- Social norms and stereotypical perceptions regarding men and women, family life responsibilities and work life
- Education and vocational training
- social security
- Structure of the labour market
- Discrimination at entry and in work

Social norms and stereotypical perceptions about men and women responsibilities and work life including social security and discrimination in work are the main points of focus for this study.

These issues have direct and indirect barriers for both men and women but of higher impacts on women. Socio-cultural norms serve as impediments for women in many forms. For e.g., traditional roles prevent good mothers for continue stay in the labour economy. These stereotypical ideologies discriminate and devalue the worth of the female in traditional societies which often leads to fewer opportunities for the female. As indicated by Maame and Eshun (2016:4) that “prevailing cultural norms which sometimes consider women as subordinate to men, coupled with ideologies that mining is a man’s job, obstruct women’s effective participation in the sector” and usually tagged them as whores when they found themselves in such an area (mining sector) presumed to be male hegemonized.

Education and training is also a hindrance to women in the labour market, though some mainstream economists argued that education per se may not be a factor for unequal treatment against women (Silvera 2008:8). Some women are educated and qualified but still encounter discrimination in relation to pay level and promotion (Elson 1999:620). For instance, there are situations where women are more educated than men other limitational factors set in-widening their opportunities. In fact, the factors are interconnected. Similarly, in Ghana, lack of education and training based on cultural prejudices impact negatively on women in the mining sector (Kilu et al. 2014:267)

2.3.1 Horizontal Segregation

The involvement of women in sectors traditionally recognised as ‘men’s work’ may not only broaden livelihood chances for women, but they are also faced with several challenges. Meulders et al. (2010:9) refers to gender segregation as the “tendency of women and men to work in different sectors and occupations”. Hence horizontal segregation refers to the “concentration of women and men in occupations or sectors of economic activity” (ibid). The state of affairs on the labour economy is such that one of the genders dominates in a particular occupational category. Women (ILO,2000) are obviously well represented in the labour markets across some sectors of the globe, but that does not mean that they are better integrated (‘OECD Employment Outlook’ 2002).

2.3.2 Vertical Segregation

Vertical segregation on the other hand, and for the purpose of this study is defined as what Emerik (2008:4) termed as the under (over) representation of a clearly identifiable group of workers in sectors at the top of an ordering based on ‘desirable’ attributes such as good income, prestige and job stability, independently of the sector of activity. And with vertical segregation, women are more likely to be in occupations with very low pay and worse working conditions (Bettio and Verashchagina 2009:102)

Meulders et al. (2010:11) indicated that, stigmatisation and discrimination that is meted out to women artisanal miners in most mining communities is born-out of cultural prejudices. And these prejudices could be based on gender or culture and can happen intentionally or unintentionally. Such

prejudices/biases have negative consequences for women participation in the labour market. Thus, low remuneration and wages, and overall bad working conditions are usually the outcome (Elson and Pearson 1981:97)

Women are mostly recruited into jobs that provide little career opportunities. Women workforce tends to be overcrowded in to small number of jobs, thereby undermining their livelihoods (Emerek 2008:20). This situation is most common in the informal sector, where conditions of service is mostly reinforced by informal agreements and predetermined thoughts that are related to discrimination (Legha et al. 2016:362).

The position of women in the society and at the household has a bad impact on their status quo on the labour economy, stemming from the unpleasant patriarchal arrangements of social establishment (Meulders et al. 2010:15). Social norms and cultural predispositions are certainly the defining influenced of labour market behaviour.

2.4 Labour Feminization

What are the pulling factors of women in to the labour market and how are gender roles attributed for differences in women's positions in the labour market, and the impact of capitalists' activities with regards to women participation in the labour economy are of critical important under this concept to the study?

Massive economic transformations took place in the industrial economies of Europe and other North American countries after the world wars where women participation in the labour market were intensified with rising feminization of the labour force across the global north and south (Standing 1989:1080). Significant proportion of women employment between 1979 and 1998 were recorded towards the manufacturing and the service sector of the economy. The proportion of women's labour between that period rose from 29% to 37% in the non-agricultural sector of the economy (Freeman 2000:13)

More than half of women population in member states of the Organization for Economic and Cultural Development (OECD) are now in the labour market compared to their male counterparts and the conjecture that women are not waged has been changed by a well representation of the realities of the labour market (Jenson et al. 1988:1-4)

According to Kanji and Menon (2001:1) feminization of labour is described and used in two ways. It is first used to describe the flexibilization of labour for both sexes (women and men)-unequal employment situations previously thought to be subordinated employment for women have become universal for both sexes. Informal activities and subcontracting work have increased rapidly, and the "deregulation of labour markets, fragmentation of production processes, de-industrialization and emergence of new areas of export specialization have all generated an increased demand for flexible female labour.

Secondly, the term is also used to refer to the sudden increases in the proportion of women in salary/wage labour over the last two decades. And women's involvement in rural informal sector in emerging countries have increased

tremendously, though their participation is generally less noticeable and therefore under estimated (ibid:1). The study is based largely on the second view point of labour feminization by Kanji and Menon above.

The table below indicates the participation of women in the informal mining economy in some selected countries as at 2003 (Hinton et al. 2003:3).

Table 2.1: Proportions of Women in the ASGM sector in some countries

Country	Number of women	Proportion of Women
Africa		
Ghana	89,500	45
Burkina Faso	45,000-89,500	45
Malawi	4,000	10
Mali	100,000	50
Mozambique	18,000	30
South Africa	500	5
Tanzania	137,000	25
Zambia	9,000	30
Zimbabwe	153,000	50
Asia	33,500	7
India	10,900	10
Indonesia	46,400	25
Philippines	12,000	20
Papua New Guinea		
Latin America		
Bolivia	15,500	22
Ecuador	6,200	10
Total	596,000	

Source: Own elaboration based on (Hinton et al. 2003:3)

Research indicates that wages for women in the global market is between 20-50% lower than that of men in the productive industries, and men's

productivity levels fell short compared to women in a research conducted in Malaysia and Malawi factories. This differentiation is largely based on some distinctive personality traits possessed by women and by impartial differences in their income requirements since men need an income for the up keep of the family, while women do not. Thus, female labour becomes cheaper to employ coupled with greater productivity levels to employers (Elson and Pearson 1981:92)

Women's employment in the labour sector has risen significantly with a decrease in male labour force since 1980 in many regions of the global north (Kanji and Menon 2001:1-2). Women's employment is a significant way of 'incorporating women in to the development process', a clearance called emanated from the United Nations Conference of International Women's Year in 1975 by several International development agencies was a strong demand from governments and the business community to adhere to the monumental role of women in both productive and reproductive sectors of the economy (Elson and Pearson 1981:87)

Economic liberalization and market align activities have been noted to have massive impact on development. Most particularly in the global south, where this has been recognized to have impacted negatively on women resulting in to inequalities in income and resources utilization within countries (Kanji and Menon 2001:1). Despite the negative socio-economic impacts of liberalization and market orientation on women among countries, "feminization of the labour force is emerging as a common theme in discussions of the ways in which global economic changes and market-led growth have impacted positively on women" (ibid). Women have been liberated from the economic pressures faced them as care takers in the reproductive economy. What is the driving force for the upsurge of women in the labour market? Elson and Pearson (1981:92) argued that:

The manual dexterity of the oriental female is famous the world over. Her hands are small, and she works fast with extreme care. Who, therefore, could be better qualified by nature and inheritance to contribute to the efficiency of a bench-assembly production. Women are considered not only to have naturally nimble fingers, but also to be naturally more docile and willing to accept tough work discipline, and naturally less inclined to join trade unions, than men; and to be naturally more suited to tedious, repetitious, monotonous work. Their lower wages are attributed to their secondary status in the labour market which is seen as a natural consequence of their capacity to bear children.

Additionally, the preference for women's labour in the labour market is far from natural dexterities alone as the authors alluded that women from infancy acquire extensive training from their mothers and other family members in social oriented activities suitable for women's role in the economy. As (Hinton et al. 2003:23) noted: Women in the artisanal small-scale mining requires no formal experience or training in the execution of their duties as the activity is little merchandise and mostly acquire the experience and knowledge as they interact with the activity.

Nevertheless, Tzannatos (1999:551-552) indicated that the elimination of gender differences in the labour market is useful as it provide efficient utilization of human resources towards poverty reduction and increase in human welfare, as Sandra Harding's argued "taking women's lives seriously has great transformative potential" (Steans 1998:161) for development.

Despite the positive impacts of the capitalist system, it also impacted negatively on workers conditions (Standing 1989:1080). The conditions of workers in the labour market cannot, however be examined merely in terms of

class struggle and national struggle alone. According to Elson and Pearson (1981:92) It must also be looked at in terms of gender struggle, of which this paper is about

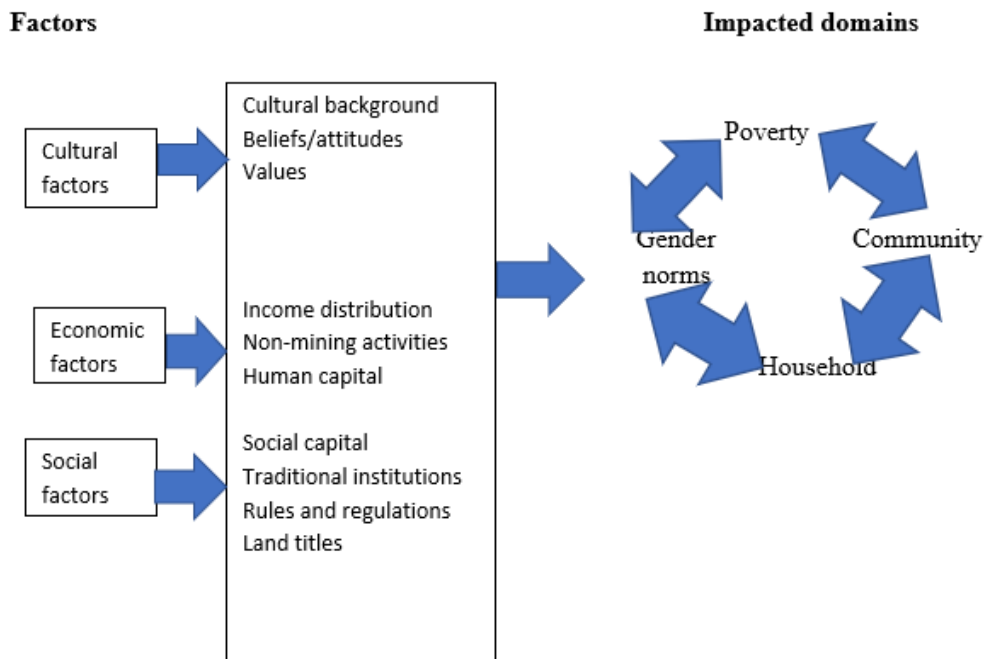
Non-adherence to the minimum wage measures and its application in the labour market under the capitalist system have great ramifications for workers. It has led to the substitution of men for women for lower wages and less bargaining powers because men by nature would respond to lower wages by reducing their “effect bargain” (ibid)

Again, the system has led to the over exploitation of workers labour as cheap readily available labour is usually provided by women and the rights of workers in the labour market are less regulated exposing workers to market risks such as denial of insurance cover, over working hours with limited wages, unsecure working environment and generally becoming powerless in negotiations arrangements especially in third world countries (Elson and Pearson 1981:92). Hence the ability of the poor to protect themselves against these forms of exploitation are unavailable (ibid:90). As research indicated in the former Soviet Union, industries where women representation in the labour force were higher, over 70% of the work force were below the minimum average wage (Mehra and Gammage 1999:545)

A more general sense of identifying circumstances that form women realities in the sector in the communities is significant to the understanding of how women affect and are affected by the sector's activities. According to Hinton et al. (2003:13): To fully comprehend and appreciate how gender roles affect and are affected by, artisanal mining, matters beyond divisions of labour must be discovered. Issues such as access to resources and control by both women and men are critical and their level of decision making towards the attainment of resources; aptitude and beliefs that back or obstruct the changing roles of gender.

The figure below depicts determinants or factors with their resultant impacted domains.

Figure 2.1: Factors Determining the realities of women miners in the community



Source:(own sketch based on (Hinton et al. 2003:14) and (field data, 2017)

The informal nature of artisanal mining afflicts its operations with issues of safety deficiencies exposing women to very strange illnesses, injuries and all manner of stresses resulting from the dusty working environment and noise pollution, coupled with high intensive labour job portfolios (Hinton et al. 2003:9). As the authors noted explosives misapplication from methane and coal dust are the countless causes of injuries and accidents at artisanal mining sites, regardless of the fact that accidents are underrepresented because of the unregulated nature of the activity. The (ILO 1999) indicated that non-fatal injuries ranging between six to seven times higher are associated with artisanal mining than in the regularized large-scale mining sector activities (Hinton et al. 2003:9)

.2.5 Linkage to the study

The study delves much in to the political economy of mining, focusing on the labour dynamics of gender with much priority on women participation and how that impact their social, economic, and cultural life around them. The use of both concepts would provide a better understanding of how women involvement in the artisanal mining economy impact their lives and their immediate surroundings-taking into account the interplay of gender and cultural traditions-who does what and for what impact to the household and community?

In the first place, the conceptual approach of gender and development is mainly about the interrelationship between gender-men and women roles, needs and access to resources in development planning cycle (Moser 2012:3). And these roles relate to the social relations of production, as both men and

women play different roles in all spheres of life both at the household and in the society. It emphasis is on the reproductive and productive roles, which treats development as a complex procedure determined by social, economic, and political factors, thus the approach basically is to empower the disadvantage in society, hence, transforming their lives for better (Duffy,163). Thus, development is more about transformations in relations that concerns gender inequality within the society. The approach gives much priority to women progression from the household level in to the labour economy (Muyoyeta 2007:7)

The concept of labour feminization clearly describes the proportion of women in the labour market (Standing 1989:1080). More than half of the women population in member states of the Organization for Economic and Cultural Development (OECD) are now in the wage labour market compared to their male counterparts and the extrapolation that women are not waged has been changed by a well representation of the realities of the labour market because many countries have realized the impact of women to development and have taken steps to integrate their issues in to development interventions (Overholt et al. 1984:3).

Women's empowerment and participation in the labour market on the basis of impartiality in all sphere of work including access to resources and decision making are essential for the attainment of livelihoods (Donaggio 1996:3).The dependence on artisanal mining by women, directly or indirectly is greatly increasing and the sector continues to be a significant income strategy for rural communities which is taking over the agricultural sector as the primary income source in most areas of rural Ghana (Hilson and Garforth 2013:348).

The sector had provided both men and women better incomes and has the tendency of becoming an alternative towards economic fulfillments. Both men and women had been able to organize diverse livelihood strategies from the artisanal mining such as trading in petty commodities to supplement their incomes (Dinye and Erdiaw-Kwasie 2012:294).

The top most priority of the study is on the two conceptual approaches of labour feminization and occupational sex segregation. Which emphasized the significance of women in the development process in the labour economy, and the segmented positions of women hindering the gender planning process. Some of these factors are socially and cultural in nature (Moser 2012:39)

More of labour market dynamics usually reflect structural disparities in various forms but are of more income inequalities severe for women in Africa (Kühn et al. 2017:7)

Misconceptions about women in relation to development often leads to discrimination against or failure to factor their affairs in to development interventions, including policies 'misses' them out thereby affecting them and development efforts (Moser 2012: I).

Both theoretical arguments relate to issues of women in developing counties such as Ghana, which critically point to the social stratification of women in

traditional societies based on the prevailing social norms and culture that marginalized and put women at a disadvantage positions in the labour economy.

Conclusion

The theoretical frameworks and the concepts discussed above point to the research questions and would assist tackle them in this paper. Where as gender and development are aimed at pointing to the underlying principles of gender in ensuring development, while focusing on women through empowerment in achieving equality and equity with men in rural communities. The concept of labour feminisation and occupational sex segregation would provide the basis for women participation in the labour market, hence helped determined the impact of their involvement by pointing out to the segmented and subordinate positions of women in the sector. The next is chapter 3, which presents a description of the demographic features of the study area, a historical and contextual background of artisanal mining and the labour roles of artisanal miners. It also looks at the market demand and the legal framework of ASGM in Ghana.

Chapter Three

Details of the case

3.1 Introduction

This section presents a historical background of the study area and its demographic features including a vivid explanation of the method or nature of the activity and the roles performed by women artisanal miners.

3.2 Historical Background and demographic characteristics

The Wa East District has an entire population of 72,074, according to 2010, District Population and Housing Census with males representing 50.5 % and females form 49.5 % of the population (Bisilin and Tee Bakpengme 2014:18). The District zones are entirely rural with no urban settlements, and 46.6% constitute the youthful population with a slight number of elderly folks (0.7%) who ranges above 60 years. Total age dependency ratio for the District is 106 (ibid: ix).

Wa east district comprises four distinct homogenous ethnic bodies in the district; Wala, Sissala, Chakali, and Dagabas/Lobi's. Other groupings that reside in the district include Gonja's and the Builsa's. The Fulani herdsmen can also be found in the district but are mostly migrants and in-often times don't stay for a longer period before they leave the district. These ethnic groups live harmoniously in the district which is a precondition for development. However, activities of Fulani herdsmen such as over grazing and burning of the vegetative cover and the devastation of people farms in the district breeds possible conflicts in the entire district. Key spoken dialects in the district are Waale, Chakali and Sissali.

There are three main religious faiths in the district, namely, Islam, Christianity, and traditional religion. The way of life of the people in the district in terms of marriage rites, performance of funerals, dressing and naming ceremonies are greatly influenced by cultural values and norms.

Being an agrarian district, agriculture, and small-scale agro-processing account, for the people's income generating ventures, this sector employs the majority of the labour force in the district. The agricultural sector is divided in to two main subdivisions: crop, and livestock productions. Food crop production is the principal activity of many of the farmers in the district.

The main indigenous crops cultivated are sorghum, yam, millet, maize, cowpea, groundnuts, rice, soya beans, cowpea, cassava, and vegetables. Post-harvest losses impact greatly to food crop production in the district and constitute a major and potential cause of food insecurity among farmers in the district. The livestock sector is subjugated by small scale farmers who engage themselves as an additional activity for income earnings and for food insecurity reasons.

The major livestock kept are cattle, sheep, goats, pigs, and rural poultry (fowls, guinea fowls and turkeys). They provide alternative livelihood opportunities to the people in the lean season since food crop production is seasonal in the district coupled with unpredictable, erratic weather conditions. This does not make farming all-year round possible. Most farmers therefore become expendable during the long dry season, from November to May and

engage in other Off-farm activities such as hunting, Pito brewing, Shea-butter processing, mini shop or kiosk operatives, food vending, repair of motorcycles and motor vehicles and quarrying.

The district is consecrated with lots of natural resources especially the ‘Am-balaara’ Forest Reserve, which has various species of animals, namely, antelopes, baboons, monkeys, and lions. The verdant nature of the vegetation makes it so exceptional for grazing and mineral extraction

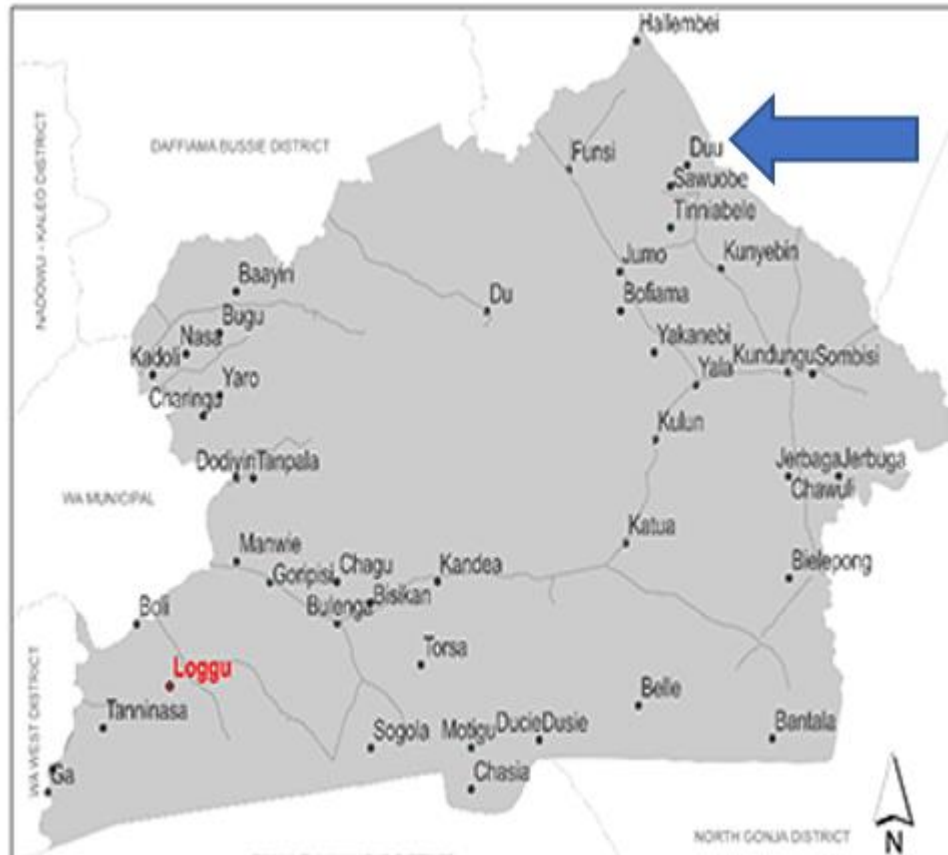
As a traditional vocation, Small-scale gold mining was once cherished at high esteem. The activity has brought many challenges since the legalization of its operations in the late 80s including the granting of mining concessions to peasants in Ghana. “The process was cumbersome and slow (till date) and therefore forced many people to mine unlawfully” (‘Galamsey: The Good, the Bad and the Ugly’ 2014)

Map 3.1: Map of Ghana showing the location of the region in which the district is situated.



Source:('Country Nuclear Power Profiles'2016)

Map: 3. 2: Showing the catchment community (Duu) of the district



Source: <http://www.gsop.gov.gh/logustory.php>

3.3 Nature of Activity/Labour roles

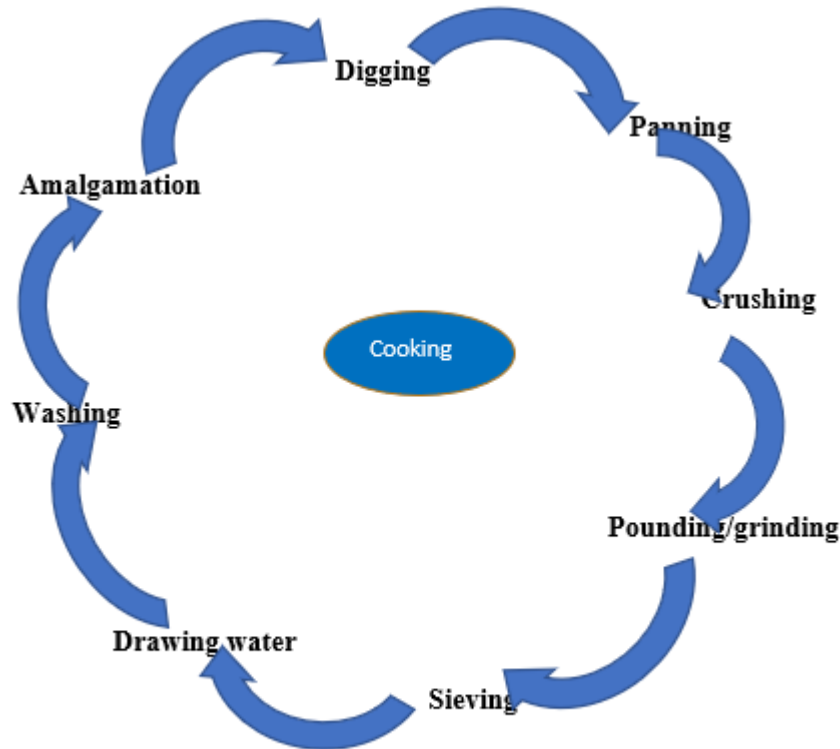
There are several methods of harnessing gold. In this particular case of study, the underground mining method will be considered, where the precious mineral is dug out deep beneath the ground level. The term for ASGM in Ghana is known as ‘galamsey’ in the local parlance and the neighboring West African francophone countries term it as ‘Orpailleurs’. The term ‘galamsey’ literally means ‘gather and sell’, and ‘galamseys’ are the people who mine this gold. Such as Diggers (Who usually dig with all manner of tools such as the pick axe, shovel, mattock, and cutlasses), Panners Crushers, Sievers and Cooks (‘Galamsey: The Good, the Bad and the Ugly’ 2014).

Headlights are mostly used by these diggers once they get inside the mining pit because of darkness. In many parts of Indonesia where ASM is done-it is usually termed as “PETI” or Penambangan Emas Tanpa Ijin (“Gold Mining without a permit)-known as illegal mining in English” (Peluso 2017:401)

The sector is very little merchandised and therefore requires physical physique in its operation (Dinye and Erdiaw-Kwasie 2012:289). Both men and women perform different roles at a time. But the question is, what roles do they perform and what makes their roles different from one another? ASGM has become a key livelihood component for the people in the district. The diagram below shows the performing roles by both men and women at different phases of operation in the community, ranging from digging, panning,

crushing, pounding/grinding, sieving, drawing/fetching water, washing and amalgamation.

Figure 3.1 Gender labour roles for artisanal miners.



Source: (Own sketch based on field data , 2017)

The organization of artisanal small-scale gold mining follows a three-dimensional divisions- financiers, organizers and labourers (Bryceson and Geenen 2016:11). A typical mining location or site is usually trail or identified by an instrument known as a gold detector. Digging for the ore is mostly done by able-bodied men, chiseling down the earth beneath the cross layer to the ore bearing rock at a depth of about 20 to 30 meters (Peluso 2017:401). This process could take weeks to months depending on their level of success.

A mine is usually owned by somebody called the 'sponsor' who usually enter into an agreement with the diggers known as the 'Loko boys' by providing accommodation, tools, and food for them. This agreement process comes with no insurance cover, meaning once anything un toward happens, such as the incidence of death or injury, the sponsor or owner of the pit has no responsibility for that. At times issues of disgruntlement and dissatisfaction sets in between the parties as the sponsor is always the largest shareholder ('Galamsay: The Good, the Bad and the Ugly' 2014).

The diggers are not paid like the way the other labour force is paid. It is mostly on a contract basis. Once the 'stones' as they mostly called them have been dug-out, it is mostly divided in to three parts; the sponsor takes two parts and the diggers also take one-third and either divide them among themselves or sell them together and share the money equally. Sometimes the sponsor can decide to buy them back if he thinks they are good stones. At times too, they

give them to the women to process and later sell in their purest form as gold. Thus, increasing the market value.

Figure 3.2: Diggers of artisanal mining



Source:(Ghana, citifmonline.com, 2014)

Issues of security are of paramount importance, so able-bodied build men called 'body guards' are usually present to ensure security once these guys get in to the pits and after they are off to rest. Incidences of robbery and theft cases are mostly common at these mining sites (Dinye and Erdiaw-Kwasie 2012:289).

Women tend to offer rigorous labour services when the ore with the gold deposits reaches the earth surface. The activities or roles played by women at the site is a combination of all categories perform by either married, unmarried and sometimes young girls under aged (between the ages of 10-17).

Typically, women in mining communities are heterogenous and perform distinctive roles throughout the world, with varied benefits, risks, and opportunities, usually serving as labourers- providing all kinds of services including being cooks and shopkeepers (Hinton et al. 2003:2). Despite the significance contribution of artisanal small-scale gold mining by women in poverty eradication, yet their roles are often undermined (ibid). In many occasions, the roles that women perform differs from that of men because women have the dexterity in performing different social tasks naturally or by through training from family kinship (Elson and Pearson 1981:93).

Thus, women in most mining communities execute different roles without undergoing any formal training (Hinton et al. 2003:23). And according to (WWMF, 2000) Women play a critical role in the ASGM sector than in the large-scale gold mining areas.

In Ghana, about 30,000 miners are duly registered and are operating legally. In another vein, over 170,000 are operating illegally with only 15% of women in the legal segment and 50% by the same gender group in the illegal sector (Dinye and Erdiaw-Kwasie 2012:289)

With the involvement of foreign nationals in Ghana, mostly from China, women roles have been progressively changed over time, ranging from: been head panners, through pounders (breaking the ore in to thinner pieces), water carriers, washers of the recovered gold, and to being cooks.

The Panners

The next operation along the chain is the panners. They usually consist of able women between 18-30 years. Their role is to transport the stones or ore from the digging pits to a designated location for processing for a wage. Both married and unmarried are involved in this aspect.

Figure 3. 3: Panning



Source:(field work, 2017)

Crushers

This category requires high energetic women. Their role is to break down the solid rock ore in to smaller sizes by using simple tools such as hammers. The high amount of physique is involved in doing so. There is a fixed amount to be paid weekly or monthly and does not base on hourly basis or quantity of work done, they work from morning to evening.

Figure 3. 4: Crushing



Source:(field work, 2017)

Pounders/grinders

After the ore or rocks has been broken or crushed down, they are pounded or grinded further into very tiny particles for sieving to be done. This category also requires the services of women mostly in their 30s and 40s. They usually use the mortar and pestle in doing so.

Figure 3. 5: Pounding/grinding



Source:(field work, 2017)

Sievers

As part of the processing process, all debris, and other foreign materials such as plant materials and sharp metallic objects are mostly removed from the crushed product at this level as they sieve to turn particles in to their powdery form for washing. They use Sievers made up of metal nets in doing so.

Figure 3. 6: Sieving



Source:(field work, 2017)

Water drawers

The services of this category of women are mostly in dire need during the dry season where the work booms. During the dry season, this aspect of the labour force is able to attract high increments as water becomes scarce. At times they trek for miles to get water for the operation. They mostly use basins or gallons in fetching the water. During the field work it was revealed that -the employers intend deploying donkey carts in aiding the operations. They mostly receive very low wages during the rainy season where water is in abundance and a period at which the work rate also goes down because of its risky nature as diseases and sicknesses such as malaria are always common and sometimes deaths. A digging pit or washing pit can easily collapse. So, most of them at this point, mostly divert their income earning opportunities in to areas such as farming, livestock/poultry rearing, and trading.

Figure 3.7: Water and artisanal Mining



Source:(field work, 2017)

Washers

The powdered rock is then put in to water, processed under close watch by close allies of the sponsor in a contaminated pit where the mud is washed off the gold particles with their bare hands with no protective working gears. Women can stand in a pit for the whole day bare footed washing, only come out for some few minutes to rest and to eat and continue till evening. This according to the women is the most difficult aspect of the operations.

Figure 3.8: Women and the washing pit



Source: (Ghana, Myjoyonline.com, 2017)

Cooking

Cooking is the last activity done by women between 18-30 years. Women in this category are entitled to fix wages, but a cook in her menstrual period is not supposed to cook. It is a sign of bad luck at the site. A belief that once a woman cooks for the miners in her menstrual cycle, the men will only come out from the pit with bad stones (ores without gold particles in them). Women at that period do not also engage in washing for the same belief system.

Amalgamation

Though this activity can be performed by both men and women elsewhere, it is usually performed by men in the community by close allies of the sponsor. This is usually done through the application of mercury to the gold particles to allow it to crystalize together and later purified it through the application of heat in to solid- pure product (gold). At this point, middlemen or gold dealers as they called them are ready to purchase the said processed gold. This deadly compound (mercury) is usually acquired from agents or middle men,

since chemicals can be purchased from any licensed chemical shop owner in Ghana.

Figure 3.9: Amalgamation by miners



Source:(enca.com, 2016)

The ASGM site has been turned in to full flair community by itself in the district, but lacks the basic services or amenities such as portable drinking water, roads, electricity, and many other services. Miners live in tents, mud houses and semi-detached buildings. Miners usually identify themselves as a class of the same identity and lived a unified life as a group of people. Chiefs and other political figures or mafias are all behind the activity of ASGM in Ghana which therefore makes the operations difficult to regulate and manage effectively as a media news agency in Ghana puts it: “Some chiefs and political figures in the country have been cited in a report by the Bureau of National Investigations for involvement in illegal mining covering the ten regions of Ghana where galamsey is taking place”(‘Chiefs, Politicians, Others Cited in BNI Report on Galamsey’ 2017)

Financiers of artisanal mining in Ghana are the Principal Mining License owners and others without a license, operating illegally, who are vigorously involved in the mining operations and normally subcontract or informally rent out their entitlements to pit holders. Everyone in Ghana can be an illegal financier provided you have adequate financial capital. Financiers in most cases do not hold any right to the land, but use their investments and a supply of gold to guarantee access to land (field work, 2017)

3.4 Market and local demand for artisanal miners.

The rural poor had largely been excluded from the market, because the poor meet much of their needs outside the market (Gomez. 2007:18)-only produces on a subsistence basis. Lack of organizations to decide on product quality, price, and quantity to produce based on their unstructured nature limits their market accessibility to big marketing companies by artisanal miners. The role of the middlemen is significant in their chain of production as “they usually buy the produce ‘in situ’ and take over the stocking, classification, transportation and commercialization with other cities” (Ramírez 2011:69). This epitomizes problems for product upgrading and marketing for local producers as middlemen dictates for producers based on set norms and regulations. In this relation (i.e. middlemen between producers and buyers), local producers

of the mineral barely have bargaining power, which therefore affects their part of production (ibid)

The middlemen or sponsors control every facet of the production process—from production to marketing including the supply of chemicals such as cyanide and mercury mostly used in the production process. Local markets had captured the local demands of these chemicals supply. It has become very difficult in establishing market relationships with big marketing organizations with producers directly because of their unstructured and informality in production. (Ramírez 2011:69)

3.5 The shadow state

The role of state in-mediating relationships not just between state and civil society organisations, but also between men and women's roles, access to resources in the labour economy has significant implication for addressing strategic gender problems.

The last decade has witnessed greater state expansion of policies in the mining sector in Ghana more particularly in the small-scale mining sector. Similarly, state laws governing artisanal small-scale mining, wages, taxation and social security benefits and good working conditions all combine to reproduce gender division of labour at the labour market which is much critical to this study. What are the state laws on artisanal mining, and does the state care about women in the sector?

All mineral resources in Ghana are entrusted to the President in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution ('National Mining Policy of Ghana'2010:12). In this framework, the parliament of Ghana may make specific laws regulating rights and interests in minerals. Under this, a minister designate is to superintend for the overall management of Ghana's mineral resources and policy-making, together with the granting of mineral rights in consensus with the indigenous people, supported by the Minerals Commission (established under the *Minerals Commission Act, 1993* (Act 450).

This body is in charge for the day-to-day supervision on matters concerning minerals policy and on the granting of mineral rights. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the Ministry responsible for the environment, the Forestry Commission, and the Water Resources Commission all has roles to play in the regulatory process of the mining sector.

The Minerals and Mining Law (PNDC Law 153) was passed in 1989 for the promotion and regulation of the mining sector. The Small -Scale Gold Mining Law (PNDC Law 218), the Mercury Law (PNDC Law 217) and the Precious Minerals Marketing Corporation Law (PNDC Law 219) was passed in 1989 to regularize and streamline small -scale gold mining- regulate the use of mercury by small-scale gold miners, and provide official marketing channels for gold produce by small-scale miners ('National Mining Policy of Ghana'2010:5).

A new mining law has been established, *Minerals and Mining Act, 2006* (Act 703). And in this law-artisanal small-scale gold mining has been defined as mining by a method not involving large expenditure by a person or group of persons not more than nine or a co-operative society made of ten or more

individuals with simple tools, and should exclusively be set aside for Ghanaians only ('National Mining Policy of Ghana'2010:12). With the recent space of mining in Ghana, research has revealed that majority of the artisanal small-scale mining and most especially in the Wa east district are operating illegally with or without political favours (ibid). The political will is ostensibly weak to manage with and to stop illegal mining operations in the country. Rules and regulations implemented are not fully enforced (Bansah et al. 2016:22).

Small Scale Mining (SSM) in the Ghanaian context has emerged from the ASM phase using simple equipment's such as, pick axes and shovel and has now transformed in to sophisticated mechanized processes involving the use of machines such as excavators, bulldozers, and Washing Plants and the "small-scale mining laws no longer capture the reality of the sector's activities" (RW.ERROR - Unable to find reference:348). According to Minerals and Mining Act 2006 (Act 703), Small scale mining license is subject to five years and could be renewed upon thorough scrutiny with pleasing performance throughout the first term. In the mining act also, a license can only be granted for small scale mining to only Ghanaians, and applicant must be eighteen years and above, and registered under section 90(1) of Act 703 by the mining Commission ('National Mining Policy of Ghana'2010:5)

ILO (1999) "estimated that approximately 80% of artisanal mining activities take place outside of a legal framework" (Hinton et al. 2003:9).The concept of gender differences prevails in Ghana, creating differences in the socio-economic development. Many mining policies and practices under the mining laws, though may not overtly exclude women, but they are not gender neutral. Hence, the ASM laws are very silent on women artisanal miners in Ghana (Kilu et al. 2014:269)

Conclusion

This chapter answers my research sub-question one: roles of women in ASGM. Both men and women perform different roles ranging from digging, panning, crushing, pounding, sieving, fetching water, washing, amalgamation and being cooks. Digging and amalgamation are the two roles perform by men in the community. The next chapter is chapter four which analyzes and discusses research findings with respect to how ASGM creates livelihood opportunities for rural women through the adoption of off-farm income strategies.

Chapter four

Off-farm Income Strategies for women artisanal miners

This chapter discusses the extent to which ASGM creates an income among women artisanal miners. Main issues to discuss are off-farm income strategies, and the pull factors that are actually deriving these poor women in to the sector, despite the vilifications.

4.1 Introduction to off-farm income strategies for WAM

An Off-farm income is an income generated by rural households, the landless poor and other urban dwellers through the payment of wage activities, self-employment in trade, craftwork, and delivery of other services (Katera 2016:1). These are earnings outside farm activities. As earlier mentioned, farming is the most singular employer of rural people in Africa. But in recent times, its value has been deteriorating more especially in Ghana (ibid). This can be attributed partly to the manner under which it is been practiced- spear-headed by small-holder farming systems, dependable on a rain-fed system of cultivation coupled with bad climatic conditions. Apart from artisanal mining being a livelihood strategy for the people, they have also been able to diversify their incomes in to other businesses such as trading and Pito brewing (local alcoholic drink) (interviews with women miners, 2017)

Out of the total sample of 35, twenty-five (25) are women artisanal miners, eight (8) are husbands of the miners and two (2) chiefs between the ages of 72 and 67. Married women were 9 and unmarried were 16. None of the chiefs had formal education. Three (3) of the women artisanal miners had education up to the senior high school level, seven (7) women had basic education and fifteen (15) had no formal education. Sixteen (16) women miners were between the ages of 18-30. Two focus group discussions between 7-9 participants each were also organized.

4.2 Income strategies for artisanal small-scale women miners

(Katera 2016:1) argued that off-farm income activities are heterogeneity in nature and helps complement rural folk livelihoods. This section identifies income strategies used by the women artisanal miners in turning their earnings from mining in to other livelihoods. What are the driving forces for their diversification and the overall impact on them as miners?

4.3 Diversification

According to (Ellis 2000), rural income diversification is a way by which rural households establish multiple ranges of activities and social capabilities to buttress their survival in order to better their living standard”.

The involvement of women in the artisanal mining sector requires considerable attention because their narratives assist in the understanding of women’s employment and income generation in the sector as economic situation frequently pushes women into artisanal small-scale mining (Heemskerk 2000:18). As earlier on mentioned, the WAM received incomes based on the

work or the role that they perform. The women shared diverse opportunities and problems experienced at the site. Views of respondents (women miners) were sought with regards to revenues generated weekly, as the table indicated below:

Table: 4. 2: Wages generated by women artisanal miners

Role	Weekly wage (cedis to euro)
Washing	Ⓒ180-Ⓒ200 = 36-40 euros
Panning	Ⓒ160-Ⓒ170 = 32-34 euros
Crushing	Ⓒ150-Ⓒ160 = 30-32 euros
Pounding	Ⓒ145-Ⓒ155 = 29-30 euros
Sieving	Ⓒ100-Ⓒ120 = 20-24 euros
Drawing water	Ⓒ80-Ⓒ100 = 16-20 euros
Cooking	Ⓒ70 = 14 euros

Source: (own sketch, field work, 2017)

Revenues generated are not fixed, varies with respect to the role that one performs and the seasonality. The minimum weekly wage is 70 cedis (14 euros) for those that draw water for the washing of the powdered ore. But could increase in the dry season where there are acute water shortages. The highest receiving weekly wage is 200 cedis (40 euros) for those engaged in washing of the ore in the pit since that requires lots of physical responsibilities and more tedious in nature as one respondent alluded (interview with women miners, 2017)

The involvement of women in artisanal mining is more likely to have the ‘domino’ effect’ on traditional local settings of the local economy where revenues are re-directed in to the traditional local community (Hentschel et al. 2003:28)

Aside from the weekly income received from the sector, women also get money from their individual occupations. Currently, some of the women miners have been able to diversify their proceeds from mining in to other non-farming and farming activities ranging from petty trading such as the sale of clothing, Pito brewing (local alcoholic drink) Shea butter production and framing activities.

A woman who requested for her name not to be mentioned said her husband is not in support of her involvement in mining activities, but economic requirements repudiated his disapproval, she now employs 6 young ladies in the processing of Shea butter in the community whom she pays 160 cedis every month as their monthly allowance. (Interview with women miners, 2017)

Regarding her family and what they think of her as a female miner, she says: “my status is better now. I am able to support a living for myself and my family from the mining activities and some other people from the community also depend on me now”.

Notwithstanding that, the income generated by women is channel directly towards the betterment of the entire household as Hentschel et al. (2002:22) argued that: whereas men “tend to spend their revenue on gambling, prostitution and alcohol, women channel their earnings in to the upkeep of the entire

family. Additionally, the (ILO, 1999) also, indicated that the revenue generated by women in artisanal mining contributes more directly to the well-being of their households (Jennings 1999:31)

More importantly, some women claimed that they have been able to diversify their economic dependency on their husbands to self-dependency because of the artisanal mining activity in the community (interviews with women miners, 2017).

(Jennings 1999:32) also argued that when women have access to their own earnings, their economic reliance directly on men may reduce, hence a challenge to prevailing gender roles. As a woman responded by saying, I used to feel ashamed because of my inability to pay for my “community insurance fee”. This insurance fee according to her is an amount they mostly contribute as a group of women in the community towards the sustenance of their livelihoods. They farm together as women in a communal manner where returns are disbursed equally among them for their economic up keep during the lean season as Katera (2016:5) noted that “households pursue “risk-coping strategies” that involve precautionary savings and asset management, in informal and formal insurance arrangements”

Some women enjoyed independence and social mobility with their involvement in the mining activities, when asked during an FGD session, as women miners whether they are happy in their dealings with the mining activities. Three of the participants revealed that since men control their movement as custom demand, and would provide for transport when there is a social event like funerals, and to attend such an occasion was usually an option for the man to decide because he has to provide the transport money. But as at now you don't need to wait for your husband to do all these things for you. And such occasions according to her, form part of their social life and strengthens their social network base with other community members (FGD with women miners, 2017).

In relation to the above, majority of the women miners indicated that their involvement with the activity in the community was as a result of poverty driven and economic dependency that drove most of them in to the sector (interview with women miners,2017). And most of the married women claimed they are able to generate income in support of their wards education as one of the women in her fifties alluded:

“If not through this work, my third born in his final year at the university would have been a drop out” (interview with women miners, 2017). As Hilson and Garforth (2013:360) indicated: Women participation in artisanal mining have tremendously improved their quality of life and they have been able to accomplish some family obligations they would not have been able to accomplish in farming alone.

Remittances earn from migration has a positive impact on poverty reduction and improved household income (Ncube and Gómez 2015:182) . Close to half of the respondents were migrants from neighboring communities (interview of women miners, 2017). One of the respondents who hail from another district alluded, that she and her family owns a 10-acre farm through the revenue

accrued from the mining activities for the past one year. According to her, she moved in to the community when her husband died in 2014, and tradition demanded her to remarry her late husband's brother against her wish (interview with women miners, 2017). She says:

Before I came here, I never knew what mining was. I started working here because of the economic pressure that was on me and my children... I initially started fetching water from the valley down there before I knew how to wash in this water. Though is not easy, through this, I have been able to look after my children I have with my late husband.

As part of a strategy in artisanal mining, it was also revealed that WAM does not usually acquire any formal training before engaging in the activity. They learn from one another based on personal experience with the job especially from the migrants-who often move from community to community searching for better working conditions at new mines to work with (interview of women miners, 2017).

Quite apart from that, Pito is a local alcoholic drink used in Ghana, but has its origin from the north where this illegal mining is taking place. Two of the miners indicated they have combined their savings from the mining activity to jointly open one of the drinking spots for the local drink that was spotted at the site. They claimed they make between 5-10 euro profit a day (interview with women miners, 2017).

4.4 Motives to diversify

The reasons for their diversification into both off-farm and farm income activities have been identified as push factors by (Katera 2016:5).

4.5 The push factors

Rural communities would diversify to off-farm incomes, to manage risk, deal with shock, or to improve their declining circumstances. Several studies have shown that earnings from off-farm activities are higher over farming returns (Barrett and Reardon 2000:8). "Households are pushed into off-farm activities by factors which can be 'idiosyncratic' (linked to a household or group of households) or 'common' to all households in a community or region" (Katera 2016:5). Obviously, as the previous table indicated, earnings from the artisanal mining are helping WAM and their households re-invest in to other trading ventures such as Shea butter production as returns from farming is fast declining as a result of poor climatic conditions leading to bad harvests (interview with women miners and husbands, 2017). As a husband of one of the miners said, "Last year I harvested only 6 bags of maize from my one-acre farm, surviving now is a challenge for me and my family".

Comparatively, when I did my analysis, it was realized that if you sell out your labour as a cook in the artisanal mining sector-averagely, you could realize not less than 672 euros a year. And a bag of maize (which is about 40kg) at the time the data was taken in the community was 20 euros. In all, the cook might have realized 33.6 number of maize bags per year compared to the farmer realizing only 6 bags of maize (field work analysis, 2017). More importantly, Katera (2016:5) illustrated that:

A drop-in income from farming may be seasonal, thus pushing households into off-farm activities to smooth income and consumption inter-seasonally, or it may be transitory (in each year), say from a drought, which forces farmers to need to cope *ex post*. Drops in farming income may also be permanent (inter-year), or farming income may be chronically insufficient, say from physical factors such as environmental degradation and chronic rainfall

As mentioned earlier, men do enter in to contract for the digging process with the sponsor. So, their income on that basis is secured. In the contract, whatever 'load' they get on a weekly basis is divided in to three (3) parts-the sponsor takes two parts (2/3) out of the three parts, and they also share one-third equally among themselves. So, with that arrangement between the sponsor and the diggers, the women workforce usually feel they are on the losing side and would therefore thrive very hard to make good use of whatever they get by diversifying in to trading ventures either on the site or in the community by employing people to take charge of such businesses- most of them family members.

Households or individuals may invest into off-farm activities where there is strong variation with their incomes, pushing them in to other activities with or without lower returns (Reardon et al. 2006:9). Two women who spoke on anonymity, said as fashion sellers-they could make profit twice of what they get as crushers of the mineral every week, because at the side prices for goods are usually very high compared to the local market in the community (interview with women miners, 2017).

Conclusion

Artisanal small-scale gold mining has been able to generate meaningful livelihoods for the women miners, through the payment of weekly wages ranging from 40 euros to 14 euros of which they have been able to diversify in to off-farm income strategies such as trading (e.g. selling clothing and food stuff) shear butter production (oil from the nuts of the shear tree). Pito brewing (local alcoholic drink) and re-investing back in to farming activities by the virtue of the fact that farming is no longer productive. This chapter is in response to my research question 2. To this end, the next chapter analyzes and discusses the findings regarding challenges of WAM and how that prevents them from engaging in artisanal mining.

Chapter five

Challenges for women artisanal miners

This chapter examines challenges for women participation in the artisanal mining industry and their social surroundings. It analyses these challenges on the basis of social inequalities, general working conditions and stigmatization based on gender. The chapter also discusses the types of stigmatization facing these rural women preventing them from effective participation as miners.

5.1 Inequality and social mobility within the ASGM sector

It is well known that the interplay of gender and labour goes beyond the borders of the labour economy of the capitalist production. According to Dinye and Erdiaw-Kwasie (2012:287) gender inequalities are not only sources of exploitation within the labour market, they are also critical spots of predicaments and struggles. These struggles are diverse, different, and very complex depending on the structures they are confronted with.

Nonetheless, this situation of study is what (Ong 1991) has termed as “cultural struggle, which is critical in understanding women situation in the artisanal mining sector (Dinye and Erdiaw-Kwasie 2012:287). This understanding is factual because social norms still play a critical role in the society and have greater influenced in the labour front of women participation in the mining industry. And as such this chapter aims to find out ways that are preventing women from creating meaningful livelihoods from the sector.

5.2 Socio-economic inequality

As mentioned earlier, social norms and rules, are highly ingrained in the Wa East community. The culture had it that-Duu men generally can regulate their wives' attitudes, conduct and mobility while women had very little influence on their husbands-social, economic, and sexual behaviour's (interview with miners and their husbands,2017). A woman had it that: “You are always abided by the rules of your husband as you live under one roof”. According to Heemskerk (2000:7) a woman's access to off-farm activities and other assets depends solely on her husband, not submitting to one's husband can have severe ramifications for the woman and her children.

Again, when it was asked whether they have full control of their incomes, two of the married women said that, at the end of every month they give part of their incomes to their husbands to keep for the management of the family and as a family head. And most of the unmarried women claimed that for their monies to be safe, they usually give them to their boyfriends to keep for them (interview with women miners, 2017). Moreover, this assertion was confirmed by Bawa who happens to be the wife of one of the miners saying:

As part of our culture-when you marry a woman- you marry everything that the woman owns, either good or bad. And this of course comes with a price -heavy price of course. Before you call a woman your wife, is not a joke. You will be required to pay 3 cows, 500 pieces of cow-ries,100 pieces of cola-nuts, local drink ('akpeteshie') and notes of 250 Ghana cedis-So how can you say the woman shouldn't be mine-we

value our women so much, and that shows how precious they are, as far as our tradition is concern.

Hinton et al. (2003:19) argued that: “Increases in household income do not necessarily equate with the improved well-being of family members, particularly in households where men continue to control finances”. More importantly, one of the miners also said: “the society has been designed in way that sees nothing bad about the situation, I managed family issues, feed everyone including my husband, my children and my sister’s daughter who is with me at home... but has no direct control” (field work,2017). This clearly shows how culture subdues and has been unfair to women undermining their accomplishments.

Koomson (2011:57) noted that women miners’ impact positively to “community stability, cohesiveness, morale, and general wellbeing, and acting as primary agents in facilitating positive change”. Their participation therefore need thorough examination in ascertaining the level of income and benefits they usually obtain from the sector, “Since women basically depend upon men- male authority may be an obstacle to the independent participation of women in social activities and other income generating ventures” (Heemskerk 2000:14)

Most of the women who were interviewed between the ages of 18-25, were found to be engaged in the activity through their boyfriends and male kin who introduced and transported them to the site (interview with women miners, 2017). This to some extent is because women traditionally feel less pleasant in travelling to new places and their role in the reproductive economy (Heemskerk 2000:9). Alijata, who trades in second hand clothes agreed for her name to be used, said she was once told by her boyfriend that she could make good sales at the mining camp, and she followed him to the site and later joined the work as a panner-but still do the business alongside (field interviews with women miners, 2017)

According to Dinye and Erdiaw-Kwasie (2012:288), “Women feel that they work harder than their male colleagues in most small-scale gold communities in the world”. As mentioned before, it is very difficult in determining the average wages for women as the table indicated. Women miners are not entitled to fix wages or can enter in to contracts as their male counterparts. Variation in wages is based on variable periods/seasons. Most often wages during the dry season usually goes high for those in charge of fetching water for the operation.

Majority of the women believed they receive lesser wages considering the responsibilities and laborious nature of activities at hand, as one respondent indicated: “I am in this pit since morning, and I haven’t eaten for the whole day. And men who dig in the pit receive higher wages, though we all use equal time”. Again, Arsel (2005:266) indicated that gold is immensely resistible to chemical corrosion in the environment which therefore makes it very tedious in extracting gold from its ore, and cyanide is a very suitable compound or element that is easily used in separating gold particles from its ore-known as cyanide leaching which can be very hazardous to human’s life and the environment

Agreeing to this Teschner (2012:266) also observed that: “Few women are often involved in mine management roles and are most often employed in the most labour intensive and hazardous aspects of the mining process” with lower incomes (Dinye and Erdiaw-Kwasie 2012:293)

5.3 Stigma and Social Identity

According to Crocker and Major (1989:609) stigma refers to individuals or social groupings by which other members attach negative attitudes, stereotypes, and beliefs against by virtue of their gender, race, social status, or condition or receiving unduly bad relational or economic outcomes from members of the society. I will analyze their stigma conditions in the sector based on two types of stigma situations-prevention them from active engagement based on their gender. These situations include: Public Stigma and Institutional Stigma.

5.4 Public stigma

I will relate this to public attitudes, beliefs and behaviours towards WAM in the community. According to Crocker and Major (1989:610) society, hold negative perceptions and attitudes against the stigmatized in the society because members of their group are generally devalued in the wider culture.

5.5 The monthly curse

Cultural norms that defined the gender roles of labour and the ability to act independently in the community equally defined peoples thought regarding who should and who should not engage in labour roles with the mining activity (interviews with chiefs, 2017). The influence of cultural beliefs is clearly visible for one to see in the community. Women are prohibited in performing mining operations under certain periods. For instance, women are not allowed to undertake mining operations in their menstrual cycles. A woman at that period derives out good spirits supposed to be protecting the pits” (interviews with women miners, 2017)

This belief system is similar to the Maroon tradition of Jamaica, taboos that prevent any form of sexual intercourse for women, cooking for the opposite sex and to even travel (Hinton et al. 2003:15). This act or belief therefore makes women labour force less attractive miners in the sector as this mindset of ‘uncleanliness’ affect their roles as one absents her herself from work during such periods which invariably affect production.

The roles that the community assigns to women are contradictory with engagement in mining. Cultural expectations of gender roles are so deeply ingrained in their culture, and women are usually attached to the domestic reproductive roles (interview with women miners, 2017). So, when asked how the community perceived them as miners, in an FGD of 9 participants, more than half mentioned that they have been branded negatively by the community members: “They always say we have gone whoring. And even more worse for the young ones who are not yet married” (FGD, 2017)

Most of the Women who migrated from other non-mining communities stated that they have always been stigmatized by their community members when they get back to their respective communities. Many who migrated to the site

are either with their partners or have relatives and connections in the community (interviews with women miners, 2017). Women therefore cannot be part of the mining activities without passing through a man. Three of the women who were petty traders in food stuff came from the city to visit their relatives and later joined the mines, working as pounders. They have been with the activity for half a year now, hoping to go back and expand their business (interview with women miners, 2017)

Furthermore, family obligations and social barriers put a huge burden on women, hindering their independence and mobility to take the lead in the artisanal small-scale mining activities (field data, 2017). As Kilu et al. (2014:69) argued that: “Barriers to effective female participation in mining are linked to socio – cultural taboos, domestic and family commitments which imposed heavy burdens on women miners”. And these Social barriers, against the stigmatized or oppressed groups, can “limit the possibilities for the formation of efficacy-based self-esteem by limiting access to resources that are necessary for producing intended effects” (Crocker and Major 1989:610)

5.6 Institutional Stigma

The stigma, that refers to an established policy or culture of undesirable attitudes and beliefs (Goffman 2009:4). My focus here is on how women have been stigmatized from their family as an institution and community based on set rules and norms, and the general rules governing their working conditions at the site.

5.7 Culturally and legally disabled

Attitudes out of cultural stance are being so unpleasant to women. Regarding the question of whether their involvement with the activity can prevent them from undertaking their unpaid household care work, most of the respondents claimed they faced lots of challenges. In some case, women lose their husbands through their involvement with the activity, but some husbands are understandable as the women alluded (field interview,2017)

The domineering social problems confronting women are those of injuries and body pains in the form of cuts, bruises, fissures, and body numbness as most women along their line of duties, either sit or stand for long hours as part of their working culture, because the activity is very little mechanized, (field observation notes,2017). Teschner (2012:311) alluded that, “women frequently observed manually crushing rocks with hammers and transporting large buckets of rock and dirt on their heads on the surface”. Tools such as pestles, mortar, hammers, pans and Sievers are what the women mostly used.

Incidences of violence, sexual maltreatments, and acts of aggression by men towards women are attributes of artisanal miners and the “mining culture” in ad hoc mining communities. Women miners including other workers live under conditions of anarchy, sexual harassment, sexually transmitted diseases, and HIV/AIDS are common and efforts by NGOs in promoting safer sexual practices (use of condoms) had been challenged by tradition, given taboos contravene to their practices (Hinton et al. 2003:13)

Two of the respondents asserted that they have been stigmatized by their family members. As a result of the injuries and other foot diseases, including cuts

on their fingers from sharp materials. Family members do refuse to eat whenever they prepare food or to eat together as a unit. Eating together is not a strange phenomenon as they mostly eat in a communal manner as culture demands (interview with women miners, 2017).

Gender based segregation is born out of the cultural norms and values that set the rules guiding how women and men interact in the society (Hinton et al. 2003:14). It was also revealed by most of the unmarried women between the ages of 18-30 that, because of the bad perception from the community about them, it is mostly difficult to get a responsible man to marry from the community as a result most of them look for their love ones at the site. It is therefore better to get married before involving yourself with the activity (interview from women, 2017).

Almost all the women interviewed revealed that they have been denied of loans from the local bank in the district capital because they have no assets such as lands to stand as collateral. Only 4 were able to access financial assistance from a credit facility (interview with women miners, 2017). According to the women they receive the lowest wages and revenues from their activities while the financiers and the male workers take all the benefits or the higher revenues, though they are most exposed to all the dangerous or toxic chemicals such as mercury (interviews with women miners, 2017)

The flexibility of the informal sector often allows for the combination of paid labour with child care and other household responsibilities for women (Standing 1989:588). To acquire enough income, many women worked throughout the year often leave their wards in the care of house maids or other relatives at home (interview with women miners, 2017).

In spite of their success stories, many still believed they are failing as mothers-Spending all their time at the site is a challenge for the married women especially combining their work with child care. A 42-year-old woman captured the feelings of other women miners who were interviewed by the researcher, claims that working almost every day at the site cannot give all the 6 children she had, the best of care they deserve from her as a mother. She continued ...

I am going to stop this work immediately I figure out something better to do, or if your people can give us jobs to do. Then I will go and stay in the city with my children and give them the best of care and education they deserved. I know that given them financial support is not only what they want. They need my attention as mother...As am here, but my mind is on them. I always regret leaving them home.

Surprisingly, some women who could not find house help or family relatives to take care of their children have no option than to send them to the mining site, as depicted below. This 8-year-old girl was found with her mother at the site at the time of the researcher's visit.

Again, most of the women who have no option than to send their children to the site claimed it is greatly affecting them in their working roles as miners. A woman, who was still in her breast-feeding stage said, she risks losing the job, because the 'sponsor' got annoyed with her situation and instructed her

not to bring the baby to the working site or look for a care taker. And she couldn't afford to hire a care taker at that period because she just started the work 3 weeks before the research (interviews with women miners, 2017)

Figure 5.11: Child care and artisanal mining



Source:(field interview of women miners,2007)

Many of the married women when asked whether mining was a good venture for them replied that they will abandon the work as soon as they acquire reliable jobs that will provide them sufficient incomes to be able to cater for their families. Three (3) of the women said they will not come to the site if they are able to get someone (a man) who will provide them food to eat. Two said they are already planning to leave as they are waiting to 'pick' their money in the next coming days from a, 'SUSU' group that they are part of called 'Nuntaa Sung Taa Poogba Group' (literally means, support one another). As a group, they normally save part of their wages in a together and give to one at a time. Members can also obtain very small loans from the group (interviews with women, 2017)

Conclusion

This chapter is in relation to my research sub-question 3 and 4. In this, I argue that women artisanal miners have been treated unequally with their male counterparts, stigmatized, and discriminated upon because of their gender both at the site, household and at the community level. Social norms and cultural beliefs served as a major barrier to their active participation in artisanal mining because their reproductive roles at the household level have a direct impact on their involvement in the labour mining economy.

I also, argue that women are victims of social insecurity at the site. They work without any social protection or social insurance cover- no bargaining power or contracts, no health insurance scheme, or death benefits, and above all no 'protective working gears' like hand gloves or protective foot wears. They are on their own faith. A woman who caught the attention of the researcher at the time of the research when she was asked to either stop working as a miner or to stop bringing her breastfeeding child to the site (interviews with miners, 2017). The next chapter below is chapter 6, which draws on the conclusions of key findings.

Chapter six

6.1 Summary of findings and conclusion

This paper explores the political economy of mining focusing on the roles of artisanal miners in Wa East district in Ghana. It interrogates the impact of mining on the social, economic, and cultural life of women and the society around them in an attempt to achieve sustainable incomes. The study argues that despite the participation of women in the artisanal mining sector, yet they have been sexually segregated, discriminated and stigmatized upon.

This case study research had shown that the conceptual approach to gender and development is aimed at pointing to the underlying principles of gender in ensuring development, while focusing on women through empowerment in achieving equality and equity with men in rural communities. Reasons for this statement will be disclosed.

Both approaches of labour feminisation and the occupational sex segregation are used in determining women participation in the labour mining economy and the impact to the society. It would be interesting to know that both men and women performed different roles ranging from digging, panning, crushing, pounding, sieving, fetching water, washing, amalgamation and being cooks. Digging and amalgamation are the two main roles performed by men in the community.

To what extent does ASGM allows them to create a livelihood in the community is of paramount important to the study. According to Rakodi (2002:7) poverty is not only characterized by lack of assets, but the absence of options with regards to different alternative income strategies. The poor and the most marginalized communities and households are compelled to adopt strategies which help them to survive but not to make better of their well-being. Most of the women are involved with the activity because there are no available livelihood alternatives. ASGM as a form of livelihood for the women artisanal miners is inefficient and effective in bettering their well-being. Lo and behold, artisanal small-scale mining is therefore a complement or a 'stepping stone' towards the attainment of their livelihoods. It has made it possible for them to diversify in to off-farm and farm income strategies such as trading (e.g. selling clothing and food stuff) shear butter production (oil made from the nuts of the shear tree) Pito brewing (local alcoholic drink) and some re-investing back in to farming by the virtue of the fact that farming is no longer productive.

The ability to diversify had empowered these rural poor women socially and economically to be able to cater for their household needs and other responsibilities without relying on their husbands and family kin as they can now afford to pay for their wards school fees, text books and school uniforms including having good meals. In all, they have attained self-dependency from their husbands though their husbands are very much uncomfortable with that, thinking they are being bossy.

Despite their ability to acquire incomes for diversification, I argue that the women artisanal miners have been treated unequally with their male counterparts, stigmatized, and discriminated upon because of their gender. Social norms and cultural beliefs served as a major barrier to their active participation in artisanal mining because their reproductive roles at the household level have a direct impact on their participation in the labour mining economy. I also argue that though both men and women are victims of social insecurity at the site, working without any social protection or social insurance cover-no bargaining power or health insurance scheme, or death benefits, and above all no 'protective working gears' like hand gloves or protective foot wear, but women are more affected because they are more prone to the hazardous chemicals (e.g. cyanide). They are therefore, always working on their own faith.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Sample size distribution

Women miners	Husbands of miners	Chiefs	Total
25	8	2	35

Appendix 2: Distribution of age, education, and marital status

Key informants	Age interval			Educational background				Marital status of Women miners	
	18-30	30-40	45+	Basic	SHS	Non-formal	No education	married	Unmarried
Women miners	16	5	4	7	3	-	15	9	16
Husbands of women Miners	-	2	6	-	1	3	4	-	-
Chiefs	-	-	2	-	-	-	2	-	-
Total	16	7	12	7	4	3	21	9	16

Source: (Own elaboration from interviews, 2017)

Appendix 3

focus group discussion

FGD	Participants
First group	9
Second group	7

SOURCE: (Own sketch based on interviews, 2017)

Appendix 4: In-depth interview guide for women miners (in groups): First visit to the site

Demographic data ----- Section A

1. Occupation:

2. Gender: M [] F [] others []

3. Age: 18-30 [] 30-45 [] 45+ []

4. Marital status: married [] single [] widow [] divorce []

5. Educational Background: Basic [] SHS [] non-Formal [] No

Education []

Section B- How does their being women prevent them from engaging in ASGM?

1. Why do you engage yourselves in this activity?
2. Do you feel happy with this work?
3. Would you have done something different if you have the option
4. Are your husbands happy for you as miners?
5. How do you know your husbands are happy for you?
6. What do you think could be the reason your husbands may not be happy with you?
7. What about your children- are they also happy for you as mothers?
8. What do you think the society thinks about you?
9. Are you free with members of the society?
10. Have you seen any difference between you and the men you work with?

Appendix 5: **Individual interview guide for women miners**

Section A-----demographic variables

1. Occupation:
2. Gender: M [] F [] others []
3. Age: 18-30 [] 30-45 [] 45+ []
4. Marital status: married [] single [] widow [] divorce []
5. Educational Background: Basic [] SHS [] non-Formal []
No Education []

Section B---- consequences of their involvement in ASGM as women miners?

1. Do you feel safe working here?
2. What makes you feel safe-working here?
3. What problems do you face here?
4. Are you in good terms with your husband's family?
5. Do you think his family members like you -working here?
6. What makes them likes/dislikes you?
7. Do you live with your husband?

8. How did your husband see it-is he happy for you as a miner?
9. Have you ever pick a quarrel with your husband before?
6. What do you thinks makes your spouse quarrel with you?
7. Do you think that your involvement in mining could affect your
Children's well-being
8. Who is taking care of your children while you are here?
9. Could that affect them?
10. Are you free with members in the community?
11. How do you relate with each other...do you greet each other?

Section C ----- How ASGM creates a livelihood

1. Did you have control over your income?
2. Do you give your income/money to your spouse to keep for you?
3. How do you feel with your money in your husband's hands?
4. Have you being able to generate enough money through this activity?
5. How much does a kilo of gold cost?
6. How much can you generate every week/month?
7. And is it enough for your up-keep?
8. Which other people depend on this amount?
9. How do you use this money for?
10. Do you make personal savings?
11. Are you from this community?
12. How many years do you stay in this community?
13. Do you belong to any women group?
14. What is the group meant for?
15. Apart from a mining, what other work do you do?

Appendix 6: In-depth interview guide for traditional leaders (chief)

Demographic data ----- Section A

1. Occupation:
2. Gender: M [] F [] others []
3. Age: 18-30 [] 30-45 [] 45+ []

4. Marital status: married [] single [] widow divorce []
5. Educational Background: Basic [] SHS [] non-Formal [] No Education []

Section B (mediation process)

1. How can one acquire land for ASGM in this community?
2. Are there problems in getting land in this community?
3. How much is needed for an acre of land for mining?
4. Who has the right to mind in this community?
5. Do women need permission from you as a chief before engaging in mining?
6. How do they get access to land for mining?
7. What do you perceive as problems with women doing mining?
8. Do you see mining as a good venture for women?
9. How does women engagement with mining helps the community?
10. Do they pay back to the community for using resources from the community?

Appendix 7: In-depth interview guide for husbands of women miners

Demographic data-Section A

1. Occupation:
2. Gender: M [] F [] others []
3. Age: 18-30 [] 30-45 [] 45+ []
4. Marital status: married [] single [] widow [] Divorce []
5. Educational Background: Basic [] SHS [] non-Formal [] No Education []

Section B (In what ways/ How does their being women prevent them from en-

gaging in ASGM?)

1. Do you feel happy for your spouse involvement in mining?
2. What kind of help do you receive or give each other?
3. How does the involvement of your spouse in mining affect your household income with regards to farming?
4. Does that also affect your wards school attendance?
5. And how does it affect them?
6. How does the community perceive your spouse as a miner, and how does that affect you?
7. Do you earn much respect from the community?
8. Have you ever quarrel with your wife before?
9. For what reason

Appendix 8: Focus group discussion interview guide for women miners (groups of two with 5 participants each)

1. What motivated you in to mining?
2. What are the problems you face as women in mining?
3. Do you think that as a woman you are fairly treated as compared to your male counterparts at the site?
4. Apart from mining, what other job(s) do you do for living?
5. How do you get access to land for the mining activity?
6. Do you have access to credit facilities?
7. From where can you get such a help from in terms of money/credit?
8. Who are the buyers of the gold?
9. What kind of relationship existed among you and your buyers?
10. How do you reach out to your families as you are here?
11. Do you feel comfortable working here?

12. What problems do you face?

13. How do you utilize the income that is generated from the mining activity?

Thank you!!!