

Girls in Illegal Mining in Ghana: Surviving Without Thrive

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Abstract

Child labour is endemic in Africa (Ghana) and remains on the biggest challenges facing Ghana. Child labour by definition in Ghana's children's act, 1998 (act 560) refers to (harmful) work by children below the age of 18 years. For many families in Ghana child labour is a coping mechanism that help them to fight poverty.

Some scholars are beginning to soften their hardline stance on child labour, suggesting that many working children especially girls have successfully completed school. This research shares findings on an exploratory study of 200 girls under 18 years working in artisanal or illegal gold mines in Tarkwa and Bogoso both towns are noted for illegal mining activities in the western part of Ghana.

Descriptive statistics from the study revealed that the majority of girls in illegal mining were able to support themselves financially but simply could not cope with regular school, and high level of teenage pregnancy were also noted, these has prevented a positive advancement in their social development; thus, the girls were able to survive but could hardly thrive under the circumstance.

Keywords: Illegal mining, Child labour, Survive, Poverty, Girl child