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The Impact of Gold Mining on Children's Education in Lele Village, District of Buru

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Abstract

Gold mining also affects the education sector of local children, one of which is Lele Village, located in Lolong Guba Sub-district, Buru Regency. This problem is presented through qualitative research with descriptive methods that aim to describe the conditions and situations related to the impact of waste gold mining in Lele Village. The analytical methods used are participatory problem analysis and stakeholder analysis. The waste of gold mining in Lele Village is significant enough to affect community income. However, the impact on education can be that children experience a setback because children who participate in work tend to ignore school. When faced with economic problems, they have no choice, especially since working in this waste gold mine is quick to make money. Therefore, it requires the attention of the local government as well as indigenous peoples to care about resolving the phenomenon of children working in mining areas, as well as school-age people who do not continue their education.

Keywords: Gold Mining, Education, Economy, Sustainability, Lele Village

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Page 32-37

INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is one of the world's countries rich in potential natural resources. One of Indonesia's natural resources is minerals (mines). Almost every region in Indonesia has sources of minerals (mines), such as gold. Potential gold deposits are found in almost every region of Indonesia, such as on the islands of Sumatra, Riau, Kalimantan, Java, Sulawesi, Maluku, and Papua.

Law No. 32/2004 on Regional Government provides a reference for the Buru Regency Government to independently manage regional assets, especially those sourced from the mining sector. In order to realize national development, the implementation of regional government is directed at accelerating the realization of community welfare through improvement, service, empowerment, and community participation, as well as increasing regional competitiveness by taking into account the principles of democracy, equity, and justice for every citizen.

The mining sector is one of the mainstay sectors that increase state revenue in the context of sustainable development. Mining activities are a process of transferring natural resources into real economic capital for the country. The resulting capital is expected to increase the value of the quality of the nation's people's ability to face their respective lives independently. In the transfer process, it is necessary to pay attention to the interaction between social, economic, and environmental factors to know the impacts as early as possible. Sustainable and global natural resource management must accommodate the dynamics of the aspirations of indigenous peoples, cultures, and communities. Values are based on national legal norms and rules because natural resources are the government's responsibility and the responsibility of all levels of society, including Indigenous Peoples (Labetubun et al., 2021). The policies have yet to accommodate all the aspirations of the community, especially local communities around mining areas, one of which is in Buru Regency.

Buru Regency, located in Maluku Province, is a region with natural resources. Its existence between three critical cities in Eastern Indonesia (Makassar, Manado/Bitung, and Ambon) and through Sea Line III (a sea route that describes the main maritime route between ports used for logistics and naval trade in the three regions above) places Buru Regency in a strategic position. Various potential natural resources, such as fisheries, mining, and agricultural resources, support this strategic position. Since 2011, Buru Regency has been well-known for opening gold mines. Gold mining in Buru Regency is artisanal and small-scale mining (ASM) with legal status.

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Efforts made by the Buru district government through the establishment of the Maluku Islands Mining Area (WP) No. 4002K/30/MEM/2013 by the Minister of Energy and Mineral Resources provide a legal basis for the Regional Government to organize several areas that empirically have gold potential, so it is hoped that with arrangements made by applicable regulations, the mining sector can make a positive contribution (jdih.esdm.go.id, 2024). Coastal and marine areas have complex spatial/ecological, socio-economic, and institutional law complexity, thus implying the need for integrated management (Dahuri, 2000).

Gold mining management of mineral resources is carried out because it is believed to provide higher local revenue to improve the economy and development and create jobs for local communities and communities outside the mining location. Early mineral resource management had both positive and negative impacts. Mining activities in Buru Regency bring about environmental, social, and economic changes. Mining activities also cause externalities to the environment, society, and economy of the people of Buru Regency. The positive impact felt by the community is an increase in income. However, negative impacts are often more dominant than positive impacts or externalities from human economic activities on the environment (Pelamonia, 2012).

All of the above impacts are very common in mining processing. An interesting phenomenon with the existence of gold mining is that it also affects the education sector of local children, one of which is Lele Village, located in Lolong Guba District, Buru Regency. We often see the impact only in terms of the environment and economy, but mining processing still needs to escape the education problem. The challenges in the education sector on the islands never seem to stop. Thus, this paper will contain and identify the impact of gold mining processing on children's education in Lele Village, Lolong Guba District.

METHODS

The Mount Botak dump gold mine in Lele Village, Lolong Guba District, affects children's education. What is the impact and influence of parents working in this waste gold mine on the lives of children vulnerable to the mining environment? This problem is presented through qualitative research with a descriptive method that aims to describe the conditions and situations of the phenomenon of the impact of the dumped gold mine in Lele Village. The analytical methods used are participatory problem analysis and stakeholder analysis. This problem analysis can be done by using a problem tree through a causal process and identifying the main issues and problems, among others:

1. Economic condition of the community in Lele Village
2. Education and school-age conditions
3. Factors influencing children to work in the Mount Botak dump gold mine
4. The impact of the Mount Botak dump gold mine on children's education
5. Socio-economic and institutional issues

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The history of Lele Village, including its development and culture, is inseparable. Lele Village is a village that was initially located in an old village called 'Wamiha'. A few years later, all moved to a location called 'Wapo,' after which it moved again to a place called 'Bangko Rua.' The people of Lele Village moved because their residence was in a mountainous area far from the city, and now all have settled in one location called Lele Village. Lele Village is administratively located in Lolong Guba Sub-district of Buru Regency, bordered to the east by Waitina Village, to the west by Wamana Baru Village, to the north by Grandeng Village and the south by Wapsalit Village. The total area is 29.14 km. Lele Village is divided into 4 sub-village areas: Wambasalahin Hamlet, Debu Hamlet, Waengapan Hamlet, and Modanmohe Hamlet. Based on population data obtained from the Lele Village office, the overall population of Lele Village is 1,379 people. The total population is then divided by male gender, with as many as 717 people, and by female population, with 662 people and a number of family 352. The following is contained in the table:

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Table 1. Population Status by Sex in 2024

No	Gender	Number of Souls
1	**Male**	**717**
2	**Female**	**662**
	Total	**1379**

Source: Lele Village Office 2024

Based on Table 1 above, the number of male and female residents is not too far apart. In addition to being categorized by sex, the population of Lele Village can also be categorized by age. The category of the population of Lele Village per age/age level starts from 0 - 70 years. For clarity, it can be seen in Table 2 below :

Table 2. Total Population of Lele Village by Age in 2024

No	Age	Male	Female	Total
1	0 – 5	23	13	36
2	1 – 2	36	26	62
3	3	4	3	7
4	4	20	28	48
5	5	14	25	39
6	6 - 9	70	65	135
7	10 – 14	98	76	174
8	15 – 19	105	72	177
9	20 – 44	236	298	534
10	45 - 54	87	55	142
11	55 – 59	42	16	58
12	60 – 69	16	14	30
13	70	6	2	8
	Total	717	662	1.379

Source: Lele Village Office 2024

Table 2 above shows that the total population of Lele Village is a more productive age population, including those aged 20 - 44, as many as 534 people. In comparison, the lowest age is 70 years and over as many as 8 people, which means that when the productive age is higher, this must also affect the level of education of the people in Lele Village. Then, what about the education level of the community in Lele Village? The population of Lele Village has a level of education that varies from early childhood education (PAUD) and kindergarten (TK) to college. Some residents have attended school but have yet to graduate. For more details on the education level of the Lele Village population, see the table below:

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Table 3. Education Level of the Population of Lele Village

No	Education Level	Total
1	PRE-SCHOOL/KINDERGARTEN	80
2	Elementary school	450
3	Junior high school	250
4	Senior high school	159
5	D3	10
6	Bachelor	7
7	Not at school	423
	Total	1.379

Source: Lele Village Office 2024

Table 3 above shows that 423 people in Lele Village are not in school. At the same time, 450 people graduated from elementary school or the equivalent. Two hundred fifty people graduated from junior high school or the equivalent, 159 from senior high school or the equivalent, 80 from early childhood education or kindergarten, 10 from college or university, and 7 from university (strata 1).

The results of the interviews show that many people do not continue their studies to higher education because of economic factors, so they prefer to work to fulfill their needs. In terms of work, some of the people of Lele Village choose to work as waste gold miners out of a total population of 90 people (Lele Village Office, 2024). Generally, the community began to switch their livelihoods as miners even though most of their work was farming. The interviews show that some residents stated that mining activities carried out daily provide more meaningful income value than farming activities. The income obtained from working as a dump gold miner is collected in one to three weeks and is enough to increase the community's income to meet their daily needs.

The characteristics of dump mine workers in the Lele Village community are mostly of productive age and are at an age that should be in school. They choose not to pursue further education due to economic factors, and their average level of education is primary school. Apart from the needs of life, many children's education is neglected. Based on observations made in the field show that those who are active at the mining site are also school-age children and mothers. However, in the end, this waste gold mining activity impacts children's education. Conventional processing and inadequate waste treatment systems can damage the environment and affect the condition of children. It is something that some people are concerned about due to the disposal of mercury waste that is not carried out according to procedures.

Getting an education is the right of all people and is not limited to age, religion, or social class. Ignoring their right to education will have a negative impact. These working children allegedly neglect school, impacting grades and knowledge. Part-time work is a double burden for schoolchildren, and they must consider physical development as well. Working children can affect their physical health because their work can cause accidents and diseases and affect their emotional development. Working children may be exploited, which is harmful to their social development. Working children can affect opportunities to engage in activities such as playing, going to school, and socializing with peers, not getting the fundamental education needed to cope with life's problems, not getting the opportunity to interact with others, and actively enjoying life naturally.

The dumped gold mine in Lele Village significantly affects the community's income. However, the impact on education can be that children experience a setback because children who participate in work tend to ignore school. When faced with economic problems, they have no choice, especially since working in this waste gold mine is quick to make money. Therefore, it requires the attention of local

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governments as well as indigenous peoples to care about resolving the phenomenon of children working in mining areas, as well as school-age people who do not continue their education. If everyone has the same awareness that if one or two generations, in this case, parents who have worked in this dumped gold mine, only have the opportunity to reach elementary school education due to economic factors, there should be a solution for the next generation to get a better education.

Another factor could be that working in the waste gold mine earns money faster than attending school. We must realize that education is critical to supporting life, increasing academic knowledge and shaping behavioral character. By taking education, it will produce a quality workforce. Human capital theory argues that a person with a high educational status has more open employment opportunities, which can reduce the unemployment rate (Arifin & Firmansyah, 2017). Ultimately, education in an archipelago such as Buru remains a challenging and social issue that must be addressed.

CONCLUSION

From an economic point of view, waste gold mining in Lele Village is very profitable and provides more income for the community. However, all these dumped gold mining activities have also had a negative impact, namely the impact on education, children who take part to work in the mining area or just help their parents. Therefore, it is hoped that the village and local governments will be more severe in making protection policies that can overcome the educational impact of existing gold mining activities. Legal protection efforts are needed for school-age children who work in mining areas. In addition, there is a need for socialization in the community, so the Mount Bald waste gold mining area is not a safe place for children's lives. We need a space for dialogue, socialization, and participation, according to the statutory mandate that residents be involved in all mining production activity plans, which must be evaluated.

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