

Module name/ title: Development Dynamics and Regional Marginalisation in India

Paper: Media and Margins

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Component II: Description of the Module

Items	Description of Module
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Objectives	
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Development Dynamics and Regional Marginalisation in India:

1. Introduction:

In order to understand development dynamics and regional marginalisation in India, one has to understand India's development model. India's development model has come from a specific kind of understanding of the term 'development'. The development strategy for India has mainly been Nehruvian model of development. The discourse of this particular model is mostly a top-down model and does not take into consideration people in the margins or the marginalised sections. Therefore to understand the dynamics of India's model of development, one has to understand the discourse of development and the prevailing social hierarchies in the society. In India, marginalized groups are the people who stand below in the social ladder. This includes scheduled tribes and castes, women, religious minorities, rural poor, manual workers in unorganized sectors and any group or individuals who do not fit into the Hindi-Hindu patriarchal imagination of the nation. Therefore, in India one finds both vertical and horizontal marginalization. The horizontal marginalisation being the region wise, probably mostly in terms of economic disparity within the nation, while vertical marginalisation is concerned with the exclusion based on social hierarchy. And when both the kinds of marginalisation get intertwined with developmental policies and schemes, disparities increase and entitlements decrease mostly. The following subsection will help us understand and problematize the situation further.

- a) Understanding the discourse of development; and
- b) Understanding the relationship between development and marginalisation.

2. Understanding the discourse of development:

What is development?

The word development is probably one the most loosely used terms. The generic meaning of the word translates itself to improvement/advancement/enhancement/progress/expansion/enlargement/up-gradation/change/increase/growth and may be even perfection. Why is it that the word development is associated with anything that could be bigger and better? Why the idea of development is bigger and better clubbed together as a positive connotation? Do things that are bigger and better always lead to a positive impact? If not why is it done? What is the power equation behind it? These are the questions that one needs to keep in mind when one has to understand development critically. That is to say that one needs to question and problematize the synonyms of development. In this context, one has to understand how the concept of the need of development was created and how people and nations were rendered underdevelopment. It all started on 20th January 1949 with Truman's – the then president of United States America – speech. It seemed like it was America's moral responsibility to develop the underdeveloped. Truman on that very day thus coined the term "underdeveloped". Gustavo Esteva argues that on that very day, two billion people were made underdeveloped and ceased to live their life in their natural way. Everything that was to happen after this saw them from the lens of developed seeing the underdeveloped (Esteva 2010).

Growth can best be understood in terms of numbers, for example, growth in Gross Domestic Product. **Development**, on the other hand, entails overall betterment in social and economic conditions in a sustainable way so that there prevails

Therefore, now very often when we talk of development, it is understood as a process of improvement of infrastructural facilities. But the question is whether development is only infrastructural advancement? Improvement in infrastructural facilities could mean growth and not necessarily development. Therefore, one has to understand the basic difference(s) between growth and development. Also increase in infrastructural facilities does not necessarily lead to overall sustainable development of human conditions. And the meaning of the word development itself has changed over time. The changing meaning of development has thus had its impact on marginalised sections all over the world. The table in Box-2 would help us understand how the meaning of the word development has always meant different things at different points in time. Along with it, what has changed is how the so-called underdeveloped have perceived themselves. So, what does these kinds of chaos do to the already marginalised groups, sections and regions in terms to India?

Box-2: Meanings of development over time		
Period	Perspective	Meanings of Development
1850>	Colonial economies	Resource management, trusteeship
1870>	Latecomers	Industrialization catching up
1940>	Development economies	Economic grow , industrialization
1950>	Modernisation theory	Growth, political &social modernisation
1960>	Dependency theory	Accumulation, national, autocentric
1970>	Alternative development	Human flourishing
1980>	Human development	Capacitation, enlargement of peoples choices
1980>	Neoliberalism	Economic growth-structural reform, deregulation, liberalisation, privatisation
1990>	Post-development	Authoritarian, engineering disaster

3. Understanding the relationship between development and marginalisation:

a. What is marginalisation?

Marginalisation is the process of cornering or not letting an individual or a group reach its full potential. Oxford dictionary of Sociology defines marginalisation as a process by which a group or an individual is denied access to important positions and symbols of economic, religious and political power within any society. In understanding marginalisation, one has to therefore understand social exclusion because social exclusion leads to marginalisation. Arjaan de Haan defines, “social exclusion as a rupture of social bonds. Borrowing from European foundation de Haan argues that social exclusion is the process through which individuals or groups are wholly or partially excluded from full participation in the society within which they live. Social exclusion is defined as the opposite of social integration, mirroring the perceived importance of being part of society, of being ‘included’.

b. Relationship between development and marginalisation

As we have understood that development is a highly loaded word and cannot be simply equated with progress or advancement and has to be critically analysed. Therefore, one has to think that when there is so much confusion around the meaning of a word, how would it react in its interplay with people and societies? What happens when development happens in places which are so diverse and different from the place of origin of the word itself? The answer is: the result is anything other than absolute positive way in which it is portrayed. The result of development on India and other colonised countries worldwide has not been smooth. These countries were referred to as underdeveloped and backward and so had to be developed and civilised. Hence, the countries also jumped into the bandwagon to shed its underdeveloped-ness and become developed. India is no different. At the midnight speech on India’s independence, Nehru had called Dams as the temple of modern India. It is now clear how much havoc these modern temples have created. The most affected by dams are the people from the marginalised sections. This will be explained in the latter sections. Some years later in the 1990’s, liberalisation happened and the markers of exclusion deepened. Human development index highlights that development process has actually deepened exclusion, alienation and marginalisation. India ranks at 131st position in the human development index report 2016 prepared by United Nations Development Programme. This report categorises India as a medium human development index country along with countries like Congo, Pakistan and Namibia. The human development index of the 17 major Indian states in terms of their population and geographical area shows a great variation (The Hindu 2017). Kerala performs best amongst the major

Definition of Human development index

The Human Development Index (HDI) is a statistical tool used to measure a country's overall achievement in its social and economic dimensions. The social and economic dimensions of a country are based on the health of people, their level of education attainment and their standard of living.

Pakistani economist Mahbub ul Haq created HDI in 1990 which was further used to measure the country's development by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP). Calculation of the index combines four major indicators: life expectancy for health, expected years of schooling, mean of years of schooling for education and Gross National Income per capita for standard of living.

Every year UNDP ranks countries based on the HDI report released in their annual report. HDI is one of the best tools to keep track of the level of development of a country, as it combines all major social and economic indicators that are responsible for economic development.-taken from The Economic Times

states in terms of health and education, despite being ranked fifth in income among the 17 major states. On the other hand, Haryana is the richest state, but is seventh in terms of health and education sub-index. Thus, high income need not necessarily guarantee high social parameters in terms of health and education (Livemint, 2017). The following table shows the regional disparity in terms of human development index.

Human development ranking of 17 major state*	
State	Rank
Kerala	1
Himachal Pradesh	2
Tamil Nadu	3
Maharashtra	4
Punjab	5
Haryana	6
Jammu and Kashmir	7
Karnataka	8
Andhra Pradesh	9
Gujarat	10
West Bengal	11
Rajasthan	12
Odisha	13
Madhya Pradesh	14

Assam	15
Uttar Pradesh	16
Bihar	17

*Source: *Livemint 2017*

4. Marginal groups of India

Difference and hierarchy is the hallmark of Indian society and the foundations to these differences are caste, class, language, religion, region, tribe, gender and different historical processes. These form the base for various categories of segmentation and stratification. The different marginal groups therefore, may be categorised as scheduled caste, schedule tribes, women, sexual minorities and people with disability. These are the vertical exclusions that exist across the different regions of the country. In addition to this, there is the region-wise marginalisation, which appears to be more horizontal in nature. Therefore, if one has to see the worst affected regions with both kinds of marginalisation, the tribal belt forms an intriguing example. What is important to note here is the fact that the resource rich tribal areas, be it the indigenous communities of Northeast India or central India, are worst affected by development. The top-down model of development has not worked for the people. As a result of this kind of developmental process, the need is to increase the dependence of tribal groups on the administration because in most cases it is seen that indigenous people have lost their communal rights. The next section would help us to understand marginalisation in tribal regions emphasising on the dynamics of development and marginalisation of indigenous groups and women.

5. Tribal areas, women and development

Regional marginalisation and development in India during the last fifty years planning processes in India has not been able to narrow the disparity between the tribal and non-tribal population, which has rather accentuated the dominant relationships and reinforced the unequal exchange between super- and sub-ordinate groups. Such inequality is persistent in the economic and social realm. Elwin was critical of the importance given by Nehru to large scale industrialization. But according to Nehru, technological revolution in India needed maximization of steel production, so Rourkela was a part of it. But prior to the establishment of the plan, the place was home to many tribal groups. The Bhumiyas, Munderi were the original inhabitants while the Oraon, Munda, Kols and Kalthuyas had migrated from the adjacent tribal pockets (Rath 2006). The tribes suffered mainly in terms of receiving compensation. Many a times, the tribal people did not have any land records since the land rights were customary for them. Area too was so backward that the British did not show any interest in including such area in its mainstream revenue system. Possession of land and payment of rent was done orally, thus the tribes could not produce the land ownership records. R. K. Barik argues that the planning process ignores the social side and ultimately leads to unrest in society (Barik 2006). The rehabilitation strategy has been adopted by the Indian planners as an integrated development paradigm for the development of the backward regions, wherein non-tribal refugees will get settled

in tribal areas and share development programs with local tribes. But the plan did not succeed as the settlers started to acquire tribal land by illegal means, destroyed the forest to sell timber in the open market and accumulated major means of the local economy by pushing the tribes to more drudgery.

The social audit shows a great loss to the tribes whereas the economic audit confirms a positive contribution to gross domestic product. Development induced displacement and further resettlement has become a major issue now but the burning of it was felt more by the tribal population because in most situations they got displaced even from their original habitat. As a result of this, the tribal population, more specifically the tribal women than men, suffered a lot. According to Walter Fernandes, it was an attack on the natural resources on which they depended to play their role in the household. Women were more affected than men because women were related to the collection of fuel, fodder and water (Fernandes 2006). The bhils and the vasavas were also among the two displaced tribes in the Sardar Sarovar Project. The bhils were of Anjanvara and were the original cultivators and there were no differences between the land owners and labourers. Moreover the wealth of the people was determined by the number of cattle people have. People used to help each other in their land and village exogamy was practiced in order to have stronger ties with other village. Moreover they lived in the realm of forest and river which was their provider. So people only stored drinking water and for every other purpose they went to the river bank. The Vasavas were in the village of Mapalli. They were primarily agriculturalists who supplemented their forest produce with grain produce. Their economy was mainly subsistence economy with clothes being the only thing to buy. The Vasavas still consider Mapalli as their home. But after the displacement of the people from their native village, the indigenous people placed a lot of problems. After displacement, they were only given land to stay but not grazing land. So they had to sell their cattle and poultry. Moreover there were problems in finding alliances for their children as they were now out-sees and could no longer have the life they earlier had. This increased the mobility of men but the women were confined to their homes whereas the Vasava women earlier had strong ties with their natal family. So in this way, there was change in the kinship patterns and the social relations. Moreover, women could not visit their natal homes located at larger distances and this worked differently for men and women. Earlier they lived amidst forest and jungles, so it was easier for women to collect fuel, firewood and water but now women have to travel a lot. So the working conditions of women have diminished. One of the most important problems of displacement is that the privacy of the women is lost. Previously, women used to defecate in the hills but due to the shifting of settlements, these women defecated in the plains where there were no toilets. Moreover, Vasavas were placed at the bottom of the caste hierarchy so with the intersections of caste and gender, women were more marginalized (Baviskar and Hakim 1997). These call for gendered vision of resettlement policies. Such negative impacts on the tribes are clearly the result of the failure of India's developmental regime. Thus, the developmental projects other than anything else had performed as medium of social exclusion and further marginalizing the tribal population. The tribes continue to be the most marginalized of all communities. Although there are various special legal provisions for their upliftment, however they continue to be deprived. In other words, the rights guaranteed to the tribal population have been grossly violated leading to social injustice. The tribal people face not only serious socio-economic marginalization but also threat of undermining of their distinctive culture and identity, which in turn is rooted in their livelihood pattern (Prakash 2009). Tribes hold the same citizenship rights and have the same status as any other member of the state, however, in terms of enjoyment of these rights, the position of the tribes in

comparison to others have been extremely vulnerable. Tribes have suffered mainly due to disadvantages characterized by a combination of economic, political, social and cultural dimensions. Tribal rights thus acquire a substantive content to right to socio-economic development as well as preservation of socio-cultural distinctiveness. Both the substantive rights have come under question under the developmental process adopted by the Indian state leading to negotiation of space. Thus the politics of development and identity is generated. The denial of effective social and economic rights of the tribes as well as the taking away of forests continued even during the post-independence period due to the existing developmental policies in the post-independence period. In-fact the major cause of tribal displacement and uprooting has been the state itself. The state which was to bring about equality and do away with social exclusion has been exclusionary in its policies and programs. Large scale industrialization, exploitation of mineral resources, construction of dams and power projects have made more tribal people landless, jobless, homeless and transfer of land from tribes to non tribes (Xaxa 2008).

Development, as mentioned above, is a myth of sorts. Because the real development would require communities engage in self development, prioritize their needs, solve their own problems and raise their own resources to meet their needs. So the developmental agenda has to be such that there is holistic development of the individuals and the community. Many problems concerning tribal development, like displacement, poverty alleviation, health and disease, land alienation, indebtedness, are in-fact resultant of the econo-centric developmental policy. The biggest failure of modernization model of development policy is that it has disintegrated the symbiotic holism of man-nature-society relationship through its over-emphasis on econo-centrism and consumerism, and the result is the alienation and lopsided development. Thus the “centre and periphery” is the dominant ideology to understand the marginalisation of the tribal and the mainstream society in general.

6. Conclusion:

Development and marginalisation has a strange connection. Actually the kind of development procedure or policy that is strategized creates the difference. If a development policy or scheme is done without any idea of the ground realities, it will definitely lead to poor results and will not reach its desired target. However, if a developmental policy is designed keeping in mind the regional veracities, then development policies can be good. Such a kind of developmental policy will not result in the marginalisation of some. Also, the development policies need to be inclusive in every sense of the term, then only a positive correlation can be found between development and marginalisation.