Geography · GS - I

Account for the present location of iron and steel industries away from the source of raw material, by giving examples.

EXAM YEAR	PAPER	SUBJECT
2020	GS - I	Geography

MARKS	WORD LIMIT
10	~150 words

Answer Hint

Changing industrial location factors; transport infrastructure; proximity to markets; port-based industries; technology; imported raw materials; examples from India; economic efficiency

Model Answer

Introduction

Traditional iron and steel industries developed near coal and iron ore deposits to minimise transport costs. Modern industries increasingly locate near ports, markets and transport hubs because technology and logistics have changed the relative importance of location factors.

Reasons for changing industrial locations

- **Improved transportation:** Railways, highways and coastal shipping facilitate the movement of bulky raw materials over long distances.
- **Proximity to markets:** Steel-consuming industries, construction centres and automobile hubs encourage production near major demand centres.
- **Port access:** Coastal plants can import coking coal and iron ore or use imported raw materials efficiently.
- **Technological changes:** Modern furnaces, efficient material handling and improved logistics reduce dependence on traditional mineral-based locations.

- **Infrastructure and energy:** Reliable electricity, water, land and industrial corridors influence location decisions.
- **Agglomeration economies:** Access to suppliers, skilled labour, finance and supporting industries encourages clustering near established industrial regions.

Examples

- **Visakhapatnam Steel Plant:** Its coastal location supports access to port facilities and imported coking coal.
- **Hazira steel complex, Gujarat:** Port connectivity and access to industrial markets favour its location away from some traditional mineral belts.
- **Dolvi steel plant, Maharashtra:** Coastal access supports the movement of raw materials and finished products.
- **Tata Steel, Jamshedpur:** In contrast, its location illustrates the traditional advantages of proximity to mineral resources.

Conclusion

The location of iron and steel industries reflects a shift from raw-material orientation towards integrated cost efficiency, transport connectivity and market access. Nevertheless, mineral availability remains important for many inland plants.

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