



Mains Practice Question

Q. "Plateaus are often termed 'treasure houses of minerals.' Discuss this statement with reference to the major plateaus of the world. (150 words)

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Approach

- Introduce the answer by defining plateau as a treasure houses of minerals
- Delve into Mineral Wealth in Major Plateaus of the World
- Highlight the Role of Plateaus in Reflecting Mineral-Based Economic Activity
- Conclude suitably.

Introduction

Plateaus, elevated flatlands formed by **tectonic movements, volcanic activities, or erosional processes**, are known for their mineral richness. The term "**treasure houses of minerals**" is apt as plateaus host significant reserves of **metallic and non-metallic minerals**, fueling industrial growth and economic development globally.

Body

Mineral Wealth in Major Plateaus of the World

- **Chota Nagpur Plateau (India):** Known as the "Mineral Heart of India," it is rich in:
 - **Coal:** Supports India's energy sector.
 - **Iron Ore:** Drives the steel industry.
 - **Manganese and Mica:** Used in electronics and manufacturing.
 - **Jharia coalfields and Noamundi iron ore mines** are key contributors.
- **Deccan Plateau (India):** Formed from volcanic activity, it is rich in:
 - **Bauxite:** Vital for the aluminum industry.
 - **Gold:** Found in the Kolar Gold Fields.
 - **Black cotton soil (regur)** supports agricultural activities like cotton cultivation.
- **Colorado Plateau (USA):** Renowned for:
 - **Uranium Deposits:** Essential for nuclear energy.
 - **Copper and Potash:** Used in electronics and fertilizers.
 - It also boasts scenic landmarks like the **Grand Canyon**, adding to its significance.
- **Tibetan Plateau (China):** Rich in:
 - **Lithium:** Crucial for modern battery technology.
 - **Chromite:** Used in steel and alloy production.
 - Acts as **Asia's "Water Tower,"** supporting rivers like the **Yangtze and Mekong.**
- **African Plateaus:**
 - **Gold:** South Africa is renowned for its gold reserves. The **Witwatersrand Basin**, for example, is one of the largest gold-producing regions in the world.
 - **Copper:** **Katanga Plateau (Congo)** holds large reserves of copper, powering the global tech industry.

- **Brazilian Plateau:** A major source of:
 - **Iron Ore and Manganese:** Boosting Brazil's economy.
 - **Gold:** Historically significant for global trade.

Role of Plateaus in Reflecting Mineral-Based Economic Activity

- **Industrial Backbone:** Minerals extracted from plateaus support industries like **steel, electronics, and energy. (BALCO and NALCO in India)**
- **Export-Oriented Economies:** Countries like **Congo and Brazil** rely heavily on **plateau-based mineral exports.**
- **Energy Transition:** Lithium from the **Tibetan Plateau** and **uranium from the Colorado Plateau** are driving the global shift toward clean energy.

Conclusion

The mineral wealth of plateaus underscores their role as "**treasure houses,**" driving industrial and economic growth globally. Plateaus like the **Chota Nagpur, Colorado, and Katanga** are prime examples of regions where **mineral resources contribute significantly to development.**

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