

Vol 10, Issue 2, 2025

The intersection of sustainable development goals, Ubuntu and accessibility of sexual gender-based violence services for sexually violated female artisanal miners in Chakari mining village, Zimbabwe

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Abstract

Although policies and awareness campaigns have been introduced to address sexual violation, it should be noted that previous research has not investigated the influence of the Ubuntu perspective in facilitating the accessibility of Sexual Gender-Based Violence services for women in artisanal mining during their struggle in sustaining their livelihoods in most countries. This is because most of the female artisanal miners remain subjects and prey to sex predators in the mining industry. There have been several incidents whereby the women, of whom are victims, are deprived of their access to the justice system through intimidation by perpetrators or corruption in the law enforcement systems. Therefore, the main objective of the study was to explore the dimensions of the Ubuntu perspective together with the agonies and struggles in the attempt of sexually violated female artisanal miners to access the justice system. The researcher used a qualitative method with a descriptive multiple case study design to examine the well-being of the women. Eight in-depth interviews with the participants were conducted. Two key informant interviews were also carried out in Shona language (since some of the participants were illiterate) during data collection. The data were transcribed, translated and thematically analysed. The experiences of the sexually violated artisanal miners differed depending on their backgrounds and workspace.

Key terms: Ubuntu, sexual gender-based violence, female artisanal miners, Chakari, Mashonaland West Province, Zimbabwe

Cite as:

Tome, A.R. and Gwaze, K.K. (2025). The intersection of sustainable development goals, Ubuntu and accessibility of sexual gender-based violence services for sexually violated female artisanal miners in Chakari mining village, Zimbabwe. *People Centred – The Journal of Development Administration*, 10(2), 22-31.
<https://dx.doi.org/10.4314/jda.v10i2.3>

Introduction

Women encounter multiple challenges such as sexual violence in diverse working environments and the mining sector is no exception. This can be attributed to the fact that the mining sector is a male-dominated area which portrays an image of a strong patriarchal system as the heavy manual labour is usually associated with masculinity. Women's livelihoods in the mining sector are often threatened by discrimination, gender-based violence which comes in different forms, gender-pay gap, underrepresentation in the workplace and many others. Gender inequalities in the mining sector tend to have long-lasting consequences for women as they are resultantly exposed to violence, discrimination, objectification and socio-economic inequality. These challenges have a negative impact on the mental well-being of the women as they may develop low self-esteem, anxiety, depression and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) to mention but just a few.

Gender mainstreaming in artisanal mining

Gender mainstreaming involves the integration of gender concerns into the management and design of business operations to help identify areas where risks, impacts and benefits may be experienced variously by women and men (Danielson and Hinton, 2020). Gender mainstreaming enables successful development, implementation and monitoring of strategies and measures designed to address gender equality (Lauwo, 2018). Female artisanal miners are underrepresented in the mining industry as it is a male-dominated sector. The harsh working conditions in mining stations such as remote site locations, lack of accommodation, inflexible work hours and poor lighting make women vulnerable to sexual violence. Gender inequality is prevalent at mining stations as male miners are preferred to their female counterparts as they can work for longer hours and they tend to have more physical strength. Female artisanal miners tend to be outnumbered by their male counterparts which in turn results in their protests against sexual violence and harassment thwarted and ignored (Kaggwa, 2020). The implementation of gender mainstreaming concepts will help with addressing these inequalities, thereby adopting the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 5 and Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 10 which focus on regulating discrepancies among populations.

The relevance of Ubuntu philosophy in addressing Sexual Gender-Based Violence against women in artisanal mining

The idea of Ubuntu was derived from the Nguni dictum, *Umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu*, that translates as, "A person is a person through other persons, (Shutte, 2001)" Manyonganise (2015) has it that Ubuntu is humanity and this humanity is shown when an individual respects the dignity of others, shows compassion, care and is also empathetic towards other people. In African communities it is of great importance that no person should exist in isolation or be excluded from the web of life (Dolamo, 2013). Ubuntu encourages equal treatment and regard for everyone regardless of differences in race, abilities, gender or any dichotomy. This shows that the Ubuntu philosophy embraces gender equality, dignity and inherent worth of women and equality of life among African people. The Ubuntu philosophy promotes the participation of women in the mining sector which happens to be an industry that is male-infested and dominated. Both men and women need to have equal access to exploiting the natural resources without any hindrances. The Ubuntu approach values dignity, equality and existence whereas dichotomies invoke fear within members of the society which often result in the marginalisation, discrimination, stigmatisation and isolation of those who fail to conform to the normative or are different (Kasomo and Maseno, 2011). The adoption of the Ubuntu ideology in politics enhances and accelerates service delivery and also promotes good governance (Nzimakwe, 2014). Ubuntu at political level can be described as a call to service and participation as it involves serving humanity in a practical way (Nzimakwe, 2014). When employed in politics the Ubuntu ideology encourages political leaders and government officials to put people first and not exploit the nation's resources for their selfish gain; hence it curbs corruption. The Ubuntu theory ensures that policies are formulated and implemented in a manner that includes everyone and eliminates exclusion and marginalisation of women. It encourages the recognition of the essence of the participation of women in the mining industry. Thus, the adoption of the Ubuntu ideology as mentioned above, serves as a catalyst for gender equality in society.

The relevance of Sustainable Development Goals in addressing Sexual Gender-Based Violence against women in artisanal mining

The 17 Sustainable Development Goals promote gender equality, dignity and equality of life. The 17 SDGs include: No poverty, zero hunger, good health and well-being, quality education, gender equality, clean water and sanitation, affordable and clean energy, decent work and economic growth, industry, innovation and infrastructure, reduced inequalities, sustainable cities and communities, responsible consumption and production, climate action, life below water, life on land, peace, justice and strong institutions and lastly partnerships for the goals (United Nations, 2015).

Gender equality among men, women, boys and girls refers to opportunities, responsibilities and rights of individuals that will not be determined by the fact that they were born either male or female (Ibiloglu, 2024). The adoption of SDG 1 of no poverty would help with preventing and addressing sexual exploitation of women in the mining sector. Most women and girls are compelled to work as artisanal miners at mining stations in Zimbabwe because of poverty. Working as small-scale miners is a way that is often adopted by women and girls to generate income and help sustain their livelihoods (UN, 2015). The Zimbabwean government is failing to provide women and girls with employment opportunities because of the dilapidated economy of the country. Poverty in most mining villages in Zimbabwe is a catalyst to the sexual harassment and violation of women as they are subject to sexual violation in return for monetary or protection gifts from perpetrators. SDG 1 of no poverty, once employed by the Zimbabwean government, could help with the protection of women and girls in artisanal mining against sexual violence.

Most households in rural and remote areas in Zimbabwe are hunger-infested as they are either labour-constrained or are deprived of employment opportunities as there is not much business activity in these places due to lack of and dilapidated infrastructure. These households can even go for days without food and clean water to drink because of the inability of breadwinners to cater for the family members' needs (United Nations Development Programme, 2023). It should be noted that most of these households are located in remote mining villages where artisanal or small-scale mining is the only option to help sustain households. Young women and girls amidst men and boys usually take up the challenge of venturing into the trade to curb hunger. The second goal of the SDGs can be very useful in addressing the perpetuation of sexual exploitation in the mining industry as women and girls go to mines in a quest for survival (UNDP, 2023).

The Zimbabwean government has adopted the 17 SDGs to help promote the welfare of Zimbabwean citizens. The country has even staged programmes and policies that promote the health and well-being of the people particularly women and children. Women and girls working as artisanal miners are exposed to quite a number of diseases as they rarely have access to protective clothing. Mining is a very dangerous activity and so it demands adequate equipment together with clothing so as to prevent injuries and deaths of the miners. With the rampant sexual exploitation that characterises the mining stations where artisanal mining is conducted, women and girls are prone to contracting Sexually Transmitted Infections such as syphilis, Human Immunodeficiency Virus, gonorrhoea and many others (UNDP, 2023). The working environment at mining stations often compromises the health and well-being of women and girls. Some of the pregnant women and girls who participate in small-scale mining often experience miscarriages and others get to have inconsistent menstrual cycles due to the unfavourable working conditions. It is of paramount importance to note that female artisanal miners are liable to experiencing mental health challenges due to the harsh environment of the mining stations (UNDP, 2023). Women and girls who are sexually violated get to experience Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), depression, anxiety, hallucinations and substance-induced psychosis. The sexual exploitation of women and girls in small-scale mining is rampant since the mining industry is a male-dominated business sector. More details will be explained in the following paragraphs.

Women and girls who work as artisanal miners in Zimbabwe are amongst the poorly educated and illiterate Zimbabwean population. This is because of their lack of access to quality education due to lack of money. The Zimbabwean government has put in place social policies and programmes that will help with achieving Goal 4 of quality education in the country. Quality education will serve to empower women intellectually, sexually, socially and physically as women will be enabled to make informed decisions about their lives (UNDP, 2023). The attainment of quality education will enable women to have control over their bodies and reproduction. Artisanal mining does not demand educational qualifications from women and girls who intend to venture in it; rather it demands bravery and experience and these are easily provided by the women and girls. However, because of lack

of quality education the women and girls in artisanal mining's salaries are easily manipulated by their superiors and male counterparts. Some of the women and girls can be paid less for their jobs without them knowing.

The adoption of Goal 5 in the mining sector or industry would help with addressing sexual violation against female artisanal miners. Women working in male-infested settings are often objectified, that is, they are often viewed as sexual objects; hence they become inferior to their male counterparts. Gender inequality persists in the mining sector and society at large because of unfair social norms, legal discrimination, the under-representation of women in politics and violence against women and girls (Danielson and Hinton, 2020).

Women and girls who live and work in remote areas are mostly deprived of access to clean water and sanitation. They often travel long distances to fetch clean and safe water to drink. For some women who live and work as artisanal miners in remote areas they fetch water from deep ditches created by their mining activities. The unrehabilitated ditches are very dangerous as they are a sign of land degradation and they are also dangerous to both humans and animals. During rainy seasons these ditches may be a source of water; however, some children may be tempted to swim in them and most have drowned, including adults who slip in them unawares and get seriously injured. Women and girls in artisanal mining struggle with maintaining menstrual hygiene as some of them have no access to sanitary pads and clean water. Lack of sanitary pads and clean water may result in poor health for them. The Zimbabwean government is still working towards the provision of clean water and sanitation for everyone, especially women and girls.

Goal 8 emphasises the essence of decent work and economic growth. The working conditions in small-scale mines are usually not decent and conducive for female artisanal miners. In some occasions the working conditions can be even life-threatening to the women and girls as they lack appropriate equipment, protective clothing and if ever they are able to locate gold they fall prey to raids, gang rapes, beatings and murders by their male rivals. Some women and girls in artisanal mining are hired by some licensed mining companies as cheap labour to work under poor working conditions that often compromise their health and well-being. Female artisanal miners are liable to sexual exploitation because of misconceptions about women working in male-infested areas; hence they are often regarded as prostitutes. The women are also sexually harassed in return for salary increments. The objectification of women as sex objects is rife in mining stations. Women's voices of protest against sexual violence are often thwarted by the men's rampant sexual exploits because of the fact that they are outnumbered by their male counterparts. It is of paramount importance to note that the participation of women in mining activities has a huge impact on the economic growth of the country. Female artisanal miners are financially emancipated as their venture in mining endeavours enables them to generate income to sustain their livelihoods (UNDP, 2023).

The Zimbabwean government is working towards addressing inequalities among its own people and structures; hence its adoption of the 10th goal of addressing inequalities. This goal is helping with addressing social problems that exist in the mining industry and these include discrimination, stereotyping, marginalisation and sexual exploitation of women and girls involved in artisanal mining. Women who work in male-dominated places such as mining areas are often viewed as inferior to their male counterparts. Some of them are even paid lesser wages than their male colleagues regardless of the fact that they will be carrying out similar duties. In some scenarios the men are usually paid more because of their physical strength which surpasses that of women. Women and girls who work in male-infested areas are often viewed as wayward, lacking morals and uncultured. Society expects men only to participate in endeavours that yield higher profits because men are often portrayed as the 'head' of the household whilst women are expected to be docile and subservient to the male members of their families. Mining stations in Zimbabwe are typical societies which are founded upon strong patriarchal systems that hold men in high regard over their female counterparts. The 10th Goal however seeks to address these discrepancies as such views make women become more vulnerable to exploitation by male counterparts in the mining workplace. Women and girls need to be given access to enjoying the exploits of natural resources just like the male citizens of Zimbabwe.

The 16th goal of peace, justice and strong institutions serves to safeguard the rights of female artisanal miners who might have been subjected to sexual violence and sexual harassment in the workplace. There is need for women and girls in artisanal mining to easily access the justice system (UNDP, 2023). There is also need for strong institutions that advocate against sexual violence perpetrated against female artisanal miners in mining stations.

Sexual Gender-Based Violence against female artisanal miners in the mining industry

SGBV is defined as harmful acts against a person's will based on gender norms and unequal power relationships. Danielson and Hinton (2020) explain that SGBV is a concept of gender that entails forms of power relations between women and men in a given society. There are quite a number of forms in which SGBV can be exhibited; these include Intimate Partner Violence (IPV), sexual harassment, domestic violence, physical violence, verbal, socio-economic and psychological violence (UN Women, 2015). Sexual harassment in the workplace involves offensive and unwelcome behaviour in the form of quid-pro-quo arrangements where the progression of work is made conditional on sexual demands in such a way that the working environment becomes hostile and threatening. The link between mining and SGBV stems from the masculine nature of the industry which poses as a contributory factor to the sexual exploitation of women in the industry (Jenkins, 2014). Bradshaw et al. (2017) explain that the dangerous and harsh nature of mining gives rise to exaggerated masculinities that reinforce stereotypes of what it means to be a man and a woman. Women and girls in artisanal mining are often subjected to sexual harassment and rape (Benya, 2015). Women working underground are believed to offer sexual services to men in return for the men's assistance in some of the mining stations in South Africa (Jenkins, 2014). In Tanzania the protective clothing some of the female miners put on was reported to be unsuitable for female miners as it exposed some of their physical features, thereby promoting the risk of sexual harassment of the women by their male counterparts (Lauwo, 2018). In some of the mining stations in Zimbabwe SGBV is shown in the helplessness of women in avoiding sexual advances by their male superiors as saying no would result in job loss and denial of promotion (Lauwo, 2018).

The discrimination of women in mining is evident as some managers expect women to be submissive towards their male counterparts. Kaggwa (2020) has it that the discrimination of women in the mining stations is shown by the preference of male miners by the managerial sector as they tend to have more physical strength and can work for longer hours compared to their female counterparts. These preferences have resulted in mining stations having large populations of male miners compared to female workers, thereby making mining stations a 'male space'. It should be noted that mining stations are rarely safe spaces for female artisanal miners to operate in. Very few women tend to occupy senior positions at mining stations; this therefore makes it difficult for female workers' protests against SGBV to be heard (Lauwo, 2018). The remoteness of mining operations and the masculinity of the industry serve as catalysts to the escalating rates of SGBV against female artisanal miners (Nene, 2016). The gender dichotomies in the mining area expose female artisanal miners to sexual violence, rape and even murder as they will be working underground (Benya, 2015). The poor working conditions in small-scale mining areas such as poor lighting expose women and girls to being raped without being able to identify the perpetrator (Mavuso, 2015).

Artisanal mining stations appear to be sites of abuse and exploitation of women regardless of the benefits women gain from operating within them (Hinton, 2016). SGBV is viewed as a way of reinforcing power dynamics by those in powerful positions such as managers, senior security officers, local officials and traditional leaders, to mention but just a few (Danielson and Hinton, 2020). The prevalence of violence and requirements for sexual favours are rampant in mining sites and when women refuse to perform those sexual acts they are either intimidated by threats or excluded from the mining activities (Danielson and Hinton, 2020). It is further explained that SGBV is perpetrated against women and girls in artisanal mining through strip-searching for diamonds; this should be noted to be a form of psychological violence as the women sustain trauma from such offensive practices in mining sites (Danielson and Hinton, 2020).

Method

The paper employed the qualitative data collection method. Six participants and two key informants were interviewed, making eight in total. Purposive and snowball sampling methods were employed by the researcher to identify and select those with the capacity of providing relevant information with regards to the research question the researcher seeks to address. The research considered the views of six female artisanal miners who happen to be victims and survivors of Sexual Gender-Based Violence. Two key informants were also interviewed by the researchers. These are the people who in one way or the other have interacted with the violated female artisanal miners on multiple occasions and so they happen to have reasonable knowledge that can assist with achieving the research objectives. Data were transcribed, translated, coded and thematised. Themes were identified and data were discussed according to the notes that were gathered during the interviews. The researcher used pseudonyms to hide and keep the identities of the participants private and confidential.

Ethical considerations

The researcher used the San Code of Research Ethics during the research study. The researcher observed care for the research participants as this is one of the significant sections of the code. The section stipulates that the research study should be in alignment with local needs and should be focused on improving the lives of the research participants (The San Code of Research Ethics, 2017). The researcher was respectful towards the participants as there was an engagement of the participants and the researcher prior to the research (The San Code of Research Ethics, 2017). The researcher briefed the participants about the research. It is of paramount importance that the researcher carries out an open and clear conversation with the research participants (The San Code of Research Ethics, 2017). The language used was clear and not academic, and so the researcher used Shona language in communicating with the research participants.

Results

The challenges associated with the accessibility of Sexual Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) services by sexually violated female artisanal miners

Illiteracy

When I was raped here at this mining station, I contracted HIV because of lack of knowledge. This is because I only reached grade 3 level because my parents died when I was so young. I also did not know about having protected sex; I discovered this recently when an organisation came to teach us about Sexual Reproductive Health and also after Post Exposure Prophylaxis which is administered to victims of rape. – Rudo.

Most of the women in artisanal mining are uneducated; hence they are not aware of their rights nor of the capacity of the justice system in protecting them from further sexual exploitation. Some cannot even read or write regardless of the fact that they would have mastered the skill of counting money. Their illiteracy and ignorance of SGBV services has exposed them to rampant sexual violence and Sexually Transmitted Infections. They are not aware of the PrEP and PEP services in Zimbabwe that protect women from STIs and unwanted pregnancies. – Key informant 1.

Mining life is not safe and easy as there usually occur raids perpetrated by our rival artisanal miners. One day the boys came to raid us after they discovered that we had found gold at our base. Our male colleagues were thoroughly beaten whilst women and girls were violated. It was terrible. We did not report this matter as the police are afraid of them also and if we report they will come back to finish us. – Chiedza.

Reporting sexual violence perpetrators who happen to be fellow artisanal miners is not easy as it can lead to murder. My friend once reported a case of sexual violence at the police station but they were not detained. Life became unbearable for her as they looked around for her to deal with her and so she no longer lives here anymore. As for me I ventured into mining to help sustain my livelihood; it is my last option as I have no other means of survival. – Vongai.

We do report cases of sexual violence to the police but the police are also afraid of the violence. They are afraid for their lives as well. Mining areas are not safe spaces; it is difficult for justice to prevail. – Svorai.

Mining stations are located in remote areas; this is scary as these places are isolated from developed cities and towns. Women and girls in artisanal mining do not feel safe at all especially after an occurrence of rape or any other form of violence. The rape issues can even get out of control and lead to the murder of the victims. These murders traumatise the women and cause them to live in constant fear of even exposing their own perpetrators. – Key informant 2.

Stereotyping and discrimination of female artisanal miners

It is very difficult for women and girls to work in a mining setting because when unfortunate events like rape or sexual violence happen to us we are usually given all the blame by some of the service providers. They tell us that we deserve it because we work in a male-dominated industry. – Sarudzai.

Due to rampant sex work and child prostitution at mining stations and towns, female artisanal miners are viewed as sex workers. This increases their chances of vulnerability to sexual and psychological abuse as most people in the mainstream society believe that sex workers can never be sexually violated. – Key informant 1.

Mining stations are male-dominated areas; in actual fact mining is viewed as a man's profession. It is out of bounds for women and so women who venture into mining as a means of sustaining their livelihoods are viewed as wayward, disrespectful and immoral. The society expects women to be subservient and docile; it expects women to venture into endeavours that do not give them too much financial independence such as mining. So, when female artisanal miners are sexually violated, the society refrains from giving them social-psycho support because they view them as immoral. – Key informant 2.

Socio-cultural beliefs

We do not have gender-sensitive protective gear to put on when carrying out our mining operations. We wear normal clothes but because of the nature of our job we are compelled to pull up and tie our long skirts high above our knees which in turn exposes our thighs; so this is usually mistaken by sex predators as seductive practices. I remember my friend and I visited a clinic after we had been violated. Instead of receiving the medical attention, nurses hurled insults at us accusing us of seducing men because we work at a local mine, a male-infested environment. – Vongai.

Women and girls who work at mining stations are usually viewed as sex workers. People do not understand our interests and dreams of working in mines. Women who are not married are at a peril of facing severe discrimination as the society and culture expect us to be married and to have our own homes. – Sarudzai.

Culturally a Zimbabwean woman is expected to carry out household chores and not fend for the family. Fending for the family is associated with masculinity in the sense that the male members of the family are responsible for toiling for the family; they are the breadwinners, so women who venture into mining for the upkeep of their families are disrespectful members of society as they fail to adhere to the social and cultural norms that instruct them to stay at home and depend on the male members of the family for financial help. So, when they are sexually violated at work, the female artisanal miners are accused for their predicament; the sexual exploitation is attributed to their fault. – Key informant 2.

Remote locations

We women who work in mining operations often face challenges of walking long distances to medical facilities and police stations when sexually violated. These facilities are inaccessible to us so at the end of the day we just resort to accepting the fate of being violated and not doing anything about it. – Chiedza.

In remote locations, educative information about sexual harassment in workplaces and sexual violence is not readily available for women in artisanal mining. Some are not even aware of their rights for the high rate of illiteracy is prevalent among them. They cannot read and write. The remote locations have excluded them from developed towns and cities where SGBV services and facilities are available. The local clinics, mission hospitals and police stations are miles away. This serves as a hindrance to their accessibility of SGBV services. – Key informant 2.

Corruption

When I went to present my case at the one police station, I discovered that some police officers are loyal to maintaining peace and order whereas some have other motives as they tend to receive bribes from perpetrators of sexual violence. – Sekai.

I reported a case of sexual violence at one local police station and the perpetrator was caught, but to my surprise the following day I saw him roaming the streets a free man. – Vongai.

I wish for policy makers and law enforcers to intensify and increase jail sentences for perpetrators of sexual violence as these people seem to receive a much lesser sentence than robbers of cattle. It is well known that if you steal a bull or cow you receive a 10-year jail sentence but sexual abuse perpetrators receive lesser than that. – Svorai.

Discussion

Challenges associated with the accessibility of SGBV services by female artisanal miners

Illiteracy

Most women and girls in artisanal mining have no access to quality education; therefore they struggle to access SGBV services because of their inability to read and write. In areas which are located in mining stations, most girls drop out of school at Form 4 level due to poverty, early marriage, school-related Gender-Based Violence, parents' prioritisation of boys' education, teenage pregnancy and insufficient gender-sensitive infrastructure in schools (Danielson and Hinton, 2020). Female artisanal miners usually have a history of remoteness, abuse, risks of violence and socio-cultural norms posing as obstacles to their access to quality education when they were adolescents. The education system in Zimbabwe is inclusive in nature but this inclusivity is often compromised by quite a number of challenges such as poverty and socio-cultural norms that often result in the prioritisation of boys' education over girls'. However, the Ubuntu philosophy demands that even girls have equal access to education with their boy counterparts. In African communities it is of great importance that no person should exist in isolation or be excluded from the web of life (Dolamo, 2013). Ubuntu encourages equal treatment and regard for everyone regardless of differences in race, abilities, gender or any dichotomy. In other scenarios, female artisanal miners drop out of school to go and work in mining stations to help generate an income that will help sustain their livelihoods. Some are attracted by enormous profits incurred in mining such that they may view schooling as a waste of time compared to going into mining industries to make quick and huge profits from mining. The problem with the high prevalence of illiteracy among female artisanal miners is that when they are sexually violated, they tend to be ignorant of SGBV services that are readily available to support them. SDG 4 on quality education demands that both girls and boys have equal access to it regardless of gender disparities, race, disabilities, ethnicity and many other differences. Illiteracy is an obstacle to the access of SGBV services by sexually violated artisanal miners.

Intimidation by perpetrators

Mining stations tend to be dangerous and scary environments to work in. Bradshaw et al. (2017) explain that the dangerous and harsh nature of mining gives rise to exaggerated masculinities that reinforce stereotypes of what it means to be a man and a woman. Women and girls in artisanal mining are often subjected to sexual harassment and rape (Benya, 2015). Women working underground are believed to offer sexual services to men in return for the men's assistance in some of the mining stations in South Africa (Jenkins, 2014). In Tanzania the protective clothing some of the female miners put on was reported to be unsuitable for female miners as it exposed some of their physical features, thereby promoting the risk of sexual harassment of the women by their male counterparts (Lauwo, 2018). In some of the mining stations in Zimbabwe SGBV is shown in the helplessness of women in avoiding sexual advances by their male superiors as saying no would result in job loss and denial of promotion

(Lauwo, 2018). When sexually violated in the mining stations, female artisanal miners may be threatened by perpetrators so much so that they become fearful of speaking out and reporting the crime committed against them. It is evident that when policy frameworks that guide mining activities are formulated, they do not adopt the Ubuntu philosophy and SDGs which help create environments that are safe for female miners to operate in. The Ubuntu philosophy demands that people be kind, caring, considerate and empathetic to others. By incorporating the Ubuntu philosophy there is a higher possibility that violence against women in mining areas will be addressed. Manyonganise (2015) has it that Ubuntu is humanity and this humanity is shown when an individual respects the dignity of others, shows compassion, care and is also empathetic towards other people. The integration of the Ubuntu philosophy and SDG 16 will help create safe working environments for women in both formal and informal mining areas. SDG 16 demands the promotion of just, peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels. Female artisanal miners together with all women need to be able to turn to fair and effective institutions to access justice and essential services (United Nations Women, 2018). Many institutions tend to fail women and girls in their quest for justice against SGBV (UN Women, 2018).

Stereotyping and discrimination of female artisanal miners

Mining stations are male-dominated areas as the operations are often associated with masculinity. Women's population is smaller compared to their male counterparts in the mining stations; this has resulted in women being referred to as prostitutes or sex workers. The stereotyping has also influenced poor SGBV service delivery in some institutions who offer services to women who would have been sexually violated. Gender inequality persists in the mining sector and society at large because of unfair social norms, legal discrimination, the under-representation of women in politics and violence against women and girls (Crawford et al., 2020). The adoption of SDG 5 will help with addressing gender disparities that perpetuate the sexual harassment and violence against women in artisanal mining. The adoption of the 10th goal of addressing inequalities is helping with addressing social problems that exist in the mining industry and these include discrimination, stereotyping, marginalisation and sexual exploitation of women and girls involved in artisanal mining. Women who work in male-dominated places such as mining areas are often viewed as inferior to their male counterparts. The Ubuntu philosophy embraces gender equality, dignity and inherent worth of women and equality of life among African people. The Ubuntu philosophy promotes the participation of women in the mining sector which happens to be an industry that is male-infested and dominated. Both men and women need to have equal access to exploiting the natural resources without any hindrances. The Ubuntu approach values dignity, equality and existence whereas dichotomies invoke fear within members of the society which often result in the marginalisation, discrimination, stigmatisation and isolation of those who fail to conform to the normative or are different (Kasomo and Maseno, 2011). This shows that the integration of the Ubuntu philosophy and SDGs can be very effective in improving the accessibility of SGBV services by female artisanal miners.

Socio-cultural beliefs

Socio-cultural beliefs and practices often view artisanal miners as wayward and immoral as mining is often associated with men and patriarchal systems. Women's roles in society are centred on taking care of the household whilst men are expected to go and toil in workplaces such as mine operations to cater for their families. Some of them are even paid lesser wages than their male colleagues regardless of the fact that they will be carrying out similar duties. In some scenarios the men are usually paid more because of their physical strength which surpasses that of women. Women and girls who work in male-infested areas are often viewed as wayward, lacking morals and uncultured. Society expects men only to participate in endeavours that yield higher profits because men are often portrayed as the 'head' of the household whilst women are expected to be docile and subservient to the male members of their families. Mining stations in Zimbabwe are typical societies which are founded upon strong patriarchal systems that hold men in high regard over their female counterparts. The 10th Goal however seeks to address these discrepancies. SDG 10 in conjunction with the Ubuntu philosophy helps protect women from being sexually exploited and also it enhances the accessibility of SGBV services for female artisanal miners. Ubuntu encourages equal treatment and regard for everyone regardless of differences in race, abilities, gender or any dichotomy. This shows that the Ubuntu philosophy embraces gender equality, dignity and inherent worth of women and equality of life among African people. The Ubuntu philosophy promotes the participation of women in the mining sector which happens to be an industry that is male-infested and dominated.

Corruption

The findings reveal that there are some incidences when some of the female artisanal miners are sexually violated and they decide to report to law enforcement. The suspect is arrested but sometimes the suspect is unjustly released due to the fact that some of the police officers would have been bribed by the perpetrators. Corruption is an impediment to the accessibility of SGBV services by female artisanal miners who are victims of sexual violence in the workplace. The 'acquitted' perpetrators may threaten or even murder the women as revenge for their quest for justice. The integration of the Ubuntu philosophy and the SDGs will help address the problem of corruption as they serve to reinforce integrity, dignity and human worth.

Remote locations

Mining areas are usually located in rural and remote areas where accessibility to basic services such as health, law enforcement services and education is difficult due to lack of infrastructure and long distances. People who reside in remote areas often travel long distances to hospitals, police stations, local clinics and schools, to mention but just a few. The remoteness of mining operations and the masculinity of the industry serve as catalysts to the escalating rates of SGBV against female artisanal miners (Nene, 2016). The adoption of SDGs and the Ubuntu philosophy will help with putting in place development initiatives that will serve in ensuring provisions and accessibility of SGBV services by female artisanal miners.

Conclusion

The study concluded that the Ubuntu philosophy and the 17 SDGs can be integrated to help enhance the accessibility of SGBV services for female artisanal miners who have been subjected to sexual abuse. Ubuntu philosophy and the 17 SDGs can be used to inform policy making to help create safe working environments in mining stations, thereby reducing the sexual exploitation of women in artisanal mining. Artisanal mining is instrumental in developing communities and Zimbabwe at large, but for there to occur sustainable development the 17 SDGs need to be practically implemented by the Zimbabwean government in conjunction with the Ubuntu philosophy.

Recommendations

The study recommends development in remote areas where mining activities take place. Mining stations are usually located in remote locations where there is poor infrastructure, poverty, violence and service providers of health and law enforcement are located miles away from these areas. The long distances serve as catalysts for every form of violence, especially sexual violence against women and girls.

There is also need for qualified and professional health personnel to walk into the mining station communities educating people about Gender-Based Violence, Sexual Reproductive Health, mental health challenges and human rights. Most of the women and girls as revealed by the findings are illiterate. They lack knowledge with regards to the SDGs which uphold their rights and fight inequalities, together with local policies that have been put in place to protect their rights. Awareness campaigns on the prevalence of SGBV need to be staged in the country to help inform the government and the mainstream society on the dangers of sexual exploitation against women and girls working in mining stations. SGBV has a hugely negative impact on its victims and survivors. The community needs to be educated on the essence of showing psycho-social support to women and girls who have been exposed to sexual violence rather than discriminating against and marginalising them.

The SDGs help with maintaining stability in all spheres of life such as the economy, politics and social life all over the globe. Women in artisanal mining need to be enlightened on international, regional and political policy frameworks that uphold their rights. There is need to educate them about sustainable mining practices to help preserve natural resources for future generations.

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