



Galamsey Fight in Ghana: An Analysis of Failure of Government Interventions Since 1989

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ABSTRACT

Illegal gold mining (galamsey) continues to be a threat to forest and water resources in Ghana. Even though *galamsey* is not new in Ghana, the use of heavy machines such as excavators and bulldozers, and chanfans are a recent phenomenon causing destruction to forests, farmlands and river bodies. Illegal mining undermines the government's commitment to the attainment of the 17 sustainable development goals. Governments since 1989 have made attempts to clamp down on illegal mining using military interventions. Unfortunately, these programmes have failed to yield any results. Concerns about the destruction of the natural environment and the impacts of climate change have heightened the fear of illegal gold mining in Ghana. This paper, therefore, analyses the failure of government/military interventions aimed at fighting illegal gold mining in Ghana since 1989. To achieve the objective of the study, the qualitative research approach was used. A total of 26 individuals were interviewed. Exploratory and descriptive research designs were employed for the study. As part of data management, collected data from fieldwork were cleaned and edited for spelling mistakes and inconsistencies before entries were made for analysis. Data analysis was carried out manually. Finally, the study found that the failure of government interventions since 1989 is as a result of a lack of proper planning of programmes aimed at dealing with illegal gold mining and poor collaboration between government and chiefs/stakeholders. The paper contributes to the discussion on illegal mining in Ghana and its impact on the environment and sustainable development.

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Publication History
Received 10th January, 2023
Accepted 24th March, 2023
Published online 6th April, 2023

Keywords: *Illegal gold mining, forests, water bodies, government interventions, sustainable development, livelihood, stakeholders, planning and collaboration.*

INTRODUCTION

Many states in the developed world, since the fifteenth century, are heavily dependent on the imports of natural resource products for national development.¹ It is worthy of note that the eighteenth-century Industrial Revolution prompted Great Britain and other industrial capitalist countries to link overseas territories such as Africa for raw materials, markets and investments. The scramble for Africa began and it became an integral part of the world capitalist economy. Forest resources were imported from Africa and they primarily functioned as producers of raw materials for western industrial manufacturing. Forests have thus played an important role in the development of the West and Africa.

¹ Jonathan M Harris, "Trade and the Environment," *Tufts University*, 2004.

Forests play an important role in the economic development of Ghana and the lives of Ghanaians, especially rural dwellers. It is a source of exports to countries in Africa, Europe and Asia.

Deforestation and forest degradation are two major concerns for conservation, and sustainable forest management in Ghana.² According to Oduro, one of the important strategies adopted by the government to manage forests and meet the growing demand for timber resources in Ghana is plantation development.³ Furthermore, the government, recognising the important role of forest resources in food security, climate change mitigation, poverty reduction and sustainable development, is promoting ecotourism in forest reserves. In addition, it has also instituted Operation Halt, Operation Vanguard and Galamstop Taskforce to support the fight against illegal gold mining (IGM), and the Youth in Afforestation programmes among others.

Despite these programmes to protect forest resources and to attain sustainable development, Ghana's forest resources continue to be exploited causing water pollution in rivers Pra, Oti, Offin and Ankobra, among others. Ghanaian and Chinese miners continue to engage in IGM and logging in the face of bans placed by the government. Illegal gold mining is the main cause of the depletion of the natural forest. Unlike in the past, today, mining is not only taking place on land but on riverbanks and riverbeds. This has caused the contamination of major water bodies nationwide.⁴ In the last decade, both domestic and foreign illegal mining operations have increased.⁵ Since 1989, the government has used legislation, military interventions and alternative livelihood programmes in an attempt to end illegal mining.

Unfortunately, all these attempts have failed to yield the desired results. Past studies have looked at the environmental impacts of illegal mining and efforts to end illegal mining. There is limited literature on government/military interventions and programmes aimed at ending illegal mining. This paper, therefore, seeks to analyse the failure of government/military interventions aimed at fighting illegal gold mining in Ghana since 1989. Specifically, the research seeks to evaluate state responses to illegal gold mining since 1989 and examine the challenges to the fight against IGM in Ghana.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Conceptual Issues

Forest Management in Ghana

As indicated earlier, forests play an important role in the economic development of Ghana. Key forest exports include sawn wood, plywood and veneers.⁶ Marfo indicates that chainsaw milling has a major impact on rural livelihoods.⁷ It is estimated that it employs around 100,000 people directly and supports the livelihoods of approximately 700,000 individuals.⁸ Furthermore, Kpelle and Marfo state that many rural households depend on fuel wood and charcoal to meet their everyday energy needs.⁹ According to the Forestry Commission, Ghana's total forest cover is 5,768,678 hectares,

² Forestry Commission, "Forestry Commission Annual Report 2017," <https://fcghana.org/Wp-Content/Uploads/2022/07/2017-FC-ANNUAL-REPORT-FINAL.Pdf> (Accra: Forestry Commission, 2017).

³ Kwame A Oduro, "Ghana's High Forests: Trends, Scenarios and Pathways for Future Developments" (Wageningen University and Research, 2016).

⁴ Gavin Hilson and Roy Maconachie, "Entrepreneurship and Innovation in Africa's Artisanal and Small-Scale Mining Sector: Developments and Trajectories," *Journal of Rural Studies* 78 (August 2020): 149–62, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jrurstud.2020.06.004>.

⁵ Gordon Crawford et al., *The Impact of Chinese Involvement in Small-Scale Gold Mining in Ghana* (International Growth Centre, 2015); Benjamin A Teschner, "Small-Scale Mining in Ghana: The Government and the Galamsey," *Resources Policy* 37, no. 3 (2012): 308–14.

⁶ Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, "Global Forest Resources Assessment 2010," <https://www.fao.org/forest-resources-assessment/past-assessments/fra-2010/en/>, 2010.

⁷ Emmanuel Marfo, *Chainsaw Milling in Ghana Context, Drivers and Impacts* (Wageningen: Tropenbos International, 2010).

⁸ Marfo, "Chainsaw Milling in Ghana Context, Drivers and Impacts."

⁹ David Kpelle, *Contribution of the Ghana Forestry Sector to Socio-Economic Development* (Presentation given at the 10th session of the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF 10), 2013); Marfo, *Chainsaw Milling in Ghana Context, Drivers and Impacts*.

approximately one-fifth of the total land area.¹⁰ Out of this, 2.6 million hectares is classified as forest reserve dedicated to both timber production and conservation. Also, according to the Commission, about 500,000 hectares of unreserved forests ('off-reserve') and 2 million hectares of cropland are also used as a source of timber. As such, deforestation and forest degradation are two major concerns for conservation and sustainable forest management in Ghana.

Agricultural expansion, logging (legal and illegal), urban expansion, infrastructural development and mining are the major causes of deforestation and forest degradation.¹¹ These have caused the shrinkage of Ghana's formal forestry sector which was estimated at 9.17 million hectares in 1995 to 5,768,678 hectares in 2017.¹² In view of this decline, successive governments have taken a host of measures to enhance forest resource management in Ghana.

In respect of the above, between 1970 and 1980, the government established 75,000 hectares of plantations within degraded forest reserves as part of the agroforestry programme. Oduro states that the Ghanaian government began a reforestation campaign in the mid-1990s as part of the 1994 Land and Wildlife Policy.¹³ The policy aimed to address the issue of deforestation and forest destruction, which resulted in the decline of the forest resource base. Similarly, the Forestry Development Master Plan (FDMP 1996–2020) was launched in 1996 to promote private plantation development, with a target of 10,000 hectares annually for 20 years.¹⁴

The government of Ghana in 2001 initiated a National Forest Plantation Development Programme (NFPDP) to plant 20,000 hectares per annum. The main objective of the NFPDP was to restore forest cover of degraded forest lands.¹⁵ It also sought to create job opportunities as a method of reducing or alleviating rural poverty, as well as solving future wood shortages and improving food production.¹⁶ Consequently, legal reforms were carried out in 2002 to encourage the development of the plantation.

The Timber Resources Management (Amendment) Act, 2002 (Act 617), and the Timber Resources Management (Amendment) Regulations, 2002 (LI, 1721) were promulgated to prohibit the granting of timber rights on land with private tree plantations or land with any timber grown or owned by individuals or groups of individuals.¹⁷ Small-scale farmers in off-reserve areas were given incentives to participate in on-farm tree planting as a result of the reforms. As a result, between 2002 and 2012, the NFPDP saw the establishment of 168,910 hectares of forest plantations across the country, mostly in degraded forest reserves, by both the public and private sectors.¹⁸ In recent times, illegal gold mining activities are causing fast depletion of forest resources.

Small scale illegal gold mining activities in Ghana have evolved and grown steadily over the past two decades from artisanal mining into a more organised and mechanised sector (Minerals Commission (MINCOM)).¹⁹ In 2018, the Minerals Commission report indicates that SSM contributed

¹⁰ Forestry Commission, "Forestry Commission Annual Report 2017."

¹¹ G. M. Kissinger, Martin Herold, and Veronique De Sy, "Drivers of Deforestation and Forest Degradation: A Synthesis Report for REDD+ Policymakers" (Lexeme Consulting, 2012); Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, "Global Forest Resources Assessment 2010."

¹² Forestry Commission, "Forestry Commission Annual Report 2017"; Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, "Global Forest Resources Assessment 2010."

¹³ Oduro, "Ghana's High Forests: Trends, Scenarios and Pathways for Future Developments."

¹⁴ Oduro.

¹⁵ Forestry Commission Ghana, "Ghana Forest Plantation Strategy: 2016-2040,"

[https://www.oldwebsite.fcghana.org/userfiles/files/Ghana%20Forest%20Plantation%20Strategy_FC_\(2\).Pdf](https://www.oldwebsite.fcghana.org/userfiles/files/Ghana%20Forest%20Plantation%20Strategy_FC_(2).Pdf) (Accra: Forestry Commission Ghana, 2016).

¹⁶ Oduro, "Ghana's High Forests: Trends, Scenarios and Pathways for Future Developments."

¹⁷ Forestry Commission Ghana, "Ghana Forest Plantation Strategy: 2016-2040."

¹⁸ Oduro, "Ghana's High Forests: Trends, Scenarios and Pathways for Future Developments"; Forestry Commission Ghana, "Ghana Forest Plantation Strategy: 2016-2040."

¹⁹ Minerals Commission of Ghana, "Small Scale and Community Mining Operational Manual. ," 2021; Teschner, "Small-Scale Mining in Ghana: The Government and the Galamsey."

43% of the total gold production in Ghana.²⁰ This growth has been linked to the involvement of foreign investors such as the Chinese and the introduction of technologies and heavy earth-moving equipment like bulldozers, excavators, crushing machines and suction equipment.²¹

State Response to Illegal Gold Mining (IGM)

Illegal gold mining in Ghana commenced more than a century ago. Nonetheless, the first official government response in dealing with IGM in Ghana was the legalisation of SSM in 1989, ‘Small-Scale Gold Mining Law, PNDC L I 218’. After the passage of the law, there was a military intervention to deal with all illegal miners.²² Unfortunately, the passage of the law to legalise SSM and the military operation could not resolve the issues surrounding IGM in Ghana. In September 2006, the government announced an operation known as ‘Fight Against Illegal Mining or Operation Flush Out’. It was a nationwide military exercise to sweep illegal miners who were expanding to legal mining sites and causing destruction to the natural environment.²³ Hilson et al add that “during the months before the sweep, the Ghanaian government, being aware that illegal mining was becoming unmanageable and under pressure from the country’s mining companies to address the problem, intervened to prevent further expansion of galamsey camps.”²⁴

The government had indicated that it was going to earmark areas for galamsey after putting a halt to IGM operations. This never happened and illegal miners returned to galamsey sites.²⁵ Since the failure of this initiative, governments had put in adhoc measures to fight IGM. These have not solved the problem of illegal mining and the destruction of forests and water resources. The involvement of Chinese migrants and the use of heavy equipment in illegal mining led to new initiatives by the government to deal with this menace. According to Boafo et al, in May 2013, the Government of Ghana commissioned a five-member Inter-Ministerial Taskforce to clamp down on illegal SSM.²⁶ The ministries included the Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources (MLNR), the Ministry for the Interior and the Ministry of Defense. Among other things, the Taskforce was tasked with arresting and prosecuting all Ghanaians and foreigners involved in illegal SSM, seizing equipment belonging to illegal miners and deporting all non-Ghanaians involved in the activity.

Also, Ghanaians who have sub-leased their concessions to foreigners should have their licenses revoked.²⁷ According to Boafo et al, although the crackdown by security reduced the number of illegal miners, the work of the Taskforce could not wholly stop illegal mining.²⁸ This is because the Taskforce was made up entirely of state actors, with no input from traditional land actors like chiefs, who deal directly with illegal miners through land acquisitions. The failure of the above programmes to crack down on illegal gold miners led to the launch of the campaign against IGM by the Media Coalition Against Galamsey in 2017. Boafo et al. point out that the government responded and launched Operation Vanguard to end SSIM in the Ashanti, Eastern and Western Regions.²⁹ The operation later targeted the Central Region. Operation Vanguard was a Joint Military Police Taskforce comprising 400 servicemen from the military and police service.

²⁰ Minerals Commission of Ghana, “Small Scale and Community Mining Operational Manual. .”

²¹ Crawford et al., *The Impact of Chinese Involvement in Small-Scale Gold Mining in Ghana*; Teschner, “Small-Scale Mining in Ghana: The Government and the Galamsey.”

²² Gavin Hilson, Natalia Yakovleva, and Sadia Mohammed Banchirigah, “‘To Move or Not to Move’: Reflections on the Resettlement of Artisanal Miners in the Western Region of Ghana,” *African Affairs* 106, no. 424 (July 1, 2007): 413–36, <https://doi.org/10.1093/afraf/adm038>.

²³ Hilson, Yakovleva, and Banchirigah, “‘To Move or Not to Move’...”

²⁴ Hilson, Yakovleva, and Banchirigah, “‘To Move or Not to Move’...,” 3.

²⁵ Hilson, Yakovleva, and Banchirigah, “‘To Move or Not to Move’...,” 3.

²⁶ James Boafo, Sebastian Angzoorokuu Paalo, and Senyo Dotsey, “Illicit Chinese Small-Scale Mining in Ghana: Beyond Institutional Weakness?,” *Sustainability* 11, no. 21 (2019): 5943.

²⁷ Boafo, Paalo, and Dotsey, “Illicit Chinese Small-Scale Mining in Ghana: Beyond Institutional Weakness?”; Crawford et al., *The Impact of Chinese Involvement in Small-Scale Gold Mining in Ghana*.

²⁸ Boafo, Paalo, and Dotsey, “Illicit Chinese Small-Scale Mining in Ghana: Beyond Institutional Weakness?”

²⁹ Boafo, Paalo, and Dotsey, “Illicit Chinese Small-Scale Mining in Ghana: Beyond Institutional Weakness?”

In 2019, the Ministry of Environment, Science, Technology and Innovation (MESTI) also set up a 64-member Galamstop Taskforce to support the Operation Vanguard team in fighting illegal mining.³⁰ Bofo et al. submit that the government placed a six-month ban on all forms of SSM in the country before the work of Operation Vanguard started.³¹ The ban was to make their operations easier and more successful. The Taskforce carried out its mission, and by February 2018, over 1000 illegal miners, had been apprehended. In addition, hundreds of temporary shelters for illegal miners were destroyed, along with the confiscation and burning of mining equipment. Many detained were either fined or jailed. Foreign nationals who were arrested were deported.³² Hausermann and Ferring indicate that some corrupt members of the security task forces and others who were under the control of “big men” with political power provided support to both locals and foreigners engaged in illegal operations for personal gains.³³ State interventions to combat SSIM, therefore, failed to combat IGM partly due to the failure of state institutions.³⁴

Furthermore, in 2021, the government authorised the military operation, Operation Halt II. This operation aimed at taking action against illegal mining in forest reserves and water bodies. It must be noted that prior to this operation, the government had declared some forest reserves and water bodies as red zones for mining. In order to help reduce the hardships persons in mining communities endured as a result of activities of Operation Halt, the government in October 2021, launched the National Alternative Employment and Livelihood Programme (NAELP). The NAELP had six modules including a land reclamation, and reforestation programme, agriculture and agro-processing, apprenticeship, skills training and entrepreneurship, responsible, viable and sustainable community mining, mine support services and community engagement programmes. The main objective of the Community Mining Scheme is to bolster the local participation of residents of host communities in sustainable small-scale mining to reduce illegal practices.³⁵

Legal and Institutional Framework for Managing Mining in Ghana

According to Teschner, Ghana has, since the 1980s, put together and adopted a legal and institutional framework to guide the operations of both large and SSM industries.³⁶ The main aim of this framework was to ‘promote, formalise and regulate the mining sector.’ For example, in 1986, the government recognising the importance of mining to the development of the nation enacted the Minerals and Mining Law.³⁷ This law sought to promote and regulate the orderly development of the sector. The Environmental Protection Agency Act 490³⁸ mandates the EPA to “manage, protect, enhance the country’s environment and seek common solutions to global environmental problems. The agency is dedicated to improving, conserving and promoting the country’s environment and striving for environmentally sustainable development with sound, efficient resource management, taking into account social and equity issues. It oversees the implementation of the National Environment Policy”. The Forestry Commission Act 571 of 1999 establishes the Forestry Commission of Ghana as a corporate body “responsible for the regulation of the utilisation of forest and wildlife resources, the conservation and management of those resources and the coordination of policies related to them.”³⁹

Furthermore, the responsibility for the regulation and management of the utilisation of the mineral resources of Ghana and the coordination and implementation of policies relating to mining is

³⁰ Richmond Yeboah, “Diplomatic Relations, Environment and Development: An Interrogation of Ghana-China Relations and Illegal Mining in the Amansie South District.” (University of Cape Coast, 2022).

³¹ Bofo, Paalo, and Dotsey, “Illicit Chinese Small-Scale Mining in Ghana: Beyond Institutional Weakness?”

³² Bofo, Paalo, and Dotsey, “Illicit Chinese Small-Scale Mining in Ghana: Beyond Institutional Weakness?”

³³ Heidi Hausermann and David Ferring, “Unpacking Land Grabs: Subjects, Performances and the State in Ghana’s ‘Small-Scale’ Gold Mining Sector,” *Development and Change* 49, no. 4 (July 2018): 1010–33, <https://doi.org/10.1111/dech.12402>.

³⁴ Hilson and Maconachie, “Entrepreneurship and Innovation in Africa’s Artisanal and Small-Scale Mining Sector...”

³⁵ Minerals Commission of Ghana, “Small Scale and Community Mining Operational Manual.”

³⁶ Teschner, “Small-Scale Mining in Ghana: The Government and the Galamsey.”

³⁷ PNDC Law 153.

³⁸ EPA, 1994:1.

³⁹ The Republic of Ghana, “FORESTRY COMMISSION ACT, 1999,” Pub. L. No. ACT 571, 1 (1999), 1.

vested in the MINCOM. The Commission was established under Article 269 of the 1992 Constitution and the Minerals Commission Act 1993, Act 450. It also ensures compliance with Ghana's Mining and Mineral Laws and Regulations through effective monitoring. Artisanal and small-scale mining (ASM) is also reserved for Ghanaians under the Minerals and Mining Act of 2006 (Act 703, Section 83a) (MINCOM, 2021). It must be noted that SSM was legalised in 1989 under the 'Small-Scale Gold Mining Law, PNDC L 218'. According to the Minerals and Mining Act 2006 (Act 703), SSM 'operation means mining operation over an area of land in accordance with the number of blocks prescribed'.

License for SSM is for five (5) years duration. This is renewable upon satisfactory performance during the stipulated period. The MINCOM and the EPA are the core government institutions charged with mining permitting. The EPA and the Water Resources Commission approve an environmental permit (which includes a water use permit). The Minister of MLNR represents the government and, on the advice of the MINCOM, approves the mineral rights for the prospective company. In addition, the inspectorate division of the MINCOM issues final operating permits. Regulators from the MINCOM District Offices and the EPA conduct on-field monitoring visits to mining sites.

In addition, in 2021, the government recognising that most mining communities are negatively impacted by mining activities, yet they receive little benefit from the sector as host communities introduced the Community Mining Scheme (CMS).⁴⁰ The CMS, according to MINCOM, is a government policy aimed at dealing with illegal mining by encouraging people living in mining communities to undertake viable, responsible and sustainable SSM as prescribed under the Minerals and Mining Act, 2006 (703) and Minerals and Mining (Licensing) Regulations, 2012 (L.I 2176).⁴¹

Despite the many minerals and mining laws and the mandate given to government ministries, departments and agencies to enact laws, and by-laws and to manage the environment, the rate at which Ghana is losing its forest resources as a result of IGM is alarming.⁴² The loss of these resources will impact negatively on Ghana's quest of achieving the SDGs one, two, three, twelve, thirteen, fourteen and fifteen. Teschner argues that political leniency and corruption in the enforcement of laws have resulted in the booming of the SSM sector. Regulation has, therefore, become highly difficult over time.⁴³

McQuilken and Hilson explain that inadequate financial, personnel and logistical capacity of state regulators have deepened the enforcement problem.⁴⁴ Teschner indicates that lack of information also contributes to the problem.⁴⁵ This is because miners and operators in the informal sector lack knowledge of the institutions and legal requirements governing the subsector. They also lack the basic technical skills and capacity needed for practicing sustainable mining. Hilson adds that there is generally low environmental awareness within the sector.⁴⁶

Acquisition of Land for Mining in Ghana

Adu-Baffour, Daum and Birner have noted that minerals in their raw states are the property of the state in the trust of its citizens.⁴⁷ However, the lands on which such minerals are found could have different types of ownership. Adu-Baffour et al, add that the location of the land and the tenure system plays an important role in the transfer for use as a mining concession, they also mention that "there are five (5)

⁴⁰ Minerals Commission of Ghana, "Small Scale and Community Mining Operational Manual."

⁴¹ Minerals Commission of Ghana, "Small Scale and Community Mining Operational Manual."

⁴² Bofo, Paolo, and Dotsey, "Illicit Chinese Small-Scale Mining in Ghana: Beyond Institutional Weakness?"; World Bank, "World Development Report 2016: Digital Dividends," 2016, <https://www.worldbank.org/en/publication/wdr2016>.

⁴³ Teschner, "Small-Scale Mining in Ghana: The Government and the Galamsey."

⁴⁴ James McQuilken and Gavin Hilson, "Artisanal and Small-Scale Gold Mining in Ghana: Evidence to Inform an Action Dialogue" (International Institute for Environment and Development., 2016).

⁴⁵ Teschner, "Small-Scale Mining in Ghana: The Government and the Galamsey."

⁴⁶ C. Chesaina, *Oral Literature of the Kalenjin* (Nairobi: Heinemann, 1991).

⁴⁷ Ferdinand Adu-Baffour, Thomas Daum, and Regina Birner, "Governance Challenges of Small-Scale Gold Mining in Ghana: Insights from a Process Net-Map Study," *Land Use Policy* 102 (2021): 105271.

land ownership types in Ghana.⁴⁸ These are state lands, vested lands, stool lands, family lands and privately acquired lands. State lands belong to the state. The second category is vested lands. These are lands given to specific groups of people. Another type is the stool lands. These are lands vested in an appropriate stool or clan authority, represented by the chief or traditional leader, on behalf of its subjects, in accordance with customary law and usage. The fourth type is the family lands. These are lands vested in a family represented by a family head. Finally, the privately owned lands. These are freehold interest lands that have been purchased by an individual or a group of persons”.

It is instructive to note that most lands in rural Ghana where mining concessions are commonly located are owned by traditional leaders, extended families or individuals in the trust of members of the communities they lead (Adu-Baffour et al (2021)).⁴⁹ The Ministry of Land and Natural Resources indicates that about 78% of total lands in Ghana, including forest reserves, are owned by customary landowners or allodial titleholders (clans, stools, families). Customary law allows these landowners to exercise surface rights to lease or appropriate portions of these lands in the interest of their welfare to mining companies and individual miners. Traditional leaders, individuals and families, therefore, lease lands to individuals for mining.

From the above discussions, it can be argued that the weak legal and institutional framework is one of the factors that account for the weak enforcement of mining laws in Ghana. This is because in spite of the formation of Operation Vanguard and the Galamstop Taskforce by the government to arrest and prosecute illegal miners, the practice is still pervasive. Also, despite the decision of the government in 2013 to ban the logging and sale of rosewood in Ghana, illegal logging and export of rosewood to China have continued. The unfortunate aspect is that Ghana has stringent laws to protect the environment as stated earlier. There have been reports of the arrest of some illegal miners and loggers especially Chinese nationals in Ghana but, prosecution of these offenders has so far not been successful. To achieve compliance with the law and protection of the natural environment, the government must enforce appropriate environmental laws without making any compromises.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A qualitative research approach was employed for this study due to the nature of the variables. Qualitative research assumes that the world is socially constructed.⁵⁰ With regard to this study, qualitative research stresses the importance of recognising subjectivity, not only that of the research but also that of the researcher.⁵¹ The main reason for adopting a qualitative research design for this study was that the study aimed to achieve a deeper understanding of the failure of government interventions toward ending IGM. The qualitative research design was employed by using non-random sampling techniques in key informant interviews. This is because there was the need to interview officials who knew about particular government policies relating to the programmes put in place to deal with IGM.

Exploratory and descriptive research designs were employed in the study. The use of exploratory research design helped to identify new areas of knowledge and a deep insight into the failure of state interventions aimed at ending IGM in Ghana. The study also used descriptive design because it entails a systematic collection and presentation of data on IGM in Ghana. It offered the researcher the opportunity to analyse the failure of programmes put in place to protect the natural

⁴⁸ Adu-Baffour, Daum, and Birner, “Governance Challenges of Small-Scale Gold Mining in Ghana...”

⁴⁹ Adu-Baffour, Daum, and Birner, “Governance Challenges of Small-Scale Gold Mining in Ghana...”

⁵⁰ Lawrence Neuman, “Social Research Methods: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches,” *England. Pearson Education Limited*, 2014; S Sarantakos, “Social Research” (London: Macmillan International Higher Education, 2012); Iain Black, “The Presentation of Interpretivist Research,” *Qualitative Market Research: An International Journal*, 2006.

⁵¹ Creswell John and Creswell David, *Research Design : Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*, SAGE Publications, Inc. (US), 5th, illustrated, ed. (SAGE Publications, 2018), https://books.google.com/books/about/Research_Design.html?id=s4ViswEACAAJ; Maggie Sumner, “Feminist Research.,” in *The Sage Dictionary of Social Research Methods*, ed. Victor Jupp (London: Sage Publications, 2006); W. Lawrence Neuman, *Social Research Methods: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*, vol. 30, 2002, <https://doi.org/10.2307/3211488>.

environment. This study used an interview guide and documentary review to interrogate the failure of government interventions aimed at dealing with illegal mining. The targeted population for this study was the Amansie South District Assembly (ASDA) in the Ashanti Region. A purposive sampling technique was used to draw 26 respondents for the study.

The study relied on responses from interviews with Chiefs/Opinion leaders, Officials of the Amansie South District Assembly, Assembly Members, and the Forestry Commission. Others included officials of the Ministry of Trade and Industry (MOTI), MINCOM, Illegal Miners, and Former Members of the Taskforce as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Sample distribution

Category of Respondents	Sample
Ministry of Trade and Industry	2
Forestry Commission	3
Ghana Immigration Service	4
Minerals Commission	1
Chiefs/Opinion Leaders	3
Members of Inter-Ministerial Committee	2
Small Scale Miners	3
Officers of ASDA/Assembly Members	5
Chinese Industry Representatives	3
Total	26

Source: Field Survey, Yeboah (2020)

Laws on small scale mining in Ghana were also reviewed. Data analysis for this study was done manually. The data for this study came from audio recordings, notes and photographs taken during the collection of data of fieldwork. Data collection and management went hand in hand. The researcher transcribed the recorded interviews with the help of the field assistant at the end of the field gathering. The data was examined in depth at this time in order to aid in conclusive coding.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Analysis of Programmes to Deal with IGM

According to the World Bank, the impacts of environmental degradation are not only local but global.⁵² In view of this, governments all over the world have committed to the SDGs and initiated programmes to deal with activities that undermine the natural environment and the livelihood of the people. The UN SDGs underscore the importance of climate change mitigation and the protection of forests and water resources. In Ghana, one of the threats to the protection of the environment is IGM which has a direct impact on the attainment of the SDGs. Government and intergovernmental organisations continue to make efforts to end IGM in Ghana. Several programmes have, therefore, been put in place to end IGM at both the local and national levels.

Responses for this study revealed that although the government has put in place institutions and several programmes to deal with this menace, the state continues to battle with illegal gold mining. An official of the Forestry Commission remarked:

Despite all the programmes put in place by the state, we continue to battle with illegal mining. This is causing devastation to the natural environment and water bodies. Governments upon governments have tried without any success (March 30, 2021).

⁵² World Bank, "Forests and Landscapes," 2019, <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/forests>.

National programmes aimed at dealing with illegal mining include Operation Vanguard, Galamstop and the Inter-Ministerial Taskforce against illegal mining, and Operation Flush Out among others. These programmes are discussed below:

Operation Halt II, 2021

The study discovered that in 2021, the government instituted the military operation, Operation Halt II. This operation was aimed at taking action against illegal miners who were operating in forest reserves and water bodies. It must be noted that prior to this operation, the government had declared some forest reserves and water bodies as red zones for mining.

Similarly, in 2018, the Forestry Commission announced the formation of the first Operation Halt group to prevent illegal entry into forest reserves. According to an official of the Commission, this was a joint military and forestry Taskforce aimed at bringing to an end IGM and logging activities in Ghana's forest reserves. An officer of the Ghana Immigration Service (GIS) noted that about 700 foreign nationals including Chinese, ECOWAS citizens, Indians and Russians were arrested and repatriated under the Operation Halt programme in the then Amansie West District which is now divided into Amansie West and South Districts. Out of these repatriated illegal miners, about 70% of them were Chinese. This measure seemed to be yielding results as the number of Chinese illegal miners in the ASDA had declined. A respondent from the Forestry Commission indicated:

Operation Halt has been fruitful. I can tell you that it helped in reducing the number of miners, including Chinese miners in the district. Now you do not see many of them at mining sites. In the past, they were all over the district and caused serious problems to our forest reserves (March 30, 2021).

Contrary to the assertion that Operation Halt had reduced Chinese illegal miners in the district, some respondents intimated that members of the Taskforce and other military men provided protection for Ghanaian illegal miners and their Chinese collaborators. According to respondents, there had been times that clashes erupted between community members and other anti-illegal mining Taskforces. An Assembly Member commented:

Sometimes you will go into the forest and realise that some of the military men are around protecting it. You may think that these men are protecting it from illegal miners. The sad truth is that these men are rather protecting Chinese illegal miners to mine the forest reserves. Oh yes, the Chinese do this illegal activity with the overt connivance of Ghanaians who may own the concessions (February 28, 2021).

Inter-Ministerial Taskforce against IGM, 2017

Respondents indicated that the Amansie South District benefited from the 2017 inter-ministerial Taskforce also known as "Operation Vanguard", which was aimed at dealing with IGM in Ghana. This was a Joint Military Police Taskforce comprised of 400 military and police personnel tasked with combating illegal SSM. Similarly, in 2019, the MESTI also set up a 64-member Galamstop Taskforce to support the Operation Vanguard team in fighting illegal mining. Interviews with respondents revealed that this operation was fraught with allegations of bribery and corruption. A Chief remarked:

Illegal miners, whose excavators were seized, were made to pay huge sums of money after which the excavators were released back to them. Also, illegal Chinese miners who were arrested were never prosecuted. Even though we were made to understand that those illegal miners arrested were going to be prosecuted we never heard of their prosecution. However, we later saw that those who were arrested were freed (February 26, 2021).

Inter-Ministerial Taskforce against Illegal Mining, 2013

From the field interviews, respondents revealed that, prior to the launch of the above programmes, in 2013, the government set up the Inter-Ministerial Taskforce aimed to clamp down on illegal SSM. Among other things, the Taskforce was entrusted with the responsibility to arrest and prosecute both

Ghanaians and foreigners engaged in illegal SSM. They were to seize equipment used by illegal miners and deport all non-Ghanaians involved in the practice. Also, Ghanaians who had sub-leased their concessions to foreigners should have their licenses revoked. According to an official from GIS, arrests of illegal miners who were mainly made up of Chinese, and ECOWAS citizens were made. The officer stated:

Apart from the arrest, hundreds of temporary shelters for illegal miners were also destroyed, along with the confiscation and burning of mining equipment. We were told that foreign illegal miners were going to be deported but we do not know whether this is true or not. This is because, though the total number of Chinese in our district seems to have reduced since the launch of Operation Vanguard, we still see Chinese in this area. Even some Chinese who were once arrested are still walking around (February 28, 2021).

An official of MINCOM added that “the operation was a welcoming programme which halted illegal mining activities. The unfortunate thing was the reports that some miners with legal documentation were affected, which should not be the case.”

A highly placed official of ASDA interviewed for the study indicated that the MINCOM was not actively involved in programmes to fight illegal mining in the district. However, the officer was quick to add:

... in fact, we don't see them involved, we don't see the kind of work they do in this district. I want to put on record that we don't have a MINCOM office in the district. The officer in charge of our mother district, Amansie West has an oversight responsibility here. I don't know whether this affects the work of MINCOM in the district. This is why we have put in place a Mining Taskforce to take care of regulating mining activities in the district. Management has also appointed a staff as the ASDA Mining Desk Officer who coordinates the work of the Taskforce (May 17, 2021).

From the discussion above, despite the fact that the crackdown seemed to have reduced the number of illegal miners in the Amansie South District, the Taskforce was unable to completely stop illegal mining. The study found that it might be due to so many challenges such as a weak institutional framework, lack of political will, and lack of stakeholder involvement and consultations. Others include inadequate logistics, difficult access to mining sites, bribery and corruption, among others.

Challenges to the Fight against Illegal Mining

As noted earlier, programmes aimed at dealing with illegal mining have been unsuccessful because of a myriad of problems. The involvement of the Chinese and the weak legal/institutional framework contribute significantly to the failure. This section attempts to discuss legal and institutional arrangements guiding SSM in Ghana. Some of the challenges to the fight against Chinese involvement in illegal mining (CIIM) as gathered during interviews for the study and documentary reviews are also discussed.

Weak Legal and Institutional Framework

As noted earlier, the MINCOM has the legal responsibility to lead the regulation and monitoring of all mining activities in Ghana. The Environmental Protection Agency, and the Forestry Commission, are institutions that support the protection of the environment especially forest and water resources. These institutions work to promote mining as a source of livelihood for the people and also reduce the environmental impact of gold mining. Unfortunately, despite these laws and institutions dealing with IGM, the state continues to struggle with the enforcement of mining regulations as a result of weak institutions.

Interviews conducted for this study found that the MINCOM did not have enough staff in the district to carry out routine inspections of mining sites to assess the work of mining companies and concession owners. They lacked the capacity to stop illegal mining. An official of the MINCOM stated

that they did not have enough staff to carry out monitoring of mining sites. In terms of enforcement, the official said that they did not carry out enforcement but reported all illegal mining activities to the security agencies. The respondent from MINCOM stated:

...we have been carrying out strict enforcement of mining laws and regulations with the help of law enforcement agencies to ensure that mining is done legally. What we do is report all illegal mining activities to the security agencies to halt their operations. We don't make arrests or stop illegal miners but report to security agencies because there are records of attacks by these miners on our staff. The District Security Committees are given this information which is verifiable. The problem we have is that response from the security services is sometimes slow because of inadequate logistics (June 1, 2021).

A respondent from the Forestry Commission indicated that weak institutional arrangement accounts for Chinese involvement in illegal mining. He added, “we should not blame Ghana’s failure to enforce mining laws on its diplomatic ties or trade relations with China only but weak institutions.” Political interference in the prosecution of both locals and foreigners and inadequate logistics affect enforcement efforts.

Ghanaians were the owners of all concessions and operated them together with the Chinese and other foreign nationals. The Chinese provided funding or support services such as the sale of machinery to Ghanaian miners both legal and illegal. This collaboration makes it difficult to arrest Chinese illegal miners (June 1, 2021).

These findings confirm the work of McQuilken and Hilson and Hilson and Maconachie.⁵³ McQuilken and Hilson explain that inadequate financial, personnel and logistical capacity of state regulators have deepened the enforcement problem.⁵⁴ Hilson and Maconachie also posit that state interventions to combat SSIM failed to combat IGM partly due to weak institutions.⁵⁵

Lack of political will

Responses from interviews with Chiefs/Opinion leaders, Officials of Amansie South District Assembly, MINCOM, and Assembly Members revealed that successive governments lacked the political will needed to fight illegal mining in Ghana. Respondents explained further that politicians were deeply involved in illegal mining. In view of this, prosecutions of both local and Chinese miners had been unsuccessful. Some politicians who have mining concessions even threaten government officials who question their illegal activities. Respondents added that whenever these illegal miners were arrested, there were influential local people with political connections who fought for their release. One Chief declared, “Once an arrest was made, there was political interference from government official(s) or some members of the governing party.” An official of the MINCOM corroborated this point by stating that political interference was an impediment to the fight against illegal mining.

Officials of ASDA and Assembly Members said, “some Ghanaian officials have been using their positions in the government and ruling party to assist illegal Chinese miners to get away with the illegalities.” Some of the respondents revealed that there were some politicians and government officials who were also into these illegal mining operations. An official from the Forestry Commission explained:

⁵³ McQuilken and Hilson, “Artisanal and Small-Scale Gold Mining in Ghana: Evidence to Inform an’action Dialogue””; Hilson and Maconachie, “Entrepreneurship and Innovation in Africa’s Artisanal and Small-Scale Mining Sector: Developments and Trajectories.”

⁵⁴ McQuilken and Hilson, “Artisanal and Small-Scale Gold Mining in Ghana: Evidence to Inform an’action Dialogue’.”

⁵⁵ Hilson and Maconachie, “Entrepreneurship and Innovation in Africa’s Artisanal and Small-Scale Mining Sector: Developments and Trajectories.”

Over the years, law enforcement has been weak because some politicians own mining concessions and they operate them with the Chinese. When these Chinese miners are arrested, officials intervene and they are set free (March 30, 2021).

According to a Chief at Manso Adubia in the district, the state has been unable to deal with Chinese illegal miners. He commented,

..... not too long ago, the Chiefs had information that some illegal miners including both Ghanaians and the Chinese were operating in the Aboaboso forest reserves. We went there and made an arrest of some Chinese and local illegal miners. The case was transferred to Kumasi on the premise that it was an order from above. Initially, we had hopes of successful prosecutions but now some of us are no more interested in pursuing the case. This is because, we have been following the case but it is obvious that there is no motivation on the part of state authorities to prosecute Chinese illegal miners (February 26, 2021).

Bribery and corruption

The study also found that the incidence of bribery and corruption was an impediment to the fight against IGM in Ghana. Respondents alleged that local miners and their collaborators paid huge sums of money to members of the illegal mining Taskforce to compromise their activities. Interviews with respondents revealed that members of the anti-illegal mining Taskforce had been extorting monies from illegal miners and had left them to operate when they were supposed to arrest them and seize their equipment. In view of this, illegal miners continued to operate with impunity. In the words of an Assembly Member, “why won’t they continue engaging in these illegalities? After all, the farthest authorities could go is to collect monies from them.”

Interviews reviewed that local miners realising that the Taskforce had been compromised by Chinese miners, formed partnerships with the Chinese to operate illegal mining activities in the Amansie South District. These illegal miners did not take anti-illegal mining Taskforce operations seriously. A Chief remarked:

I can tell you that the people who were charged to fight illegal mining took bribes from illegal miners and allowed them to operate. Those who were arrested or had their machinery/equipment seized were the ones who failed to pay bribes. Community members have realised this phenomenon and have decided to rather partner with Chinese illegal miners. They pay bribes to officials whenever they are arrested. Oh yes, it makes virtually no sense for community members to work hard in dealing with the canker when state officials mandated to halt this unsafe situation continue to compromise their work (February 26, 2021).

In an effort to affirm the above allusions, a former member of Operation Vanguard revealed:

My brother, dealing with illegal miners is a difficult and complex task. There are so many forces working against the desire to end illegal mining because we are not honest with ourselves. People who are supposed to lead in dealing with IGM tend to compromise their activities for selfish gains. We all know those who are involved but we always go to chase mining equipment (March 28, 2021).

The study also found that since 1989, the state had put out several legislations and programmes such as Operation Halt I and II, Operation Vanguard, Galamstop and the Inter-Ministerial Taskforce to end illegal mining. Despite these efforts by the state, it continues to battle with IGM and its devastating impacts on the natural environment because of weak institutions. This finding supports the work of Hausermann and Ferring who indicate that programmes to combat illegal mining failed because some corrupt members of the security task forces and others who were under the control of

“big men” with political power provided support to people engaged in illegal operations for personal gains.⁵⁶

Inadequate consultations and planning with stakeholders

The study found that all the national programmes put in place to deal with illegal mining lacked proper consultations with key stakeholders, including community members, opinion leaders, chiefs and other local leaders. The respondents indicated that once these key stakeholders were not involved, there was very little they could do to support the fight against illegal mining. Also, respondents indicated that the various Taskforces had always disregarded suggestions offered to them by local leaders. Besides, some community leaders felt unconcerned because they had sold land to the people to engage in mining. Others also had also formed partnerships with the Chinese to operate mining in the district. An Assembly Member complained:

We are not informed nor involved in discussions and programmes by the government to fight illegal mining. We only hear of them when they are announced in the media. When the Taskforce comes there is no collaboration with community leaders. There are times we try to engage them on how we can work collaboratively to achieve results but they don't seem to be ready to listen to our inputs (February 28, 2021).

A Chief confirmed the above statements by indicating:

I remember in 2019, we suggested to members of Operation Vanguard that when they arrest these illegal miners, they should supervise them to reclaim the land before the machines were taken out of the mining sites. This we believed could have helped in reclaiming the land for future farming activities. Unfortunately, they did not agree and took the machines out of site. If we had been involved, they would have seen us as partners, and they would not have rejected our suggestions (February 26, 2021).

Also, in support of the above statements, a former member of the Inter-Ministerial Committee (Operation Vanguard) remarked:

The Inter-Ministerial Committee (Operation Vanguard) did not listen to any suggestion from the local people. One day I met the Committee, in fact, I was a member of the Committee, and I suggested to them that when we arrest illegal miners and seize their machines, they should bring the machines to the district. From there, we make sure that they use the machines to reclaim the land before they were transported outside the district but they said no! (March 8, 2021).

Respondents further indicated that programmes to deal with IGM lacked proper planning. The study found that even though government programmes to deal with illegal mining were good, they failed because they lacked proper planning. A respondent from ASDA noted:

Over the years, the government has come up with some good programmes to fight IGM but all of them failed. This is because the programmes were 'knee-jerk' reactions to the problem. As a result, people who were put in charge of these programmes exploited the weaknesses that came with a lack of proper planning (February 24, 2021).

The study found that lack of consultations with stakeholders especially the chiefs had affected programmes put in place to deal with illegal gold mining. For example, it was revealed that the Minerals Commission which is mandated to regulate mining activities was not involved in programmes aimed at fighting illegal miners. These findings corroborate the work of Boafo et al who argue that

⁵⁶ Hausermann and Ferring, “Unpacking Land Grabs: Subjects, Performances and the State in Ghana’s ‘Small-Scale’ Gold Mining Sector.”

despite the fact that programmes put in place to deal with illegal mining decreased the number of illegal miners, the Taskforce was unable to completely eliminate illegal mining.⁵⁷ This is possibly due to the fact that the Taskforce was made up entirely of state actors, with little input from the Minerals Commission and conventional land owners such as chiefs, who negotiate directly with miners through permits and land transactions respectively.

Informal Miners lack Information on Laws and Sustainable Mining

Lack of information also contributes to illegal mining and the destruction of the natural environment. Miners and operators in the informal sector lack knowledge of the institutions and legal requirements governing the subsector. They also lack the basic technical skills and capacity needed for practicing sustainable mining. There is generally low environmental awareness within the sector. The study found that, even though some mining companies had licenses and permits, their operations were illegal. For example, some CMSs were done in river bodies. This is because the owners and operators of small scale mining operations lacked knowledge of the laws and permit regimes governing the sector. This finding supports the work of Teschner who noted that miners and operators in the informal sector lack knowledge of the institutions and legal requirements governing the subsector. They also lack the basic technical skills and capacity needed for practicing sustainable mining and have low environmental awareness.⁵⁸

Inadequate funds and logistics

The fight against IGM demands adequate resources and logistics such as vehicles and security personnel. Most IGM sites are located in remote areas with poor road networks. Inadequate personnel, including police, immigration and military officers and logistics derailed programmes to deal with IGM at the local level. Responses from interviews proved that inadequate logistics hampered the fight. They explained that in the Amansie South District, most roads leading to mining sites were not passable. Thus, when officials received information about the activities of IGM, before security personnel who are deployed reached these mining sites, illegal miners may have left the sites. An official of the ASDA stated:

Hmmmm! Let me tell you... the truth is that the Assembly does not have funds and enough logistics to deal with IGM. Our roads are also poor so we are unable to come to speed with the rate at which illegal miners operate. They use excavators, bulldozers, trench drills and other sophisticated machines in mining. So within a few hours, they can cause serious damage to forest and water resources even before we get to the site (February 26, 2021).

Plate 1 shows an excavator and other heavy machines at an alleged illegal mining site belonging to the Chinese at Aboaboso in the ASDA.

⁵⁷ James Boafo, Sebastian Paalo, and Senyo Dotsey, "Illicit Chinese Small-Scale Mining in Ghana: Beyond Institutional Weakness?," *Sustainability* 11, no. 21 (October 25, 2019): 5943, <https://doi.org/10.3390/su11215943>.

⁵⁸ Teschner, "Small-Scale Mining in Ghana: The Government and the Galamsey."



Plate 1: Heavy machines for mining at an alleged illegal mining site

Photo credit: Fieldwork, 2021

Collaboration between Chinese miners and their Ghanaian collaborators

One of the challenges to the fight against IGM, according to respondents was the collaboration between Ghanaian SSM and Chinese workers. Responses from interviews found that it was Ghanaians who normally led the Chinese to mining communities and provided them with accommodation in some instances. An official of the Amansie District Assembly disclosed:

.... the collaboration between local people and the Chinese has made the fight against illegal mining difficult. The local people know where there is gold so they host the Chinese and, lead them to the forest. In view of this, they do not volunteer information about Chinese illegal miners and before we get the information, they have destroyed the forest (February 25, 2021).

In support of the above assertion, a Chief stated:

Our people have formed partnerships with the Chinese because they have the money and machines to make money from gold mining. Some of our people collect heavy amounts from the Chinese and take them to their family lands which have gold deposits to mine. Apart from the local people collaborating with the Chinese to mine our forest, there is another group, Ghanaian concession owners. These Ghanaians apply for concessions and partner with the Chinese to mine our gold. Sometimes, they only front for the Chinese in the acquisition of concession and entry permits because the law does not permit foreigners in SSM. To be frank, this prevailing situation makes fighting illegal mining difficult (February 26, 2021).

The study noted that Ghanaians applied for concessions, and mining permits and formed partnerships with Chinese investors/miners. This corroborates previous studies.⁵⁹ These studies generally established that Ghanaian miners apply for mining licenses from the Minerals Commission and other state institutions but form partnerships with Chinese investors and miners. Crawford et al indicate that the scale of Chinese citizens' involvement in informal gold mining in Ghana had grown

⁵⁹ Crawford et al., *The Impact of Chinese Involvement in Small-Scale Gold Mining in Ghana*; Jixia Lu, "A Chinese Empire in the Making?: Questioning Myths from the Agri-Food Sector in Ghana," *Made in China Journal* 1, no. 3 (2016): 30–33.

to such proportions with, increasing, instances of local conflict.⁶⁰ Similarly, Lu posits that despite the fact that in many cases, Ghanaians have the mining permits to operate SSM and legally own small-scale mines; the mines are controlled by Chinese investors.⁶¹

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The research analysed the failure of government/military interventions aimed at fighting illegal gold mining in Ghana since 1989. The study revealed that weak legal and institutional arrangements affected law enforcement regimes. Inadequate staff and lack of enforcement of laws were some of the institutional weaknesses in dealing with illegal mining. These weaknesses were exploited by illegal miners. Also, programmes put in place to deal with IGM failed as a result of a lack of political will on the part of the government. Moreover, bribery and corruption among members of the anti-illegal mining Taskforce constituted a major hindrance to the fight against IGM. The study also found that poor consultations between the government, local chiefs and other stakeholders affected the fight against IGM. This is because there was no cooperation between local chiefs and members of the various Taskforce charged to clamp down on the activities of illegal miners.

Furthermore, the study also revealed that inadequate funds and resources both human and logistics hampered the various initiatives by the government of Ghana to end IGM. The study found that most of the programmes to deal with IGM were not properly planned. They were ‘knee-jerk’ reactions by political actors in response to public and media campaigns. The study also found that miners and operators in the informal sector lack knowledge of the institutions and legal requirements governing the subsector. They also lack the basic technical skills and capacity needed for practicing sustainable mining. Finally, it was found that the collaboration between Ghanaian small-scale miners and Chinese investors was a threat to the success of the government’s fight against illegal mining.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is, therefore, recommended that government, through the MLNR, should involve the Minerals Commission, consult stakeholders and properly plan future programmes that aim to deal with IGM. For example, the government should engage all relevant stakeholders including chiefs, local authorities, opinion leaders and community members before the formulation and implementation of any programme aimed at fighting IGM. It is important to note that, when Chiefs and district assemblies are involved in initiatives aimed at fighting IGM, there will be a more local commitment to the fight. Minerals Commission and the Forestry Commission should be well-resourced to carry out their mandate and deal with illegal miners. Finally, MINCOM should build the capacity of miners and operators in the informal sector on institutions and legal requirements governing the subsector and sustainable mining prior to granting mining licenses.

CONCLUSION

The study analysed the failure of government/military interventions aimed at fighting illegal gold mining in Ghana since 1989. It also evaluated state responses to illegal gold mining since 1989 and examined the challenges to the fight against IGM in Ghana. Weak legal and institutional arrangements affected law enforcement regimes. Minerals and Forestry Commissions did not have adequate staff to carry out their mandates. Chinese illegal miners, therefore, exploited these weaknesses. Political interference and lack of political will to deal with Ghanaian politicians and their Chinese collaborators thwarted efforts to clamp down IGM in the country thereby causing destruction to forest and water resources. In addition, poor stakeholder management, lack of planning, and low consultation between the government, Minerals Commission and local chiefs affected programmes put in place to deal with IGM in the country. Also, the collaboration between Ghanaian small-scale miners and Chinese migrant workers contributes to the failure of programmes to deal with CIIM.

⁶⁰ Crawford et al., *The Impact of Chinese Involvement in Small-Scale Gold Mining in Ghana*.

⁶¹ Lu, “A Chinese Empire in the Making?: Questioning Myths from the Agri-Food Sector in Ghana.”

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