

ABSTRACT

Artisanal Gold Mining (AGM) is an important economic activity that underpins the welfare of many people worldwide (ILO 2001). Despite the importance of AGM, the major focus in Sub-Saharan Africa has traditionally been on large-scale mining and the welfare of artisanal gold miners particularly the trends relating to their health, income and food security are less known or documented (Collier, 2010). In order to examine the relationship between Artisanal Gold Mining (AGM) and the Welfare of Miners in selected districts in Uganda, a descriptive cross-sectional study design employing both qualitative and quantitative methods with the principles of epistemological pragmatism was used. (Stahl, 2003; Sol.H.G & Gonzalez R.A (2012), Wynn, 2001). 384 respondents were selected from artisans, AGM learders and district technical officers. Data was collected using questionnaires and an interview guide.

The findings indicated a strong correlation between the variables of interest determined using odds ration and 95% confidence intervals. Particularly, the nature of AGM, the AGM role and AGM business significantly affected the welfare of miners in terms of their income, health and food security. It was also established that the AGM was not properly executed as a business to improve the miners' welfare and as a result, their per capita income is well below the national figure and this is exacerbated by lack of mining rights coupled with limited decision making on AGM income.

The conclusion is that the nature of AGM; the AGM business; and the AGM roles significantly affect the welfare of miners in selected districts in Uganda in terms of their incomes, heath and food security. It is thus recommended that AGM should be improved through proper regulation and formalization. AGM should be executed as a business through provision of mining rights to artisans while AGM incomes should be improved through proper registration and formalisation. Finally, the involvement of children in AGM should be restricted; while the AGM roles should be harmonized to minimize income disparities and reduce wasteful and luxurious consumptive behaviors among the artisans.

Key words: Artisanal gold mining, welfare of miners.