

## **Livelihood and Food Security: a Study of the Impact of Iron Mines of Keonjhar District of Odisha**

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### **Executive Summary**

India is one of the world's most naturally endowed lands and home to numerous minerals which benefit the country economically. And among all mining states in our country, Odisha occupies a prominent place. The present study intends to explore the contribution of mining sector to economic development. It will also examine the trickledown effect of this development by analyzing the impact of mining on the livelihood and food security of the people in mining region. Keonjhar is the most mined district of Odisha and the centre of iron ore production. It has been identified by the Shah commission for the rampant illegal mining of iron ore. Besides, Keonjhar-Bolani belt in Odisha has been identified by Central Geological Programming Board Committee for future scope of exploration of low grade iron ore. Thus the issue that cries for attention is the price that the people of Keonjhar district have to pay for the benefits of mining. This raises a pertinent researchable question whether economic benefit generated from mining in this district is higher than the external cost the people have to pay for it? Has mining really improves the lives and livelihood of the people? To answers these issues, it is highly required to examine the impact of mining on the local communities in the mining region of Keonjhar district. Thus, present study is an endeavour towards this general objective. Mining has no doubt has contributed a lot to the development of Odisha but this development has failed to trickle down to the mining region and bought welfare to the local community in which mining project is going on. Hence, serious and bold measures are required by the government and mining company to address these problems in mining region and move it forward towards sustainability. Since the impact of mining on environment is worst, so eco-friendly technology should be used to minimise the adverse impact of mining operation on the nature. It is found that most of the households in mining areas have left cultivation despite of owning huge amount of land. This has affected the food security in the region as it has increased the dependence of households on the market for food. Therefore, it is required that mining company should intervene in this issue and encourage the households to adopt farming by providing various inputs. To encourage the people in mining region for agriculture, Government should step in and support the household in various ways for adopting farming. Mining practices have always caused serious social and environmental impacts in the mining region. Study shows that it has

resulted in land degradation, damage to water quality, pollution, and harm to livestock and wildlife biodiversity.

To sum up, it can be said that in the study area, mining has failed to provide a sustainable source of livelihood and food security to the local community even though it helps in the augmentation of the financial resources of mining households. This is due to its severe adverse impact on the natural and human capital. Besides, it has depleted the forest resources, polluted the water bodies, disturbs the ecology, destroys the biodiversity, devastated the land and makes it unusable.

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