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AN INVESTIGATION INTO SMALL SCALE GOLD MINING ACTIVITIES ON MORAL DECADENCY IN INSIZA DISTRICT, MATABELELAND SOUTH PROVINCE.

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The main aim of this study is to investigate small scale mining on moral decadency in Insiza District, Matabeleland South Province. The discovery of many gold deposits in the district was seen as a solution to unemployment problems as well as poverty, however, from the study, it is clear that this came with more harm than good. Qualitative methodologies were used in the investigation, these were observations and interviews. Data was analysed through the use of tables, graphs and photographs. The results indicate that small scale mining has changed the morals of the people in Insiza District. This is evidenced by the high rate of crime in and around the mining areas, most of the crimes being committed by miners, murder and assault are the common crimes in the mining areas. Cultural fusion has resulted, with people coming from all corners of the province and some nearby provinces. This fusion has somehow led to a change in morals of people; people tend to behave in a socially unacceptable manner, especially prostitution and crime. The increase in the number of night spots within the vicinity of the mines has seen women frequenting these places, where they also engage in drinking sprees and prostitution. Family men are seen with these prostitutes and this lead to family breakups as some end up abandoning their families. These negative impacts end up outweighing the positive outcomes of small scale mining. It is recommended that all these problems be addressed by the government so as to ensure the continued viability and sustainability of small scale mining. The role of the government as enforcers of regulations and promoter of mining development need to be defined. Miners also need to take responsibility for their negative impacts from their livelihoods.