
A Geographical Analysis of Implementation of District Mineral Foundation works in Mining Area of Jharia Coalfield, Dhanbad, Jharkhand

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Abstract:

Mining is an important primary sector providing raw material to manufacturing sectors. While the mining operations provide employment opportunities and infrastructure facilities to local communities, these may also lead to negative externalities, including adverse environmental, health, and livelihood effects. The Indian government took cognisance of the welfare of the mining-affected communities, including tribal and forest-dwelling communities and hence, introduced the District Mineral Foundation (DMF) fund in March 2015 under the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) (MMDR) Amendment Act 2015. Section 9B of the MMDR Amendment Act 2015 instructed the establishment of a DMF fund in every district affected by mining activities. Under the DMF scheme, the mining companies would pay 30 percent of the royalty amount for leases granted before 2015 and ten percent by the leases granted through the auction mechanism post-2015. The DMF aims to work for the interest and benefit of persons and areas affected by mining-related operations (Ministry of Mines, 2015a). The DMF fund recognises local communities as equal partners in natural resource-led development and the protection of the environment. The fund provides a mechanism for benefit-sharing with mining-affected communities. It is a special fund that is not tied to any particular scheme or area of work, and it does not lapse at the end of each financial year. Instead, the unused funds get accumulated over the years. The present paper is thus concerned with study of DMF work, its implementation challenges in special reference to Jharia Coal Field Region in geographical perspectives.

Key Words: Geographical Analysis, District Mineral Foundation, Jharia Coalfield

Introduction:

In modern times, mining is most important economic activities. It is one of the most important contributors to the new trends of modern development in the world. Although minerals such as iron ore, coal, mica, etc. are mined in large areas under mining activity and then the extracted minerals are sent to large industries for manufacturing, many problems are also associated with it. The population of the mining center is affected by mining activities in both positive and negative ways. Displacement, pollution, employment, health, education, infrastructure development, etc. are serious concerns. The basic problems of the people living in the mining area and the creation of welfare schemes for the welfare of population is very important because the problem of displacement, pollution, health, education etc. are directly related to the socio-economic and political stability of that area, that is the reason why development In these statues, welfare schemes related to socio-economic development are implemented by the mining companies under the supervision of the government, so that the population of the mining area is not affected in a negative way. This is the reason that the government has made a provision for setting up District Mineral Foundation for the construction and successful implementation of welfare schemes for their socio-economic upliftment and to protect the population of the mining area from the negative effects of mining activities.

District Mineral Foundation (DMF)

As per the Mine and Minerals Development Regulation (Amendment) Act, 2015, in every district affected by mining-related operations, the state government shall, by notification, establish a trust as a non-profit body to be called the District Mineral Foundation. The State Government can establish a DMF as a trust or non-profit body, and contributions from miners fund a DMF. The primary goal of a DMF is to work for the welfare of those areas and individuals that have been impacted by mining, as per the state's prescription. The State Government believes that tribals and other poor residents also have the right to benefit from the extraction of natural resources in their localities.

A DMF will comprise a Board of Trustees with the following members –Revenue Divisional Commissioner or Collector who will act as the Chairperson (to be finalised by the State Government); Collector, provided he is not the Chairperson; Additional District Magistrate and District Level Officers of the following departments will be ex-officio members

(Steel and Mines, Forest and Environment, Rural Development, Works, ST and SC Development, Health and Family Welfare Departments, and of such other Departments as the government sees fit to include). In this foundation the District Collector will be the Managing Trustee, Members of Lok Sabha and State Legislative Assembly in whose constituency any major mineral concession exists are also invited to be ex-officio members, The State Government will nominate one member of the Zilla Parishad as an ex officio member in the district where there exists any mineral concession, The State Government will nominate up to 3 members of Urban Local Bodies or Panchayati Raj Institutions from those areas where major mineral concessions exist. The Chairperson may include such other officials to the Board meetings, as he may deem fit. The quorum for this Board will comprise 50% of its members. The Board should meet for a minimum of two times in a financial year.

A DMF will also implement the Pradhan Mantri Khanij Kshetra Kalyan Yojana (PMKKKY). It will use the funds it has accrued to enact this scheme. It aims to execute various programs and schemes for the welfare of those persons in mining-affected areas. PMKKKY will create these schemes to complement existing programs that any State or Central government runs - To minimise the negative impact of mining on- Environment, Health, Socio-economic status of people residing in these mining districts. To ensure the long-term livelihood of the persons who live in these mining areas.

District Mineral Foundation (DMF) in Mining Area of Jharia Coalfield, Dhanbad, Jharkhand:

“DMF is a people-centric vision of natural resource governance where their right to benefit has been put at the forefront. If developed and implemented well, DMFs not only have huge potential for improving the lives and livelihoods of some of the poorest communities, they can also be a model for inclusive governance. DMFs have been instituted to be established as a non-profit Trust in every mining district of the country under the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation), Amendment Act, 2015. They have a precise and legally defined objective to work for the interest and benefit of persons and areas affected by mining-related operations but recent reports on DMF work is not satisfactory and has raised some serious question to its existence.

District Mineral Foundation (DMF) Status Report, 2018 – as the report is called -- is an assessment of DMF as it enters its fourth year. The report covers 12 states in the country, and

closely studies the investments in 13 districts in the top five states, including Jharkhand. The report was released in the presence of representatives from the state and Central governments, district administrations from mining-affected districts, NGOs and media. The DMF collection in Jharkhand is Rs 2,696 crore till March 2018. The top six districts in Jharkhand in terms of DMF collection are Dhanbad (Rs 715 crore), West Singhbhum (Rs 424 crore), Chatra (Rs 425.8 crore), Ramgarh (Rs 414 crore), Bokaro (Rs 265 crore) and Godda (Rs 200 crore). DMF is a defining opportunity to overturn decades of injustice meted out to millions of people living in deep poverty and deprivation in India's mining districts. CSE's assessment shows that the administration of DMF in Jharkhand is top-down and have poor representation of mining-affected people. The DMF investment priorities have been determined by the state government. DMF Rules in Jharkhand categorically specify a bottom-up planning approach to be followed to address the needs of the mining-affected people. Not including people in decision-making violates the Rules.

As per the CSEs Report 2018, Jharkhand's top coal mining district Dhanbad — where sanctions worth Rs 935 crore were collected — has left out Jharia, one of the worst mining-affected areas of the district from the fund allocation list. Funds were entirely sanctioned for rural drinking water schemes which were earlier pending with the state government, and for building toilets. This followed a direction that was issued by the state government in 2016. It is extremely unfortunate that even now the district is failing the people of Jharia. A key problem in the area is income security. Even women and children work in hazardous situations in the coal fields to earn a living. Since there is no opportunity for livelihood elsewhere, they cannot afford to move. But, instead of giving funds for their livelihood, the district is building a Rs 250 crore flyover in the town. Working in hazardous situation in the coal mining areas along with severe pollution all around has taken a toll on people's health. The district has a very high burden of chronic diseases such as asthma and tuberculosis (TB). But, it has an acutely inadequate public health infrastructure, which is slowly crumbling.

Geographical Analysis of Implementation of District Mineral Foundation (DMF) work in Jharia Coalfield, Dhanbad, Jharkhand:

Geography is an inter-disciplinary science, under which the natural and human characteristics of an area are systematically studied, in which size and condition, geo-physical structure, soil, natural resources such as water, vegetation, minerals wild life , population,

settlement, economic activity, population migration, land use, etc. are studied in detail. Under the subject of geography, micro-level interpretation is possible by taking both natural and human elements in the study of facts and events on a particular area, so in the present time, planning for the development of the area from the geographical point of view is very relevant. From geographical point of view the deficiencies related to proper utilization of DMF funds can be identified as follows -

- **Lack of Proper mapping of Affected Area-** Before the successful implementation of any welfare schemes, it is very important to properly map the area in which the scheme is to be benefited. In the context of Jharia Coal Field, mapping should be done on the basis of characteristics of the population in the mining-affected areas.
- **Lack of proper rehabilitation of Displaced Population** - In mining areas, a large number of people have to leave their land and migrate to other places. Due to lack of proper arrangement for displacement, the population of mining areas has to face many socio-economic challenges. Displacement and rehabilitation is a serious problem in Jharia Coal Field. Even today, due to lack of proper rehabilitation policy, a large number of people are forced to live in areas where landslides can happen anytime.
- **Proper Socio-Economic Survey-** A socio-economic survey is regarded as one of the most important sources of statistical data on household expenditure and income as well as other data on the status of housing, individual and household characteristics and living conditions. By analyzing the data obtained from the Socio Economic Survey, a planer can plan or ensure that what are the areas that need more concern, what are essential issues and should be worked on immediately, what are the areas that need to be taken care on priority basis. DMF initiatives in Jharia Coal Field seem like not concerning the socio-economic data for appropriate utilization of fund.
- **Resource Appraisal-** For the proper development of an area, it is very important to evaluate the natural and human resources available in that area. By appraisal of the resources, development priorities can be determined based on the relationship between the need and available resources of that area. Especially in mining affected areas if welfare schemes are made after appraisal of the natural and human resources, there is a possibility of achieving immense success by the formulation and action of welfare

schemes. In the context of Jharia Coal Field, there is a clear lack of priorities in the formulation of welfare plans of the District Mineral Foundation, in which the aspect of resource evaluation has been sidelined.

- **Land –Utilisation Survey and management-** From the land use survey in a region; we come to know that under which activities the land has been used in that area. In general terms, we can say from the land use studies that what percentage of a region is being used in human based activities such as agriculture, industry, mining, human constructions – road, railways, settlement etc. and what percentage is covered naturally as vegetation cover and water cover.

Recommendations and Suggestions:

If the schemes being run under the foundation are successfully implemented in the district to improve the socio-economic condition of the people of all the mining affected areas including Jharia Coalfield, it will definitely play an important role in the development of the mining regions. For this, by establishing coordination between the Distic Mineral Foundation and the concerned state government and the central agency, the preparation of plans and action will be extremely beneficial. Also, from the geographical point of view, such as proper mapping of the mining region, evaluation of natural and human resources of that region, study of land use, socio-economic survey, study of the demographic characteristics, to be used by the Distic Mineral Foundation in the formulation of welfare plans for the mining regions. State government must provide districts the flexibility to plan and invest for the needs of local communities. The intended autonomy of the DMF Trusts should be maintained. A systematic and bottom-up planning approach must be followed to make investments effective. Big investments must take into account long term viability of the projects. The piped water supply sanctions based on the Damodar river and its tributaries in three major districts -- Dhanbad, Bokaro and Ramgarh-- needs to be assessed collectively. Districts must identify DMF beneficiaries; there cannot be a Trust without beneficiaries. This will also help in targeted investments such as for addressing women and child development issues. Gram Sabhas (and ward members where applicable) should have a representation in the DMF body. Not following this is in contravention to the spirit of the DMF law as well as the state DMF Rules. For efficiency of operation, all DMFs must have an office comprising of officials and

experts. Independent organizations/planning experts can be roped in for effective planning. Public disclosure of information is key to DMFs' transparency of operation. District-specific DMF related information must be made available through a website. To ensure people's access, information should be shared by using panchayat-level platforms.

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