

Causes and Effects of Illegal Gold Mining (Galamsey) Activities on School Dropout and Residents at the Tutuka Central Circuit in Obuasi Municipality in Ashanti Region, Ghana

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Abstract: - Illegal gold mining (Galamsey) activities contribute tremendously to the local economy of the communities within which the practice is conducted. Despite such development, its activities come with several environmental, economic, developmental and societal challenges that governments and environmentalist have fought several decades to overcome. The study sought to examine the effect of galamsey operation on school dropout in the Tutuka Central Circuit in the Obuasi Municipality. The case study design was used. A sample size of 102 participants was selected for quantitative analysis together with purposive sampling of 20 key informants for qualitative analysis. Youth engagement in galamsey and subsequent dropout from school had some relationship with guardians/relatives being engaged in galamsey as confirmed by 68% of participants who had one or both of their guardians involved in the galamsey business. The majority; 50% of dropouts worked at galamsey sites. Eight in every ten school dropouts (86.3%) enrolled in the study aged between 14 to 22 years admitted to having a sexual partner. This study calls for a comprehensive strategy adoption, strong institutional collaboration with stringent commitment from both parents and government in ensuring job security at galamsey operating communities guided by strict law enforcement for children in school who seek to enroll in galamsey activities.

Key Words: Child Education, Illegal Gold Mining, Parenting, Economic impact of illegal mining.

I. INTRODUCTION

One of the major sources of foreign exchange earnings for Ghana as a country is gold mining (Adu-Gyamfi, 2014). It involves the extraction of minerals in addition to precious metals from under the earth (Akabzaa & Darimani, 2001). Ghana is the second African largest producer coming only after South Africa. About 40% of the national total earnings are thus generated through mining activities (Berger, 2008; Airo, 2009). Increased production of gold has been witnessed over the last ten years in Ghana. Minerals that are mined in Ghana include Bauxite, manganese, tantalum, copper, tin, silver, diamonds and gold. On the Ghanaian landscape, mining operations are categorized largely into two. Those that operate on a large scale and those that operate on a small

scale. While mining operations produce huge tons of gold with heavy equipment forms the large scale mining, small scale mining operates on a small level and mostly with a few number of persons involved Appiah (1998, Hilson, 2002). Mining companies such as Anglo-Gold Ashanti of Ghana, Newmont Ghana, Goldfields Ghana and Minas Serra Pelade Mines in Brazil are examples of large scale mining companies in Ghana and across the globe.

Illegal mining activities are generally engaged in by the local residents calling for the influx of other people from different areas into the community. Globally, between 80–100 million people are estimated to be currently engaged in small scale mining activities depending on it for their livelihoods directly or indirectly (Petra & Kamini, 2007). As indicated in (Appiah,1998, Hilson, 2002), the current and accurate size of people engaged in the illegal gold mining operation was unknown. Amankwah & Anim-Sackey (2003) place an estimated 500,000 who are directly engaged in the operation with an additional 500,000 as indirect beneficiaries of the activities of illegal gold mining operations. They contend that about half of all those involved in the small scale mining constitute illegal operators known commonly as illegal mining operators”.

The link between illegal gold mining operation and other sectors of the economy and social life of the residents has been often reiterated. This link or relationship is multi-sectorial and multi-dimensional. One core area that a relationship has been identified is how the activities of illegal gold mining operations lead to school dropout, how it boosts local economies, affects changes in social life and harms the environment. Despite efforts in achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) of a universal access to education, illegal gold mining operation in mining communities presents a threat to both the MDG2015 and the Sustainable Development Goals in 2030. High drop outs in school enrollment in most illegal mining operating communities continue to pose a threat to achieving education goals.

Notwithstanding these challenges, illegal mining operations present window of hope for the rural unemployed that needs something to survive on. The International Labour Organization establishes that about 1 million children who are under the ages of 5 to 17 years of age work in the mines and quarries. At the root of all this is poverty despite the rudimentary techniques adopted, highly manual processes, hazardous working conditions and negative human and environmental health implications (Barning, 2002). This study seeks to investigate the causes and effects of illegal gold mining activities on school dropout and residents at the Tutuka Central Circuit of Obuasi Municipality. An observational point of view suggests students' enrolment in the circuit has gone down due to their engagement in illegal gold mining. The statistics from the Education Management Information Service (2017) on Tutuka Central Circuit JHS of Obuasi in the 2015/2016 indicated that 200 students out of the 1,800 dropped out of school. However, it is unclear whether the activities of the illegal mining have led to the levels in attrition among students. This is because, while some youth go into illegal mining to secure money to fund their educational cost which their parents are unable to cater for others simply stop school and get involved in the activity. Research works such as Adu-Gyamfi (2014), Owusu & Dwomoh (2012) conducted on illegal operation has always looked at one side of how illegal activity in their operating communities lead to school dropout without controlling for other factors. Moreover, whether children of school going age who are identified on the mining sites came from outside communities of the activities is yet to be explored. These issues are worth exploring because they offer solutions to addressing the illegal mining activities and how it influences school enrolment. It is against this background that this study is being conducted to examine the causes and effects of illegal mining activities on school dropout and residents at the Tutuka Central Circuit of Obuasi Municipality. The study sought to examine the causes of school drop out at the Tutuka Central Circuit in the Obuasi Municipal Education Directorate, the effects of illegal gold mining (galamsey) operations on school dropout and how illegal gold mining (galamsey) activities affect the socio-economic life of residents at the Tutuka Central Circuit in the Obuasi Municipality.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

In Ghana, Armstrong (2008) reports that gold mining has a very extensive history that dates back at least to the 15th century when the Europeans, starting with the Portuguese and followed later by the Dutch and the English, were first drawn to the territory they called the "Gold Coast" by the trade in gold and spices. The British and a small number of other foreign investors controlled the mining industry during the colonial age and Ghanaians were absolutely excluded from the tenure structure of the mining industry. The industry was very vibrant during the pre independence period, thus Ghana accounted for 35% of total world gold output between 1493

and 1600, nevertheless its portion of world mineral output declined over subsequent years. The post-independence period was marked by state ownership of mineral resources. The period up to 1986 of the industry was largely characterized by unproductively, except for a few spikes recorded immediately after independence and in the early 1970's (Akabzaa and Darimani, 2001).

As part of the country's Economic Recovery Program (ERP) launched in 1983, the mining industry experienced substantial reforms beginning in 1986. Since 1983, Ghana has been experiencing World Bank/International Monetary Fund sponsored Structural Adjustment Program (SAP). Furthermore, Aubynn (2003) reported that modern mechanized mining of precious metals from both alluvial and hard-rock dates back from about 1880 and this type of mining began in the Tarkwa area. In 1898, modern mining was extended to Obuasi in the Ashanti Region, where the gold deposits were found to be even richer than the Tarkwa deposits AngloGold Ashanti's Obuasi Mine, which began production in the Adansi West District of the Ashanti Region in 1890, is by far the oldest mine in the country (Armstrong, 2008).

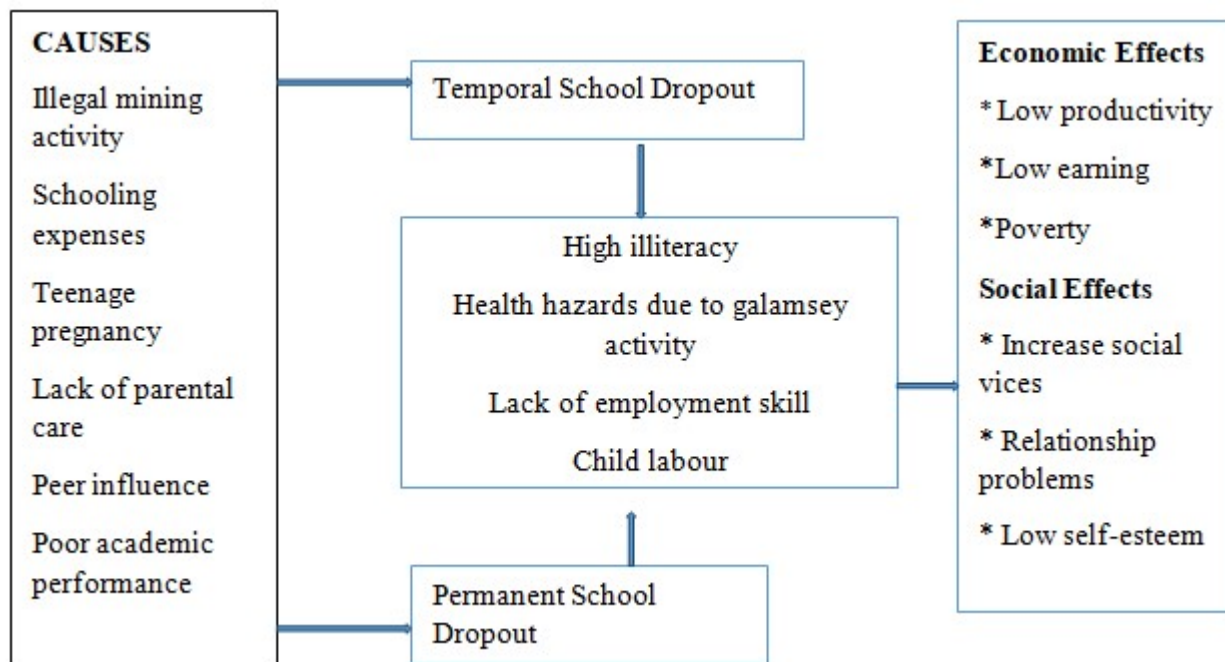
It is worthy to note that activities of small-scale mining are commonly done on the immediate surface or near surface deposits, comparatively with little waste or overburden, simple metallurgy and with easy access. Most at times, as indicated by Hilson (2001), galamsey entails the use of mercury for processing. In the view of Berger (1982), the activity is characterized by: one-man operations; various forms of leasing where miners either share the profit from the concession or sell the minerals to the owner of the concession at an agreed price, joint-venture ship and cooperatives, limited labour with wage payments, distribution and sales usually involving middle men who in turn sell to the world market. Hentschelet al. (2003) conceptualized artisanal and small scale mining as mining by individuals, groups, families or cooperatives with minimal or no mechanization, which is usually done in the informal sector of the market. For the purposes of taxonomy, small scale miners are artisanal miners who are licensed to operate on a small piece of land and who are required to market their produce through the Precious Minerals Marketing Company (PMMC) or designated agents associated with PMMC and illegal miners "galamseyers" on the other hand, practice their trade without any regularization or license from the regulatory agencies (Nyame et al, 2007).

In the study of Brayan (2010), two kinds of small scale mining are mentioned: land dredging and river dredging. ASSM activities can be subdivided in the same way, as conventional mining, according to type of deposit: underground mining; open pit mining and placer mining. In addition some small mining operations may have a semi-industrial or fully industrial character and the degree of mechanization, internal organization and compliance with international industrial standards is advanced. These operations are most frequently financed and managed by partners from industrialized countries (Hentschel et al, 2003).

In many parts of the world, artisanal or small -scale mining activities are at least as important as large scale mining activities, particularly in terms of the numbers of people employed. Miners are generally unskilled and earn little. The most common equipment used are basic hand tools such as picks, axes, sluice boxes and shovels, although occasionally Honda water pumps, explosives and washing plants are seen within regions (Hilson, 2001). Small scale mining can generate significant local purchasing power and lead to more demand for locally produced goods and services such as food, tools, equipment, housing, infrastructure (Hentschel et al. 2003). Artisanal and small -scale mining is the case in the

majority of developing countries. The quick growth in Ghana’s artisanal and small scale gold mining sector can be attributed to the acute lack of jobs and accompanying poverty nationwide (Hilson & Potter, 2005). The ASSM sector is the most challenging to regulate among others, due to the nomadic and often seasonal nature of their activities (Nyame & Grant, 2007).

III. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK OF THE INTERRELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ILLEGAL GOLD MINING ACTIVITIES AND SCHOOL DROPOUT



Source: Author’s construct, 2018

The conceptual framework illustrates a system relationship among variables that predict or lead to school dropout. Galamsey or illegal mining activities bring both economic and social effects on the community within which it is operated. These social and economic effects have the tendency to cause drop out. However, the impact of the school dropout is varied and multifaceted. Generally, the impact have been negative and unwelcomed, however there are isolated cases where people dropout of school, engage in galamsey operations are able to make a living and become better off. Later in life when they have become economically advantaged, they invest the money earn from galamsey operation into improving the socio-economic conditions of their family and upgrade themselves in education, business or trade or apprenticeship. With increasing school dropout, the social vices such as stealing, drug addict, prostitution, and others are likely to increase as poverty level goes up due to the fact that people do not have employable skills to gain employment. When children dropout of school and are in engaged in all kind of

social vices, they are likely to have relationship problems with community members, friends and family members which could lead to low self-image and self-esteem. This framework will guide the study of examining the interlocking relationship between the variables of interest.

IV. RESEARCH METHODS

The study was informed by a descriptive case study design. This study selected respondents from the Tutuka Central Circuit as a case to have a detailed investigation into children’s engagement in illegal gold mining and its effects on school dropout. The selection of this design was on the basis that, it has the ability to provide detailed and adequate responses from a special area of participants. The descriptive design helped the researcher to provide a precise portrait on the situation of illegal gold mining in the Tutuka Central Circuit and how it had led to school dropout among school going children in the community. The study’s population constituted all dropped out students at the Tutuka Central

Circuit of Obuasi Municipality. The study's target population constituted both male and female Junior High School students who had dropped out of school and were unable to continue their basic education in the two schools that were selected in the circuit. Teachers, parents and educational administrators within the Tutuka Circuit formed part of the target population.

The study used stratified two-stage random sampling. In the first stage, one circuit in Obuasi Municipality was selected randomly from all circuits with high school dropout rates. In the second stage, the researcher used the stratified sampling to select two schools within the circuit already selected. Purposive sampling technique was adopted to facilitate the selection of teachers, parents and educational administrators from the community while convenience sampling and snowballing technique were adopted to select the school dropout participants from the two communities. Due to the difficulty in identifying the school dropout students, who were the focal participants of the study, a sample size of 122 was deemed to be adequate for the study. This consists of 102 children, eight (8) teachers, ten (10) parents and two (2) Circuit Supervisors from the Tutuka Central Circuit were purposively selected. This is presented in Table 1 below

The study mainly used questionnaires and interviews as the research instruments for collecting data. These methods were justified due to the nature of the study and the population of interest. The study used the questionnaire to collect data, which is the most used means of collecting data. The advantages of using questionnaires are that, it is convenient when the sample size is large. This makes interviewing every participant uneconomical. The questionnaires designed were in two parts. The first part was a classification section. This required such details of the respondent sex, age, occupation etc. The second part possesses the questions relating to the subject matter of the inquiry. The responses for this second part formed the basis of the data presentation and analysis. This represented purely the primary source of data collection. The questionnaire designed contained both open and closed questions. The open questions gave the respondents the freedom to decide the aspect, detail and length of their answers. It enabled the respondents to give a more adequate presentation of their particular cases and convey flexibility in their choice. The close questions on the other hand were designed to keep the questionnaire to a reasonable length and this encouraged response and validity in terms of the representativeness of the returns. This helped to minimize the risk of misinterpretation unlike the former. It also permitted easier tabulation and interpretation by the researcher. The question on whether to use either open or close questionnaire was resolved on the basis of validity, reliability and usability, and in as much as the problem under review is varied and complex, a combination of the two is better than the exclusive use of one. This study employed the use of both open and closed ended questionnaires. The structured questionnaire was anonymous and solicited information on respondents' background as well as their general knowledge on the causes

of school dropout. The study applied face to face interview as another method in the collection of primary data. As a research method, the interview is a conversation carried out with the definite aim of obtaining certain information. It is designed to gather valid and reliable information through the responses of the interviewee to a planned sequence of questions. These questions, however, were structured similar to the open and closed questions of the questionnaire respectively. The form of the open interview was crucial, nevertheless, to win those who were less willing to cooperate and also elicit in-depth information from the study participants. The aim of the large scale survey through the interview was to attain uniformity in the asking of questions and recording of answers. The researcher reached out to dropout school children within the community. Through convenience and snowball sampling, children who were not schooling were reached at their convenience. After the objective of the study was explained and consent sought, dropout students were included in the study to answer the questions. They were encouraged to lead the researcher to their colleague dropout if any.

Descriptive analysis was used to analyze the data. It was presented in tables as descriptive statistics. The interview conducted was analyzed with a thematic focus. The qualitative data was analyzed using thematic approach. The researcher identified themes that were emerging from the interview relating to each objective. These themes were used to support the quantitative data. For each objective of the study, the researcher adopted both quantitative and qualitative approaches. The analysis on each objective was done by first providing quantitative data presented in tables and at some instances charts after which qualitative data was provided to support the quantitative data. This was done throughout the study for all the specific objectives outlined in the study. The results that were obtained were processed into a form appropriate for analysis. Editing, coding and entry into the computer software were the major activities carried out here. The SPSS version 16 was employed to organize results for analysis and interpretation to arrive at the findings based on the research objectives. The quantitative method of analysis was employed. Descriptive statistical tools such as percentage and frequencies tables and charts were generated from the SPSS output and detailed analysis made on these tables and charts.

V. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Background characteristics of respondents (children)

The demographic characteristic revealed that more than half of the study participants were males (74.5%). Similarly majority of them, were in between the ages of 15-17 years. Equal number of respondents was from Odumasi Municipal Assembly Junior High School and Owusu Sampa Junior High School constituting 50%. Majority of respondents stopped attending school at JHS 2 (66.7%). A high number of respondents' guardian were self-employed representing

29.4%. Understandably, majority of respondents’ parents had attained their middle/JHS education (72.5%) with majority separated (66.7%). The education level of siblings of respondents showed that majority had completed their JHS education (93.1%).

Causes of school dropout

The study enquired from respondents as to how long they had stopped schooling. This was to determine whether respondents had stopped schooling for long or had just recently stopped schooling. The intent was to find out whether respondents who had stopped schooling recently could go back to school considering the fact that they had not stopped schooling for long period of time. The results in table 1 illustrate the period most of the respondents stopped schooling.

Table 1 How Long Have You Stopped Attending School (children)

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Less than six month	17	16.7
Since the last one year	9	8.8
Since the last two years	2	2.0
More than two years	10	9.8
Don’t recall	63	61.8
Missing response	1	0.9
Total	102	100

Source: Researcher’s Field Data, 2018

The study elicited information on the length of time during which pupils had stayed away from school. Among 17(16.7%) of the dropped out students, some had stayed home in less than six months at the time of the study, 8.8% had stayed home since the last one year. Among 2(2.0%) of the pupils, they had not stepped in their former schools since the last two years. The majority 61.8% of students did not recall the last time they left school.

The results show that most of the respondents could not recall the time they stopped schooling. This implied that most of the respondents did not have much interest in schooling as they had stopped schooling for a long time and could not recall the period they stopped. It also implied that it would be difficult to make most of the respondents go back to school as they stopped schooling for long and could not even recall the time they stopped schooling.

Table 2Guardian whom child stays with before dropping out of school

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Mother Alone	59	57.8
Father Alone	14	13.6
Both Parents	16	15.6
Siblings alone	1	0.09
Grandparents	1	0.09
Stays alone	14	13.6
Total	102	100

Source: Researcher’s Field Data, 2018

The living arrangements of the dropouts showed that more than half 57.8% were staying with their mothers alone, 13.6% stay with their fathers, 15.6% stay with both parents while 13.7% of young people were staying alone. This study results showed that majority of the respondents stay with their mothers alone. This indicates that the absence of the fatherly role in child upbringing affected the children’s schooling.

The result showed that most respondents stayed with their mothers at the time they stopped schooling. It was, however surprising to see that those respondents who stayed with both parents at the time they stopped schooling are second on the table with 15.6% of the respondents. The study’s results showed that children under the care of only their mothers were more likely to stop schooling than children who stayed with only their fathers and other relatives. This implied that mothers in the study area have an important role to play, with regards to effort to reduce school dropout in the study area. This study result was more similar to the view of Hunt (2008) that children from single mother’s home were more likely to stop schooling considering the fact that single mothers may find it difficult providing the school needs of children alone with the help of a father.

Table 3 Number of respondents who join their guardians in Galamsey operation and the guardian work

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Yes	58	57.0
No	44	43.0
Total	102	100

Source: Researcher’s Field Data, 2018

There were 58(57%) of the drop out children who affirmed that their parents directly asked them to stop schooling to join them in the illegal gold mining (galamsey) operation. This was not the case among 43% of the children. The results show that parents and guardians were very influential in children’s school dropout in the study area as most of the respondents stated that their parents asked them to join them in their galamsey operations which led most of the respondents to drop out of school in the study area.

In an interview with a respondent as to why parents may make their children join them in their jobs, some parents shared how teachers worsen their poor plight by the frequent demand of extra classes’ fee which they are sometimes unable to pay. The respondent stated that;

I have lived in this community for 30 years. Some parents do not care about their children education’s at all. It is true that some use the money they get to support their education but...Teachers should stop collecting classes fees and other charges (Participant 9, [23/07/2018]).

The galamsey is what help some of the students to pay for their printing fees and others. Some of them their parents have no money, so when they work, they are able to make

some money to help their parents in paying school fees and also, in providing for their other school needs such as buying books, school uniform and the likes (Participant 6, [27/09/18]).

The respondent's views showed that parents engage their children in the work they do out of poverty, as indicated by the respondents through the interview. The study revealed that parents who were poor were more likely to request their children to work while in school. This further explains the reason why most children under the care of only mothers who cannot take care of their children's school needs dropout of school the most in the study area. The study results confirmed the views of Polelo and Molefe (2006) that poverty was the leading cause of school dropout for most children in Africa. The study results showed that parents who were poor and were not earning high income that could enable them take care of their children's school needs engage their children to help them raise some income to provide for the children's school needs.

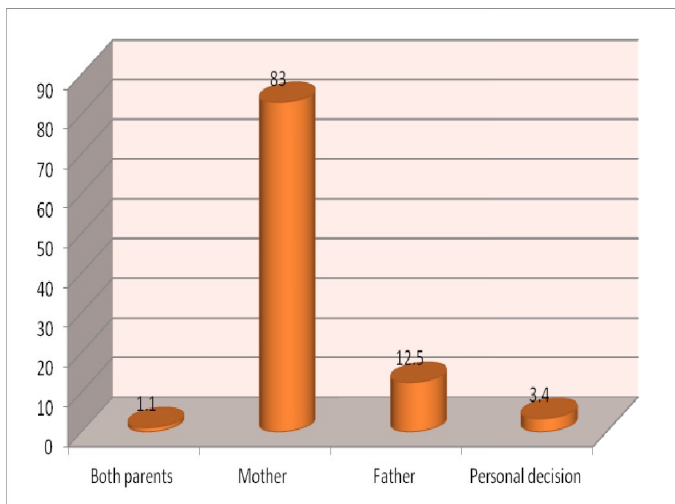


Figure 1 Person responsible for respondents to engage in the type of work they do while schooling

Source: Researcher's Field Data, 2018

As presented in figure 1, it was revealed that only 1.1% of the respondents stated that it was both parents who decided to make them work while they were in school, 83% of the respondents argued that it was their mothers who made them work during the time they were schooling, 12.5% of the respondents stated that it was their fathers who made them work while they were in school and 3.4% of the respondents stated that it was their personal decision to work while they were still schooling.

The results show that most respondents who worked do so because their mothers influenced them to do so. As presented in figure 1, majority of the respondents (83%) argued that they worked during the time they were in school because it was their mothers' decision. This again showed that girls under the care of mothers only were more likely to work while in school. Similarly, Nyamukapa and Gregson (2013) suggested

that single motherhood results in a situation where mothers have to make their children help them in their work. The study results showed that mothers in the study area had a responsibility to perform when it comes to taking care of the girl child as most respondents argued that it was their mothers who encouraged them to work more than their fathers.

Effects of the Galamsey Activities on School Dropout

The study examined the effects of Galamsey activities on school dropout. School dropout has far reaching consequences on the individual and the society at large (Jacobs & Gerson, 2004). Most often, high school dropout rate plays a significant threat to the development of the country, as this goes a long way to reduce the educational level of the people in the country (Bruneforth, 2006). Aside these effects the study sought from the respondents' views on the effects of school dropout.

Table 4 Daily average earnings from galamsey activity

Responses	Frequency	Percent
GHC5-50	60	58.8
GH51-100	12	11.8
GHC101-150	21	20.7
More than 150	2	1.9
No earning	7	6.8
Total	102	100.0

Source: Researcher's Field Data, 2018

The results revealed that children who engaged in galamsey activities were making money as some could earn up to 100 Ghana cedis or more daily. This implied that galamsey activity was very locuraative economic activity for most school dropouts in the study area. The daily earnings of some child miners were more than the minimum wage rate of GHC9.68. The results showed that most children were motivated to engage in illegal gold mining because of the amount they earn.





Figure 2 Children Receiving Daily Wages

Source: Researcher’s Field Data, 2018

The children in figure 2 receive their daily wage after a hard day’s work. The respondents indicated that engaging in gold mining was rewarding as they are paid immediately after the end of the day. Most of them stated that it was far better than engaging in monthly pay where the workers have to wait for a whole month before being paid. For them, they earn their income as long as they go to work. This according to the child miners was encouraging and appetizing.

of the respondents were working in galamsey activities before stopping school. These children were very happy after they were paid for the work they did. In effect, they count and display their money upon receipt. The amount received, although it was only between GHC5-100, most of the respondents considered it as motivating enough to increase the appetite to continue being in the galamsey business. This serves to motivate children to stay in galamsey activity. Some respondents earn more than GHC 100 as a daily wage. From the results presented in table 4, 8.7% of the children earn more than GHC 100 as daily wage. Averagely, it was more than 10 times the daily wages in the main stream employment; with minimum wage of GHC9.68. Respondents always show excitement upon receipt of their wage and are paid on daily basis (see fig 2 & 3). It was also revealed that child miner received above the world poverty line of \$1 a day. This clearly showed that children’s engagement in gold mining offers them immediate reward of which if care is not taken, more children will drop out of school to engage in illegal gold mining to the detriment of their education.

Table 5 Engagement in Galamsey activity before dropping out of School

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Yes	87	85.3
No	15	14.7
Total	102	100.0

Source: Researcher’s Field Data, 2018

It was further found that majority of the dropouts engaged in the galamsey activity prior to their drop out of school. As presented in table 5, the study revealed that 85.3% of the respondents were engaging in galamsey before they stopped schooling. Galamsey business is likely to increase school dropped out rate. Children were conscious of the effect of their engagement in galamsey activity on their academic requirements as most of them indicated that they were involved in galamsey before they drop out of school. From the results presented in table 4.15, a teeming 87(85.3%), they were convinced that their engagement in the galamsey activity affected their academic performance though this opinion was not shared by 15 (14.7%) of the group. In their opinion, tiredness from activities they do from site and other things that motivate them diminish their desire to study and therefore reduce their academic performance.

Illegal gold mining operation and socio-economic life of residents

The study further examined the socio-economic life of children in galamsey business operation. As a quest to get solutions to the research objective, the researcher asked several questions. The responses from the dropouts show that there were majority 94.1% who sometimes joined their friends to go and drink alcohol. This shows that majority of respondents, in galamsey business, joined their friend to go and drink alcohol. This, to them, would be a source of entertainment, since they spent a lot of their time working. Children engagement in gambling was explored. The study examined whether school dropouts engagement in gambling had occurred during the past six months. Accordingly, 97.1% affirmed their involvement in gambling related activities during the period under discussion.

Respondents were asked whether they presently had sexual partners. The results showed majority 86.3% responding yes with only 13.7% not with sexual partners at the time of the study. It is possible that the quickness in getting money must have served as a temptation for the dropout to engage in any sort of social vice that comes to heart.

Smoking characterized some of the children who had dropped out of school. This was, however, among few sections of the dropouts. Accordingly, the majority 93.1% had not smoked cigarette in the past. Majority of respondents claimed they have never smoked cigarette. The requirement of the galamsey operation was a daunting one. This reflected in the frequency of hospital visit resulting from the galamsey operations. Nearly nine in every ten (89.2%) of the youth often had to either buy drugs or go to the hospital to buy drugs to treat galamsey related illness related. Majority of the respondents visit health institutions for medical checkups. Respondents were asked if they are intrinsically motivated to be in school.

Table 6 Aspect of students' social life affected by gamamsey operation

Aspect of social life	Response	
	Yes	No
I sometimes join my friends to go and drink alcohol	96(94.1%)	6(5.9%)
I have engaged gambling in the past six months before	99(97.1%)	3(2.9%)
I presently have a sexual partner	88(86.3%)	14(13.7%)
I have smoked cigarette in the past before	2(2.0%)	95(93.1%)
I mostly visit the Clinic/Hospital/Pharmacist to buy drugs or for treatment due to the gamamsey work I do	91(89.2%)	10(9.8%)
Preference to go back to school when educational needs are provided	21(20.6)	81(79.4)
Pregnancy before drop out of school	5(19.2)	21(80.8)

Source: Researcher's Field Data, 2018

On the economic life, there was unanimous admittance that gamamsey activities give the local people and the youth money.

There is positive contribution because gamamsey gives money....it is the main source of job for the youth. The gamamsey activities help both parents and students to get money to cater for both school and home expenses. There is also improvement in earning on the part of local traders (Participant 12,[29/11/18]).

One major social vice that was cited to often have been caused by gamamsey players was teenage pregnancy. Among the parents, teachers and educational administrators, the availability of money in the pockets of gamamsey operators made it easy for them to lure children of school going age. This results in pregnancy.

They use the money to impregnate school girls but not to support education. They earn the money but use it for other social activities such as drinking, smoking and womanizing. When asked the contribution of gamamsey to the social fibre of the community, a teacher shared. Negative contribution because of the bad attitudes of the gamamsayers...Some after earning the money, use it to finance their education, while others use it not for educational purposes especially gambling and chasing girls to sleep with them-(Participant 12,[29/11/18]).

Generally, there was a shared position that gamamsey activities have helped boost the local economy. Almost all but few participants in the interviews opined a contrary position on how beneficial gamamsey has been to the local community. Opinions, however, differed on its unique contribution to particular aspects of social and economic life of the children. The results showed that gamamsey activities negatively affect the social life of children in the study area.

The relationship between gamamsey operation and the economic life was detailed. The results depict that 80.4% of the respondents agreed, 16.7% disagreed and the remaining 2.9% were uncertain about whether involvement in gamamsey

activities were very beneficial to ourselves and our families and should be encouraged. This shows that respondent believed that gamamsey business enhances one standard of living since that pays income all the time. According to them gamamsey business has economic advantage and their happiness in life in a way.

Table 7 Economic Impacts of Gamamsey activities on Residents

Statements	Agree	Disagree	I do not know
Involvement in Gamamsey activities is very beneficial to ourselves and our families and should be encouraged	82(80.4%)	17(16.7%)	3(2.9%)
Gamamsey activity pose a danger to our environment compared to the returns it brings to our community.	14(13.7%)	86(84.3%)	2(2.0%)
Gamamsey activities destroy farm land and should be discouraged	61(59.8%)	35(34.4%)	6(5.8%)

Source: Researcher's Field Data, 2018

From the results, it was found that majority of the respondents agreed to the fact that gamamsey activity destroys farmlands and should be discouraged. However, most of the respondents argued that regardless of the fact that gamamsey activities destroy farmlands, their involvement in gamamsey activities was very beneficial to them and their families and hence, they could not be stopped from engaging in gamamsey activities. The results implied that although respondents were fully aware of the negative effects of gamamsey, most of them were not willing to stop gamamsey activities as respondents argued that gamamsey was their sole economic activity and source of livelihood.

VI. DISCUSSION

The incidence of dropout in Tukuka Central Circuit in the Obuasi Municipality is on the increase. This was revealed by the study showing majority 61.8% of students staying away from school for a long time that it was difficult to recollect. In terms of factors accounting for this, the study showed that majority of this dropout students stayed with their mothers alone. The indication is that the absence of male factor in the family weakens the discipline and control measures needed for the upbringing of the child. Irrespective of the efforts by the female parents they normally find it very difficult ensuring effective control and disciplinary measures for the betterment of the child. Canagarajah & Coulomb (2008) confirmed that the whole family headed by the father has a significant role to play on the decision by children to work or school. Family is considered as a system with interrelated and interconnected parts which function well in a whole. If one part of the system misses, the father, the decision of the child whether to attend school or work would be shuttered. Children will therefore act on the safer side by ignoring school and going for work to get enough money relieve them of their condition of poverty. Several researchers have confirmed that divorce, separation

and death deplete the interconnectedness, and interrelatedness of the nuclear family (Rumberger & Lim, 2008).

The study further revealed that relatives of majority of students were already in gamamsey business and most of the times asked to join them at the expense of the school. Considering the money one can make from the gamamsey business, the desire to offset the pressures from their relatives compared with long term, unseen, and uncertain future benefit through education, most students sometimes join their relatives at work. This has accounted for numerous school drop outs in the Tutuka Central Circuit in the Obuasi community. Moreover, the inability of parents to pay the school fees of their wards made them indulge in gamamsey activities to fetch them money. This finding is similar to that of Hunter and May (2000), who in South Africa found that school charges were important factors accounting for 27 percent and 30 percent of school dropout rate amongst boys and girls, respectively before graduation. Children, as a last resort quit school and work to get money to continue their education.

The study revealed some effects of gamamsey operations on school dropout in Tutuka Central Circuit of Obuasi Municipality. Majority of the children in gamamsey carried gravels. This poses health risk to the children which can ultimately lead to drop out. The indication is that gamamsey business reinforces children negative attitude of school and positive attitude towards work. Appreciable amount of money children received from gamamsey business motivates them to stay in the business instead of being in school. Majority of the respondents were into gamamsey business when they dropped out of school. This was explained by motivating factors such as financial rewards received in the business. According to Hilson (2001) gamamsey business has attracted more youth into the industry thereby increasing the dropout rate. According to Hilson even the ones already in schools dropout seeing that there are not even professional jobs for them at the end of their education.

Galamsey activity has been found decreasing academic performance of pupils because of truancy. When pupil's academic performance decline they are likely to drop out of school because of their unwillingness to stay in the school. This confirms a study by Moore (2005) which found that increased levels of class attendance are closely related to higher performance in terms of academics. One educational administrator in an interview admitted that gamamsey operations resulted in teenage pregnancy and peer influence thereby increasing school dropout.

The study also examined how gamamsey activities affected the socio-economic life of residents in the Tutuka Central Circuit of Obuasi Municipality including dropout pupils. It was revealed that children in gamamsey business have no control and therefore do whatever they plan for. Some children in gamamsey joined their friends to drink alcohol and engaged in gambling. They are influenced to have numerous sexual

partners partly due to the money they receive from the business. Armstrong (2008) affirms that "most job seekers including children in gamamsey indulge in alcoholism, prostitution, drug use and other crimes". These children, when they are employed in gamamsey, become free from the shackles of their parents and act on their own. In an interview with some local people of the town, gamamsey has boosted the local economy by serving as an employment avenue. According to them, gamamsey operation makes available money to cater for both school and home expenses. Hinson (2001) and Hentschel et al, (2002) confirmed that there is a very significant contribution to employment in gamamsey operation. This reduces unemployment conditions of the country.

Majority of respondent agreed that involvement in gamamsey activities is very beneficial to us and the families. Respondents of Tutuka Central Circuit do not believe that gamamsey activity poses danger to the environment. This goes contrary to a finding by Akabzaa and Darimani (2001) which asserted that gamamsey business has taken a lot of workforce from agriculture and other activities however it destroys lands that can be used for farming. The contradiction may be cultural bound, and level of education of inhabitants.

VII. CONCLUSION

The study finding adequately satisfied the objectives of the study. In the first place, the study found parenting couple with gamamsey activities in the study area were some of the major factors accounting for school dropout in the study area. The study concluded that parents who make their children to engage in gamamsey and other economic activities dropout of school commonly in the study area. It was also concluded that poverty was a factor for school drop-out in study area. Equally, performance on the part of students accounted for school dropout in the study area. It can therefore be concluded that the family involvement in gamamsey activities influenced the students to drop out of school. The study concluded that most of the dropouts were aware of the negative effects of gamamsey on school dropouts, respondents' health and life, and leading to increase social vices in the study area. However, the respondents argued that they were not in the position to discontinue their engagement in gamamsey activities since the respondents indicated that gamamsey activities were the main economic activities in the study area.

VIII. RECOMMENDATION

The government should make sure that pro-poor programs such as capitation grant, school feeding, adequate supply of exercise books and school uniforms are functioned properly. This will help reduce the burden on parents in raising money to finance their children education. And it will also go a long way to make children develop much interest to stay in school because of the food that they would be supplied.

The government should also provide an enabling environment that will help parents to create and secure jobs. This will help

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