

The Environmental and Socio-Economic Impacts of Galamsey (Illegal Small-Scale Gold Mining) on Selected Communities in Ghana

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Illegal artisanal gold mining (galamsey) accounts for about 40% of Ghana's gold production and is an important contributor to the economy. However, it has significant negative impacts on the environment that are not well-documented. Using remote sensing analysis of land cover changes and in-depth interviews of galamsey operators and community residents in 4 towns, this paper examines the impacts of galamsey activities in two regions –Ashanti and Eastern –to evaluate the extent of environmental degradation and remediation efforts. Findings revealed notable vegetation loss and widespread water pollution that compels residents to seek alternative water sources with little effort towards reclamation. Urgent action is necessary to curtail these losses and preserve the environment not just for the current residents but for the long-term future of the area.

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