Artisanal Miners' Resistances in Resource Exclusion: A Case Study at Ler Kha Loe Village, Mawchi Mine, Kayah State, Myanmar

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ABSTRACT

Mawchi mine is an old century Tin - Tungsten mine, situated in Pasaung Township, Bawlake District, Kayah State, the southeastern part of Myanmar. Since Myanmar independence from British colony and the government nationalize all resources in Myanmar, artisanal miners, who originally inhabitant in Mawchi mine, have been struggling with various conflicts and challenges in term of resource accessibility, livelihood, and security. When Karenni National Progressive Party (KNPP), the ethnic armed group authorized in Mawchi, signed bilateral agreement with Myanmar government in 2012, state policies on resources concession became effective in Mawchi mine and led most artisanal miners who originally lived and earned their livelihood there, lose their access to resources and livelihood. In addition, there were other issues such as insecurity, environmental problems, and social conflicts between artisanal miners and different authoritative actors who monopolized Mawchi mine. By engaging the concept of resistance, social exclusion, and local knowledge as adaptive practice, this research analyzed the historical situations and social culture in Mawchi mine which shaped artisanal miners' everyday practices and developed different forms of artisanal miners' resistance to Mawchi mine. The study was conducted from August to December 2019 through qualitative research method of in-depth interview with artisanal miners, heads of the village, and church pastors. The participant observation at the two mining sites in Ler Kha Loe village, Mawchi mine was also conducted. The results showed that the resistance of artisanal miners in Mawchi mine were practiced to sustain their right to livelihood, access to resources, and environment against the different authoritative actors' policies.

Keywords: artisanal miners, resistance, exclusion, adaptive practices, resources