

## **Culture and the participation of women in small-scale mining in Zimbabwe**

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### **Abstract:**

This study examines the role of culture in women's participation in the small-scale mining sector in the Bindura District, Mashonaland Central Province, Zimbabwe. The research explores the influence of cultural beliefs, the effects of a patriarchal value system, and the social status of women on their ability to actively engage in and participate in gainful activities in the small-scale mining sector. The research is anchored in the glass ceiling theory, the biological theory, and the symbolic interaction theory. These theoretical frameworks were instrumental in shaping the understanding of the systematic challenges women encounter in a typical male-dominated environment. The study adopted a descriptive research methodological approach, selecting a population of 60 women actively engaged in small-scale mining activities in the Bindura District. Judgmental and snowball sampling approaches were used to identify specific women in the small-scale mining sector as respondents to this research. Data were collected via questionnaires using a drop-and-pick method and analysed in SPSS version 25 using descriptive statistics. Respondents' demographics included gender, age, education level, and marital status. Findings showed that cultural value systems systematically excluded women from male-dominated work environments. The findings also indicated that though religion reinforced cultural value systems that limit women, acculturation has improved their chances of participating in the small-scale mining sector. The rising level of education is also enabling some women to attain leadership positions.

Keywords: Culture, Small-scale mining, Women, Patriarchy, Exclusion, Social status.

LINK: <https://journalcra.com/sites/default/files/issue-pdf/50478.pdf>