

An empirical study on Social Impact Assessment due to development projects in India

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Abstract: Macro development projects have led to a systematic exploitation of people and the environment. This has strengthened the power structures which ensure the flow of benefits from the periphery to the centre. The displaced persons neither get on-project jobs due to the mechanised nature of these projects nor become part of the official employment data. The objective of this study is to determine the ways in which development affects the social life of displaced persons in India. It is found that development projects, do impact the lifestyle, culture, community, quality of life and health of the displaced persons. But it is also true that unless the development projects are undertaken, it is not possible for the economy to grow and match itself with the world standards.

Keywords: Development, Social Impact, Assessment, Lifestyle, etc.

1. Introduction:

The concept of development is a historical legacy. In the course of the evolution of its meaning, it has assumed a definitive, if amorphous, economic connotation in the current usage of the word: improvement of the economic status of the society, widening of the individual's life opportunities and betterment of the quality of life. But this connotation is historically linked to and rooted in particularly interpretations of the 19th century theories of biological evolution and social progress. The doctrine of development is polymorphic, because the concept of development seems to have assumed different shades of meaning and significance across time and space.

Development is just another form of social change; it cannot be understood in isolation. The analysis of development actions and of popular reactions to these actions should not be isolated from the study of local dynamics, of endogenous processes, of 'informal' processes of change. Hence, anthropology of development cannot be dissociated from anthropology of social change.

Enrooted by agencies Social Impact Assessment refers to the impact manifested at the social institutions and social relationship. Social impacts are the impacts of development interventions on human environment. The impacts of development interventions take different forms. While significant benefits flow in from different development actions, there is also a need to identify and evaluate the negative externalities associated with them. Such impacts not only need to be identified and measured but also need to be managed in such a way that the positive externalities are maximized and the negative externalities are minimized.

1.1 Development Discourse:

Development discourse refers to the process of articulating knowledge and power through which particular concepts, theories, and practices for social change are created and reproduced (Escobar 1995, 1999, 2000; Crush 1996). Historically, the approach to development in terms of discourse has evolved out of debates on modernization and Marxist dependency theory rooted in social evolutionism (Dependency Theories). Departing from the linear models of social progress, this approach to development seeks to articulate the processes and meanings of more nuanced social control and challenges.

2. Statement of Problem

Macro development projects have led to a systematic exploitation of people and the environment. This has strengthened the power structures which ensure the flow of benefits from the periphery to the centre. The displaced persons neither get on-project jobs due to the mechanised nature of these projects nor become part of the official employment data. This study, investigates the impact of such developmental projects on the social life of displaced persons in India.

3. Objectives:

The major objectives of present study are:

- a. To examine the potential benefits of development projects in the study area.
- b. To study the potential risks of development projects in the study area
- c. To determine the ways in which development affects the social life.

4. Research Methodology:

This study attempts to assess the social impact of displacement in India. The study is descriptive in nature and for this purpose, the primary data is collected through interviews and scheduled questionnaire distributed to respondents who were displaced from different parts of India. The data on social impact is collected from Secondary sources through NGOs reports, published books, journals, etc. The data has been collected from 100 respondents using the convenient sampling technique. A simple statistical technique is applied to calculate their percentage. Maps and charts were prepared to support the relevant data.

5. Social Impact Assessment:

Social impact assessments focus on the human dimension of environments, and seek to identify the impacts on people who benefits and who loses. SIA can help to ensure that the needs and voices of diverse groups and people in a community are considered. Social impacts include changes in people’s way of life, their culture, community, political systems, environment, health and wellbeing, their personal and property rights and their fears and aspirations. Examples of projects with significant social impacts include: landfill and hazardous waste disposal sites (perceived health risks, loss of amenity); power and industrial plants (community stress from influx of work force, pressure on infrastructure); dams and reservoirs (lifestyle disruption resulting from relocation, land use alteration or long lead time to full impoundment); and roads and linear developments (dislocation of activity networks and relationships).

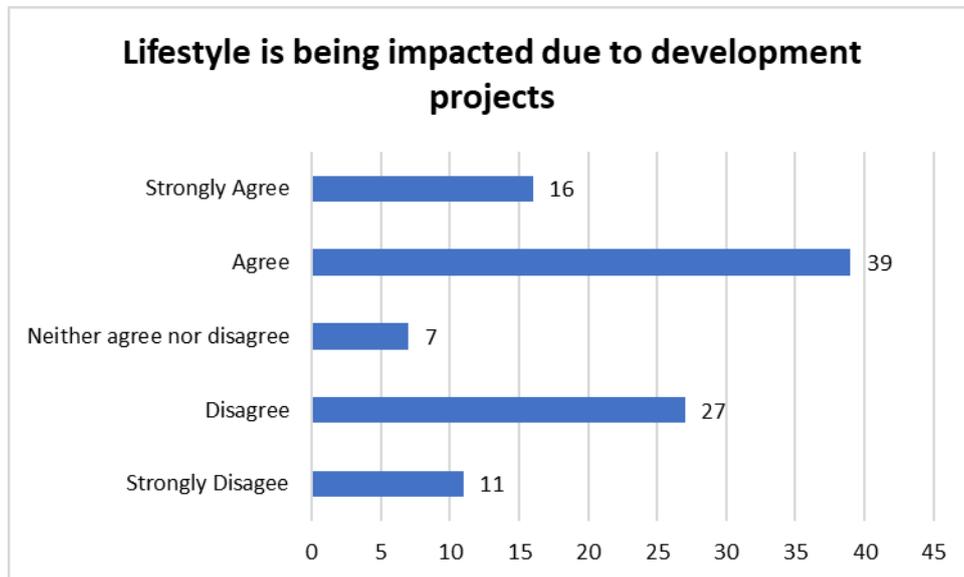


Fig. 1 Impact on Lifestyle due to development projects

Lifestyle includes the way people behave and relate to family, friends and cohorts on a day-to-day basis, it is found during the research that majority i.e. 39% of the persons agree that their lifestyle has been affected due to the developmental projects in their area, which is supported by 16% of respondents who strongly agree to this. 7% of the respondents, neither agree nor disagree to this. Whereas, 27% of the respondents disagree that their lifestyle has being impacted and remaining 11% strongly disagree to this.

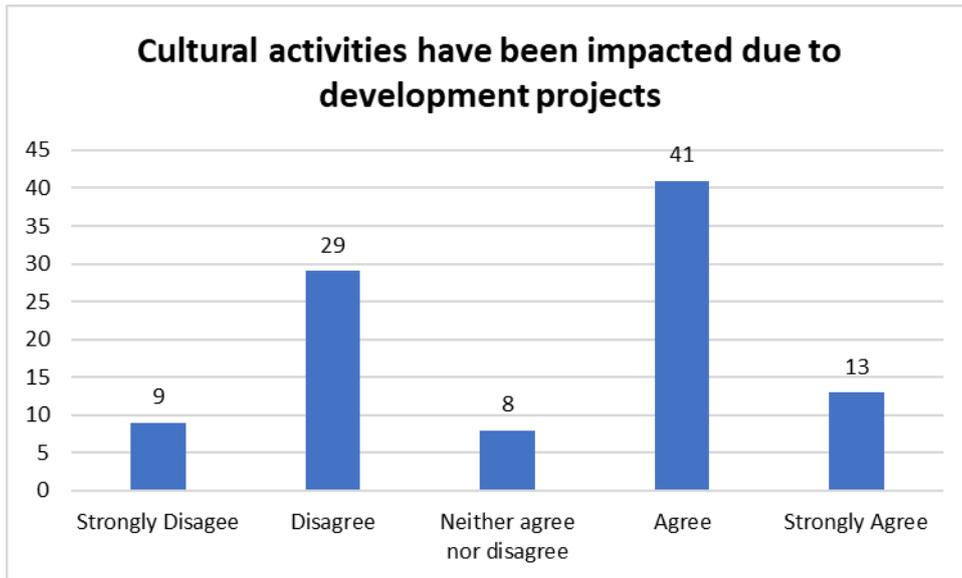


Fig. 2 Cultural Impact due to development projects

Cultural impacts included impact on shared customs, obligations, values, language, religious belief and other elements which make a social or ethnic group distinct. It is found during the research that, majority i.e. 41% of the respondents agree that their cultural activities have been impacted due to developmental projects, which is supported by 13% of the respondents who strongly agree to this. 8% of the respondents neither agree nor disagree to this. Whereas, 29% respondents said their cultural activities have not been impacted due to developmental projects and remaining 9% strongly disagree to this.

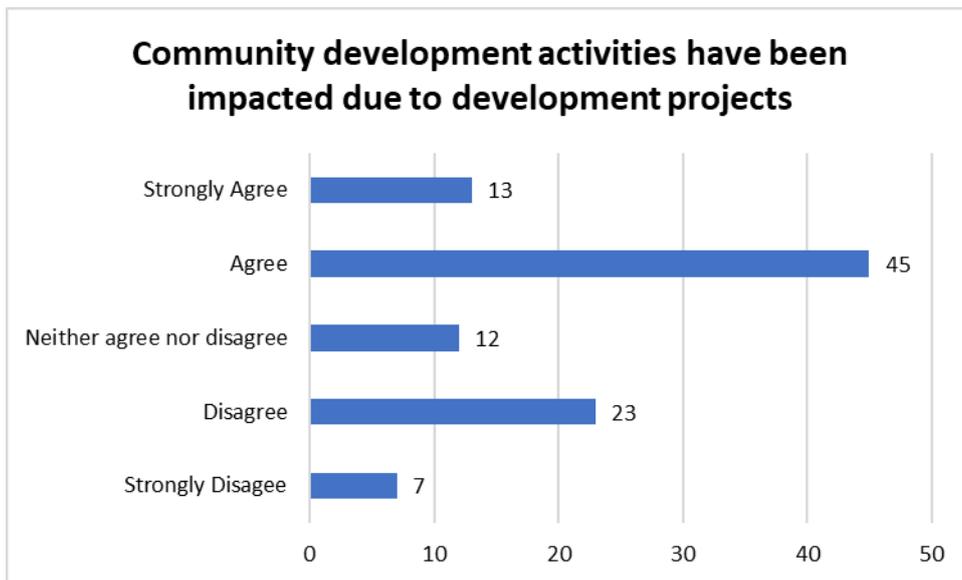


Fig. 3 Community impact due to development projects

Community impact means impact on infrastructure, services, voluntary organizations, activity networks and cohesion. It is found that majority i.e. 45% of the respondents agree that their community developmental activities have been impacted due to developmental projects, which is supported by 13% of the respondents who strongly agree to this. 12% of the respondents neither agree nor disagree to this. Whereas, 23% respondents said their community development activities have not been impacted due to developmental projects and remaining 7% strongly disagree to this.

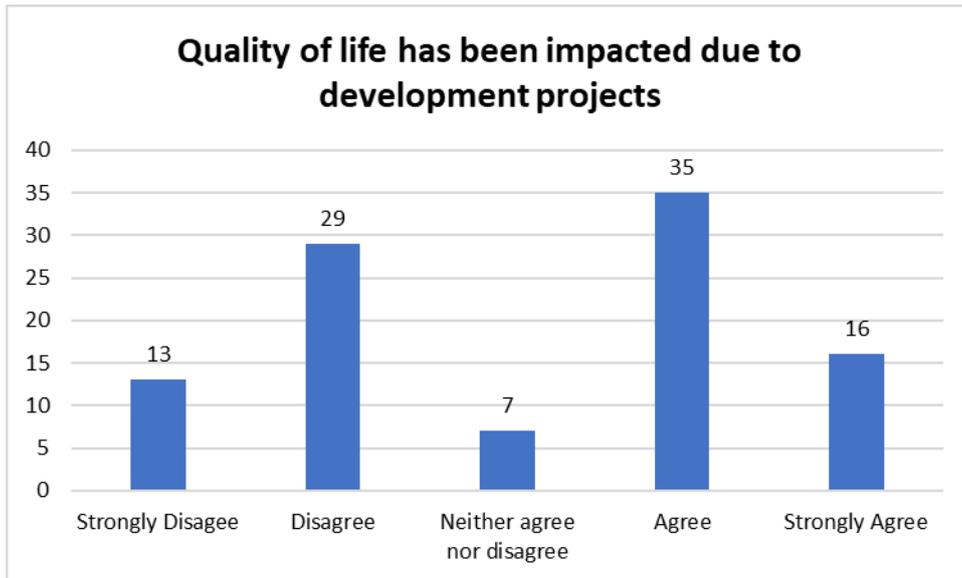


Fig. 4 Impact on Quality of life due to displacement

Quality of life impacts includes sense of place, aesthetics and heritage, perception of belonging, security and liveability, and aspirations for the future. During the research it is found that, majority i.e. 35% of the respondents agree that their quality of life has been impacted due to developmental projects, which is supported by 16% of the respondents who strongly agree to this. 7% of the respondents neither agree nor disagree to this. Whereas, 29% respondents said their quality of life has not been impacted due to developmental projects and remaining 13% strongly disagree to this.

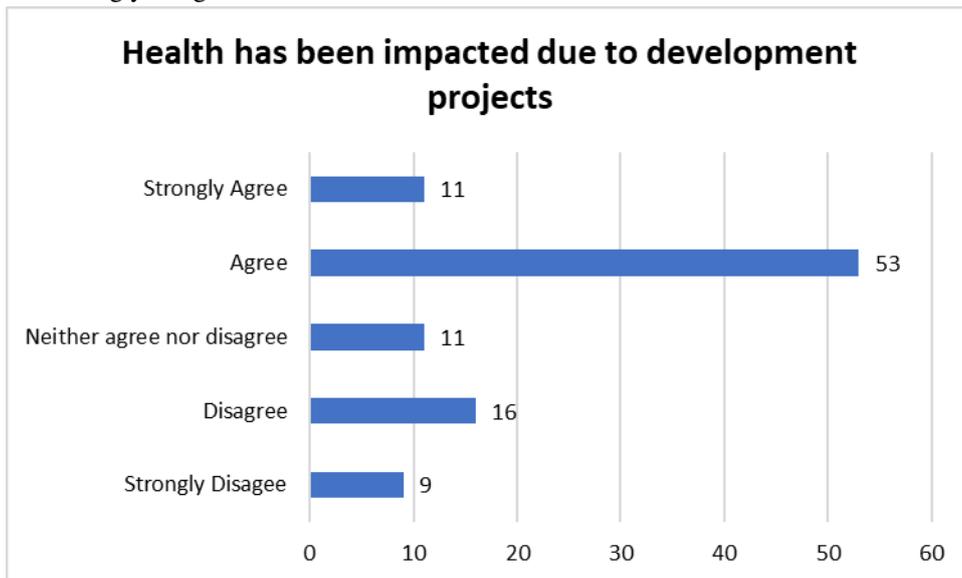


Fig. 5 Health impacts due to development projects

Health impacts means impact on mental, physical and social well being, although these aspects are also the subject of health impact assessment. During the research it is found that, majority i.e. 53% of the respondents agree that their health status has been impacted due to developmental projects, which is supported by 11% of the respondents who strongly agree to this. 11% of the respondents neither agree nor disagree to this. Whereas, 16% respondents disagree that their health has not been impacted due to developmental projects and remaining 9% strongly disagree to this.

6. Conclusion:

There is nothing more traumatic than getting physically displaced from own home and hearth which one has been enjoying for ages. Shattering culture and kinship linkages with kins and relatives built over several generations is prelude on self-alienation. The development projects, do impact the lifestyle, culture, community,

quality of life and health of the displaced persons. But it is also true that unless the development projects are undertaken, it is not possible for the economy to grow and match itself with the world standards.

7. References:

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