

Development, Displacement and Marginalisation. Paul, Norvy (Ed.), 2014, Ernakulam, Vincentian Service Society Publications, ISBN 978-93-5126-733-1, hard cover, 289 pages.

“Economic growth without investment in human development is unsustainable - and unethical”

Amartya Sen

The book under review is an edited volume comprising 16 articles which elaborate on development-induced displacement in the Asian context, mainly in Nepal, Sri Lanka and India. It brings together the various concepts in the development paradigm and some real life experiences of those situated at the bottom of this development ladder. The major areas discussed in the book are development-induced displacement, cultural displacement, mental health issues faced by the elderly and the implications of the Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act 2013, of the Government of India. Development is the need of the hour and it is mostly associated with the capitalistic nature of economic growth. Every society is aiming to develop its economy, resources, technology, basic amenities and individual skill sets. It is inevitable, and everyone is affected by development at both the micro and the macro levels. Historically, it began from the development of villages and indigenous resources during the time of Gandhi, followed by the Nehruvian model of development where the State has the power to decide the course of development according to the neoliberal State policies. With globalisation and public private partnership (PPP) projects and social impact assessments having to be carried out for large scale projects, the very concept of ‘Development’ has evolved over the past few decades. Most of the authors in the book have cited the model of Impoverishment Risk and Reconstruction (IRR) in their studies as it has been used in a number of large scale development projects in India to measure the post displacement risks in order to restore and resettle the people ousted. The editor himself has cited several studies where the IRR model has been validated and he cites the loss of land as the single and most important cause of post-displacement impoverishment in India.

The introductory article is by Venkat Pulla, a senior lecturer from the Australian Catholic University, who has over 15 years of experience in the discipline of social work. He has widely researched the nexus between development, welfare and ecology and writes about the relationship between land and development in the context of the indigenous population. The article is entitled, “Where Spirituality and Ecology Fights a Dominant Model of Economic Development.” It discusses the lackadaisical side of development when it comes to Mother Nature and the relationship of the indigenous people with nature. It critiques modern-day development where third world countries are forced to play with ecologically unsafe technologies for higher economic gain at the cost of human safety and environmental degradation. It also challenges the term ‘homo economicus’, which means that economic well-being is the most important aspect and having it will in turn ensure well-being in all aspects of life. The author argues that consumption patterns alone cannot determine the well-being of an individual or an economy. Rather, it mostly brings about a growing disparity among the various sections of the society, causing the rise of the dominant classes. For example, the indigenous people are always against this model of economic development because the capitalistic forces forcefully displace them and their livelihoods are affected, their belief systems are challenged

and, as a consequence, they culturally adapt themselves to an alien environment. The author explains this with a suitable case study of a large scale project in south western Odisha and highlights the role played by the State and social activists in ensuring the voices of the native tribal people are heard. He concludes his discussion by highlighting the values of the social work profession in the Indian context. These are mostly rooted in social action and he appeals to fellow practitioners to have self awareness in upholding the core values of the profession, namely human compassion and empathy.

Several of the subsequent articles, namely “Development Induced Displacement and its Cost on Social Capital: A Case Study from Chhattisgarh”, also highlight development-induced displacement in the context of tribal and indigenous populations in the Indian scenario like the Baiga community of Chhattisgarh and the social and cultural prices they have to pay due to the liberalisation, privatisation and globalisation regime of the State and capitalistic forces. In all these articles the central theme of the book with regard to displacement has been adhered to and they have adopted a qualitative approach to capture the cumulative effect of displacement on individuals and their families. Some of the articles also explore the legal implications of displacement at the macro, meso and micro levels, including the ineffectiveness of proper resettlement and rehabilitation packages for the displaced. These include “The Price of Development-induced Displacement: A Case Study of the Perandoor Canal Displacement in Kerala”, discussing the findings of a case study capturing the grassroot reality of the displaced families in the name of development. Employing the case study method and taking the qualitative route to study the plight of 36 families who have been evicted from the canal road is the most appropriate approach to highlight the various physical, social, economic and psychological problems faced by them and to understand the gaps in the Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act. This idea is reiterated in a following article entitled, “Displacement and Marginalisation: A Case Study on Vallarpadam International Tranship Container Terminal in Kerala”, where the author highlights how marginalisation takes place even before the actual physical dislocation begins. Once the state acquires the land from the locals, their livelihood is affected and their traditional occupational skills might become redundant. For example, farmers who only knew pokkali rice cultivation will now have to identify new livelihood opportunities as they have lost their land in the name of development. These studies make a number of recommendations in order to address the gaps in the implementation of the Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act 2013. They also shed light on the importance of the intervention of social work professionals, both practitioners and academicians, in redefining development by taking into their confidence the people who will be the most affected and who lie at the bottom of this development spectrum.

The book then traces the historical evolution of the Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition and Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act 2013, as it is preceded by the colonial Land Acquisition Act 1894. It does so in the article, “Development, Displacement and Response: Mapping the Role of the Civil Society Organisations in Resistance”. The implementation of the Act in the Indian context and the role of civil society organisations in fighting for the rights of the project affected persons (PAP) are also discussed thoroughly. It is enlightening to see how the judiciary responds to the Act. As cited by Aneesh in the case of the Sardar Sarovar Project, the Supreme Court initially allowed the water level of the dam to be raised amidst national and international protests as the PAPs were less united in confronting the State or addressing their concerns. However, the study by Venkat Pulla cites how the Supreme Court upheld the constitution of India in guaranteeing the religious freedom of

forest dwellers and preventing Bauxite mining in a few villages in south western Odisha. This was only because the PAPs came together as a group and fought for their right to safeguard their homeland which was the very basis of their existence. In contrast, in the Vallarapadam case study by Norvy Paul and Josephine James, despite the judiciary and state approving the rehabilitation package, the district administration failed to implement it. The role and responsibility of social workers is not limited to just advocating the rights of those affected by these large scale projects. In the 21st century, they need to build their skill sets in order to respond to victims of both human-made disasters and natural calamities so that they can strategise their response in future and take up such developmental issues as well.

This is then followed by international developmental issues, most notably internally displaced persons. These include post conflict situations as in Nepal and forced migration issues with reference to the problems faced by those in countries like Sri Lanka affected by civil war. In these instances, basic human rights violations need the humanitarian perspective to provide aid to these internally displaced groups of people. It is interesting to draw a parallel between the extent to which the governments have responded to combat these situations in these two neighbouring countries. The book also throws light on the issues of urban development. The editor has brought in a conceptual paper, "Migration, Social Mobility and Class Formation: Impacts of Housing Market in Sri Lanka", which focuses on the issues faced by the upper middle class and lower income groups in the context of housing. It analyses the government housing schemes in a socio-psychological perspective to understand how it affects the families as they have to move into an unfamiliar heterogeneous community and seek a new identity. This article contributes a sociological perspective in the area of development-induced displacement.

The editor has also brought in findings from his article, "Understanding Social Disarticulation and Cultural Adaptation in Displacements in Kerala", in which he discusses a quantitative approach employed to study the cultural adaptation and social exclusion of 328 displacees of Kerala's large scale development project under the Cochin International Airport Limited (CIAL). It was undertaken using a self-constructed scale to measure cultural adaptations in five sub categories. It was interesting to see how the article attempts to quantify the key qualitative elements when he argues "79 per cent oustees who had a tea shop culture before displacement has now reduced to 10.9 per cent after displacement". This nuanced qualitative expression shows the emotional and social impact which displacement has had on the local community. It is because the tea shop culture refers to the social gatherings the locals used to partake in daily and now, after being displaced, it has reduced remarkably, thereby depicting social disintegration. This concept of cultural displacement has been well illustrated by an hourglass model pictogram in a subsequent article, "Understanding Cultural Adaptation and Mental Health in Development-Induced Displacements", by Rajeev. He portrays the process of marginalisation and the loss of identity and cultural patterns resulting in social disintegration and loss of mental health of the displaced. The editor then brings in the issues faced by one of the most neglected and marginalised groups, namely the elderly. In "Implications for Social Work Practice Among the Displaced Elderly", the author discusses the higher rate of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) among older persons post displacement. This is one of the major areas of intervention for social workers, considering the increase in ageing population the world over.

The book thus has a plethora of well researched articles relevant to the common theme of development-induced displacement and marginalisation. The editor has brought in various development issues in the Asian scenario and has also incorporated a few articles in the Keralan context. However, the organisation of the articles in the book could have been more accurate by

classifying the first half of the book specifically under development followed by different kinds of displacement focusing on the various marginalised communities as sub-themes. He has managed to touch upon the issues faced by the indigenous community, the elderly population, people in war-torn countries, and then further highlights the legal implications of displacement, the gaps in the Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act and the implications for social work practice and to the profession itself. A sequential arrangement of the topics could have been maintained to help the reader follow the thread of development and displacement from one article to another. This would have been facilitated by moving into the various facets of development-induced displacement in the international context of Nepal and Sri Lanka and then talking of issues in the Indian context, highlighting the cultural displacement issues faced by the indigenous population. In conclusion, the focus could have been on the forced displacement issues in the Kerala context. More studies citing how development affects children and women could also have been added in order to give an insight into the most unseen and unheard issues of a very vulnerable group of people. The book is very useful to both students and practitioners as it covers both the theoretical aspects of development and displacement as well as the real life experiences of those displaced and the areas of further research and intervention for social workers. It essentially highlights the role of social work professionals to build their skills sets, take up studies on various developmental issues and to strategise. As a result, this would help the marginalised communities to escape the vicious cycle of poverty. It can even aid in social work course curriculum development as it highlights the different dimensions where the profession can shape itself to provide human assistance in, for instance, conflict situations by providing psycho-social assistance to the elderly, youth, women and children. Thus, by borrowing Sen's capability approach, the idea of 'development' should be in congruence with human development and ensure that it does not take away an individual's entitlement. Development is not a one way bridge and it should help all sections of the society to make a crossover to a better social situation without having to compromise on their social and cultural ethos.

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