



Cancellation of Bauxite Lease

Prelims: Environment Impact Assessment, Environment Protection Act, 1986, Metalurgical process and related concerns.

Mains: Bauxite and its Distribution, Environment Impact Assessment.

Why in News?

Ahead of Odisha State Pollution Control Board's (OSPCB) hearing on [Environment Clearance of Mali Parwat Bauxite Mining Lease](#), local people have started protests demanding permanent cancellation of the lease.

What is the Issue?

▪ Background:

- The opposition to the mining activities in Maliparbat dates back to 2003, when a public hearing was organized by the Odisha SPCB for environmental clearance.
- After a lease was granted to Hindalco in 2007, **villagers had alleged that their grievances and objections to the project were ignored.**
- According to activists, the company's [Environment Impact Assessment](#) report mentioned that **there was no water-body in Maliparvat.**
- Villagers had, however, argued that 36 perennial streams flow down from the Maliparvat, which **was the source of water for villagers for their agricultural and drinking purposes** and the **bauxite mining project should be cancelled.**
- Till 2011 the company **failed to carry out mining and subsequently, its environmental clearance expired.** But, in 2012-2014 it **started mining illegally without going in for renewal of environmental clearance.**
- The industry has got a **fresh lease for 50 years for which the public hearing was necessitated.**

▪ Concerns:

- Tribals residing in nearby villages have alleged that mining activities in Maliparbat would affect **around 42 villages under Sorishapodar, Dalaiguda and Pakhajhola panchayats.**
- Environmentalists have also said that mining can **deplete water sources from around 32 perennial streams** and four canals in Maliparbat, adversely affecting the livelihoods of the tribals.
 - The Mali and forest area are **inhabited by members of Kondha, Paraja and Gadaba tribes.**

What is the Environment Impact Assessment?

- It can be **defined as the study for predicting the effect of a proposed activity/project on the environment.**
- It is statutory under the [Environment Protection Act, 1986](#) for some projects.
- **Process:**

- Screening based upon scales of investment, type of development, and location of the development is done to see whether a project requires an environmental clearance as per the statutory notifications.
- Scoping is a process of detailing the Terms of Reference (ToR) of EIA, that is the main issues or problems in the development of a project.
- Impact Prediction involves mapping the environmental consequences of the significant aspects of the project and its alternatives.
- The public mandatorily needs to be informed and consulted on the proposed development after the completion of the EIA report.

What is Bauxite?

▪ About:

- Bauxite is an ore of aluminum. It is a rock **consisting mainly of hydrated aluminium oxides.**
- The deposits of Bauxite are mainly associated with laterites and occur as capping on hills and plateaus, except in **coastal areas of Gujarat and Goa.**
- Bauxite is primarily used to **produce alumina through the Bayer process.**
- Like many metals, world demand for aluminium, and therefore **bauxite, has grown substantially over the past several years in response to economic growth in emerging Asian economies.**

▪ World Distribution:

- **Reserves:** As per **2015 data**, world bauxite reserves are estimated **at 30 billion tonnes and are located mainly** in Guinea (25%), Australia (20%), Vietnam (12%), Brazil (9%), Jamaica (7%), Indonesia (4%) and China (3%).
- **Australia continued to be the major producer** and accounted for about 29% share in the total production, followed by China (19%), Guinea (18%), Brazil (10%) and India (7%).

▪ Distribution in India:

- **Reserves:** By States, **Odisha alone accounts for 51% of country's resources of bauxite followed by** Andhra Pradesh (16%), Gujarat (9%), Jharkhand (6%), Maharashtra (5%) and Madhya Pradesh & Chhattisgarh (4% each) in 2019. Major bauxite resources are concentrated in the East Coast bauxite deposits in Odisha and Andhra Pradesh.
- **Production:** In terms of production, in 2020, **Odisha accounted for 71% of the total output** followed by Gujarat (9%) and Jharkhand (6%).

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Questions (PYQs)

Q. 1 Which of the following minerals are found in a natural way in the State of Chhattisgarh? (2008)

1. Bauxite
2. Dolomite
3. Iron ore
4. Tin

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

Code:

- (a)** 1, 2 and 3 only
- (b)** 1 and 3 only
- (c)** 2 and 4 only
- (d)** 1, 2, 3 and 4

Ans: (d)

Q.2 Consider the following minerals: (2020)

1. Bentonite
2. Chromite
3. Kyanite
4. Sillimanite

In India, which of the above is/are officially designated as major minerals?

- (a) 1 and 2 only
(b) 4 only
(c) 1 and 3 only
(d) 2, 3 and 4 only

Ans: (d)

Exp:

- According to the National Account Statistics (2007), minerals are broadly classified into major and minor minerals.
- Major Minerals Includes
 - Fuel Minerals: Coal, Lignite, Natural Gas, Petroleum (Crude).
 - Metallic Minerals: Bauxite, Chromite, Copper Ore, Gold, Iron Ore, Lead (Concentrates), Zinc (Concentrates), Manganese Ore, Silver, Tin (Concentrates), Tungsten (Concentrates).
- Non-Metallic Minerals: Agate, Andalusite, Apatite, Asbestos, Ball Clay, Barytes, Calcite, Chalk, Clay, Corundum, Calcareous sand, Diamond, Diaspore, Dolomite, Kyanite, Laterite, Limestone, Limestone Kankar, Lime Shell, Magnesite, Mica (crude), Ochre, Pyrites, Pyrophyllite, Phosphorite, Quartz, impure quartz, Quartzite, Fuchsite Quartzite, Silica Sand, Salt (Rock), Salt (Evaporated), Shale, Slate, Steatite, Sillimanite, Vermiculite, Wollastonite.
- Minor Minerals include Bentonite, Boulder, Brick Earth, Building Stones, Chalcedony or Corundum, Fuller's Earth, Gravel, Lime Stone, Dunite, Felspar, Fire Clay, Felsite, Flourite (Graded), Flourite (Concentrates), Gypsum, Garnet (Abrasives), Garnet (Gem), Graphite run-on-mines, Jasper, Kaolin, Marble, Murram, Ordinary Clay, Ordinary Sand, Ordinary Earth, Pebbles or Kankar, Quartzite and Sand stone, Road Metal, Salt Petre, Shale, Shingle, Slate.
- Chromite, Kyanite and Sillimanite are major minerals, whereas Bentonite is a minor mineral. **Hence, 1 is not correct and 2, 3, and 4 are correct.**
- **Therefore, option (d) is the correct answer.**

Source: TH

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