



Mains Practice Question

Q."The concept of 'development-induced displacement' raises critical questions about the balance between national progress and social justice." Analyze India's rehabilitation and resettlement policies for displaced communities, suggesting improvements to ensure equitable development. **(250 words)**

17 Sep, 2024 GS Paper 2 Social Justice

Approach

- Introduce the answer by defining the concept of development-induced displacement
- Delve into India's Rehabilitation and Resettlement Policies
- Highlight the Key Features of Current Policy (LARR Act, 2013)
- Give Implementation Challenges
- Highlight Suggestions for Improvement
- Conclude suitably.

Introduction

The concept of '**development-induced displacement**' refers to the forced relocation of communities due to large-scale development projects such as **dams, mines, industrial plants, and urban renewal initiatives**.

- While these projects are often crucial for national progress, they raise significant concerns about social justice, particularly for marginalized communities who are disproportionately affected.

Body

India's Rehabilitation and Resettlement Policies:

India's approach to rehabilitation and resettlement (R&R) has evolved significantly over the years:

- **Pre-1990s:** No comprehensive national policy; project-specific approaches.
- **2004:** National Policy on Resettlement and Rehabilitation.
- **2007:** National Rehabilitation and Resettlement Policy.
- **2013:** The Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act (LARR Act).

Example: The **Sardar Sarovar Project on the Narmada River** highlighted the inadequacies of early resettlement policies, leading to widespread protests and eventual policy reforms.

Key Features of Current Policy (LARR Act, 2013):

- **Comprehensive Approach:** Combines land acquisition with rehabilitation and resettlement.
- **Social Impact Assessment:** Mandatory for all projects.
- **Consent Requirement:** 70-80% consent from affected families for private projects.
- **Compensation:** 4 times the market value in rural areas; 2 times in urban areas.

- **Resettlement Provisions:** Housing, employment, and other social security measures.

Implementation Challenges

- **Inadequate Implementation:** Gap between policy provisions and ground realities.
- **Delays in Compensation:** Often leading to prolonged displacement periods.
- **Limited Livelihood Restoration:** Insufficient focus on long-term economic rehabilitation.
- **Lack of Transparency:** In assessment and disbursement processes.

Example: The **Polavaram dam project in Andhra Pradesh** faced criticism for **inadequate rehabilitation of tribal communities**, highlighting implementation gaps.

Suggestions for Improvement:

- **Participatory Planning:** Involve affected communities in the planning process from the outset.
- **Skill Development and Livelihood Support:** Focus on long-term economic rehabilitation through skill training and job placement.
- **Time-Bound Implementation:** Set strict timelines for compensation disbursement and resettlement.
- **Cultural and Community Preservation:** Ensure resettlement plans consider cultural and community ties.
- **Independent Monitoring Mechanism:** Establish third-party monitoring of R&R implementation.
- **Gender-Sensitive Approach:** Ensure women's rights and needs are specifically addressed in R&R policies.
- **Alternative Development Models:** Explore development alternatives that minimize displacement.
- **Comprehensive Database:** Create a national database of displaced persons to track long-term outcomes.

Conclusion

Balancing national progress with social justice in the context of development-induced displacement remains a critical challenge for India. By adopting a **more participatory, transparent, and holistic approach to rehabilitation and resettlement**, India can move towards more equitable development.