

Evaluating the Attitudes of Local Communities towards Foreign Mining Companies, Government Policies, and Intervention Case study: Jackson Village, Liberia

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Abstract— This study aims to assess the attitudes of local communities toward foreign mining companies, government policies, and interventions in Jackson Village Liberia, and provide recommendations that may improve community-mining relations and the more sustainable exploitation of Liberia's natural resources. The study is based on a survey of 80 households in Jackson Village, Jorquelleh district number 3 Bong County, Liberia as well as focus group discussions with resettled communities, chief's elders, compensated individuals, and young people. Statistically, the discussion on the rules and regulations of the Mineral Development Agreement (MDA) governing both the citizens and the Uring gold mining company with the Government has not yet yielded based on the violations by the Uring gold mining community. Respondents said the violations of the mineral development agreement continuously increase the disregarding of the mining laws by citizens towards Uring gold mining company. This study finds that the majority of local people do not have a favourable attitude toward mining policies and interventions. 65% of respondents have unfavourable attitudes towards mining policies and interventions, compared to 35% who have favourable attitudes. Economic challenges are the most pressing issue in mining communities that cause unfavourable attitudes towards mining policies and interventions, followed by environmental factors.

Index Terms- Mining, Mineral Development Agreement (MDA), Intervention, Jackson Village, Uring, Compensation, resettled, compensated

I. INTRODUCTION

The focus of this study is to assess the attitudes of the local communities toward foreign mining companies, and recommending that the government visit the Mineral Development Agreement (MDA) regularly, with a study on Jackson Village, Jorquelleh District, and Bong County.

Mining is the process of removing precious minerals and geological elements from the Earth's surface (Rebello et al., 2021). Most materials that cannot be produced artificially in a lab or factory or cultivated through agricultural techniques must be mined. Metals, coal, oil shale, gemstones, limestone, chalk, dimension stone, rock salt, potash, gravel, and clay are among the ores that are extracted through mining (Adeleke & A. 2023). The ore needs to be a mineral or rock that can be mined, extracted, and sold for a profit and includes valuable components (Olafsdottir et al., 2021). Extracting any non-renewable resource, including water, natural gas, and petroleum, is referred to as mining in a broader sense (Brilha & J.2023). These deposits must be mined for raw minerals, which require money for labor, energy, processing, and transportation (Krysa et al., 2021). Both during mining operations and after the mine has closed, mining operations may have a detrimental effect on the environment (Worlanyo et al., 2021).

In many nations, mining is essential to their economic development (Worlanyo et al., 2021). These days, the production and availability of important commodities including copper (70%), bauxite (40%), iron ore, and precious metals are dominated by the growing economies (Mudd & G.M 2021). Moreover, mining benefits the economies of numerous nations. The creation of jobs and revenue is a further way to quantify the effects of mining (Adebayo et al., 2021). Over two million persons receive job and skill transfers from commercial mining. An extensive analysis of the economic and social effects of mining at the local level in Bolivia, Papua New Guinea, Chile, Peru, and Mali has been conducted by the World Bank Mining Department (Stemberg et al., 2023).

Liberia is home to a variety of minerals, including gold, diamond, bauxite, manganese, iron ore, and others (Kamara A.M 2029). In terms of economic value and foreign exchange profits, the most significant minerals are gold, diamond, iron ore, and bauxite. The mining industry has faced several difficulties that have made it challenging for the industry to grow and boost production (Upadhyay et al., 2021). Even though Liberia has been exploiting minerals, particularly gold, and iron ore for more than two centuries, there are still several issues that make it challenging for the industry to reach its full potential, particularly in the area of employment, and income, and subsequently contributing to growth. Additionally, a lack of compliance with policies, rules, and interventions, particularly by Small- small-scale mining, has resulted in several detrimental environmental (Surface water, groundwater, air pollution, forest and land degradation, etc.) issues that affect future generations.

Several conflicts have emerged in mining communities, including those between locals and mining communities, including those between locals and mining companies, communities and their chiefs, Small Scale Mines (SSM), and Large-Scale Mines (LSM) among others, even though several policies, regulations, and interventions have been put in place to address the issues of mining communities. The relationship between mining firms and the local community is not always the best in many mining areas today, which could have negative effects on the industry if steps are not taken to enhance the relationship. The focus of this study is to assess the attitudes of the local communities toward foreign mining companies, and recommending that the government visit the Mineral Development Agreement (MDA) regularly, with a study on Jackson Village, Jorquelleh District, and Bong County.

II. MATERIALS AND METHODS

2.1 Study area

The study was carried out in Jackson Village, Jorpolu clan, Jorquelleh district 3, Bong County, Liberia which lies between latitudes 7.0024 degrees north and longitudes -9.4728 degrees west and has an estimated population of about 500 people with mixed tribes which Kpelle is the most dominant. Jackson Village is

bordered by Kpoloyah town on the west, and Gbarmue on the north. The site is 30km away from Gbarnga, and the climate of the Jorpolu clan is influenced by tropical rain forest. The area experiences two seasons (April to September rainy and October to March dry season with a mean annual rainfall of 3000 mm. The mean annual maximum temperature of Jackson Village is 32°C and the mean annual maximum temperature is 30°C (MDSP, 2012). The elevation of the area is 285.9m.

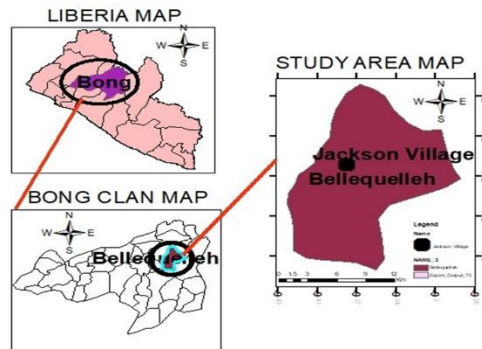


Figure 1: 1a is the map of Liberia, 1b is showing Bong clan map, 1c is the study area

2.2 Methodology

This chapter describes the design of the study with a particular emphasis on the techniques used to gather and analyse the data. The study's research methodology combines qualitative and quantitative data collecting with analytical techniques to gauge how mining communities feel about government policies and initiatives. The research is specifically focused on comprehending the attitudes of mining communities and the mechanisms via which these views turn into behaviour that influences communities' decisions to follow policies and interventions in the mining sector.

2.3 Sample Technique

The study technique used is straightforward random sampling. A specific portion of the population was chosen by the researcher to participate in the study. Every member of the population has an equal probability of getting chosen using this sampling technique. The choice of respondents who were willing and able to take part in the survey was made possible by the researcher. The formula for Taro Yamane's sampling technique will be applied

here when the population is greater than 100. n is defined as $n = N / (1 + Ne^2)$. N is the population, n is the sample size, and e is the error. The population >100, and the error that was taken into account was 5%.

2.4 Sample sizes

Based on population >100 estimated population, 80 people were selected as the sample size for this study. The 80 people who were interviewed provided input for this study.

2.5 Research Tools

To gather information, many primary data-gathering tools were used. Raw data used in the study, such as questionnaires, surveys, and field observations.

2.6 Research Questionnaire

The major method for gathering primary data was the creation and administration of a survey on how local communities felt about policies and initiatives in the mining sector. A questionnaire served as the primary survey instrument. The researcher created the questionnaire while taking into account the major concerns that residents may have regarding policies about the mining industry, as determined by earlier conversations.

Resettlement, compensation payments, conflicts; activities of small-scale miners, and other major problems were used to categorize the questions to streamline the overall structure. To ensure uniformity of responses and facilitate quick results analysis, some of the questions were closed. Others were sufficiently left open so that anyone could contribute data that would be essential to the study. The main goal of the questionnaire was to evaluate the local population to confirm or deny the existence of these issues as a significant factor in their observed attitude toward mining sector policies and interventions, as well as the extent to which these issues inform their attitude toward the mining sector and interventions. This information was gleaned from preliminary consultations and a literature review.

2.7 Data analysis

To assess the data, both quantitative and qualitative techniques were used. To assist check for data

entering problems. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was mostly used to analyze the data. The key informant interviews in Jackson Village that came from the data analysis are the perceptions of the local communities on the difficulties that they face and how those perceptions have affected their attitude toward policies and interventions in the mining sector.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

3.1 Overviews of findings

This chapter discusses the results and findings of research on the attitudes of local communities towards foreign mining companies in Jackson Village, District#3, and Bong County, Liberia. Data was collected through individual interviews, questionnaires surveys, and field observations. The researcher considered and sampled communities' dwellers around Jackson Village to evaluate community dwellers' attitudes toward mining companies, find out the economic impacts of mining company (Uring) on their livelihood, Observation on why residents of the area disregard mining laws, to examine Government intervention.

3.2 Demographic Data Characteristics of Respondents

The demographic data features of the respondents from the study area designated the gender, age ranges of respondents, educational level, marital status, and Religion of respondents. The annexation criteria for the forms survey were on any of the above demographic data characteristics that were accessible in a sampled domestic and willingly take part in the study.

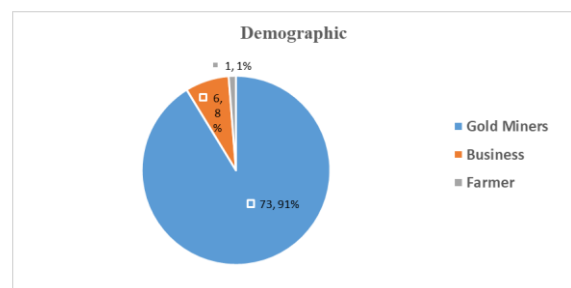


Figure 2: shows the population in the study

Figure 2. Parades the principal occupation of respondents in the study area. The principal occupational distribution of the respondents of Jackson Village revealed that the majority of the respondents are gold miners which constitute 91%, businesses constitute 8% and 1% represent farmers. From this back drift majority of the respondents who are gold miners from Jackson Village are majorly involved in the process of earning a living. Statistically, one occupation type influences the others, for example, the study revealed that gold mining is the main economic activity for the livelihood of a large portion of the population in the communities near the mining sites.it is followed by the group of business people with both gold miners and business people who are negatively affected by mad labour practices.

Table 1: Do the company and community have a good relationship?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
YES	25	31.2	31.2	31.2
NO	55	68.8	68.8	100.0
Total	80	100.0	100.0	

Table 1. Revealed the views of respondents on the working relationship in the mining area. The views of respondents on working relationships displayed that 55 respondents which constitute 68.8% revealed the poor working relationship between the citizens and the mining company in Jackson Village while 31.2% depict that there is a good working relationship between them. From the survey conducted by the researcher in collecting views of respondents, it was vividly explained by citizens due to the lack of the implementation of the mining rules (MDA), Uring mining company has been highly involved in land degradation, extinction of biodiversity, deforestation, soil, water, land pollutions and reduction in water quality. It also results in the vulnerability of macro-organisms and disease infestation especially; typhoid, bilharzia, dysentery, and the breeding of mosquitoes (introduction to Malaria).

3.3 The economic impacts of the mining company (Uring) on the livelihood in Jackson Village.

Findings of the economic impacts of the mining company (Uring) on the Livelihood in Jackson Village described; the provision of employment for Citizens, construction of community clinics and farm-to-market roads in the community, and compensation of citizens' farm land destroyed by the company. The details are below with their various tables and figures.

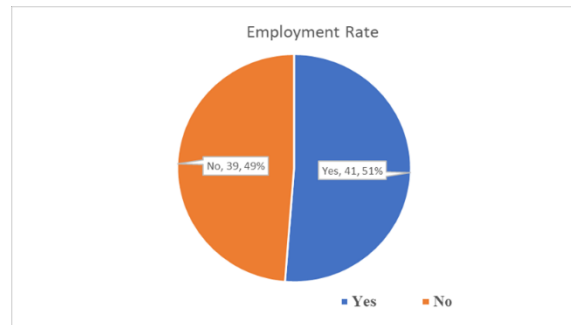


Figure 3: Shows the employment rate

Figure 3. The provision of employment for citizens by the company (Uring) clearly showed that there has been and still is employment provision activity in Jackson Village. In the research conducted by the researcher in the study area, respondents said that the provision of employment by the company (Uring) is highly on their agenda (51.2%), while 39.8% of respondents said there is no provision of employment by the company (Uring) in Jackson village. It is statistically clear that the presence of the company provides job opportunities for citizens in its environs which helps citizens in their livelihood.

Table 2: Did the company build a community Clinic?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
YES	1	1.2	1.2	1.2
NO	79	98.8	98.8	100.0
Total	80	100.0	100.0	

Table 2. Revealed the views of respondents on the construction of a community clinic in Jackson Village. Respondents from the study said the construction of a community clinic in Jackson

Village which is inscribed in the Mineral Development Agreement is lacking (no implementation). The majority of the respondents (98.8%) said no while 1.2% constitute yes.

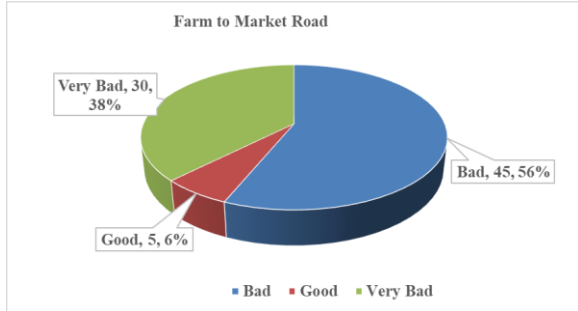


Figure 4: Shows the road condition to market

Figure 4. Shows respondents' views on the community farm-to-market roads in the study area. 56% of the respondents said the conditions of Jackson Village farm-to-market roads are bad, 38% of the respondents said the farm-to-market roads are very bad while 6% of the respondents revealed that the farm-to-market roads are good. Majorities of the respondents also said the lack of intervention of the Uring gold mining company has caused the road to resulted in deplorable conditions.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
YES	12	15.0	15.0	15.0
NO	68	85.0	85.0	100.0
Total	80	100.0	100.0	

Table 3. shows the views of respondents on the compensation to farmers whose farmland has been destroyed in the study area by the Uring Mining Company. 85.0% of respondents revealed that there is no compensation to farmers whose farmland has been destroyed while 15.0% said yes, there has been compensation to farmers for the destruction of their farmland. The operations of the Uring gold mining company in Jackson Village have drastically brought the demolition of farmland leading farmers into farming and loss of income.

3.4 Reasons for residents of the area disregarding mining laws

The findings of views of respondents on the reasons of residents in Jackson Village disregarding mining laws described; the lack of community members forming part of the MDA process and the lack of the implementation of the MDA by the Uring mining company Jackson Village.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
NO	53	66.2	66.2	66.2
YES	27	33.8	33.8	100.0
Total	80	100.0	100.0	

Table 4. Shows the views of respondents on the lack of community members forming part of the Mineral Development Agreement in the study area. The majority of the respondents (66.2%) said they have not formed part of the mineral development agreement while 33.8% constitute the number of respondents who said yes there is active participation of both citizens and Uring mining company. The lack of active participation of citizens in the discussion of the mineral development agreement with the Uring mining company described the lives of citizens as uncountable beings (said by the respondents).

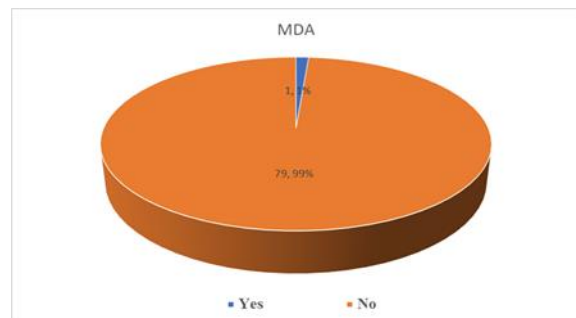


Figure 5: Shows how the company respond to MDA

Table 5. Revealed the full implementation of the Mineral Development Agreement (MDA) in Jackson Village by Uring Mining Company. The views of respondents on the full implementation of the Mineral Development Agreement showed that out of the total targeted sampled population, 99% said no to the full implementation of the MDA by Uring mining company while 1% agreed that Uring gold mining company living full up to the MDA. Statistically, respondents highlighted some major negative impacts post in their environment based on the lack of the full implementation of the Mineral Development Agreement by the company, such as; the construction of community clinics, farm-to-market roads, schools, scholarships, environmental education, afforestation, and the provision of safe drinking water (hand pump construction). These negative situations drastically impost some environmental problems such as; disease infestation, water contamination, land and air pollution, decomposition of agricultural produce due to lack of poor road connections, extinction of biodiversity, soil erosion, and lack of medication to citizens in the study area have sincerely brought the disregarding of the Uring gold mining laws by the citizens in Jackson village.

3.5. The intervention made by the Government of Liberia

Findings of respondents' views on intervention made by the Government of Liberia described the government inviting local chiefs in their regular meetings with the Uring gold mining company and the Government paying attention to their requests.

Table 5: Does the Government invite local chiefs to their regular meeting with the Uring gold mining company?					
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent	
YES	52	65.0	65.0	65.0	
NO	28	35.0	35.0	100.0	
Total	80	100.0	100.0		

Table 5. Shows the views of respondents on the Government inviting local chiefs to their regular meeting with the Uring gold mining company in Jackson Village. From respondents' views of this result, 65.0% constitute yes while 35.0% of respondents said no. Statistically, the discussion on the rules and regulations (MDA) governing both the citizens and the Uring gold mining company with the Government has not yet yielded based on the violations by the Uring gold mining community. Respondents said the violations of the mineral development agreement continuously increase the disregarding of the mining laws by citizens towards Uring gold mining company.

Table 6: Have the Government paid attention to your quests?					
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent	
YES	28	35.0	35.0	35.0	
NO	52	65.0	65.0	100.0	
Total	80	100.0	100.0		

Table 6. Revealed the views of respondents on the Government paying attention to local chiefs' requests from their regular meetings. 65.0% of respondents said there have been no government interventions in solving the quests while 35.0% said yes. This analysis revealed that the lack of citizens' quests about what affecting them has been downplayed by the Government of Liberia.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1. Over view of the results and findings

The research was assembled to evaluate the attitudes of local communities towards foreign mining companies and Government intervention and policies with a case study on Jackson Village District#3, Bong County, where Uring gold mining activities take place for the development of human and economic exchanges. The specific objectives were; to evaluate local community dwellers' attitudes toward mining company, find out the economic impacts of mining company (Uring) on their livelihood, observe why residents of the area disregard mining laws, and examine Government intervention and policies.

4.2. CONCLUSIONS

The study revealed the evaluation of attitudes of local communities towards foreign mining companies and government interventions as respondents gave their views. This research highlighted the views of respondents (communities' dwellers) on the economic impacts of the mining company (Uring) on livelihood through questionnaires, one-to-one interviews, and direct observation. Though the activities have created employment opportunities, a source of income) but the majority of the respondents were not happy with several environmental problems faced, the prevalence of some mining-related waterborne diseases, the destruction of socially and economically valued plants and animals; existed poor road connections leading to the mining sites. From the survey conducted by the researcher in collecting views of respondents, it was vividly explained by citizens due to lack of implementation of the mining rules (MDA), Uring mining company has been highly involved in land degradation, deforestation, soil, water, land pollutions and reduction in water quality. It also results in the vulnerability of macro-organisms and disease infestation, especially; typhoid, bilharzia, dysentery, and the breeding of mosquitoes (introduction to Malaria). The lack of active participation of citizens in the discussion of the mineral development agreement with the Uring mining company described the lives of citizens as uncountable beings (said by the respondents). Respondents said the situation has caused serious embarrassment leading citizens to their minerals being extracted by a foreign company. Statistically, the discussion on the rules and regulations (MDA) governing both the citizens and the Uring gold mining company with the Government has not yet yielded based on the violations by the Uring gold mining community. Respondents said the violations of the mineral development agreement continuously increase the disregarding of the mining laws by citizens towards Uring gold mining company.

4.3. RECOMMENDATIONS

From the results and findings of the survey conducted, the researcher concluded with the following recommendations:

- Information on corporate accountability, environmental impact assessments, and regulatory compliance should be made publicly available by the government to encourage transparency in the mining industry.
- Information on corporate accountability, environmental impact assessments, and regulatory compliance should be made publicly available by the government to encourage transparency in the mining industry.
- To guarantee that they sufficiently safeguard the rights of communities and the environment while encouraging ethical mining operations, the government should think about examining and tightening the current mining laws and regulations.
- If the company is found to violate mining laws, appropriate penalties should be imposed.
- The government should facilitate meaningful engagement and consultation with the affected community.
- There should be environmental practices through monitoring and evaluation to cutie environmental pollution.
- The government should force foreign mining companies to implement or work in line with the MDA.
- There should be further study on the evaluation of attitudes of local communities towards foreign mining companies in different mining communities.

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