

NATURAL RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENTAL CHALLENGES, THE TARABA STATE EXPERIENCED

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ABSTRACT

The research worked on the examination of the available natural resources and the environmental challenges that are undermining the performance of such resource to full utilization particularly in taraba state to achieve that the following objectives were developed (i)To determine the environmental challenges to the use of natural resources in the state (ii)To ascertain the economic importance of natural resources in the state. (iii)To evaluate why the natural resources are been underutilized in the state (iv)To analyze whether misplaced priority is the reason behind the underutilization. The findings of the research shows that there are abundant natural resources that has not be exploited as a result of challenging emanating from the environment which is both as a result of human activities and nature

INTRODUCTION

A natural resource is anything that people can use which comes from nature. Natural resources are all that exists without the action of humankind. Natural resources may exist as a separate entity such as water, forest, gold, diamond, air, etc as well as living organisms such as fish or it may exist in alternative form which must be process to obtain, the resources such as metal ores, oil etc and most form of energy.

Taraba State is situated in the North-eastern part of Nigeria consists of 16 Local Government Areas; the state was curved out

from the former Gongola state on 27th August, 1991. Jalingo is the administrative centre of the state. Taraba state has an estimated population of 2,688,944 according to 2006 census. The state derives its name from Taraba River which traverses the Southern part of the state. The state lies roughly within the tropical zone and has a vegetation of forest in the southern part and grassland in the northern part. The Mambilla Plateau with latitude 1800 meters (6000ft) above the sea level, it has a temperature climate all year round. River Benue, Donga, Taraba and Ibbi are the main rivers in the

state, it rise from the Cameroon mountain straining almost the entire length of the state, in the north and south direct to link up with river Niger.

Taraba State occupies 54,473 square kilometers. The state is bounded in west by Plateau, Nasarawa and Benue state, on the eastern border by Adamawa state and Republic of Cameroon, and on the north border by Gombe State. The state is richly blessed with numerous natural resources.

STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

We might not really understand the economic importance of natural resources to any state or nation until the needs arises. The state is richly blessed with numerous natural endowments across the 16 Local government areas, with the availability of natural resources, the state is faced with the challenges includes underutilization of natural resources across 16 local government of the state, nonchalant attitude towards investing on the natural resources across 16 local government of the state and inadequate manpower and techniques in managing the available natural resources. The study, therefore, we sought to identify the available natural resources in the state and the reasons for the underutilization of natural resources.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The overall purpose of this research is to evaluate and determine the economic importance of natural resources and the

environmental challenges in the state. This research work stands to achieve the following objectives:

1. To determine the environmental challenges to the use of natural resources in the state.
2. To ascertain the economic importance of natural resources in the state.
3. To evaluate why the natural resources are been underutilized in the state
4. To analyze whether misplaced priority is the reason behind the underutilization.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Natural resources has contributed immensely towards fiscal revenue, income and poverty reduction. The wealth embodied in natural resources makes up a significant proportion of the wealth of most nations, often more than the wealth embodied in produced capital, therefore, making natural management a key aspect of economic development (World Bank, 2006). Many countries have seen significant rises in revenues from natural resources due to the rise in commodity prices. Natural resources such as oil, gas, mineral and timber are expected to continue to play significant role in resource abundant economies, as demand from rapidly growing economies increases, and as supplies of non-renewable resources decline and renewable resource harvest approach

maximum sustained yield levels. Not surprisingly, countries, states richly endowed with natural resources capital have the potential to derive significant current income from resources. In addition to providing revenues to countries, natural resources can play a central role in poverty reduction efforts. The poor generally depend upon natural resources directly for their livelihoods, especially the rural areas. Consequently, policies that improve natural resources management can have immediate and meaningful poverty reduction impacts. Pro-poor natural resource management policies include, among other (OECD 2008):

- i. Projects that improve the capacity of community based organizations to manage resources.
- ii. Assuring access to resources by providing clear land tenure and resource use rights;
- iii. Promoting tools such as participatory rural appraisals, strategic environmental assessment, poverty and social impact assessment.

The natural resources comprise three principal categories of assets being natural resource stocks, land and ecosystem that occur in nature and provide environmental functions and services.

The term “natural resource” designates renewable and non-renewable resource stocks that are found in nature, such as

mineral resources, energy resources, soil resources, water resources and biological resources.

Renewable natural resources are resources from renewable natural stocks that, after exploitation, can return to their previous stock levels by natural processes of growth or replenishment. Examples of renewable resources include timber from forest resources, freshwater resources, land resources, wildlife resources such as fish, agricultural resources.

Non-renewable natural resources are exhaustible natural resources whose natural stocks cannot be regenerated after exploitation or that can only be regenerated or replenished by natural cycles that are relatively slow at human scale. Example include metals and other minerals such as industrial and construction minerals, and fossil energy.

Kurmi Local Government Area is richly blessed with fertile soil which grows number of cash crops and food crops such as Banana, Plantains, Rice, Groundnuts, Oranges, Palm trees, cocoyam and cocoa. Other includes maize, guinea corn. Kurmi is also a producer of high quality Timber and the only local government with the state owned abandoned Timber Company which is called Baissa Timber.

In the north-west part, is grassland which also grows most of the cash and food crops. Majority of the populace are farmers, these crops are produced in large quantity

for local consumption and the rest exported, either to other parts of the country or outside the country.

Russian scientists from the institute of aerospace instrumentation have discovered deposit of silver and traces of gold and oil in the central and northern part of Taraba State (2011). Mr. Valery Shaposhnikov, the economic counselor of Russian Embassy in Nigeria disclosed this to Governor Danbaba Suntai in Jalingo while briefing him on their survey for mineral deposit in the state. The counselor noted that Russian scientists had vast experience in mineral exploitation across the world and were sure of their findings. According to him, silver is the largest deposit in the northern part and traces of gold and oil which are found at the middle level in the central and northern part of the state.

According to Robert Mukhanmdyenor, the Lead scientist of the team spoke through an interpreter explained that deposit of lead and zinc were also found in the northern zone. He said, precious stones were also discovered along the Benue trough in southern part of the state, also in Nguroje Sardauna. According to the leader, this is our first contract in Taraba and we hope to continue our survey of the state for more information on the discoveries especially gold, crude oil, and “silver deposit which we have so far discovered about 1.7km in 1000square kilometer. The major occupation of the people of

Taraba State is agriculture, cash crops produced in the state include coffee, Rice, sorghum, millet, cassava, and yam which are produced for both subsistence and commercial purposes. In addition, cattle, sheep and goats are reared in large numbers, especially on the Mambilla Plateau, and along Benue and Taraba valleys. Similarly, the people undertake other livestock production activities like poultry production, rabbit breeding and pig farming in fairly large scale. Taraba state is among the leading states in the production of livestock with its diary farms at jalingo, Gembu and Nguroje. Communities living on the banks of river Benue, Taraba, Donga and Ibi engage in fishing all year round.

ECONOMIC IMPORTANCE OF NATURAL RESOURCES IN THE STATE

Economic importance of natural resources to human endeavor cannot be overemphasized, they are as follows:

- i. Forestry and fishery products are significant generators of export income for as long as they are available, even though for many countries they contribute a modest percentage of total income.
- ii. Most fuel for cooking and heating comes from wild trees and shrubs. For a great many communities, particularly rural ones.
- iii. Wildlife also plays a central role in traditional medicine, a role likely to

- persist with the modernization of indigenous medical system and their integration with western medicine.
- iv. Value of ecosystem services: Ecosystem services are the services provided by the functioning of natural systems that we often take for granted, but that provide much of the necessary foundation for the economy and society. Properly functioning ecosystems provide a range of services that include waste absorptions, water and nutrient cycling, seed dispersal and pollination, controlling agricultural pests and providing food and habitat for species. These services allow ecosystem good otherwise known as natural resources to be produced and maintained. Timber, fish and wildlife, clean water and air, and agricultural production all require the provision of ecosystem services
 - v. It is cleared that wildlife makes a major contributions to the lives and economic of people in developing countries.
 - vi. Wildlife and wild ecosystem protect watershed and coasts, providing a buffer against harmful environmental perturbation such as flood and drought, they recycled and increase the availability of nutrients, and provide several valuable ecological service, notable crucial

habitat for economical, genetically and ecologically important wild species

ENVIRONMENTAL CHALLENGES

Despite the abundant natural resources in the state, below are some of the environmental challenges:

- i. Deforestation
- ii. Illegal logging, bush burning and grazing
- iii. Industrial pollution such as toxic waste and gas flaring
- iv. Erosion, gully etc
- v. Food/drought: Most of our towns lack drainage plans.
- vi. Water pollution
- vii. Solid waste management/medical waste, electronic waste and plastics
- viii. Noise pollution: the Careless attitude of a citizenry adds to the problem.

DATA ANALYSIS

Land is the most vital and indeed the most essential factor on which all economic activities rest. Taraba State has an estimated land area of about 60,000 square kilometers, out of which about 50,000 square kilometers or five million hectares is arable. 11,000 square kilometers of the state is covered by forest while about 8,000 square kilometers under water, Mashy flooded and waterlogged areas.

Taraba State is blessed with abundant Human and Natural Resources which are at the disposal of every willing Investor who wishes to set up any business venture in the

state. These include the following:

1. Agriculture: About 80% of the people of Taraba State engage in Agriculture. This could be ascribed to the rich farmland as well as the favourable climatic condition. The role of the government, to boosting agriculture, cannot be overemphasized. As most Agricultural activities are co-ordinated by the Taraba Agricultural Development Programme (TADP), a parastatal(s) of the ministry of agriculture which renders agricultural extension services, distributes fertilizer, chemicals and other farm inputs to farmers at subsidized rates.

2. Livestock: Taraba State is one of the leading States in Livestock Production in Nigeria. All breeds of Animals are found in the State. These include Cattle, Horse, Donkeys, Sheep, Goats, Fowls, Doves, Pigeons etc. with the high supply of livestock in the State especially Cows that number over three million, there exists high potential of a viable Meat Processing Industry, Dairy industry and other Livestock related industries.

The type of animals and their population as at 1998 is shown in the table below:

S/N	Type of Livestock	Local Govt. Area Where Found	Population as at 1998
1.	Cattle	All Local Governments	3,398,632
2.	Sheep	All Local Governments	873,683
3.	Goats	All Local Governments	1,300,215
4.	Horses	All Local Governments	993,480
4.	Donkeys	All Local Governments	48,739
5.	Poultry	All Local Governments	1,963,619
6.	Pigs	All Local Governments	314,254
7.	Rabbits	All Local Governments	29,564
8.	Dogs	All Local Governments	110,165
9.	Cats	All Local Governments	40,585

Table showing the types of livestock and their population in Taraba State as at 1998 Source: Ministry of Agriculture, Jalingo.

Over half of the Cattle population is concentrated on the Mambilla Plateau due to the conducive climatic conditions in the area.

3. Forest Resources: The State is endowed with abundant forest resources. It has 49

Forest Reserves, 78 Plantations, and one National Park (Gashaka-Gumti National Park). Out of the 49 Forest Reserves, six are highly productive. They include Baissa, Amboi, Baissaula, Wirkam, Gangume and Wasaje. Some important species of trees found in the reserves and that can sustain sawmill industries include: Melicia Excelsa (Loko), Ichaya Grandifoliola (Male), Nauclea Dedrichii (Tafashiya), Afezelia Africana (Kawo), Erythroleum Guineense (Gwaska), Terminalia Superba (Baushe), Daniellia Oliveri (Maje), borassu Aethiopicum (Giyinya) etc. In the plantations, species that can sustain sawmills industries includes Eucalyptus Spp (Zaiti), Gimelina Arborea, Pines etc.

The Forest Reserve and the National Park are blessed with animals like Chimpanzee, Gorilla, Leopard, Lion, Python, Elephant, Buffalo, Pangolin, Monkey etc and many species of birds. It is to be noted that Gashaka-Gumti National park has the most diversified flora and fauna (plants and animals) in the country. If the Ngel Nyaki Forest Reserve is developed, it will be an international tourist attraction that will generate employment, create wealth and boost the economy of the state.

The State is also endowed with many

Water bodies like River Ponds etc, which have assorted species of fish placing the State as one of the major sources of fish protein in the country. Amongst the non-wood forest products are gum Arabic, honey, cane and many seeds and fruits of economic importance.

Feasibility study reveals that there are vast untapped Natural Resources for Industrial ventures in the state for the following areas:

- i. Diary and livestock farming
- ii. Fruits and vegetable growing
- iii. Flour mills
- iv. Tannery and leather works
- v. Timber industry
- vi. Paper conversion
- vii. Break-fast cereal production
- viii. Fisheries
- ix. Packaging and canning
- x. Furniture making
- xi. Production of matches
- xii. Machine tools and light engineering industry
- xiii. Livestock Feeds etc

MINERAL RESOURCES

Taraba State is blessed with abundant mineral deposits, although they have been fully exploited. Deposits of marble are found in Lanadu, Zing Local Government Area, and Barytes at Ibi, Karim Lamido and Lau Local Government Areas, Salt deposits in Akwana (Wukari), and Iron Stone in Jalingo.

Other minerals and precious stones found in the State are listed below:

MINERAL BASED RAW MATERIALS

S/N	Raw materials	Location/Local Govt. Area	Possible products
1.	Graphite	Gashaka	Lead Pencils, Dry Batteries, Paints, Dynmo Brushes, Lubricants, crucible.
2.	Calcite	Ibi, Lau, Yorro	Glass, Fertilizer, Lime, Paint Bleaching Power, Soap, Flux and Paper.
3.	Barytes	Ibi, Wukari, Karim Lamido Lau.	White Paint, Wall Paper, Drilling Mud
4.	Quartzite	Yorro, Donga, Takum, Ussa, Jalingo, Ardo Kola.	Abrasives, Glass, Tooth -Paste.
5.	Gold	Kurmi, Sardauna, Gashaka	Jewellery, Coinage, Medium of Exchange
6.	Cassiterite (Tin Ore)	Gashaka, Sardauna	Metal Alloys, Tin Oxide & Tin Chloride
7.	Bauxite	Sardauna	Aluminum, Abrasives, Refractory Bricks and Aluminum Compounds.
8.	Kaolin	Sardauna	Ceramics Wares, Paper, Paints, porcelain Insulators, Soaps, Toothpaste and Pharmaceutical Products.
9.	Zircon	Takum, Ussa	Sparking plugs, Electric Furnance, Abrasives, Amour Plate, Refractories.
10.	Topa	Takum, Ussa	Abrasives, and Ornamental Products
11.	Germstones	Donga, Sardauna, Yorro, Gashaka, Kurmi & Karim-Lamido	Jewelleries and Ornamental Products
12.	Galena	Wukari, Karim-Lamido	Lead Meta, Cable Covering, Paints, Ammunition, Metal Alloys e.g. Solder and Storage Batteries.
13.	Muscovite (Mica)	Takum, Ussa, Gashaka	Electrical Insulators, Paints and Dry lubricants
14.	Uranium	Yorro, Zing	Nuclear Energy, Uranium for glass staining Glazes, Dyeing, Photography, Radium for Treatment of Cancer.
15.	Feldspar	Jalingo, Ussa, Takum, and Bali.	Glass, Ceramics, Sanitary Wares, Tiles, porcelain Insulators, Production of Artificial Teeth, Soaps and Mild Abrasives.
16.	Limestone	Ardo-Kola, Lau and Karim-Lamido	Cement, lime, Fertilizer, Flux for Iron Melting
17.	Sapphire	Gashaka, Sardauna	Metal Alloys, Tin Oxide & Tin Chloride
18.	Tomalin	Kurmi, Sardauna, Gashaka	Jewellery, Coinage, Medium of Exchange

TOURISM

Taraba State is richly endowed with potentials for the development of the Tourism Industry which when fully exploited will offer visitors to the State the opportunity to see a lot of attractions, top of which are:

i. *The Mambilla Plateau:* The Mambilla Plateau is part of the mountain chains of Adamawa, Obudu, Shebsi and the Mandara. This Plateau has a gently undulating land with beautiful green scenery, characteristic of the temperate regions. The Plateau is 1800 metres above sea level (6000ft). There are over two million herds of Cattle on this Plateau is a Tea factory at Kakara where the popular highland Tea is produced. Fruits such as pear, Apple, Strawberry etc are grown there.

ii. *Rock Formations:* There are mysterious Rock Formations at Kpambo and Fikyu. These are two formations resembling human beings on top of a cave found at Kpambo in Takum Local Government. Also at Fikyu near Kpambo, there is a big rock formation having the appearance of a human beings wearing “Agbada” (Big flowing gown). The Rock formations are legendary. Other rock formations and caves abound in the state.

iii. *The Gashaka-Gumti National Park:* These two Game Reserves situated at the base of the Mambilla Plateau. They have potential of becoming international tourist centres. The Game reserves cover a land area of 6,411 square kilometers. Though the roads to the Reserves as well as the viewing tracks are not yet fully developed, plans are under way to make them functional. There is also a catering rest house at the reserve for visitors. The Game Reserves have various species of Animals like Crocodiles, Alligators, buffaloes, species of Dear Bull family, Elephants etc. there are water-falls and ponds as well as streams in the Reserve.

iv. *Marmara Pond:* The Marmara Pond in Wukari Town is legendary. There are Crocodiles in the Pond. In days gone by the crocodiles used to crawl about one and a half kilometers in the town to the Aku Uka's Palace. Apart from Crocodiles, the pond also harbours white fowls which are still sighted on special days.

RAW MATERIALS IN TARABA STATE

S/N	Raw Materials	Local Govt. Area	Production in Metric Tonners Per Annum as at 1998	Possible products
1.	Guinea Corn (Sorghum)	All local govt. Area	990,808	Flour & Animal Feed
2.	Maize	All local govt. Area	995,920	Semovia Flour, Animal Feed & Vegetable Oil

3.	Millet	All local govt. Area (exception Sardauna	190,002	Flour & Animal Feeds
4.	Rice	All local govt. Area	586,175	Milled Rice & Rice Flour
5.	Milk	Jalingo & Sardauna	30,933 lires	Cheese/Butter, Ice Cream & Yoghurt
6.	Ground-nuts	All local govt. Area	100,058 litres	Vegetable Oil & Animal feed
7.	Cowpea	All local govt. Area	210,620	Bean flour & food
8.	Soya-Beans	All local govt. Area	235,375	Powered Milk, local Maggi & vegetable Oil
9.	Sugar Cane	All local govt. Area	335,375	Sugar
10.	Palm trees	All local govt. Area	2.09 Million	Palm Oil, Soap, Pomade, Rugs, Palm Wine, Magarine & Candles
11.	Wheat	All local govt. Area	448,430 tones	Flour, brewing
12.	Cocoa	All local govt. Area	34,245	Beverage, Chocolate & Confectionaries
13.	Coffee	Sardauna	Commercial quantity	Caffeine Extraction, Beverages & Wine.
14.	Tea	Sardauna	Commercial quantity	Bev erage
15.	Cocoyam	All local govt. Area	488,679	Food and starch
16.	Sweet Potatoes	All local govt. Area	2.99 Million	Food and Malt
17.	Timber	Sardauna & Kurmi	1 Million Tones	Timber & particle board
18.	Banana/Plantains	Takum, Karim - Lamido, Wukari	N/A	Wine, Banana Juice, Jam & Livestock Feeds
19.	Yams	All local govt. Area	8.61 Milion	Yam Flour
20	Benniseed	Takum, Karim - Lamido, Wukari	47,075	Vegetable Oil & Animal feeds

21.	Cocoa Nut	Takum, Karim - Lamido, Wukari	20 Tones	Vegetable Oil, Cocoa Butter	Carpet &
22.	Melon	Vegetable Oil & Animal feeds	47,076	Vegetable Oil	
23.	Bambara Nuts	Takum, Karim - Lamido, Bali, Jalingo, Zing, Wukari.	28,621	Vegetable Oil	
24.	Sun Flower	Sardauna	N/A	Vegetable Oil & Livestock Feeds	
25.	Cashew	Wukari, Takum, Gashaka	370,750	Cashew Oil, Feeds, Juice & Dye	
26.	Cotton	Jalingo, Lau & Gassol	406,450	Textiles, Bags etc	
27.	Irish Potatoes	Sardauna	551,995	Chips	
28.	Tomatoes	All Local Govt.	1 Million	Juice & Puree	
29.	Cassava	All Local Govt.	10 Million	Starch & Glucose	
30	Grape	Karim-Lamido, Gashaka	N/A	Juice & Jam	
31.	Onions	Northern Parts of the state	N/A	Seasoning & Flavour	
32.	Pepper	All Local Govt.	28,015	Seasoning	
33.	Rubber	Kurmi	Twenty tones	Latex, Tubes, Rasins, Tyres & Gums	
34.	Mango	All Local Govt.	N/A	Jam & Juice	
35.	Citrus	All Local Govt.	N/A	Chemicals & Lime	
36.	Gum Arabic	Karim-Lamido, Lau	N/A	Gum	
37.	Guava	All Local Govt.	N/A	Jam & Juice	

38.	Pineapples	Sardauna, Kurmi, Wukari, Takum, Gashaka, Bali	N/A	Jam & Juice
39.	Pear (Avogadros)	Sardauna	200,000 Tones	Oil, Jam & Pomade
40.	Pawpaw	All Local Govt.	N/A	Jam & Papain
41.	Tamrines	Northern part of the state	N/A	Dyes & Jam
42.	Date Palm	Northern Part of the state	N/A	Jam
43.	Borassus	Northern part of the state	N/A	Mat making, Brooms & Brushes
44.	Apple	Sardauna	N/A	Juice & Wine
45.	Grape Fruit	Kurmi, Sardauna, Gashaka	N/A	Juice & Wine

MAJOR FINDINGS

One of the most important assets of Taraba State is the abundant arable land suitable for cultivation of a variety of both food and cash crops. In fact, it is estimated that more than 40% of the total area of the state is arable, yet not more than 40% of this, is presently cultivated. Crops cultivated in the state includes oil palm, coffee, tea, coconut fruits, cotton, ground nut, beans, rich, maize (corn, guinea corn, millet, sweet potatoes, yam, bambara etc and other forest product. Agriculture is so far, the greatest employer of labour with over 80% of labour believed to be engaged in farming. Agricultural activities is coordinated by the Taraba State Agricultural Development Programme (TADP).

The southern part of the state is an embodiment of forest resources, forest reserve have been established in various part of the state either for timber development or fuel wood exploitation. These includes the forest reserve at Chicory, Gembu, Bissaula, River Amboi, Kamatan, Kurmi, Donkin and Gongon, other are at Jalingo, Bakindutse, Garba-Chede, Dakka, River Suntai and Gongola valley. There are several other smaller forest reserve all over the state. These forest reserve covers an estimated land area of about 1442sqkm. So far, the Baissa Timber Company is the largest Timber Industry in Taraba State. Fishery and fish smoking activities are the major occupations engaging a substantial number of people especially in Ibi, Karim-Lamido, Lau and Ardo-Kola Local Government Areas. The River Benue, Donga, Taraba and Mayo-Ranewo provide sufficient opportunities for fishery

activities in the state, other important basic activities in the state because of the abundant grass in the state is poultry and nomadic cattle rearing with over one (1) Million of cattle.

With the abundant natural resources in the state, if well put in place, the state government can carry out its obligations to the citizens without depending on the Federal Government allocation before paying salaries, building schools, hospitals, maintaining law and order etc. The state still up till now rely on the Federal Government before carrying out its obligations due to weak governance.

CONCLUSION

A natural resource is a necessary condition for development but not a sufficient one. When it is said that the environment is our life, a significance implication is that we are all children of the universe. The sun remains the key source of energy for all creatures. For the survival of living creatures the water cycle must not be broken. Breaking the vital cycles of nature has dire consequences for all living beings on the planet. When we strive to defend the Taraba State environment, we are at the same time defending the global environment because we have only one earth. The fact that we one earth makes it that we report environmental crimes as soon as they occur. We must also pro actively work to ensure that these incidents do not happen. Where they do happen there should

be extraterritorial systems of checking and enforcing rulings against environmental crime including ecocide. We have taken a broad look at the environmental challenges confronting us today. Taraba has been especially in focus, but we would find similar situations in several states. Accurate reporting of the environmental issues will not only help secure a healthy environment, it will also help to halt the erosion of the gains of independence that are rapidly eroded by dispossessions.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The study recommends the following:

- i. There should be massive reforestation programme in the state.
- ii. The state government should allocate some percentage of its fund for the development of natural resources.
- iii. The state government should set an embargo or restriction on the mismanagement of natural resources in the state.
- iv. Ecological funds strictly monitored.
- v. There should be Public Private Partnership in the exploration and processing of the natural resources which will create employment for the indigenes and increase the state revenue.

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