

BOOKREVIEWS

Development for Human Resettlement and Rehabilitation Policy in India by L.K. Mahapatra, A Mittal Publication, New Delhi, 2013 pp viii + 93, ₹ 295.

The book in review is a collection of the papers of the author presented at Conferences/Seminars in India and outside the country. The author of the book questions development legacy as for whom? This stark interrogation is a powerful challenge to the nature of induced development processes and to the paradigm under which they are initiated. The book encompasses the decapitalised and destitution effects on the tribal oustees. As the oustees sink into a level of impoverishment from which in the next generation there may not be any prospect of gaining back their former standard of living, not to speak of improving it. This happens largely because reconstruction strategies, also identified in the Impoverishment Risk and Reconstruction model, are unfortunately not implemented as they should be by the owners and sponsors of development project. The book is divided into four chapters focusing on various issues on development, deprivation, displacement, impoverishment policies on resettlement and rehabilitation in human rights perspective.

In the first introductory chapter the problem of displacement of the tribal population in the name of regional and national development were discussed. No doubt, the Governments even when they are aware of, or concerned for, the "social costs" and the "human costs" involved in the development projects, are not in a position to compensate the displaced people fully or even reasonably. This is not always due to lack of social conscience on the part of the ruling elite, however estranged from the rural and tribal masses. However, there is a prime need for world assistance to the displaced persons for their proper rehabilitation and

adequate compensation for the "social costs" and "human costs" involved.

Displacement, impoverishment and redevelopment of the deprived oustees in India was discussed in chapter-two. The earlier version of this chapter was presented in World Congress Symposium in 2000. The author attempted to synthesise the displacement and redevelopment which had taken place in India during the pre-Independence and the post-Independence eras. In the recent decades after Independence, there has been widespread involuntary displacement of poorer, vulnerable sections of the people including the tribal people due to the resolve of the country to locate industries, mines, reservoirs/dams for irrigation and national parks. Still more recently, the urban communities for infrastructure development, slum clearance, and housing estates, etc., have come under the displacement imperative.

The emphasis in this chapter is on evolving mechanism for consulting the affected people at all levels from the stage of formulation to that of implementation of the project and the government should recognise the customary rights of the displaced people to land, forest and other natural resources and the products derived from these resources for their livelihood. Further, the author is of the view based on one case study of the tribal people in Odisha State. It was mentioned that these people enjoyed age-old rights over land and forests and other commonly held (CPR) resources for about three decades since Independence, these rights were trampled upon in Keonjhar district without any qualms in favour of the corporate sector.

Chapter 3 discusses that good intentions and policies are not enough for reduction of impoverishment risks for the tribal oustees. Their impoverishment risk multiplies compared to other oustees, as they cannot take advantage of the policy or ad hoc rules. It is observed that

there are some NGOs who sincerely believe in their crucial but conditional role in the empowerment of women, tribal and other weaker sections, in helping the tribal oustees cope with the problems of organisation, leadership and intercession with authorities for faster development. In addition, they constantly strived to bring to the notice of the authorities the unintended negative consequences of action.

Finally, in chapter four the resettlement and rehabilitation policy human rights perspective had been elaborated. It was expressed that the paradigm of rehabilitation and resettlement policy could change drastically if the human rights approach to be adopted in development spree. Any development goals, informed by human rights principles would therefore not only have effects on the structure of the economy, but also influence societal growth on the basis of equity and would thereby go beyond conventional developmental policy. Right to development, defined as the right to a particular process of development, but ensures the realisation of all human rights that are recognised as indivisible. The approach taken under the Right to Development establishes that realisation of human rights is more than a judicial or statutory process; the realisation is also dependent on a favourable societal and economic environment that, along with social change, includes the need for economic growth. Amartya Sen conceives of entitlement as being more than legal obligations of the State. He notes that the human rights approach embraces the idea that individuals, collectivities and social institutions have duties to facilitate and enhance human development. Hence, the need to promote the participation and inclusion of the poor people, actively realise their rights and the obligation of the state to help make this possible.

Development is a process of change in the nature of resources for the benefit of resource owning as well as the resourceless classes. The Government policy is to balance

the benefits and costs more towards the resources available for consumption/development and the dire need of the poor for their wherewithals keeping in view of today and of tomorrow's interest which could fulfill the people's requirements. The book is of utmost use in general as well as for researchers and the students.

Dr. S.S.P. Sharma

Traditional Irrigation System - Issues and Challenges by SSP Sharma and U H Kumar, Published by Serial Publications, 4830/24, Prahlad Street, Ansari Road, Darya Ganj, New Delhi-110002 (India), Price ₹ 595, Pages-133.

The book is primarily a Case Study of traditional irrigation practices in the State of Bihar in Gaya, Aurangabad and Nawada districts, where the traditional irrigational system through "Ahar-Pyne" has been augmenting the modern irrigation practices to cater to irrigation requirements of the area. The authors tried to examine the current scenario of traditional irrigation system in selected district of Bihar, examine comparative advantages of community participation and tried to identify issues and challenges in maintaining a traditional irrigation system in Bihar. The authors appear to have been concerned on the dismal situation of traditional irrigation system, in Patna and Gaya regions, leading to acute shortage of water. As Bihar is primarily an agrarian economy, the estimated shortage of more than 60 per cent in rice production, may pose a serious challenge, attributed to improper and inadequate irrigation support system. Even though Bihar has rainfed agriculture, the traditional Surface water schemes like Ahars & Pynes, in Patna, Magadh, Munger and Bhagalpur Division of Bihar in 17 districts, through rainwater conservation storage, distribution and groundwater recharge, promotes the watershed management in rainfed areas. The authors are of the view that lack of traditional irrigation system is impinging on the prospects of being prosperous and impact the agriculture yields. Lack of proper policy