

Mining, Development and Environment: A Case Study of Bijolia Mining Area in Rajasthan, India

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ABSTRACT Mining is essentially a destructive development activity where ecology suffers at the altar of economy. Unfortunately in most regions of earth, the underground geological resources (minerals) are superimposed by above ground biological resources (forests). This is particularly more prominent in India. Hence mining operations necessarily involves deforestation, habitat destruction and biodiversity erosion. The extraction and processing of ores and minerals also lead to widespread environmental pollution. However, mankind also cannot afford to give up the underground geological resources which are basic raw materials for development. An unspoiled nature can provide ecological security to people but cannot bring economic prosperity. Scientific mining operations accompanied by ecological restoration and regeneration of mined wastelands and judicious use of geological resources, with search for eco-friendly substitutes and alternatives must provide the answer. A case study of Bijolia Mining area in Rajasthan, India, gave some sensational revelation of the impact of mining on human ecosystem.