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Q7(a)

The problem of displacement is inherent in the idea of development. Analyze the statement critically

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2021 · Sociology GS 2 · 20 marks · Visions of Social Change in India

Visions of Social Change in India: Idea of development planning and mixed economy; Constitution, law and social change; Education and social change.

Core demand of the question

- The problem of displacement is inherent in the idea of development. Analyze the statement critically
- Use planning, **Narmada**, and tribal debate

Revision summary

Indian planned development has routinely needed other people's land.

Narmada is the public case of dam as growth and as submergence.

Adivasi policy debates show protection versus assimilation at the same sites.

Displacement is inherent in this model, not in all possible development.

Rights, consent and in-situ alternatives contest that inherence.

Introduction

Development, as India practised it, has often meant moving people off land so that a dam, mine, mill, or city can stand. Displacement is therefore frequent in that idea. It is not a law of nature. It is a political choice about who counts as the public.

Body

Why the statement is strong

- **Developmental planning treated national growth as a spatial project:** reservoirs, steel towns, and highways need empty land that is never empty.
- Adivasi and peasant tracts become 'sites' because Ghurye-style assimilation and a weak property voice meet Elwin's unprotected people.
- **Narmada made the inherent link public:** the dam was development; submergence was the same plan's other face.
- **Urban slum eviction and SEZ land are the city version of the same idea:** improvement requires someone to leave.

Critical limit of 'inherent'

- Not every idea of development requires dispossession. Land-saving industry, in-situ slum upgrading, and Forest Rights titles imagine growth with staying.
- **What is inherent in Indian big-project development is a class-caste arithmetic:** those with less honour and less paper title pay first.

- Desai would say displacement is inherent in this capitalist-state path, not in 'development' as human flourishing.
- Yogendra Singh's modernization can include legal rights as heterogenetic tools against forced exit.

Who is moved

- Scheduled Tribes, Dalit labour, and women with no recorded title are over-represented among the displaced.
- Compensation cash without livelihood is not rehabilitation; reverse migration during COVID showed how thin urban alternatives are for the already uprooted.

Politics against inherence

- Movements, Gram Sabha consent under PESA, and court battles treat displacement as contestable, not as fate.
- If the idea of development is rewritten as social democracy, staying with resources becomes the test, which Ambedkar's pairing of social and political democracy would support.

Verdict

- In the actually existing Indian developmental state, displacement has been structurally normal.
- The statement is critically true of that model, and false as a metaphysical claim about all possible development.

Flow diagram

Big-project development -> Land for dam mine city
 Land for dam mine city -> Displacement
 Rights in-situ FRA PESA -> Not fate
 Displacement -> Adivasi Dalit untitled women

Conclusion

Displacement is inherent in the Indian big-project idea of development because land is taken from the weak for a national surplus. It is not inherent in every meaning of development. The critical task is to change the idea so that growth does not require an exit.

Facts & figures

Narmada

Large-dam politics that fused national development with Adivasi-peasant displacement.

PESA / FRA

Legal tools that try to make staying on land part of development.

Ghurye-Elwin

Assimilation versus protection as two readings of what tribal 'development' costs.

SEZ / slum eviction

Urban-industrial displacement as the same logic beyond the forest.

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