

# DARUBINI

## Unearthing Equality: Women's Empowerment in Tanzania's Extractive Sector



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Tanzania's extractive sector, encompassing mining, oil, and gas, significantly drives economic growth and development while also influencing the welfare of its people. However, the sector's benefits have not been equitably distributed among all segments of society, with women being notably disadvantaged. Within the mining sector, the activities women are engaged in fall in three main categories: artisanal and small-scale mining (mainly mineral processing, service provision and a small group of mining license owners); skilled and unskilled labour in large-scale mining operations; and those residing in mining vicinities, affected by mining activities (HakiRasilimali, 2024).

Despite efforts to promote gender equality in various domains of society, women's participation and representation in the extractive sector continue to be constrained (UN Women, 2016). Employment in Tanzania's extractive sector is overwhelmingly dominated by men, with a significant gender disparity nearing 80% (TEITI, 2021). Women confront formidable challenges that hinder their full participation and equitable benefit. They experience marginalization and encounter entrenched systemic barriers rooted in legal, cultural, and socio-economic factors. These obstacles relegate women to the fringes of decision-making processes, which limits their access to opportunities for advancement within the extractive sector (The Citizen, 2022).

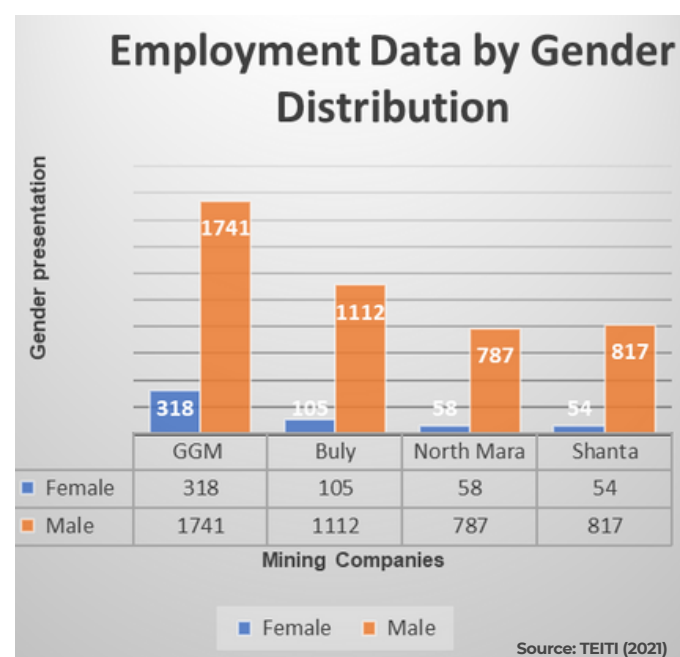
## Women's Participation in Extractive Sector

The 2023 progress report on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) paints a worrisome picture of SDG 5: "Achieve Gender Equality and Empower all Women and Girls". It warns that the world is far off course to achieve gender equality by 2030 and will at this pace take 300 years to end child marriage, 286 years to bridge legal protection gaps and discriminatory laws, and 140 years to attain equal representation in leadership in the workplace (UN, 2023).

The latest Tanzania Extractive Industries Transparency Initiatives (TEITI) report does not have a lot of focus on gender issues but highlights that women's participation in terms of employment provided by the extractive companies is less than 10% (TEITI, 2021).

According to the data from the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), the mining and quarrying sector, including the extraction of natural gas, made a significant contribution to employment in the financial year 2020/2021 providing 218,353 direct jobs, with 176,815 male and 41,538 female (20%) (TEITI, 2023). While the measurements in the recent report shows an improvement in the employment of females in the extractive sector, there remains a pronounced gender disparity.

This becomes starkly evident when examining the workforce of the top five mining companies in Tanzania, namely Geita Gold Mine, Bulyanhulu, North Mara, and Shanta Gold Mining (see Figure 1).



This gender gap extends beyond mere numerical representation and permeates into decision-making roles within these companies resulting in policies that tend to sideline and exclude women's experiences, perspectives, and interests in extractive projects (Oxfam, 2016). Structural and cultural obstacles continue to hinder women's participation and engagement. This trend is evident in Tanzania's mining industry, where empirical evidence of the TEITI report highlights a substantial employment difference in the number of men and women in extractive companies.

"It is very rare to find a woman owning the mining pit (kitalu) unless she had obtained it by way of inheritance from her deceased father or husband. Those who participate in mining are only engaged in secondary activities such as picking some gold leftovers and panning (kuchenjua)."



## The Existing Policy Challenge in the Gender and Extractive Sector

The 2023 World Bank report on the State of the Artisanal and Small-Scale Mining Sector underscores the importance of establishing legal frameworks that safeguard women's rights as a fundamental step in combating discrimination within the extractive sector (World bank, 2023).

The absence of a dedicated policy statement regarding women's involvement in the extractive sector within the 2009 Tanzanian Mining Policy highlights an important deficiency. Prioritizing an explicit gender strategy is imperative to facilitate and guide concrete actions. Furthermore, there is a need to review Local Content regulations as they currently lack provisions for gender inclusivity.

For instance, while Geita Gold Mine has appointed a considerable number of Tanzanians to managerial positions, the representation of women in such roles remains disproportionately low. Consequently, revising these regulations to incorporate specific targets addressing the challenges faced by women in employment is crucial.

Equally, in government bodies there remains considerable room for improvement in ensuring gender-balanced representation, as illustrated by the composition of the Mining Commission. Regrettably, its composition and that of its committees under the Mining Act is gender insensitive.

The Mining Commission is composed of the Chairman, Permanent Secretary (Treasury), the Permanent Secretary (Ministry of Lands); Permanent Secretary (Ministry of Defense); the Permanent Secretary (Ministry of Local Government); Chief Executive Officer of the Federation of Miners Associations of Tanzania; Deputy Attorney General; and two eminent persons who possess proven knowledge and experience in the mining sector, one of whom is supposed to be a woman. Therefore, the composition of the Mining Commission requires the presence of one woman only and other members who subscribe to it by their official positions (most of them being Permanent Secretaries of the Ministries) not by gender representation (HakiRasilimali, 2021).

"We need effective deliberate efforts (documented and structured) which show political will, and the legal framework for women empowerment."

Mr. Stephen Aloys - GEPC

## Recommendations for Addressing Gender Challenges in Extractive Industry

- Amend the Mining Act to restructure the Mining Commission's composition, emphasizing gender balance. This should entail revising the membership criteria to explicitly incorporate gender representation, thereby ensuring women occupy a substantial proportion of positions within the Commission.
- Review the 2009 Mining Policy and integrate gender perspectives into the Local Content requirements and employment targets within the mining companies. This will aid in reducing the gender disparity within the industry.
- Encourage companies and Local Government Authorities to develop women empowerment initiatives as part of Corporate Social Responsibilities programs. There is a particular need for initiatives that directly target or engage the ASM sector.

"Why there is no priority in policy statements for women? They are just mentioned as a cross-cutting issue in the mining policy of 2009."

Mr. Erick - Hakimadini, questioning the lack of explicit policy emphasis on women empowerment within the Tanzanian mining sector.



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A recent study conducted by [HakiRasilimali](#) aiming at understanding the extent of women's participation in and benefit from mining revenue management. It highlighted systemic barriers that keep women at the periphery of the entire mining revenue value chain. Among the obstacles identified by the study are an unsupportive legal framework that is not gender sensitive, reduced access to finance, persistent socio-cultural norms, and limited opportunities for education and skills development.

Access to capital emerged as significant hurdle for women seeking to engage and participate in mining ventures. As lamented by one of the women respondents in the study ***“Our major challenge is capital. We do not qualify for loans issued by local government authorities because once you are involved in mining, you are considered a financially capable woman. Financial institutions such as banks do not trust us because mining is like gambling, there is no guarantee that one will get the minerals and be able to repay the loan. We have therefore resorted to self-help plans by establishing savings and credit cooperatives societies (SACCOS). It is not yet operative, but we hope when it starts working, it will assist us a lot. Each member will contribute some agreed amount of money and be able to borrow at a low interest rate.”***

The plight of women in the extractive sectors extends beyond economic challenges. The world bank report underscored the prevalence of exploitation and harassment faced by women miners. Limited access to capital often pushes women into low-paying labor-intensive roles, while pervasive stereotypes about physical strength further constrain their opportunities for better-paying work. Reports of sexual exploitation and unequal treatment in terms of respect and wages have increased levels of violence within the mineral sector as compared to other sectors. ([World bank, 2023](#))

In response to these challenges, HakiRasilimali conducted a Women's Symposium to celebrate International Women's Day 2024, focusing on gender dynamics within the extractive sector. Participants from various communities shared their experiences and concerns, highlighting persistent obstacles such as bureaucratic hurdles in obtaining licenses and the lack of prioritization of women in policy frameworks.

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A participant from Kahama, representing a grassroots organization “Kikundi Cha Wavuja Jasho” voiced, ***“Women are facing several challenges especially those who are directly participating in extractive activities, and for us, we have been struggling to get a license for the area in which we are working, and it has been so long until now, and when we asked municipal they replied this is under the concern of Commissioner, please Hon. Assistant Commissioner help us to get the License.”***

As indicated in the various studies and ongoing community and stakeholder dialogue sessions, there is a growing consensus on the urgency of implementing comprehensive strategies to promote gender equity and empower women within the mining industry.



1. How to bridge the gender gap in mining ([The Citizen](#))
2. Maternal health care crucial in mining, mobilizing women's participation ([Daily news](#))
3. Women ventures in the mining industry despite the challenges they go through ([The Chanzo](#))
4. Six Sectors still have low women representation ([Mwananchi](#))
5. Women challenged to grab mining sector opportunities ([Daily news](#))
6. Women miners, call for their mining areas ([IPP Media](#))
7. The Tanzania government argues mining firms to consider more women in the mining industry ([The Citizen](#)).

