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Gender in artisanal and small mines: an overview

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Flight of miner birds?

Once there was a king who asked his adviser:

‘how many crows are there in my kingdom?’ adding that if he did not give the correct answer, his head would be cut off.

The adviser thought carefully for a moment, and said:

‘sir, I will tell you, and if you do not believe me, you can always count them’.

‘Fool’, shouted the king, ‘how can I count them? Tell me at once!’

‘Well sir’, the aide replied, there are exactly 999,999, and if you find less, then obviously some have gone away, and if you find more, then some must be visiting’.

(An old Indian fable)

ASM, peasant mining or informal mines

- **Characteristics**

Small, scattered, low return, low mechanization, short-life span, frontier type, large range of minerals with varying processing & values, varying ownership, varying employment patterns, moonlighting: illegal, seasonal, poor marketing channels, can be large in size, important for subsistence, often primary, but also secondary incomes... **women present in large numbers**. Located in developing countries: Asia-Pacific, Africa, Latin A

- **Issues**

Environmental concerns ('disturbance of the earth's surface'), poor health (from malaria to AIDS) & safety, child labour, moral decay, sexual harassment, property rights, linkages with formal mines, regulation

- **Potential**

Poverty reduction, sustainable livelihoods, economic & social empowerment, entrepreneurship development

Traditional, artisanal mining & quarrying;

Non-traditional quarries;

Small but clustered;

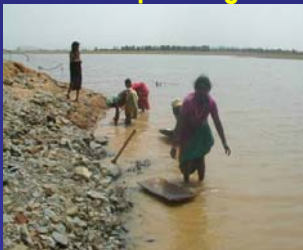
Abandoned mines

Scavenging

Alluvial panning



The many and varied faces of ASM



Gender does not mean just women

Women and work

Informal: no role in decision-making;
Constrained by conventions;
Often invisible, unrecorded;
Low-pay, low-status;
Less secure, more risky;
More manual: machines are male domain



'A gender approach involves a focus on both women and men rather than an exclusive focus on women.'

Defining gender

- '...One is not born, but rather becomes, a woman. No biological, psychological, or economic fate determines the figure that the human female presents in society; it is civilization as a whole that produces this creature...'
- '...**Women are much more rigidly constrained by gender than by sex...**'
- '...In all cultures, gender arrangements transform biological differences and sexuality into power relations and human agency...'



Gender and Sex

Gender refers to the social differences and relations between girls and boys, women and men. These are *learnt, vary widely* within and between cultures and *change* over time.

Gender values and norms refer to ideas that people have on what men and women of all generations *should be like*.

Gender stereotypes are the ideas that people have on what boys and men, girls and women are *capable of doing*.

Gender roles refer to the activities that both sexes actually do. In many societies the roles of men and women are segregated by sex, for example, boys help their fathers working outside the house on the land and girls help their mothers taking care of the household work.

In other societies the roles of men and women are increasingly interchangeable, for example, men also contribute to household work and women may be the breadwinners in family.

Women as workers in the mines

Although mining is commonly seen as a masculine job, women did, and still do, constitute a large segment of workers in the mines all over the world (WMMF 2000).

More so in ASM mining. MMSD (2002) reported: '*In contrast to large-scale mining, the involvement of women in small-scale mining activities is generally high*'.

The number of women in ASM is increasing.

Hinton *et al* (2003) estimated that approximately 30% of the world's ASM miners are women: proportion varies

ILO '*the impact of structural adjustment programs, low commodity prices or drought on private and public sector employment, trading, farming and inflation has led many people, especially women who relied on subsistence agriculture to seek new, alternative or additional paid employment for better quality of life, more usually just to survive*'.

Women as workers in ASM

Labourers: Crushing, grinding, sieving, washing and panning, carrying, amalgamation.....

- Self-employed or wage labour? At equal rates?
- Same work (digging) as men?
- Ancillary jobs? Full-time or part-time? Servicing the miners & running informal enterprises

Gender differentiation in ASM

- *Kamins & coolies*

Undifferentiated categories

- *Palliri* (gold miners) & *Barraanquila* (gold washers) in Bolivia
- *Garimpeiros* in Brazilin Amazon
- *Ninjas* in Mongolia
- *Galamsey* in Ghana

Women's work in ASM

- Traditional and non-traditional?
- Relation to post-colonial politics and global economics?
- Rushes & seasonal or temporary relief from natural disasters
- Local or migrants?
- Unaccounted for (no data!)
- Low wage rates: as individuals or as part of family units
- High risk, low security & safety; poor health and sanitation
- Low awareness about human rights & legal processes
- Lack of economic & social empowerment

Whilst these problems affect both men and women, it is the latter who have to put up with the more than their fair share

We know some, don't know much: eg. 'Findings' on Women & Mining in Tanzania (189) 'Mining is a demanding physical activity for women' but downplays the fact that women need consent from husbands to apply for loan.

An individual enterprise



A mechanized marble quarry

A large 'small' mine



Girl & boy carrying loads from the mine



Transport by cycle vans



Tea-shop lady



Packing the sacks on to the cycle

From the mine to the cart



Coking of coal



Limestone quarries, eastern India



Women: From part of 'the mining community' to equal & productive partners

Academic studies

- Changed from emphasis on impacts of mining on women to roles & status of women in mining, in formal **AND** ASM sectors
- Country-based examples & evidences bring a wealth of information; still under-researched are:
 - How do poor women subsist in mineral-rich tracts?
 - What roles women play in artisanal & informal mineral economies?
- Researcher's training / background evident:
 - In Mongolia, informal gold mining provides an invaluable social safety net*
 - In Benin (NW): socio-cultural perspective through the evolution of new economic circuits and migration*

Lessons learnt

Conferences & workshops

- Quito, Ecuador, 1998: Indigenous people identified in the consultation process
- Yaounde, Cameroon, 2002: Decreasing livelihood choices in marginal & remote areas, increasing pressure on available resources. Attention to livelihood practices & need for pro-poor policy framework. To integrate ASM policy into PRSPs.
Reforms: land rights, institutions, legislation
- Max Planck Instt, Halle, 2003: Socio-cultural perspectives
- Elmina, Ghana, 2003: *'African Women in Mining Network'* (originated from its Tanzanian precursor?) Mission statement: gender mainstreaming, socio-economic empowerment, capacity building, improved practices, employment generation, increased productivity

Lessons learnt

- IIR, SA, January 2004: *'The employment of women in mining conference'*
- Madang, PNG, 2003, *'Voices of Change'* : Identified four areas, Health & education, economic empowerment, social empowerment, safety & security
- In Madang: **Workshop on women in ASM** by Hinton:
Positive (improved capacity to meet family needs) & negative (social) impacts
Barriers preventing full benefits: inequities in political power, access to resources (capital, information, education & training), lack of human basic rights & presence of socio-cultural constraints
Lack of women in public office, lack of recognition of ASM as an activity contributing to poverty alleviation

Lessons learnt

International donor agencies, mining industry & institutions

- ILO, 1999: *Social and labour issues*
- MMSD, 2002: Gender is mentioned under 'Livelihood & sustainable development' section. 2 only in 67 page report
- Mongolian Business Development Agency: September 2003 report
- Extractive Industries Review, Bali, 2003: 'Small mines, big issues' (ILO). The question asked on ASM was: How can artisanal small-scale mining be practices with minimum impact to the environment and maximum impact on poverty reduction in the Asia-Pacific region'?

Also, 'Stakeholders' views on ASM' (Bugnosen): Int Instt, govt. Sector, academe & consultants, SS miners, mining Companies: legislation, capacity building, database, financing, training, meetings, specific projects.

Gender sensitization: issues running through are gender equality, livelihood questions & economic empowerment

Lessons learnt

Governments: ASM invisible. Translation of policy into action through legal & other facilitation. Q: resource ownership & rights, local tradition & cultural values....

NGO sector: generally ambivalent, but rising awareness

- Minewatch, London, 1997: *'Women united and struggling for our land, our lives, our future'*
- Zimbabwe: *Women in Mining* 1999
- JATAM, Bali, 2002: Women & Mining Group: Demanded equal opportunities for women & men.
- Oxfam Community Aid Abroad: *'Tunnel Vision'* in June 2002. *'Need for more focus, research & action to address the differential & often detrimental impacts that mining has on women from local communities'*.
- CEPROMIN: Centre for Mining Promotion, Bolivia
- RIMM, Samatha & m,m&P: *'International Network of Women and Mining'*, 2004 meeting in Vizag

Trade unions: still ambivalent

Why gender?

Winds of change

globalization of mining capital: 'new grounds' in developing countries
changing geographical distribution of inequality

Millennium Development Goals, 2015: Collective responsibility for halving world poverty. Explicit commitment to gender equality **as an end in itself**. *'No individual must be denied the opportunity to benefit from development. The equality rights & opportunities of women & men must be assured'*.

- * Gender inequalities are more pervasive than other forms
- * Cuts across other forms of inequality, more severe among poor
- * Structures the relations of production & reproduction in different societies

Why women as workers in ASM?

**Not only as part of the community, not for family's benefit
To remove gender inequalities, to empower as a person**

Mainstreaming ASM and gender

Interrelated tasks

Acknowledge ASM as a major livelihood activity capable of reducing poverty

Lobbying for the recognition of the important roles of women in ASM

Information dissemination on participation of women in ASM

Mining companies should provide training & outreach programs to small miners, including women

Support to the formation of women's associations

Constraints in creating a gender responsive ASM

Conventional gender roles & relations: subordinate position & lack of access & control over resources

Lack of knowledge of **Gender Analysis** (roles, responsibilities & needs), lack of gender disaggregated statistics

Inadequate **Gender Perspectives** within the governments & mining sector: over-emphasis on technical aspects

Putting gender into the mainstream mining (& development) agenda

- Visibility of women's work & agency, especially in poverty reduction: **Gender audit of mining projects**
- Challenge conventional models of the household
- Make analysis & research gender-aware from gender-blind to create synergies & trade-offs
 - Disaggregate conventional models if possible **by gender**
 - Introduce gender inequality as a variable
 - Reconceptualise ASM economies
 - Use micro-level measures & participatory approaches that include women
 - Change institutional frameworks & create new ones, if necessary
 - Participatory poverty assessments with women

No blue print, universal approach, will vary according to the context

From WID to GAD, but in mining GAM

Gender and Development (GAD) theory is distinctive from the terms Women in Development (WID) or Women and Development (WAD)

WID/WAD are based on the underlying rationale that development processes would precede much better if women were fully incorporated into them

The weakness of this approach is that it focuses on women in isolation.

In contrast, GAD maintains that to focus on women in isolation is to ignore the real problem, which remains their subordinate status to men

Kabeer (2001): 'The expansion in a person's ability to make strategic life choices in a context where this ability was previously denied to them' – more power, a process or changeover, and human agency & choice

In mining, GAD translates to GAM

Gender mainstreaming

Decision-making (so far) in mining

- Engineers, technologists & scientists
- Contractors
- Bureaucrats
- Politicians
- Consultants
- Environmental experts
- Development planners

Now, **gender & community specialists**

A gendered view will be a critical instrument in highlighting the contribution of ASM globally & nationally, in using its potential as a tool for poverty reduction, & finally, in creating sustainable livelihoods for local communities in mineral-rich regions