



Mains Practice Question

Q. Despite being mineral-rich regions, the Eastern states of India have failed to register expected growth and social indices. Examine the reasons for this failure along with suitable remedial measures. (250 words)

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Approach:

- Introduce by mentioning about the mineral wealth of Eastern India.
- Mention the reasons for poor socio-economic growth of the region.
- Suggest measures to improve the condition.

Introduction:

As per the ministry of Mines data, the eastern states of India - Jharkhand (7.72%), Chhattisgarh (6.65%) and Odisha (10.62%) account for more than 24.9% of the value of mineral production in the country. Despite being mineral rich region, it remains to be one of the most underdeveloped regions of the country. They continue to fare badly in indicators like health, education, employment and social inclusion.

Body:

Reasons for poor growth and social indices:

1. **Neglect in policy making:** The region has a history of exploitation of its mineral wealth without giving due regard to harmful impacts on the environment and local people. The locals being poor and vulnerable have no say in high level decision making. Even Gram Sabhas do not work as per their mandate.
2. **Opposition from local people:** Rapid growth and industrialization is resisted by local people due to mistrust on governance policies which resulted into **growth of Naxalism**.
3. **Difficult terrain and low outreach:** A number of villages are remotely located which creates hindrances in implementation of government programmes like immunization, literacy promotion, etc.
4. **Negative impacts of mining:** Mining has direct impacts on health and well being of locals. Cancer cases in the nearby villages of Jaduguda mines of Jharkhand due to radioactive waste generated from uranium mining are widely documented.

Remedial measures to improve the situation:

- **Utilizing District Mineral Foundation funds:** MMDRA Act 2015 mandates that 60% of the DMF funds must be utilized for high priority areas such as drinking water supply, health care, sanitation, education, skill development, women and child care, welfare of aged and disabled people and environment conservation.
 - There is need to expedite work of **Pradhan Mantri Khanij Kshetra Kalyan Yojana (PMKKKY)** to ensure sustainable livelihood for the affected people.
- **Institutional approaches: National Mineral Policy 2019** suggests establishing an **inter-ministerial body** to create a mechanism for ensuring sustainable mining with adequate concerns for the environment and socio-economic issues in the mining areas, and to advise the Government

on rates of royalty, dead rent etc.

- **Investing in infrastructure:** Improving connectivity, increasing irrigated area which is currently only 16.6% in Chhattisgarh and 7% in Jharkhand is the need of the hour.
- **Promoting local specialization and resources:** Providing **GI tags** to local producers which help in export earning, promotion of tourism, cultural heritage and regional identity, simultaneously preserving traditional skills. For ex: Odisha's Kotpad Handloom fabric, Bastar Iron Craft of Chhattisgarh, etc.
 - Similarly, with India going plastic free, utilizing the minor forest produce like Tendu leaves, jute and handloom products has immense potential to boost the local economy.
- **Boosting tourism potential:** The **Tribal Circuit** of **Swadesh Darshan Scheme** aims to develop and promote tribal rituals, festivals, customs and culture. This is also necessary to promote national integration by developing a sense of respect for the tribal way of life.

Conclusion:

- Development of the Eastern States is critical for achieving Sustainable Development Goals 1(No poverty), 2(Zero Hunger), 3(Good Health and Well Being), 4(Quality education) and 10(Reduced Inequalities).
- All developmental policies for the socio-economic growth of the region should adhere to the motto of 'Sabka Sath Sabka Vikas'. Inclusive and sustainable growth is the way forward.

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