



Self-Care Practices of Miners in Sitio Midas, Itogon, Benguet

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Abstract

In the mountainous enclave of Sitio Midas, Itogon, Benguet, small-scale gold mining has sustained the community for decades, serving as the primary livelihood despite inherent health and safety risks. This qualitative research delves into the miners' perspectives on the potential hazards associated with their activities and the self-care practices they employ. Through semi-structured interviews and open-ended questions, the study actively engages miners and their families, drawing insights into their self-care strategies. Major findings underscore a heightened awareness of health risks, particularly chemical exposure, prompting the adoption of safety measures such as protective gear. Cultural influences deeply rooted in tradition significantly shape the miners' approach to self-care, with the study noting a gradual shift influenced by Christianity, supplanting long-standing customs. The miners express a dual reliance on government support, acknowledging the importance of seminars while advocating for alternative livelihood options. Despite the inherent limitations of the research, the results underscore the critical role of self-care practices in mitigating health risks within the unique context of small-scale gold mining in Sitio Midas. The conclusion highlights the resilience of miners facing environmental and health challenges and points to the need for comprehensive support systems beyond their existing efforts, indicating the broader implications for policy and intervention strategies in similar mining communities.

Introduction

Mining is often considered a significant source of wealth and a contributor to economic development. Acheampong (2014) as cited in Jethro & Ogbodo, 2018, emphasizes that mining has an essential foundation for human development through the creation of wealth. In a separate study, Witchalls (2022) said that mining remains essential for providing resources to help economies grow and improve standards of living. However, despite the positive economic benefits, mining is also a significant source of health and

safety problems. Mensah et al., (2015) report that mining operations, especially illegal small-scale mining, are carried out in the open air without appropriate safeguards and environmental standards and, in the process, release contaminated water into the surrounding environment, thus polluting nearby rivers, soils, and vegetation. Consequently, mining has negative impacts on human health and safety. Haddaway et al., (2019) highlighted that these negative impacts include those on human health. Furthermore, the National Academy of Sciences



(2002) pointed out that health problems like pneumoconiosis, or black lung disease, silicosis, occupational hearing loss, and other health problems have long been associated with mining operations. Conant and Fadem (2008) said that the use of chemicals in mining contaminates the land, water, and air, which causes health problems for the workers and people living near the mines. Apart from chemical pollution, accidents are also a significant issue in the mining industry. The International Labor Organization (ILO) (1999) said that while it is impossible to say how many deaths and accidents occur in small-scale mines, due to under-reporting and the clandestine nature of much of the work, the risks of fatal and disabling accidents are high, particularly in underground coal mines. Additionally, ILO (1999) highlights that in the Philippines, children in the Sibutad region work carrying ore in 28kg sacks (62 lbs.) from gold mines to processing centers; others are involved in ore processing, exposing them to mercury contamination; some work underground carrying food or water to the miners.

Based on Chinese records, the history of mining in the Philippines dates back to pre-colonial times, with records suggesting that it began as early as the third century (Tujan & Guzman, 1998). In a 2005 article by Fialen, Vergel Aniceto, a founding member of the Itogon Inter-Barangay Alliance, said that *sayo* or gold panning along the river banks was widely practiced by several Cordillera communities even before the coming of the Spaniards. According to Aniceto, gold panning communities bartered their goods with lowland products and other farming needs such as cows and carabaos. Needs unavailable in the Highlands were also accessed through bartering their gold products. According to Scott (1974), the Igorots had their first contact with the Spaniards as a result of the fame of their gold mines. This mining tradition continued during American colonization and greatly contributed to the economic activities in the Cordillera Central (Cordillera Administrative Region at the present time). But while the Igorots had been practicing mining prior to the arrival of the Americans, systematic mining was not yet underway (Fry, 2006). The Cordillera Peoples Alliance (2007) added that small-scale mining has been practiced by Philippine peoples for at least ten centuries and large-scale mining by foreign as well as Filipino firms for about a century. And while mining has translated to economic growth, mining activities

have caused pollution in the region's rivers and lands since mining corporations started their operations.

Small-scale gold mining in the Philippines has been associated with different health and safety issues. ILO (2020), citing Lu (2012) and Rey and Saturay, (2005) noted that generally, the work involved in small-scale gold mining and processing is done crudely and unsystematically; it is also hazardous and labor-intensive. In addition, Vergrugge (2015) as cited by Granadillos and Parafina, (2020), said the workers are at high risk of pulmonary diseases and even suffocation due to poor ventilation inside the mines. Aside from toxic chemicals and other related risks, mining has been linked to additional health issues. Leung and Lu (2022), found that prolonged crouching and bending, extended tool handling, and hauling heavy sacks laden with minerals had to be dealt with.

Sitio Midas is one of the Itogon, Benguet sitios that has been practicing small-scale gold mining. Some miners' daily routines have included chemicals such as cyanide solutions used in the carbon in pulp (CIP) gold extraction process. Because of their frequent exposure to such toxins, these miners are at risk of developing pulmonary diseases, suffocation, and other injuries. As a result, it is important to understand how the miners of Sitio Midas care for themselves.

Many individuals in Sitio Midas still rely on mining as their primary source of income. In the study at hand, we will understand how the residents of Sitio Midas exercise self-care to protect themselves from potential health and safety dangers.

Conceptual Framework

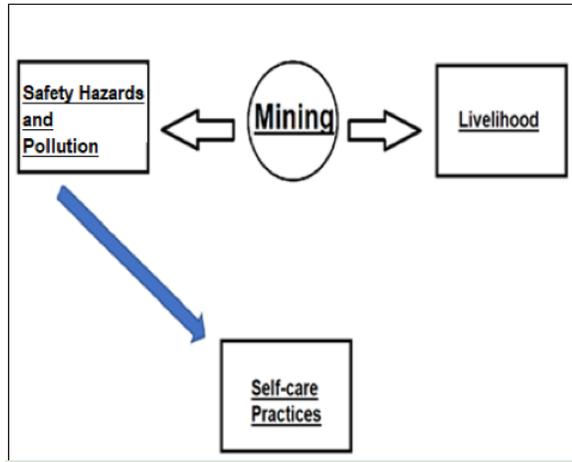
Figure 1 illustrates the interconnected elements central to our exploration of miners' self-care practices in the context of small-scale gold mining in Sitio Midas. At the core of this framework is the key activity of mining, showing the livelihoods and daily experiences of the miners.

To the left, the arrow points towards "Livelihood," emphasizing the economic foundation of mining for the community. This includes the various ways in which mining sustains and shapes their way of life.



Figure 1

Relationships Between Mining, Livelihood, Pollution, Safety Hazards, and Self-Care Practices



On the right, the arrow leads to "Safety Hazards and Pollutions," acknowledging the inherent risks and environmental challenges posed by mining activities. These hazards underscore the need for proactive self-care practices to mitigate potential health impacts.

Below, another arrow directs attention to "Self-care Practices," positioning it as a crucial response to the identified safety hazards and pollutions. This square signifies the unique blend of practices observed among miners, influenced by scientific, traditional, and Christian beliefs.

This conceptual framework serves as a guide for understanding the complex relationships between mining, livelihood, safety concerns, and the diverse self-care practices adopted by miners. The blend of scientific, traditional, and Christian influences emerges as a central theme, shaping the miners' approach to well-being in this challenging occupational context.

Referencing this framework throughout the discussion allows for a detailed exploration of how these elements interact, influence each other, and contribute to the miners' holistic approach to self-care.

Methodology

To comprehensively investigate the self-care practices of small-scale gold miners in Sitio Midas, a qualitative research approach was deliberately chosen. The utilization of qualitative methods, such as semi-structured interviews and open-ended questions, was deemed appropriate for this study. Qualitative research allows for an in-depth exploration of individuals' perspectives, experiences, and cultural influences, offering a detailed understanding of how miners protect their well-being in the face of the health and safety hazards associated with mining activities. This approach was selected over quantitative methods to capture the richness of miners' narratives and to uncover the complex interplay of cultural and contextual factors that shape their self-care strategies, aligning with the aim of exploring the subjective and multifaceted dimensions of self-care within the unique context of small-scale gold mining in Sitio Midas. Through this qualitative research approach, the study aimed to provide valuable insights into the self-care practices of small-scale gold miners in Sitio Midas, shedding light on how these individuals safeguard their well-being while engaging in mining activities.

The target participants were random miners from Sitio Midas, along with their families. Sitio Midas is a community located in the scenic surroundings of Itogon, Benguet, in the Cordillera region. This enclave has been sustained by small-scale gold mining for decades, serving as the primary livelihood for its residents. Semi-structured interviews and open-ended questions were used to gather insights into their self-care strategies. Nine participants took an active role in the study, predominantly male, with only one female respondent. The majority of participants primarily spoke Kankanaey. Observations and random interviews were conducted within the mining community to achieve the research objectives.

Ethical considerations were addressed by obtaining a permit from the barangay officials and sought permission from the participants. We introduced ourselves, outlining the purpose of our work, and explained essential standard operating procedures (SOPs), including the assurance of confidentiality. Participants were



informed that their involvement was voluntary, and they had the freedom to decide whether to participate or not.

Treatment of Data

In addition to written notes, the researchers employed smartphones to record interviews, ensuring comprehensive and detailed information capture. The recorded interviews were transcribed and underwent a rigorous process of coding and theming to facilitate in-depth analysis and result summarization.

For the qualitative data that was obtained from interview with open-ended question, a simple yet effective three-column table format was utilized. This table included sections for Questions and Responses, Coding, and Generated Themes. This systematic approach helped organize and categorize the data, making it more accessible for subsequent analysis.

Furthermore, a thorough review of literature was conducted to enrich the research context and depth. Diverse sources were consulted, including academic journals, websites, and personal book collections. This extensive literature review played a crucial role in informing the study's theoretical framework and ensuring alignment with existing knowledge in the field. Finally, the researcher used the AI ChatGPT to guide him in constructing his ideas, and checking and enhancing grammar during the writing of the manuscript.

Results and Discussions

Phenomenological Exploration of Miners' Self-Care Practices in Small-Scale Gold Mining

In the context of small-scale gold mining in Sitio Midas, miners' self-care practices are influenced by both external environmental stressors and deep-rooted cultural beliefs. Mining is inherently dangerous, emphasizing the importance of miners protecting themselves and their families. Rajae et al., (2015), as cited by Stewart (2020), highlight a group of stressors that impact local communities and ecosystems. These stressors include erosion, flooding, deforestation, and contamination of ground and surface waters.

In effect, such stressors deplete food supplies and introduce harmful elements into the food chain.

The lived experiences of miners are significantly shaped by environmental stressors such as erosion, flooding, deforestation, and water contamination. These stressors, identified by Rajae et al., (2015), as cited by Stewart (2020), create a challenging backdrop that necessitates a heightened awareness of self-care practices.

Moreover, Levin's (2018) study underscores the adverse consequences of mining activities in the Philippines emphasizing their social and environmental repercussions. These impacts, such as land degradation and deforestation, closely mirror the concerns raised by Rajae et al., (2015) as referenced by Stewart (2020). Additionally, Levin stated that the pollution caused by the mercury released into the environment is endangering both ecosystems and human health as workers and nearby residents may contract respiratory and skin diseases. Furthermore, the displacement of communities caused by mining operations exacerbates these issues.

Miners in Sitio Midas prioritize self-care as a crucial measure to prevent illnesses stemming from chemical contamination and other work-related injuries. However, their approach to self-care is a unique blend of heeding the government's guidance based on scientific studies and preserving longstanding traditions and beliefs.

As referenced by Banes (2019), the Cordillera Peoples Alliance (2007) reported that the indigenous people of Itogon, Benguet has been into gold mining for at least 1,000 years. Over this extended period, mining has not only been a vital economic activity but has also played a key role in shaping the belief systems, superstitions, rituals, economic practices, and social structure of this traditional mining community. Remarkably, some miners continue to uphold these age-old superstitions to this day.

In the section that follows, the miners' self-care practices based on government protocols and on their traditional culture are elucidated.

Protection from Chemicals

Ensuring the safety of miners stands as one of the foremost policies for conducting small-scale mining as outlined in Section 4 of the



Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Administrative Order No. 97-30 (1997), specifically under the Protection against the Handling of Chemicals and other Laboratory Hazards, which encompasses the Small-Scale Mine Safety Rules and Regulations. Furthermore, Rule 17 in Chapter IV of the same DENR Administrative Order, also known as the Small-Scale Mine Safety Rules and Regulations, mandates that all miners shall be required to wear protective safety gadgets such as hard hat, rubber boots, etc.

Respondent 1, a 62-year-old male belonging to the Kankanaey community, emphasized the paramount importance of safety when dealing with chemicals in mining activities. He expressed the necessity of ensuring one's safety both within the mining site and when handling chemicals. In his own words, "*masapul adi nga kwa, safety ta adi ta nu agusar ta ti [chemicals]. Masapul a na-safety ta a dijay [site]. Nu agusar ka met ti chemicals tadta a panawen nya, ag-facemask, aggwantis*" (It is necessary that we are safe if we use [chemicals]. It is necessary that we are safe there [in the site]. If you use chemicals nowadays, wear a facemask and gloves).

Despite his commendable self-care practices, he acknowledged that not all miners prioritize their safety. He noted, "*Adda ti haan nga agproteksyon ti bagi na*" (There are those who do not protect themselves). This observation was based on his 15 years of experience in small-scale gold mining, where he had encountered fellow miners who neglected safety precautions. He also underscored the inherent risks associated with such neglect, stating, "*Siyempre ininut met nga kwa, ininut dajay a agsakit. Wen kumapsut*" (Of course, they will gradually get sick. Yes, you'll get weak).

In addition to wearing safety gear, Respondent 1 emphasized the importance of post-work precautions. He explained, "*Siyempre nu agusar ka ti kakasjay [chemicals] agdigus ka a. Nu agusar ka ti palasan nga kuna da, nu agawid ka met, agdigus ka a. Kasjay lang met ti ikukwak e*" (Of course, if you used like those [chemicals], you take a bath. If you used what they call *palasan* (gears), you take a bath before you go home. That's what I do). He extended his concern to his children, who are also involved in mining, urging them to prioritize safety.

It was evident through our observations that miners in the community diligently wore safety gear, including boots, hardhats, and gloves (Figure 2), showcasing their commitment to self-care. They attributed this practice to their participation in government-initiated seminars.

Respondent 3, a 73-year-old female from Kibungan, Benguet, also a Kankanaey, explained that even though she is physically strong until now, she acknowledges the importance of self-care. "*Wen adi [agbotas, agwantis], Wen adda sabon. Agdigus ka,*" (Yes, [use boots, gloves]. There is soap. You take a bath. You should wear a mask). Furthermore, Respondent 4, a 41-year-old male who started working as a small-scale gold miner when he was 11 years old said, "*masapul nga nu agtrabaho ka ti kasjay, kumpleto [gears]. Ag-mask ka, aggwantis ka, kasjay a. Safety protection gear,*" (If you work in the mines, it is necessary to have a complete [gears]. Wear a mask, gloves, like that. Safety protection gear). He added the importance of not bringing the gears that were soiled and contaminated by chemicals inside the house. "*Nu kasjay ti tinrabahum haan mu met nga iawid diyay [soiled and contaminated clothes and gears]. Adda met ti bodega. Haan met ti balay ti pangiawidam. Adda ti safety nga portion. Adda ti pangidisposam ti inusar mu pi man nga narugit. Syempre ag-ugas ka pay santu agawid ka,*" (If you do a work like that, do not bring them [soiled and contaminated clothes and gears] home). There is a storeroom. You do not bring them home. There is a safe portion. There is a place where you can dispose the soiled clothes you used. Of course, you wash yourself before going home," he explained.

Figure 2

Miners Go Directly to Their Bunkhouses Wearing Soiled Clothes and Gears



Respondent 5, a 58-year-old male who has been a miner for 40 years, emphasized it by saying, “*Agawid kami nga haan kami nakakwa ti chemical. Iwiwasan mi dagita ta mabuteng kami met lang,*” (We go home without chemicals. We avoid those because we are also afraid.)”

Protection from Other Work-Related Injuries

In the realm of small-scale gold mining in Sitio Midas, the miners' self-care practices are fundamentally shaped by legal mandates and occupational safety regulations. Beyond the immediate risks associated with chemical exposure, the narrative unfolds into a broader exploration of safeguarding measures stipulated under Chapters III to XII of the DENR Administrative Order No. 97-30.

The practical implications of these legal provisions come to life through the meticulous adherence to protective gear and environmental safety measures. Respondent 2's emphasis on clearing paths, using safety gears, and practicing precautions aligns with the regulatory framework set by DENR. This mutually beneficial relationship between legal mandates and individual practices forms the backbone of miners' self-care rituals. Respondent 2, a 79-year-old male from Mankayan, Benguet who started working as a miner in 1967, said,

“Idi kapigpigsagak pay lang talaga nga nagpigsagak nga kwa agminminas ya. Uray nu jay maminasam nga kwa, saan nga kaya ti kwa [bagi] mabalin nga pilitam nga bagkatan [ti ore]. Syempre makwa ti bagi. Adda ipektu na jay bagi nu kankanayun nga kwa ti kasta ti kwa. Isu nga masapul gayam nu anadam ti bagim tapnu saan mu nga [sagarapen] wen. (I was really a productive miner when I was younger. Even if you cannot carry [the ore] you mined, you have to force yourself to carry it. Of course, your body will be [affected]. It has an effect if you always do that. That is why it is important to protect yourself. I only get wounds.” Because of that, he suggested the use of protective and safety gears and other precautions).

“Agdalous ka muna ti pagnaan ti bagun bago ka mapan ijay uneg,” (You have to clear the path of the wagon before you go inside). Like the other respondents, he also mentioned the importance of taking a bath and changing the clothes before

heading home. *“Nu malpas ka agminas agawid ka ti malem agdigus ka a”* (It is necessary to take a bath before you enter your family's house) he added.

An ocular inspection of bunkhouses reveals the tangible manifestation of these regulatory standards. Proximity to tunnels, meticulous hanging of soiled clothes and safety gears, and the ritualistic importance of pre-entry bathing showcase a conscientious effort to comply with prescribed safety measures (Figure 3). We met Respondent 8 preparing a bath while washing some of his soiled clothes. We interviewed him and had the chance to observe the surroundings. The place was far from the mining site and bunkhouses. He brought with him a soap, shampoo and other cleaning materials. He said it is important to take a bath before going inside their bunkhouses to protect themselves from sickness. Most of them really give importance to having enough rest as part of their self-care practices. He explained that having enough rest will restore their strength to continue with their work. According to him, taking a rest without taking a bath is not a good practice.

Observing the activities at various bunkhouses provided valuable insights into the daily practices of the miners. For instance, when we encountered Respondent 9, who was engrossed in the panning process, we did not only conduct an interview but also witnessed practical applications of non-chemical methods for gold processing. He

Figure 3

Soiled Clothes Used by the Miners were Seen Hanging in Their Bunkhouses



generously shared his knowledge, demonstrating the meticulous process of separating small particles of gold from the soil through panning.

In another bunkhouse, we encountered two miners, one taking a rest while the other was busy at the mill. The presence of soiled clothes, masks, and boots at the site indicated a commitment to safety measures. Notably, we observed an absence of smoking, cigarettes, and liquors in the bunkhouses, emphasizing a focus on a healthy lifestyle. Beyond the mining equipment, we noticed the presence of vegetable gardens and chickens, suggesting a multifaceted approach to self-sustainability.

Continuing our exploration up the hill, we met a young miner from Cagayan chewing *momma* or betel nut. His explanation that this practice served as a pastime to alleviate boredom, rather than being rooted in taboos or superstitions, provided cultural context to his actions. These observations complemented the insights gained from our direct interviews, enriching our understanding of the miners' daily lives and practices.

Self-Care Practices Based on Old Traditions and Beliefs

While embracing modern approaches to self-care, the enduring traditions of self-preservation remained deeply ingrained and faithfully upheld within the mining community. Some miners acknowledged the existence of certain taboos believed to potentially bring misfortunes to their mining endeavors. According to Anon (2010), as cited by Addei and Amankwah (2011), the gold mining industry in particular, has several myths and superstitious beliefs. In the Americas, myths developed by the Apaches and Cocopah Indians exist about the Superstition Mountains and the Lost Dutchman's Mine. These misfortunes encompass a wide spectrum of negative outcomes, ranging from accidents to other adverse consequences arising from mining activities. In Ghana myths exist about a place called Kumadiosea, Akrokeri in the Ashanti Region, where a shaft collapsed in 1905 and in 1932 an accident occurred on the refurbished mine in which an estimated sixty miners died in an underground tunnel Addei and Amankwah (2011).

Respondent 4 elaborated on specific taboos that have been passed down through generations of miners, illustrating the rich tapestry of cultural and traditional beliefs woven into the fabric of the mining community. These taboos encompass practices such as abstaining from consuming dog meat, refraining from committing adultery, and avoiding sexual intercourse among single or unmarried men. These beliefs and practices are deeply rooted in the collective wisdom of the mining community, and are regarded as essential safeguards against bad luck or adverse repercussions in the realm of mining. As Respondent 4 explained, "*Bawal ti agsida ti aso. Bawal agbabae. Bawal ti sex nu baru. Isu ti nirugyan mi nagapu ninuno mi*" (Consuming dog meat is prohibited. Committing adultery is prohibited. Engaging in sexual intercourse is prohibited among single men. That's what we learned from our ancestors). This assertion lacks clarity as the respondent has presented a vague statement without providing a tangible real-world example or sharing a specific personal experience.

Respondent 2, on the contrary, substantiated his statement with a vivid personal anecdote. "*Malagip ku, adda ti nakitak nga nava nga adda balitok. Idi nagsidaak ti aso, naawan diyay balitok.*" (I vividly recall a time when there was gold. The gold vanished after I consumed dog meat.) According to Addei and Amankwah (2011), dogs are not allowed at mining sites as there is a strong belief among the small-scale miners that the presence of these animals has the potential to reduce gold recovery.

In a separate group discussion, Respondent 7 said "*bawal ti agmomma,*" (chewing betel nut inside the mines is forbidden.) This is not specifically because of the betel nut but because of their belief that you should not bring anything not related to mining activities like radio, cellphone and others. Similar to Respondent 4, Respondent 7 did not provide a personal experience.

Although these traditions are being practiced by other miners, Respondent 8 and 9 said they do not. I learned that all of them are Christians and belonged to one denomination or church when one of our fellow researchers asked them about their religion. We invited the respondents for a prayer every after a successful interview. I observed that they prayed seriously. Their eyes were closed and the emotions were very obvious.



I must agree that this is part of their self-care. Their faith is the one that keep them going. This is the belief that they practice. Respondent 9 said “Ditoy, at least met kitdi, na-civilize nga kuna da. Isu nga nu ti panagtrabaho mi dita, normal met lang nga kararag ti kwa mi, proteksyon nga ususaran mi. Nu man pay adda ti kwa a, advice dagiti geo science, dagidyay MGB kasjay, wen nu dagitoy company nga dadakkel, nga protective gear,” (At least we are civilized here. Regarding our job, we just pray for our protection, or if there are advices from the geo science like the Mines and Geosciences Bureau, or these big companies about protective gears).

Self-care practice is being practice due to fear of getting injured brought by mining-related activities. In the case of Sitio Midas miners, it is necessary for them to practice self-care because it is the only livelihood that they have. While it is true that they are attending seminars conducted by the LGU and DENR, they are the ones who provide safety gears for themselves most of the time. It is clear that miners receive only minimal support from the government.

The influence of religion, particularly Christianity, has been gradually eradicating the old local traditions and beliefs. As Respondent 2 said “Dagidyay nga haan nga Nakristiyanuhan, agkanyaw da. Nu Kristiyano ka, agkanyaw ken kararag,” (Those who were not Christianized, they do a Cañao. If you are a Christian, you do a Cañao and pray). According to Respondent 3, “Haanak mamati, ni Apu Diyos laeng” (We don’t believe [in superstitions], only with God).

Lack of Government Support

As mentioned above, self-care practice is mainly a result of government laws like R.A. 7076. While this is true, miners don’t receive ample support from the government to take care of themselves. Respondent 2 said “Awan met tulong ti gobyerno. Mayat kuma nu adda tulong ti gobyerno tapno sumayaat” (There is no assistance from the government. It would be better if there is).

Respondent 3 echoed Respondent 2’s assertion in a distinct interview, emphasizing the absence of government assistance. “Mayat nu tulungan da kami, ngem awan pay” (It would be beneficial if they could provide us support, but so far, there had been none). She specifically pointed out employment opportunities as a form

of assistance they anticipate. “Ibagak (ti gubyerno) nu adda ti maitulong nga sabal inga trabaho” (I will suggest (to the government) if there are other job opportunities they can provide).

Conclusions

The exploration of miners’ self-care practices in the context of small-scale gold mining in Sitio Midas unveils a complex interplay of external stressors, legal mandates, cultural traditions, and individual initiatives. The lived experiences of miners are closely woven into the fabric of their community, where environmental stressors necessitate a heightened awareness of self-care practices.

The commitment to self-care is evident in the miners’ meticulous adherence to government-mandated safety measures, such as the use of protective gear and environmental precautions. Respondents emphasized the importance of safety not only within the mining site but also in post-work routines, reflecting a comprehensive approach to minimizing risks associated with chemical exposure.

Furthermore, the study highlights the symbiotic relationship between legal mandates and individual practices, emphasizing the effectiveness of regulations in shaping self-care rituals. The tangible manifestation of regulatory standards, observed in bunkhouses and daily activities, underscores the conscientious effort to create a safe working environment.

The endurance of cultural traditions in tandem with modern self-care approaches adds depth to the miners’ practices. While embracing government protocols, miners hold steadfast to age-old taboos and beliefs, viewing them as essential safeguards against misfortunes in mining endeavors.

Despite the commitment of miners to self-care, the study reveals a significant gap in government support. The absence of substantial assistance, as expressed by the respondents, poses a challenge to the sustainability of effective self-care practices. While laws such as R.A. 7076 provides a framework, the onus of securing safety gears and implementing self-care measures falls largely on the miners themselves.



In conclusion, the complex tapestry of miners' self-care practices in Sitio Midas reflects a dynamic interplay of environmental, legal, cultural, and individual factors. While miners exhibit commendable dedication to safeguarding their well-being, bridging the gap in government support is crucial for the long-term sustainability of effective self-care in small-scale gold mining communities.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, it is recommended that the government take proactive steps to bridge the existing gap in support for small-scale gold miners in Sitio Midas. This involves enhancing assistance programs, especially in providing necessary safety gears. Collaborative efforts between government agencies, local communities, and mining associations can help ensure the effective implementation of self-care practices.

Given the gradual shift in cultural practices due to the influence of Christianity, there is an opportunity for educational initiatives. These initiatives can focus on integrating modern self-care practices while respecting and preserving certain cultural traditions that align with safety measures.

Furthermore, regular assessments and updates to existing laws, such as R.A. 7076, should be considered to address the evolving needs of miners. This can involve consultations with miners themselves to better understand their challenges and tailor support mechanisms accordingly.

In summary, the government should play an active role in supporting the self-care efforts of small-scale gold miners in Sitio Midas. Strengthening collaboration, educational initiatives, and adapting laws to current realities will contribute to the sustainable well-being of miners and the overall success of their self-care practices. Additionally, further research could explore the potential correlation between prayer practices and the well-being of participants sharing a common religion, thereby enriching the understanding of cultural influences on self-care in mining communities.

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