

Name: Maru, Digafe Tufa

Student ID: 201726013

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Abstract

Over the recent past years, the society living in Odo-Shakiso district in Ethiopia has been raising health concern from gold mining activity in the area particularly associated with Lega Dembi gold mining, the only large-scale private gold mining company operating in Ethiopia. There is a growing belief in the local society that the chemical released the mining sites, specifically mercury, cyanide and other heavy metal are triggering various health problem such as birth defect, premature pregnancy, among others. Nevertheless, even though existing literatures also provided supporting evidence that greater exposure to these kind of chemicals could cause serious health problem including developmental disabilities, taking into account children under age three, this study could not find any convincing result in terms of neither higher children disability risk nor children mortality associated with the gold mining. Interpreting the result however need to be made with caution. Concisely, it does not meant to undermine the likely adverse health impact of children exposure to mercury, cyanide, heavy metals or any other toxic chemicals. Hence, the study recommends policy makers to regularly follow-up the level of chemicals in the biosphere surrounding the mining area to remain within the global standard acceptable level.