

## Book Reviews

*The Teesta on the Run: Development-Induced Displacement in Sikkim 1975-2010*, by Walter Fernandes, George Thadathil & Bitopi Dutta, co. published by North Eastern Social Research Centre, Guwahati & Salesian College Publication, Siliguri, 2016, 352 pages, INR 600.00, ISBN. 978-99-82216-13-1

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Displacement has always been the other face of development. The growth of infrastructural facilities in the name of development has often taken place at the cost of livelihoods of the people especially the poorer section of the society. These poor are at times deprived of their basic rights in terms of getting the compensation for the land that they lose, the family that suffer, the challenges that they come across. Monetary compensation that they receive often does not help them to regenerate their livelihood. The developmental projects that are built at the cost of peoples' livelihood sometimes fail to resettle and compensate them. Rehabilitation of this voiceless community is often neglected. The consequences that follow after the displacement of these poor are more miserable. The failure of such developmental projects to rehabilitate these poor makes them more vulnerable to various forms of exploitation.

The book '*The Teesta on the Run: Development Induced Displacement in Sikkim 1975-2010*' has precisely documented the development induced displacement in Sikkim. This study provides a valuable spatial and temporal database towards the literature of development induced displacement. Based on primary fieldwork, the study lists some 65,000 people in Sikkim are victims of development induced displacement, i.e. more than 10 per cent of the entire population of the state.

It is not only a quantitative study, but also a reflective one. In nine chapters, the authors put forward the processes through which the developmental schemes are initiated, and the lands that are taken away from the people without paying adequate attention to the lives and livelihoods associated with it, the location of the, merged with India in 1975. The development trend it followed in terms of infrastructural facilities resulted in the displacement of sizeable population as shown in the work, the work analyses and questions the nature of development that grows at the cost of peoples' livelihood.

Special attention has been given on the methodological aspects of the work. The nature and source of data collection, the respondents chosen, the use of official figures and organization of the text amply substantiate the objective of the work. The research conducted in three different phases critically analyse the issues of development-

induced displacement both qualitatively and quantitatively. Extensive literature has been reviewed on the issues of development-induced displacement across the world. Problems of displacement have been shown in the review focusing on the marginalized communities that are displaced in the name of development. The literature critically evaluates the nature of development induced displacement across different states in India and throws light on the situation in the state of Sikkim. The entire history of development reveals the fact that the tribals in India have often remained the victims of development. The land lost not only hampers them economically but also marginalizes them socially.

The work highlights the real picture of development and its consequences for the affected people. It critically examines the process that operates within and the way in which these voiceless communities become the sufferers. It reflects the way in which the State supports the development with its interest of generating the revenue by taking away the land without fully attending to the land losers. The process that operates in the name of development and the way in which the people are marginalized has been shown and supported with the data from official gazettes, secondary sources and field survey. The study examines the nature of development that has taken place in Sikkim post-1975 by making use of extensive data on land acquisition for developmental projects in Sikkim.

The first chapter deals with the literature on the development induced displacement in India. It analyses the nature of displacement that have taken place in India since Independence. It examines the history and geography of development induced displacement in India and the problems of the poor and marginalized affected by these developmental activities. It analyzes the overall scenario of the history of development in India and evaluates the number of people who are displaced from their native land, revealing that the figures provided by the official records are far less than the actual figures. The way these data get concealed also reveals the lack of transparency around these developmental activities.

The second chapter in outlining the methodology of research explicates the rigour taken to be quantitatively accurate and provides the justification for the interpretation, where there were constraints - be it in the lack of the data or accessibility to data and knowledgeable persons. The research was completed in three phases: gathering gazette notifications; verifying land records; and interviews of displaced persons. The third Chapter gives an overview of Sikkim, its geography and cultural historical emergence as a state within Indian union from being a buffer Kingdom between India and (Tibet) China.

The development trajectory of Sikkim, while better than the Northern states does not equal to Southern or Western states. In the race for development if the stress is mostly on infrastructure and does not care for the displaced people then the undertaking of

development in a state does not reflect the constitutional vision of development as it pauperizes a significant section of its own people.

The fourth Chapter enters into the heart of the discussion by exposing the development induced displacement caused by water resources (mainly dams for hydrop projects), industrial mining and non-hydro power projects).

It also examines the way in which the victims are compensated with the price of land they lose without taking into account the other essential loss that these populations lose along with their lands. The failure of the government in various ways to protect people's livelihood has been clearly detailed. In the fifth Chapter, data on land acquisitions for defense, transport and communication, urbanization and administration has been clearly presented after 1975 till 2007. It also questions the failure of government records to maintain the data on deprivation in Sikkim. It reveals the fact that the data on Private land used have been available in the state records. However, it fails to record the data on Common Property Resource (CPR). The chapter minutely investigates the process of land acquisition in the state. While environment protection, Firms, HRD, Tourism and Others are welcome features the land alienation and displacement caused thereby if adequately not retributed, becomes the displacement induced loss of human quality of life is what is explored in Chapter six. Within the period of three decade, the land acquisition has been very high in Sikkim without making much effort to document the figures of land used for these purposes. The Seventh Chapter brings together the data of the previous four chapters and looks squarely at the issue of whether displaced persons have been rehabilitated, compensated and the consequences in terms of future trends.

The last two chapters of the book analyses the entire process of development and its impact on the lives and the livelihoods of the people, shifting attention away from the statistics and focusing on the impact it has had on peoples lives.. It critically evaluates the internal politics that operates and flows at different levels. It links the economy, society, and polity that functions in a system thereby fulfilling the interest of the State even at the cost of citizens livelihood. In Chapter Eight, the interview phase of the project is summarized, providing the background of the respondents - economic and demographic; and in Chapter Nine the processes of deprivation and resettlement are assessed. The book itself is the database for the young researchers and academicians interested in the field of understanding the scenario of development induced displacement in Sikkim. Multiple facets of development has been shown keeping the poor and the marginalized communities in the centre.

The Conclusion shows the path towards inclusive development as the model for fulfilling the need and greed of a few by safeguarding the poor from losing their land and livelihoods. It directs towards the path that prevents impoverishments of these populations, taking their rights and identity into consideration. It expresses the view of considering social cost, rather than merely sticking to economic cost, and compensating

the land losers in terms of enabling them to recreate their lives totally. The search for alternatives has also been the objective of the work that can prevent these voiceless communities from being further marginalized in the years to come in the brand name of development .The book has over 120 pages of references and appendices with the data tables adding weight to and substantiating the findings.