UNIT 12: DEVELOPMENT AND PROTEST MOVEMENTS IN INDIA

UNIT STRUCTURE

12.1 Learning Objectives

12.2 Introduction

12.3. Understanding Development vis-a -vis Protest

12.4 Historicising the protest movement against development projects in India

12.5 Development and Protest Movement (Loss of land)

12.6. Development and Protest Movement (Environmental Destruction)

12.7. Development and Protest Movement (Loss of Livelihood)

12.8 Let Us Sum Up

12.9 Further Reading

12.10 Answers to Check Your Progress

12.11 Model Questions

12.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to-

- understand the various responses that development evokes
- explain the origin of protest movement against development projects
- analyze development and protest movement [loss of land].
- examine development and protest movement [environmental destruction].
- explain development and protest movement [loss of livelihood].

12.2 INTRODUCTION

This unit examines the major debates and critiques of development in the backdrop of globalisation, and highlights how the processes of development has evoked various challenges. The protest mapped out in this unit will include the following:

[I] Those who have lost their land to the developmental scheme.

[ii] Collective protest by environmentalists and the affected population.

[iii] Marginalised citizens who are unable to secure their livelihoods.

12.3 UNDERSTANDING OF DEVELOPMENT Vis-a Vis PROTEST

There have been several times in history when people have come together in large numbers to protest against an injustice or support a cause, and created history. Development is the concept that includes the progressive enhancement in the quality of human life in provisions of food, clothing and shelter and the setting for a healthy living with increasing permanence of life and happiness.

However, the LPG paradigm of development in India reveals the signs and effects of widening inequalities between the 'haves' and 'have-nots' and the increasing deficiency of the poor and marginalised sectors of the population.

In this state of affairs of development, if mines and mineral-based businesses are allowed to flourish in the mineral rich tribal areas of the country and continue to displace the indigenous people who live in these regions in order to enrich the affluent privileged, the inequalities and poverty in these regions will be aggravated further. If land and other natural resources like water and forests that belong to the state or the local communities are acquired for industrial use or lost to development projects like river dams, the people who depend upon such resources become the direct and immediate victims of these projects.

In populous countries like India, development based on high technology that minimises the employment of human labour but for the holistic development of the country it is necessary to ensure food security for poor and half-starved people of the country. These needs can be fulfilled by pursuing a sustainable development model that ensures 'growth with equity'

and provides employment for all. What needs to be understood is that development has become co-terminous with globalization.

The term 'new social movement' refers to those movements which have come up since mid-1960s. The new social movements look into various collective actions, their identity, and on their relations for culture ideology and politics. They differ from the old idea of social movement in the following ways:- (a) they are concerned with non-material phenomena; (b) they work for quality of life, rather for merely life; (c) they are cooperative and non-conflictive; (d) they are followers-oriented rather than leader oriented; (e) they are decentralized, rather than centralized ones.

The new social movements include the women's movement, the ecology movement, and various peace movements among others. Thinkers have related these movements with post materialism hypothesis as put forth by Ronald Inglehart. Important contributors in the field include sociologists such as Alian Touraine, Claus Offe and Habermas. Many of the movements tend to emphasize social change in lifestyle and culture, rather than pushing specific changes in public policy or for economy change. Some theorists argue that the key actors in these movements are the members of "new middle class" or "service sector professionals", such as academics. They are informal, loosely organized network of 'supporters' rather than members. Paul Byrne described new social movements as 'relatively disorganized'.

12.4 HISTORICISING THE PROTEST MOVEMENT AGAINST DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS IN INDIA

Protest indicates demonstration or expression of disapproval / dissent/ discontent on some issues. In a democracy, the expectation is that the Government's decisions reflect the majority's will. However, in view of the division of ideology or political party system, there is probability of disagreement on the Government's decision.

Aberle described four types of social movements based upon two characteristics:

a. Who is the movement attempting to change for?

b. How much change is being advocated?

Social movements can be aimed at change on an individual level or change on a broader, group or even societal level (e.g., anti-globalization). Social movements can also advocate for minor changes or radical changes.

In the context of India, the Indian constitution clearly states - in Article 19 (1) (a) that it guarantees the right to express dissent. Article 19(1)(b) says that all citizens shall have the right to assemble peaceably and without arms. Infact an important component of democracy is the right to protest and having the Government to listen to the people's grievances. "To treat all protest as a nuisance, a violation of public order, the most common attitude of the administration and the Courts, is to misunderstand democracy fundamentally." The question is when the state plans meticulously every minute detail of the construction of the project, why can't the same concern and foresight be extended towards the displacement misery it would cause and the costs and methods of rehabilitation?

The resistance to development projects is not new. By the mid-19th century itself, communities had mobilized to oppose colonial policies of resource extraction, like the Epidemic Commission of 1864, followed by the Canal Commissions of 1885 and 1888. The spirited protests of Raja Digambar Mitter and L. Ghosh prior to 1890 were noteworthy. Be it the Drainage Committee of 1907 or the Flood committee of 1928, report after report lays down clear evidence of the devastating impact of projects on population. From 1947, Kapil Bhattacharaya warned repeatedly how the proposed dams, roads and bridges would impoverish both nature and society. Nobody listened, because they said there was not sufficient evidence. There were protests against the Forest Act of 1876. Most of these protests were from tribal areas which were most affected. The beginnings of the anti-dam movement can be traced back to the issues raised by the affected farmers of the Mulshi dam, 1921-24. The environmental and social

costs of constructing large dams were raised by prominent social reformers like Senapati Bapat and Vinayak Bhuskute. The voices of contentious engineers like Kapil Bhattacharya, who pointed out the mistakes in Damodar Valley Corporation, inspired leaders like Ram Manohar Lohia to take up the struggle. Ram Manohar Lohia, in the late 1950s and 1960s organised one of the earliest post-independence protests against developmental displacement. It was one of the most remarkable struggles for justice for 3 lakh people who were to be displaced by the Rihand Dam (U.P.). A day before submergence, 100 political activists and community leaders were picked up and imprisoned. There was no effort to rehabilitate those displaced and the fate of over 70% is not known while the remaining have faced the repeated trauma of multiple displacement.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 1. Define protest.

12.5 DEVELOPMENT AND PROTEST MOVEMENT [LOSS OF LAND]

As the resource demands of globalisation increase, land has emerged as a key reason of conflict between the land holder and the various development agencies including the State. The establishment of heavy industries, building of dams and introduction of development tactics in tribal and rural zones has necessitated dislocation of local population. These lands were purchased from the public, and in many instances farmers at cheap rates.

Further the State passes on the land rights to the private companies for the development of projects. After the era of rapid industrialisation, post - independence several states wanted to follow this route and thus usher in development. This has resulted in peasant families being displaced from

their traditional territories. Moreover, contact with outsiders has been equally detrimental and at times devastating especially in tribal areas.

Destruction of forests as a consequence of felling of trees for industrial purposes has endangered the small communities of hunters and food-gathers primarily in tribal zone. In early post-colonial India, land was seen as the source for equitable development. In 1961 the land reforms law came into being. It was expected to improve agricultural efficiency, broaden the distribution of benefits, and thereby move towards larger societal equality. But one by one, various legislations for land reforms are being diluted to enable changes in the land position.

The introduction of macroeconomic reforms in 1991 was a serious challenge to the state level development plans and programmes. The introduction of market driven economic reforms in India was perhaps due to the fiscal crisis that India faced. Though the reform saved the blushes for the country ,it also devastated many local agro based communities.

This support was not of significant benefit to the marginalized sector of the population. Recent industrialisation efforts in India, particularly in some states, have created widespread social and political tensions.

Most of this is attributed to land-grab events for building industrial or economic parks which have been marred with resistance often transgress into violent riots with casualties. In India, 65 per cent of people are dependent on land. Since the last decade, state governments as well as Government of India have been taking over enthusiasm to thrust the plan of Special Economy Zones as the instrument of rapid industrialisation and development.

There is no doubt that the principal source of livelihood of farmers is land and if the land is acquired they lose the source of livelihood. Despite the fast pace of sanction and establishment of these zones, and their noticeable achievement, the development of SEZs has faced extensive resistance from those whose land is in the process of being acquired.

The reasons behind such resistances are that there is no suitable Land Use Policy in India, excluding a few states, for example Kerala. In Kerala this legislation was brought in very recently, when the large tracts of paddy fields were renewed to residential and commercial complexes. The Land Acquisition Act, 1894, a nearly 120-year-old law enacted during British rule sketch the 'purposes' for which land may be purchased, the 'procedure' for possession, and the payment of 'compensation' for such acquisition.

The heart of the trouble his in the fact that the foundation of these industrial projects in general requires the forced acquirement of land and the expulsion of its previous users. This is possible for Indian states under the Land Acquisition Act of 1894 for "public purposes". The invocation of "public purpose" for what are essentially private commercial business enterprises has been repeatedly questioned. A growing number of studies have focused on the welfare effect of optimum compensation in the context of industrialisation-led displacement.

Ghatak and Ghosh (2011) suggest a revision of the Land Acquisition Bill enacted in 1894, which binds compensation based on the market value of land at the time of acquisition. Since the Land Acquisition Act, 1894 was a very old law as imposed in India since the time of British rule and was replaced by Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act, 2013. Many critics feel that this Act was also a toothless tiger and not able to solve the problems of rural and tribal peoples because of its certain limitations. This has led to, the following -

[a] Increase in unemployment

[b] Neglect of Agricultural Sector

[c] Mass migration from rural areas

[d] Problem of Land, Air and Water Pollution.

Some of the notable protest movements pertaining to land are

1. Movement against Land Acquisition Bill, 2015
2. Anna protests against Land Acquisition Bill, 2015
3. Protest against Yamuna Expressway
4. Prakritik Suraksha Sampada Parishad Protest
5. Pratirodh Sangram Samiti
6. Bisthapan Birodhi Manch
7. Land Grabbing in Singur and Peoples' Resistance
8. Krishjami Raksha Committee
9. Karanpura Bachao Sangharsh Samiti

12.6. DEVELOPMENT AND PROTEST MOVEMENT [ENVIRONMENTAL DESTRUCTION]

Environment Movement is a term which is also used to include the conservation and green movements. It is a diverse, scientific, social and political movement which addresses the concern of environment. In general terms, the environmentalists advocate the sustainable movement of natural resources. The movement major focus is on ecology, health and human rights. Its basis is very broad, including private citizens, professionals, statesmen, intellectual and the like. Among its advocates, we may mention Thoreau and Marsh between 1830 and 1960. During 1960s and 1970s, mention may be made about Rachel Carson Paul R. Ehrlich and the like.

The scope of the Environment Movement is broad and it includes environment conservation, and biology, as well as preservation of landscape, flora and fauna for a variety of purposea and uses. The Conservation Movement seeks to protect natural areas for sustainable consumption, as well as traditional and spiritual use.

Environmental Health Movement dates at least to progressive era, and focuses on urban standards such as clean water, efficient sewage handling, and stable population growth. Environmental health could also deal with nutritive medicine, aging, preventive medicine and other concerns specific to human well-being. Environmental health is also seen as an indicator for the state of the natural environment, or an early warning system for what may happen to humans. Environmental justice is a movement that began in the United States of America in 1980s and seeks to end environmental racism and prevent low income minority communities from an unbalanced exposure to highways, garbage dumps and factories. The environment justice movement seeks to link "social" and "ecological" environmental concerns, while at the same time preventing the de facto classism, and racism. Deep ecology is often concerned to be a spiritual spinoff of the ecology movement.

Bright Green environmentalism is currently a popular sub-movement, which emphasizes the idea that through technology, good design and more thoughtful use of energy and resources, people can live responsible, sustainable life while enjoying prosperity.

In the Indian context, the Silent Valley Project was perhaps the first instance where the development versus environment debate gained prominence. In the late 1970s the Kuntipuzha River in Kerala's Palaghat district flowing through a valley was considered an ideal place for constructing a dam. The envisaged benefits were an irrigational potential of 10,000 hectares, generation of 240 megawatts of power in addition to job creation. On the other hand, construction of the dam would lead to destruction of one of the world’s richest biological heritages. The Kerala Sastra Sahitya Parishad which was instrumental in the silent valley movement led a peaceful agitation and is still vigilant .The success of the Silent Valley Movement is considered a golden chapter in the history of the conservation movement



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 2: Where did the Environmental Justice Movement begin?

12.7. DEVELOPMENT AND PROTEST MOVEMENT [LOSS OF LIVELIHOOD]

It would be interesting to study how the processes of development have challenged the way marginalised citizens secure their livelihoods. Modernization in contemporary global scenario is becoming synonymous with Globalisation. Globalisation needs to be viewed as a phenomenon that seeks to incorporate citizens into the global level, unequally. Thus it becomes crucial to understand that the transformation of the 'conceptualisation of development and welfarism', within globalisation, has given an 'ideological legitimacy', to the market thereby challenging the notion that 'state provides to secure livelihoods for the poor (John 2005). In this context it becomes imperative to understand how and by what processes the idea and policies of globalisation have challenged securing of livelihoods of the marginalised. Sassen argues that it is important to recognise that globalisation involves two critical dynamics. One involves the formation of explicitly global institutions and processes, such as the World Trade Organisation (WTO), global financial markets, the new cosmopolitanism, the practices and organisational forms through which such dynamics operate. The second set of dynamics involves processes that take place deep inside territories...constructed in national terms...although localised in national...these are part of globalisation as they involve transboundary networks' (sesson, 2007). Thus as Giddens (1999: 12) argues that 'it is wrong to think of globalisation as just concerning the big systems like the world financial order. Globalisation isn't about what is 'out there', remote and fare away from the individual. It is an 'in here' phenomenon too, influencing intimate and personal aspects of our lives'. Thus in this context

one could see that the macro policies affect and impact the everyday lives of the people and they are caught in the larger social, economic and political developments. One such aspect refers to 'sustainable livelihoods'. In the Indian context, Kanan et al., (2000): state that one needs greater public investment in research and development for improving supply of food grains and for ensuring sustainability of an efficient system of agriculture. It is extremely important to address the decrease in public investment in agriculture as a result of deflationary macro-economic policies in the era of globalisation. Further the growing degradation of land and water sources may require higher inputs and huge costs to maintain food production, thereby posing a threat to food security. Thus Kannan et al., (2000), argue that one needs a strong research and development programme to develop technologies that would enhance productivity of dryland agriculture, which would go a long way in securing food security within the country.



12.8 LET US SUM UP

- The process of development places citizens around the world unequally.
- People are rendered vulnerable to the open market fluctuations with little fall back positions and are exposed to seek the marginal and insecure livelihoods.
- The analysis of development and protest movement [loss of land, environmental destruction, and loss of livelihood], emphasises how challenging it is for the marginalised poor to secure their livelihoods.
- Particularly, securing and maintaining sustainable livelihoods within a highly competitive economy geared towards maximising greater profits is a challenging task.



12.9 FURTHER READING

Aberle, David F. 1966. *The Peyote Religion among the Navaho.* Chicago: Aldine.

Agarwal, B. (1996) *A field of one's own: Gender and land Rights in South Asia, Cambridge:* Cambridge University press.

12.10 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans to Q No 1: Protest indicates demonstration or expression of disapproval/ dissent / discontent on some issues.

Ans to Q No 2: United States of America

12.11 MODEL QUESTIONS

A) Short Questions (Answer each question in about 150 words)

Q1: What is meant by environment movement?

Q2.: Define new social movements.

B) Long Questions (Answer each question in about 300-500 words)

Q1: Discuss the reasons for the change in role of the state, from welfare to sustaining economic growth.

Q2: Describe how the livelihoods of the marginalised are affected by the changing state policies.

Q3: Discuss the importance of environmental movements in securing livelihood for the marginalized in India.

** ** **