

Mineral Resources – do we care?

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What are minerals?

Whatever things or products that we use in our daily lives are made from minerals. For example: cars are made from iron, computers from silicon, buildings from cement.

These minerals come from earth - like soil. As a desert is full of sand; some parts of earth are full of minerals such as coal, iron, gas. We call them - **mineral resources**.

When we dig minerals from earth, we call it mining and that place on earth is called a **mine**.

Do we have unlimited minerals? Will they ever end?

A desert looks full of unlimited quantities of sand. But if we were to dig out a million trucks of sand every day; will it last forever! No. It may last a couple of 100 or 1000 years at most!

Similarly, mines look full of huge quantities of minerals. They will end someday. How sooner? We can answer this by calculating how much they hold and how fast do we dig them. Let us take an example:

We assume one mine full of coal; say 1000 million trucks. What happens if...

if we dig out 10 trucks each day? - it will last $1000m/10 = 100$ million days = **0.3million years**

if we dig out 1000 trucks each day? --- it will last $1000m/1000 = 1$ million days = **2740 years**

if we dig out 1million trucks each day? --- it will last $1000m/1m = 1000$ days = **3 years!!**

So, it does make some sense to calculate how much we dig out each day. Otherwise, going too fast will end a huge mine in less than 3years.

My calculation says: **we are burning 10million trucks of coal on earth every day.**

Do we care how much of each mineral we have on earth in total?

Do we care how much minerals do we dig out each day?

Ultimately do we care how long will they last?

Why do we need these minerals?

These minerals give us everyday things (products/gadgets). We need things to make our life comfortable. All of these things are made from minerals. **If there are no minerals, these things cannot be made.** How our life will look without these things... for example - you will have to walk or ride on a horse - no vehicles! Similarly; no electricity, no TVs, no factories!

Another question, what do we do in our lives? – we work somewhere! What do our offices/factories/businesses do? – they make or sell things. When there are no minerals what would our offices make (or sell)? How will anyone earn their salaries!!!

...Will there be any work?