

Illegal Mining and The Development of Nigeria

Terhile Jude Ahoo¹, Benjamin Gowon Ahule² and Donald Tarfa Ende³

^{1, 2 & 3} Department of Sociology,
Rev. Fr. Moses Orshio Adasu University,
Makurdi – Nigeria

Corresponding author email - jahoo@bsum.edu.ng or ahoojterhile@gmail.com

Abstract

The mining sector has enormous potentials for the development of Nigeria. It can significantly improve Nigeria's Gross Domestic Product, exports, and foreign reserves. However, the sector contributes minimally to the country's economic growth as the country reportedly loses \$9 billion to illegal mining operations annually. Utilizing secondary sources of data, the review showed that illegal mining operations in Nigeria result from poverty, unemployment, corruption, illiteracy, poor management of solid mineral resources, and poor collaboration among major stakeholders in the mining sector. The consequences include decline in agricultural productivity, government revenue, increased social unrests, and environmental degradation. It concludes that key players such as the police and community leaders must come together to thoroughly address the issue of illegal mining to achieve socio-economic development in their communities and Nigeria at large.

Key words: Mining, Illegal Mining, Law enforcement, Crime, Development.

Introduction

For decades, mining which involves the removal of minerals and metals like manganese, gold, copper, coal, iron, lead, zinc ores, columbite, tin etc from the earth has provided several continents with resources for economic development, and remains a source of employment to millions of individuals. In Europe and America, for instance, sustained economic resilience and long term prosperity are being witnessed due to the increasing mineral resource productivity (Duncan, 2020). In Africa, the abundance of minerals like platinum, gold, diamonds, chromite and vanadium among others has failed to translate to monumental socio-economic growth. Many mineral-rich countries on the continent are grappling with myriads of environmental challenges linked to illegal mining such as destruction of natural habitats, water and air pollution, soil erosion and contamination, deforestation, and resource depletion. The challenge of illegal mining activities continues to confront countries in the region.

In Nigeria, although the Minerals and Mining Act (2007) confers the ownership and control of mineral resources and the processes involved in mining on the federal government, an estimated 80% of mining in the country is carried out illegally and on an artisanal basis (Reuters, 2019). The environmental effects of unlawful mining in the country include loss of biodiversity, soil erosion, formation of sinkholes, soil contamination, and desecration of ground and surface water which could potentially cause health problems eventually leading to deaths. There are also economic challenges associated with illegal mining. Nigeria reportedly lost more than N353 billion, an equivalent of 900 million US Dollars, to illegal miners between the years 2016 and 2018 (Ogbonnaya, 2020). Some security issues confronting some parts of Nigeria are attributed

to illegal mining. According to Okoli (2019), violent local conflicts and rural banditry in Nigerian states like Kaduna, Katsina, Kebbi, Sokoto and Zamfara, which has led to the kidnap of over 3,600 people and the death of more than 20,000 people, including women and children is determined by illegal mining activities (WANEP, 2020).

Several states in Nigeria including Benue state, strategically located in the Middle Belt region of the country, is affected by the problem of illegal mining. Duru (2024) asserts that out of the 44 mineral resources in Nigeria, 34 of them are deposited in Benue State. Incidentally, the presence of these solid mineral resources including gold, lithium, coal, tin, ore, lead, gypsum, limestone, barites, graphite, manganese, salt, zinc, clay, silver among others has not fostered the mineral resource development in the state nor improved the state's internally generated revenue to enhance its overall development. This is largely due to the presence and activities of illegal miners, and the lack of proper channels to report these criminal activities. The illegitimate exploitation of the minerals denies the state its royalties and the 13% derivatives that should be accrued to it from the Federal Government of Nigeria through legal mining processes (Duru, 2024).

In response to the challenges of illegal mining operations in Nigerian states, the Federal Government banned all forms of mining, deploying the military to ensure compliance across the nation. Dialogues and negotiations were also held with relevant stakeholders at sub-national levels on ways to avert the problem of illegal mining (Amaefule, 2019). Benue State which has had its share of the problem also adopted strategies to tame the tide of unlicensed and criminal mining operations. This led to the establishment of the Mineral Resources and Environmental Management Committee (MIREMCO) which in turn formulated the Mining Marshals to safeguard lives and properties around mining sites, and facilitate smooth mining operations to ensure comprehensive development and utilization of mineral deposits. Similar steps and initiatives were adopted by other Nigerian states rich in solid mineral resources. However, the impact of these initiatives against illegal mining is yet to be felt as illegal mining has continued, causing environmental and social problems and generally impeding development. This article therefore addresses the nature of illegal mining in Nigeria, determinants of illegal mining in Nigeria, the consequences of Illegal mining on development in Nigeria, impact of the act on socio-economic development, approaches against illegal mining in Nigeria, and the challenges confronting the eradication of illegal mining in Nigeria.

Theoretical Framework

Rational Choice Theory and Resource Curse Theory

Two theories – Rational Choice Theory and Resource Curse Theory – are employed for the study. The rational choice theory developed by Ronald V. Clarke and Derek Cornish in 1986, is based on the assumption that man is a reasoning actor who weighs means and ends, cost and benefits, and makes rational choices. The theory relies on the economic principle of “cost-benefit analysis” and proposes that a potential offender calculates and chooses the activity – legal or illegal – that offers the best return (Burke, 2009). Across Nigeria, illegal mining is fuelled by the quest to make quick money and the lack of appropriate sanctions against the act. People and companies engage in illegal mining activities because they perceive the benefits to be more favourable than the costs. In the spirit of the rational choice theory, increasing the punishment for crimes, particularly illegal mining, in the hope that the pain outweighs the gain will therefore prevent future occurrence of the crime in Benue State. Although the rational choice theory explains the basic thought processes that inform the actions of individuals who embark on illegal mining activities, the theory is limited in the explanation of illegal mining in Benue state because it neglects social, economic and other external factors such as poverty and the failure of the law enforcement agencies which may contribute to the menace. The theory also fails to acknowledge the fact that not all individuals are rational actors (Grady, 2011). Following the shortcomings of rational choice theory, the Resource Curse theory was introduced.

Resource Curse theory developed by Richard Auty (1993) is also known as “the paradox of plenty” and assumes that mineral and fuel abundance in less developed countries tend to

generate negative developmental outcomes, including poor economic performance, growth collapses, high levels of corruption, ineffective governance and greater political violence (Di John, 2010). The theory reflects the situation in Nigeria whereby the abundance of natural resources and minerals in the country has led to equal economic growth and development and increasing potentials for conflict. Illegal mining has exacerbated social conflicts in resource-rich regions of Niger-Delta, and in states like Benue, Borno, Zamfara, Taraba, Kaduna, Katsina, Kebbi, Sokoto etc. Communities surrounding illegal mining sites continuously face environmental degradation, health risks, and displacement due to unregulated mining activities. The abundant natural resources in Nigeria are perceived among many people in the country to be more of a curse than a blessing. A major criticism against this theory is that it oversimplifies its assumption. Apparently, not all resource-rich countries that experience negative outcomes and not all resource-poor countries are successful. Despite the shortcomings, the framework is useful for understanding the basic challenges faced in Nigeria due to the abundance of natural resources in the country.

Methodology

Secondary sources of data were utilized for this study. The database constituted information from books, policy documents, newspaper reports, articles from peer-reviewed journals and information from relevant websites. Full text articles published in the English Language were eligible for inclusion. Keyword descriptors (such as “mining”, “illegal mining”, “causes of illegal mining”, “community leaders” “control of illegal mining”, “barrier to illegal mining”, “Nigeria”, “police and control of illegal mining”, “information sharing”, and Boolean operators (“AND”) were used to refine the search. The search strategy aimed to capture relevant articles addressing the research objectives.

Nature of Illegal Mining in Nigeria

The evident lack of attention towards the mining sector in Nigeria leads to inadequate governmental oversight and the absence of standardized operational protocols. Consequently, approximately 80% of mineral extraction activities in the country occur through illegal and artisanal means. As defined by Dozolme (2018), illegal mining encompasses activities conducted without proper authorization from the state, lacking land rights, mining licenses, or permits for exploration and mineral transportation. It spans from small-scale artisanal endeavours to large-scale organized crime orchestrated by illegal mining syndicates. Illegal mining extends to operations failing to comply with mining regulations, labour laws, environmental standards, and tax legislation (Ogbonnaya, 2020). Nigeria experiences various forms of illegal mining, often situated in rural areas which further compound the challenge of enforcing mining standards.

The International Crisis Group (2020) reported that multiple mineral deposits remain untapped in Nigeria, but illegal miners tend to focus on gold. This is due to various reasons including the relative ease with which gold can be mined, and the economic gains attached to the mineral resource. Unlike other solid minerals such as tin and zinc, alluvial gold is easy to mine and, like diamonds, it is highly fungible and easy to smuggle. This accounts for its attractiveness to illicit miners. Also, gold has high economic value and strategic importance. Following a rise in the world market price of gold since 2009, illegal gold mining activities have spread across the North West, North Central and South Western regions of Nigeria. It has attracted miners from Mali, Burkina Faso, China and India. Consequently, gold ranks high amongst the most routinely smuggled commodities in Nigeria. According to the International Crisis Group (2020), much of it is traded on the international market through neighbouring countries such as Niger and Togo to Dubai in the United Arab Emirates by a syndicated smuggling ring. Table 1 below shows the level nature and extent of illegal mining operations across Nigerian states from 2018 to 2024.

Table 1: Extent of Illegal mining in Nigeria (2018-2024)

Year	State	Estimated Quantity Seized	Mineral Type(s)	No. of Suspects (Est.)	Status of Perpetrators	Remarks
2018	Zamfara	Not specified	Gold	15	Arrested; 5 prosecuted	Linked to bandit financing.
2019	Osun	Not specified	Gold	27	Arrested; status unspecified	Included 17 Chinese nationals and a local traditional ruler.
2020	Niger	Not specified	Tin	12	Arrested; 4 prosecuted	Equipment confiscated.
2021	Ebonyi	Not specified	Lead	6	Arrested; prosecution ongoing	Local youth involvement.
2022	Kaduna	Not specified	Gold	10	3 prosecuted; 7 released	Involvement of illegal foreign syndicates.
2023	Ogun	Not specified	Limestone	5	Not prosecuted	Allegations of government connivance.
2023	Kogi	50 trucks impounded	Various (unspecified)	10	Arrested; prosecution planned	State-led crackdown on illegal mining activities.
2023	Benue	Not specified (multiple trucks impounded)	Fluorite, Iron Ore	18	Trucks seized; suspects under investigation	EFCC operation in Katsina-Ala; mining sites in Logo LGA; state loses royalties.
2024	Kwara & Oyo	12 trucks impounded	Lithium, Marble, Lepidolite, others	41	Arrested; to be charged	Massive mineral smuggling network disrupted.
2024	Akwa Ibom	Not specified	Ilmenite (Titanium-Iron Oxide)	5	Arrested; under investigation	Chinese nationals involved.
2024	Ondo	Not specified	Not specified	3	Arrested; to be prosecuted	NSCDC operation targeting illegal mining and cable theft.
2024	Nasarawa	210	Barite	22	14 arrested, 6 on the run	NSCDC-led operation

Illegal mining activities currently hold sway in several states in Nigeria including Benue, Niger, Oyo, Osun, Nasarawa, Kebbi, Zamfara, and Plateau states among others where some people rely on the act for survival. Put differently, illegal mining serves as a major source of economic sustenance for people in states where the resources are found in large proportion. Several instances have been cited where law enforcement officers have reportedly been complicit in aiding and abetting the crime illegal mining activities in Nigeria (Punch, 2020; Page, 2018). In the North Western, North Central and southern parts of Nigeria, reports and commentaries suggest that privileged Nigerians occupying positions of authority collaborate with criminals, multinational mining corporations to not only facilitate illegal mining activities but drive local conflicts and banditry in rural communities (Page, 2018).

Two major mining groups are responsible for illegal mining activities in Nigeria. The first group comprises multinational mining companies whose staff are largely expatriates while the second group involved in illegal mining activities includes local or artisanal miners who are indigenous members of the community or citizens of Nigeria. In May, 2020, Chinese nationals, a Ghanaian and some Nigerians were arrested in Zamfara state regarding illegal mining activities. This lends credence to claims of a powerful network of organised criminal activity involving the local population and foreign nationals engaged in illegal mining activities in Nigeria (Ogbonnaya, 2020).

Determinants of illegal mining in Nigeria

Illegal mining operations are carried out in Nigeria due to multiple social and economic factors. According to Adegbite et al. (2017), the weak enforcement of the law and poor monitoring of remote mining operations following lack of capacity greatly influence the prevalence of illegal mining operations in Nigerian communities. Following, Nigeria's Constitutional provisions for the compulsory acquisition of properties containing natural resources by the federal government which grants it authority over all such resources no individual asserts ownership or exercise control over mining activities in Nigeria without government authorization. This scenario has prompted inquiries into how sacred areas with essential minerals can be safeguarded when land ownership is solely vested in the government's control. Such feelings could trigger indifference to illegal mining in communities as members may feel that since the mineral resources belong to the government, it should be protected by the government.

Furthermore, the high levels of poverty and unemployment in Nigeria drive people towards illegal mining as a means of survival (Olawoyin, 2018). Individuals are motivated to indulge in illegal mining activities due to their desire for quick money and to gain economic stability. Unemployed youths could see mining as a profitable business and an alternative approach to evading other criminal behaviours such as armed robbery, cybercrime, etc whose sanctions are more agonizing. According to Faama et al. (2020), illegal mining activities may be carried out by individuals in order to raise finances to start up new businesses, take care of family members and to enhance their social status within the community. Poverty substantially contributes to inappropriate mining operations in Nigeria; it drives more than two million people into act, serving as a survival strategy. Most miners reside in rural areas and adapt crude techniques to exploit mineral resources which may be sold for fend for themselves and family members.

Although the literacy levels in certain parts of Nigeria have significantly improved following increased school enrollment, the challenge of literacy is still common across the country, especially in the northern part where illegal mining operations are most prevalent. Illiteracy therefore accounts for a major cause of illegal mining in local communities across the Nigerian state. Some miners and individuals often conduct or permit illegal mining operations without adequate understanding or consideration of the impact of the activities on the environment. However, Osei et al. (2016) stated that illegal mining could result in high degree of air, water, and soil pollution. Consequently, people in local communities who rely on wells, streams and rivers as sources of drinking water may experience a higher risk of drinking contaminated or polluted water due to activities of illegal miners. Illiteracy, lack of knowledge and awareness of the dangers of illegal mining enable the increasing growth of the criminal activity local communities across Nigeria.

Additionally, the deep-seated corruption plaguing almost all sectors of the Nigerian economy has not spared the mining sector. These social, economic, structural and institutional challenges bedeviling the Nigeria's governance system is further represented by the increasing levels of illegal mining activities in the country. The mining landscape is shaped by extreme corruption wherein mining rights/titles, mining coordinates, and other sensitive information are issued by the mining cadastral office to undeserved miners and mining companies in exchange for bribes. Access to these titles and relevant information is usually facilitated by touts or young men who parade outside the cadastral office (Igbinalolor, 2022). It is reportedly easier to deal with the coterie of young men in terms of obtaining mining titles or basic information on mining than it is in dealing directly with officials at the cadastral office. Other causes of illegal mining operations in Nigeria include the high level of dependency in the country, lack of alternative means of livelihoods in communities endowed with solid mineral resources, and the abundance of natural resources in the country.

Implications on the development of Nigeria

In African countries such as South Africa, Botswana, and Ghana, the mining sector contributes essentially to the nations' Gross Domestic Product (GDP), exports and foreign reserves. Statistics indicate that the sector contributes between 7.3 and 16 percent to the economy of those countries (Duru, 2024). In Nigeria, the economy has been adversely affected by illegal mining activities. Between 2012 and 2018, the country reportedly lost more than 5 billion U.S Dollars through the illegal smuggling of gold (National Bureau of Statistics, 2022). The Statistics further revealed that every year, the country loses over 9 billion U.S Dollars to illegal mining operations. The situation is driven by poverty, official mismanagement, and corruption.

Sadly, illegal mining have been found to potentially benefit individuals who indulge in the act. According to Yunana and Banta (2014), livelihoods of individuals are substantially enhanced as perpetrators could improve their income, build houses, train their children in schools, marry wives and start families. They also acquire vehicles such as cars and motorcycles from proceeds gotten off illegal mining operations. Other scholars opine that illegal mining operations provide opportunities for employment and the growth of local businesses and organizations (Ali et al., 2018).

Illegal mining undoubtedly poses multiple social, economic and environmental consequences for Nigeria's overall development. Kareem and Owao (2000) opined that development of some states within the country is predicated on mining the solid mineral resources that are deposited within their soils. However, the lack of attention to appropriate mining procedures has complicated the life of people residing in such communities. For instance, in localities where mining operations are frequently conducted, access to portable water could become a challenge because the available water channels are contaminated by illegal mining activities. In the same vein, natural elements such as air, land, and water serve as habitats to all living things. Mining which is an essentially destructive activity may expose natural habitats to unrefined and toxic materials such as lead, cadmium and arsenic and may endanger the flora and fauna. Respiratory systems of human beings may be adversely affected by these elements which may be contacted through diverse means such as the skin, oral ingestion, and inhalation (Ali et al., 2018).

Activities of illegal miner also disrupt smooth agricultural activities. According to Yunana and Banta (2014) illegal mining operations do not only create deep pits on farmlands, but removes both the top and sub-soils, thereby inhibiting agricultural productivity. This poses negative effects of the activities on crop productivity, humans and animals whereby the pits created by illegal mining activities could result into death or cause injuries to animals and human beings. Instances abound where several farmers have been accidentally buried in abandoned pits and shafts (Ali et al., 2018). Unfortunately, most illegal miners are unaware of the gravity of the challenges that indiscriminate mining of minerals such as sand, laterite and gemstones among others pose for man and the environment.

Approaches against illegal mining in Nigeria

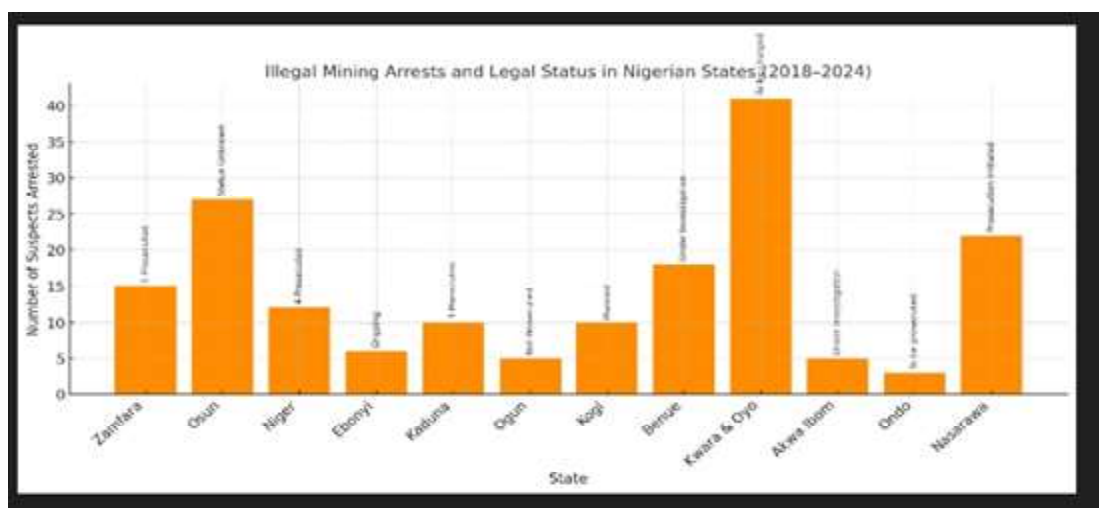
Several efforts have been made to tackle illegal mining activities in Nigeria. These efforts are

categorized into two: formal and informal approaches. Formal approaches include the constitutional and legal means adopted in the fight against illegal mining in Nigeria. Informal activities are those steps taken by local leaders at the community level to complement the formal strategies against illegal mining operations in Nigeria.

1. *Formal approaches*

The primary legislation governing the mining sector in Nigeria is the Minerals and Mining Act of 2007, complemented by the Minerals and Mining Regulations of 2011. Before the enactment of this legislation, the mining sector was largely neglected and lacked adequate regulation. Public mining institutions had overlapping responsibilities, resulting in a cumbersome and costly process for obtaining mining titles. Additionally, the inefficiencies within these institutions led to a scarcity of reliable geological data and statistics for identifying viable mining opportunities. Furthermore, the absence of fiscal incentives deterred foreign investors from engaging in the sector. Alokolaro and Akande (2015) assert that the implementation of a more robust regulatory framework under the Mining Act and Regulations has significantly improved the investment climate for foreign investors interested in the Nigerian mining sector. The introduction of a transparent licensing system and the establishment of a Mining Cadastre Office have ensured the availability of up-to-date information on mining titles, thereby enhancing transparency and facilitating investment decisions.

All over the world, the police have the constitutional mandate to tackle all forms of criminal behaviour that may occur within communities and potentially disrupt existing peace, stability, and progress. Although, Nigeria's 1999 constitution (as amended) does not unequivocally spell out the role and position of the country's police in the mining operations, combating illegal mining falls within the framework of the general activities covered by Nigeria Police Force. In recognition of this constitutional drawback in the fight against illegal mining, the federal government of Nigeria announced in 2023 plans to draw-up and establish a unique police unit for the sole purpose of combating illegal mining operations across the country. According to the minister of Solid Minerals and Development, Dele Alake, the special police would be created and christened "Mining Police Force" or "The Mining Police" (Nwachukwu, 2023). The declaration sounded promising and had the best intentions of tackling the age-long problem of illegal mining which has stampeded the country's mineral resource development and overall growth. However, the failure of the conventional police and existing mining regulations to tackle illegal mining due to ignorance, inadequate social support, poor funding, and corruption among others casts doubts on the prospects of the proposed special police unit successfully prosecuting its mandate.



In Benue State for example, the quest to protect the solid mineral resources led to the formulation of a taskforce in 2023 to apprehend individuals, groups and organizations involved in illegal solid mineral mining activities in the state (Duru, 2023). These efforts followed the

initiative of the Benue State governor, Hyacinth Alia, to sanitize the mining sector by declaring that illegal mining and logging in the state was criminal and people caught indulging in it would be made to face the full weight of the law (Ikyado, 2024). The efforts are currently stepped up to enhance collaboration towards bringing on the same table all legal miners to identify areas that need improvement and to facilitate proper utilization of the mineral resources for the overall interest of the state.

2. *Informal approaches*

All over the world, poor handling of natural resources and minerals have posed dire consequences on the economy, health and security of individuals, communities and nations. In Nigeria, the low revenues in the mining sector are attributed to illegal mining operations carried out across the country's hinterlands. Though various stakeholders may play essential roles in eradicating the menace of illegal mining, the position and role of community leaders remains critical due to their functions which range from serving as custodians of the local culture, administrators of the traditional institutions, and managers of the livelihood activities of the people in their areas (Salati et al., 2014).

The occupational and social activities in Nigerian communities are structured in such a manner that respects the traditional organization and cultural practices of the people. Similarly, mining activities are also carried out to reflect this social and cultural organization. In Benue state, this hierarchical order could strictly be adhered to by the parties involved. Even though mining operations are officially sanctioned by the government, community leaders oversee and manage all the natural resources in their local areas and may be required to cooperate with the government, investors or miners towards ensuring a hitch-free mining exercise. Put differently, mining activities including illegal mining may not happen in any locality in Benue State without the knowledge and authorization of local community leaders.

Recognizing that the core of the illegal mining issue lies within the neighborhood fabric, various approaches have been attempted to harness community resources in combating this problem. Sutton (1997) highlighted the concept of the "spontaneous rediscovery" of the community as a natural asset for addressing illegal mining and mitigating its impacts. There's a political appeal to the notion of local community action aimed at preventing illegal mining activities. In the community mobilization model, a higher level of resident involvement is anticipated compared to previous strategies. These programs are expected to foster "enhanced community competence," which is theorized to contribute to a reduction in illegal mining, with resident participation influencing both directly and indirectly through increased social interaction, a strengthened sense of community, and more effective informal control measures.

Challenges confronting the eradication of Illegal Mining in Nigeria

Eradicating illegal mining activities in Nigeria is inhibited by several factors such as lack of financial and human resources to tackle illegal mining, poor and complex coordination of agencies, confusion and inefficiencies, corruption, and absence of advanced technology which could hinder data collection and tracking of illegal mining activities etc (Yeboah, 2023). In Nigeria, the common challenge is the lack of legal framework or inadequate and ambiguous frameworks regarding the assignment of responsibilities and powers among the federal, state and local authorities. Izuaka (2023) stated that no state in Nigeria is legally empowered to issue orders concerning mining activities in any part of the country. Put differently, it is not legally within the purview of state government authorities to ban mining activities regardless of whether the mining is legal or not. This further extends to the local authorities who have no say regarding the natural resources and minerals in their domain. In circumstances where some state governors issued executive orders banning all illegal mining activities, there has been counter-reaction from the federal government through the Minister of Solid Minerals Development (Premium Times, 2023; Onuminya, 2023; Izuaka, 2023).

Another factor that is identified to be responsible for the poor enforcement of policies and regulations at local and state levels to combat illegal mining in Nigeria is the level of laxities observed in applying appropriate penalties/sanctions for violating environmental laws. If there

are no significant consequences for breaching environmental regulations, licensees or lessees have little incentive to consider the impact of their mining operations on the environment. This lack of accountability often leads to a propensity for engaging in illicit activities, given the weak or nonexistent enforcement of penalties. The government's failure to establish sufficient sanctions for unlawful practices, coupled with the enforcement agencies' shortcomings in ensuring compliance with mining regulations, exacerbates the situation (Akinleye, 2023).

According to Ogbonnaya (2020), the difficulty in tackling illegal mining lies in the lack of trust among residents of mining communities in the judicial system's capacity to effectively prosecute individuals engaged in illegal mining. Shortcomings such as insufficient resources and pervasive corruption cast doubts in the minds of the people about the ability of state institutions to hold illegal miners accountable. Additionally, there have been accusations from community members that security personnel exploit the situation for personal gain, citing instances of soliciting bribes without proper identification (Suleiman, 2019).

Effective collaboration between local and state actors against illegal mining is challenged by the fact that mining falls under the Exclusive List of the federal government. Thus, attempted collaboration between the actors at the state and community levels are met with constitutional gridlocks. It has been publicly declared by the minister of Solid Minerals Development that state and local communities in Nigeria lack the powers to interfere in mining operations (Munir, 2023). This condition makes it difficult for actors at the state and community levels to effectively collaborate in the fight against illegal mining activities in Nigeria.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Illegal mining is a persistent socioeconomic and environmental problem in Nigeria that results from multiple conditions including poverty, unemployment, corruption, illiteracy, poor management of resources, and inadequate collaboration between state and local actors. Tackling illegal mining is impeded by lack of finance, inadequate human resources, poor and complex coordination of agencies handling mining activities, corruption, and poor/inadequate use of relevant technology, among others. Illegal mining therefore significantly retards Nigeria's economic growth, social stability and other spheres of development. Serious activism and comprehensive collaboration between major stakeholders such as the police, ministry of mines and steel development, the legislature and leaders at the community level is required to tackle the problem of illegal mining in Nigeria.

References

- Adegbite, E., Aigbokhanm B.E., & Ajayi, S. (2017). Illegal mining in Nigeria: A threat to national security. *International Journal of Social Science and Humanities Research*, 5(1): 15-24.
- Akawe, (2023, September 14). Stakeholders call for collaborative efforts to end illegal mining. *The Voice*. Retrieved from <https://thevoicenewspaper.ng/stakeholders-call-for-collaborative-efforts-to-end-illegal-mining/>
- Akinleye, O.T. (2023). Realization of rights of host community under Nigerian mineral and mining act 2007 to foster sustainable community development. *NAUJILJ*, 14 (1):1-12.
- Ali, A.F., Abdullahi, A.S. & Zangina, A.S (2018). Environmental issues and the prospects of mining in Nigeria. *Dutse Journal of Pure and Applied Sciences (DUJOPAS)*, 4(2). 531 - 539.
- Alokolaro, O. & Akande, A. (2015). The legal and regulatory framework for mining in Nigeria: A catalyst for investment. *Energy & Infrastructure Group at Advocata Law Practice*, 5(1): 12-19.
- Amaefule, E. (2019, April 17). Nigeria loses N353 billion to illegal gold mining in three years, IYC, Bayelsa kick. *Punch*. Retrieved from <https://punchng.com/nigeria-loses-n353bn-to-illegal-goldmining-in-three-years-iy-c-bayelsa-kick/>.
- Borno bans mining activities (2023, October 13). *Premium Times*. Retrieved from premiumtimesng.com/news/top-news/633401-borno-bans-mining-activities.html
- Burke, R.H. (2009). *An Introduction to Criminological Theory* (3rd ed.). Willan Publishing.
- Bursik, R. J., & Grasmick, H. G. (1993). *Neighborhoods and crime: The dimensions of effective*

- community control. New York: *Lexington Books*.
- Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999.
- Cornish, D.B. & Clarke, R.V.G. (1986). *The reasoning criminal*. Springer.
- Di John, J. (2010). The 'resource curse': Theory and evidence (ARI). *Sub-saharan Africa*, 173: 1-9.
- Dozolme, P. (2018, May 31). Learn what illegal mining operations are. *ThoughtCo*. Retrieved from www.thoughtco.com/what-is-illegal-mining-and-how-significant-is-it-2367443
- Duncan, A.E. (2020). The dangerous couple: Illegal mining and water pollution - A case study in Fena River in the Ashanti region of Ghana. *Hindawi Journal of Chemistry*, 1-9.
- Duru, P. (2023, October 7). Benue task force vows to clampdown on illegal miners. *Vanguard*. Retrieved from <https://www.google.com/amp/s/www.vanguardngr.com/2023/10/benue-task-force-vows-to-clampdown-on-illegal-miners/amp/>
- Duru, P. (2024, February 17). Benue: Illegal mining activities short-changing state - AG, Mnyim laments. *Vanguard*. Retrieved from <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2024/02/benue-illegal-mining-activities-short-changing-state-ag-mnyim-laments/>
- Faama, O.B., Evans, A.K., & Bonsu, M.O. (2020). Assessing the factors influencing illegal mining operations; evidence from Ghana. *International Journal of Economics, Commerce and Management*, 8(11). <https://ijecm.co.uk/>
- Federal Ministry of Information and National Orientation (2023). *FG will collaborate with State Govts. to eliminate illegal mining* [Press Release]. Retrieved from <https://fmino.gov.ng/fg-will-collaborate-with-state-govts-to-eliminate-illegal-mining/>
- Grady, W. (2011). *Crime in Canadian context: Debates and controversies themes in Canadian Sociology* (2nd ed.). Oxford University Press.
- Hope, T. (1995). Community Crime Prevention', in M. Tonry and D.P. Farrington (eds) *Building a Safer Society: Strategic Approaches to Crime Prevention, Crime and Justice*, Vol. 19. Chicago: *University of Chicago Press*.
- Igbinadolor, N. (2022, March 21). How corruption denies Nigeria of mining sector dollars. *Business Day*. <https://businessday.ng>
- Igbo, E.U.M. (2006). Introduction to criminology. Nsukka: *University of Nigeria Press Limited*.
- Ikyado, B.T. (2024, January 28). Gov. Alia's solid steps to exploit Benue's solid minerals. *Sharpedge News*. Retrieved from <https://sharpedgenews.com/gov/alias/solid-steps-to-exploit-benues-solid-minerals/>
- International Crisis Group (2020). Violence in Nigeria's north west: Rolling back the mayhem. *Africa Report* N°288.
- Izuaka, M. (2023, October 13). State govts have no power to ban mining activities - minister. *Premium Times*. Retrieved from <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/business/632890-state-govts-have-no-powers-to-ban-mining-activities-minister.html>
- Kareem, I.A. & Owao, S. (2000). The effects of mining activities on the environment of Sanga Forest Reserved, Kaduna state. <http://dspace.unijos.edu.ng/handle/10485/496> Land Use Act 1978.
- Maidawa, B.A. (2023). The role of community participating in crime prevention and control: Evidence from Bauchi Metropolis. *Journal of Policy and Development Studies*, 14(1): 127-142.
- Moonti, R.M., Kadir, Y., Bunga, M., Koni, Y.K. & Kasim, R. (2022). The challenges of the police in overcoming illegal mining of natural stones that impact on natural damage and community. *International Journal of Humanities Education and Social Sciences*, 1(6): 1006-1015. <https://ijhess/index.php/ijhess/>
- Munir, A. (2023, September 19). Nigeria's unending battle against illegal miners amid dwindling revenue: Stakeholders want FG's renewed onslaught to end economic sabotage. *National Economy*. Retrieved from <https://nationaleconomy.com/nigerias-unending-battle-against-illegal-miners-amid-dwindling-revenue/>
- New Telegraph (2024, March 18). Benue agency impounds 14 trucks conveying ilmenite for tax evasion. *New Telegraph*. Retrieved from <https://newtelegraphng.com/benue-agency-impounds-14-trucks-conveying-ilmenite-for-tax-evasion/> Nigeria suspends mining in Zamfara state after banditry surges (2019, April 7). *Reuters*. Retrieved from [ww.reuters.com/](http://www.reuters.com/)

- article/usnigeria-security/nigeria-suspends-mining-in-zamfarastate-after-banditry-surges-idUSKCN1RJ0IS.
- Nigerian Minerals and Mining Act 2007.
- Nwachukwu, J.O. (2023, November 5). FG plans special police force on illegal mining. *Daily Post*. Retrieved from <https://dailypost.ng/2023/11/05/fg-plans-special-police-force-on-illegal-mining/>
- Ogbonnaya, M. (2020). Illegal mining and rural banditry in North West Nigeria: Responses, successes and challenges. *Policy Brief*, 19.
- Ojo, S.S., Adesina, A.S., & Agara, J.J. (2018). A sociological analysis of the impact of solid minerals mining on community development in Nasarawa State: A study of Awe local government area. *International Journal of Sociology and Anthropology Research*, 4(1):9-20.
- Okoli, A.C. (2019, September 12). What can be done to fight rural banditry in northern Nigeria? *The Conversation*. Retrieved from <https://reliefweb.int/report/nigeria/what-can-be-done-fight-rural-banditry-northern-nigeria>
- Olawoyin, O. (2018). Illegal mining: The inevitable disaster. *The Guardian*.
- Onuminya, I. (2023, September 24). Zamfara governor issues shoot-at-sight order against illegal miners. *Thisdaylive*. Retrieved from <https://google.com/amp/s/www.thisdaylive.com/index.php/2023/19/24/Zamfara-governor-issues-shoot-at-sight-order-against-illegal-miners%3famp=1>
- Osei, A.K., Amposah, S., & Osei, A.A. (2016). Factors influencing participation in illegal mining in Ghana: A case of Denkyira Condor. *Munich Personal RePEc Archive*. <https://impra.ub.uni-muenchen.de/6978/>
- Page, M. (2018). *The intersection of China's commercial interests and Nigeria's conflict landscape*, United States Institute for Peace. Retrieved from <https://carnegieendowment.org/2018/09/05/intersection-of-china-s-commercial-interests-and-nigeria-s-conflict-landscape-pub-77303>.
- Sahari, A. (2022). Legal protection in the use of land for mining activities. *Randwick International of Social Sciences (RISS) Journal*, 3(3):591-597. <https://doi.org/10.47175/rissj.v3i3.467>
- Salati, L.K., Mireku-Gyimah, D., & Eshun, P.A. (2014). Evaluation of stakeholders' roles in the management of artisanal and small-scale gold mining in Anka, Zamfara State, Nigeria. *Developing Country Studies*, 4(19): 150-161.
- Suleiman, S. (2019, June 13). Rural banditry in Zamfara state, Northwest Nigeria, *Kujenga Amani*. Retrieved from <https://kujengaamani.ssric.org/2019/06/13/rural-banditry-in-zamfara-statenorthwest-nigeria/>.
- Sutton, A. & Kayleen, M. H. (1997). Crime prevention and control: Crime and Justice: *An Australian textbook in criminology*. Sydney: Law Book Company.
- The Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999 (as amended).
- The Guardian (2022, October 22). Police, EFCC collaborate in fight against illegal mining in Kwara. *The Guardian*. Retrieved from <https://guardian.ng/news/police-efcc-collaborate-in-fight-against-illegal-mining-in-kwara/>
- West Africa Network for Peacebuilding (2020). Addressing armed banditry in the north-west region of Nigeria: exploring the potentials of a multi-dimensional conflict management approach. *West Africa Early Warning & Early Response Policy Brief*.
- Yeboah, A.S. (2023). Digging deeper: The impact of illegal mining on economic growth and development in Ghana. *Munich Personal RePEc Archive*, Paper No. 117641.
- Yunana, M.A. & Banta, A.L. (2014). Socio-economic effects of illegal mining activities in Antang district of Jema'a Local Government Area, Kaduna state, Nigeria. *Journal of Environmental Sciences and Resources Management*, 6(2):12-21.