

Chapter 5

Gender, CSR, and Mining: Perspectives From Thailand

ABSTRACT

This chapter focuses on the impact of mining MNCs and the industry on women in Thailand. Similar to most cases of mining communities in developing countries, the results show various socioeconomic impacts of mining MNCs in Thailand. They include work and economic opportunities for women, political roles and participation for women, and health issues, which seemed prominent among women who participated in this study. Local and international environmental groups have become increasingly involved in mining disputes with the Thai community that participated in this study. Meanwhile, local communities have become more concerned about shouldering all the negative impacts of mining but receiving few of the benefits. This is especially the case because capital-intensive large mining operations generate only a fraction of the jobs for certain groups of people. This study shows that employment policies of mining MNCs have affected the geographic distribution of benefits and costs. The influx of new migrants from Bangkok or other major cities also puts great strains on the existing social and economic infrastructure. It is essential that some mechanisms exist to ensure an orderly expansion of activities and provision of services by mining MNCs in Thailand.

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-5225-3811-0.ch005

INTRODUCTION

Achieving gender equality requires the engagement of women and men, girls and boys. It is everyone's responsibility. (Ban Ki-Moon)

Gender inequality in Thailand is rooted in history and based in the family unit. To a lesser degree, it is the result of culturally rooted social policy (Hansatit, 2014). Men have long been seen as the leader of families and communities in Thai society, and are expected to be the breadwinners as well. Moreover, since most Thai parents felt that sons were born to a superior role, they tended to provide them with the best education possible (Hansatitt, 2014). Girls were traditionally left ignorant or barely literate because the parents believed their ultimate goal was to marry and become homemakers. Therefore, other knowledge and skills beyond that necessary for family life was neglected for girls. This path is still followed today in many Thai families, especially in rural areas (Hansatit, 2014). Recently, the World Economic Forum (2015) put Thailand in 60th place out of 145 countries measured in its Gender Gap Index .

In this study, we observed a mining community located in the Thai rural area. Tab Klor and Khao Jed Luke are two districts in Pijit province, Thailand, where we investigated the CSR impacts of mining

Although the mine has been the main source of income for most community members in the Tab Klor and Khao Jed Luke areas, there has long been an ongoing conflict among various community members and the company. The Chatree mine, operated by Akara Resources, Public Company Limited, a subsidiary of the Australian operator Kingsgate, has been the target of environmental protests over alleged contamination of nearby villages. Interestingly, the majority of participants in this study are women who may have direct or indirect experiences with the impacts of the mining company in the community.

We focus on four aspects as key themes: employment, gender and society, health and environment and political roles of women in the mining community.

WOMEN AND EMPLOYMENT

Women residing in Tab Klor and Khao Jed Luke districts work in various industries. The majority work in the rice field and mentioned land-entitlement

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