

Review of
Development & Change
Volume XI Number 1, January - June 2006

Cultural Politics of Environment and Development: The Indian Experience

Amita Baviskar

Abstract

What exactly is the environment? In the rural case it seems to be self-evident that we are referring to land, water, animals and plants and other elements of bio-physical world. In the urban case, we often fall back on an idea of nature derived from rurality – green areas, clean air and water. However, when workers or the urban poor describe their environmental concerns they rarely mention clean air or parks as a priority; most often they speak of *space*, just the sheer ability to have a secure foothold in the city, a place to live... There is thus a lack of consensus on what defines environmental issue, and who speaks for the urban environment. Into this discursive gap have disappeared the environmental concerns of an urban underclass that makes cities possible.

* * *

Participatory Governance and Institutional Innovation - A Case of Andhra Pradesh Forestry Project (JFM)

M. Gopinath Reddy, Madhusudan Bandi

Abstract

Forests are very important for the sustenance of ecosystems, the environment and also the livelihoods of a large majority of forest dependent communities. But, unfortunately, the world is increasingly experiencing unprecedented degradation of forests everywhere. To counter this degradation, governments are coming up with coping mechanisms to preserve the forests. In India, Joint Forest Management is one such institutional innovation in which local forest dependent communities are involved in protecting the forests. Andhra Pradesh has picked up this novel innovation well and has scaled up the programme in a big way in the last few years. Yet many concerns, unforeseen while initiating the programme, now need immediate attention. This paper is an attempt to study and understand participatory governance and the institutional issues that are in question at the ground level and consider how these can be better addressed for the enhanced success of this programme.

* * *

Institutional Reforms in Educational Management — The Issue of Sustainability

R. S. Tyagi

Abstract

Administration of school education in recent years has witnessed a major transformation in approaches, structures and functions. The emphasis has been on structural changes so as to make administration more responsive to the educational needs of people at the grassroots and efforts have been made to transform the traditional centralized, control-based, process-oriented educational administration into a decentralized task-based and target-oriented system of management. The present paper, based on a comparative field study, discusses the extent to which two Indian states have decentralized their administrative structures and functions to the grassroots level and devolved administrative and financial powers to the lower rungs of educational administration. It attempts to analyze critically institutional reforms in educational administration in Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan. It examines emerging structures for planning and decision-making processes at different levels and the extent to which they have actually been made responsive to the changing needs of educational situations and to the system as a whole. The linkages and coordination mechanisms of various actors have been specifically studied in respect of shifting focus in educational planning and management. The paper advocates the need to strengthen the decentralized structure, forge inter-institutional linkages, completely do away with obsolete rules and procedures and evolve healthy practices and procedures without sacrificing accountability.

* * *

Environmental Degradation to Land Resources in Uttar Pradesh

Sanatan Nayak

Abstract

This paper highlights the extent and causes of land degradation in Uttar Pradesh and the steps taken by the government to control it. The direct impact of human activities on land resources and factors such as increasing population, poverty and land act as a vicious circle of reasons for land degradation. It is observed that irrigation induced water logging and salinity, decline in soil fertility due to disproportionate fertilizer use, and decline in groundwater table are some of the major constituents of land degradation. Though, there is no unanimity in the data collected by different organizations about the extent of various components of land degradation, yet all are aware of the seriousness of the situation. The declining productivity of major foodgrain crops in recent years is closely associated with land degradation. It is suggested that, without serious efforts in terms of right policy direction for judicious budget allocation, conjunctive use of surface and groundwater irrigation, extended participatory irrigation management, and recharging depleted groundwater, it will be difficult to feed the growing population in the coming years.

* * *

Cultural Politics of Environment and Development: The Indian Experience

Amita Baviskar

Abstract

What exactly is the environment? In the rural case it seems to be self-evident that we are referring to land, water, animals and plants and other elements of bio-physical world. In the urban case, we often fall back on an idea of nature derived from rurality – green areas, clean air and water. However, when workers or the urban poor describe their environmental concerns they rarely mention clean air or parks as a priority; most often they speak of *space*, just the sheer ability to have a secure foothold in the city, a place to live... There is thus a lack of consensus on what defines environmental issue, and who speaks for the urban environment. Into this discursive gap have disappeared the environmental concerns of an urban underclass that makes cities possible.

* * *

Participatory Governance and Institutional Innovation - A Case of Andhra Pradesh Forestry Project (JFM)

M. Gopinath Reddy, Madhusudan Bandi

Abstract

Forests are very important for the sustenance of ecosystems, the environment and also the livelihoods of a large majority of forest dependent communities. But, unfortunately, the world is increasingly experiencing unprecedented degradation of forests everywhere. To counter this degradation, governments are coming up with coping mechanisms to preserve the forests. In India, Joint Forest Management is one such institutional innovation in which local forest dependent communities are involved in protecting the forests. Andhra Pradesh has picked up this novel innovation well and has scaled up the programme in a big way in the last few years. Yet many concerns, unforeseen while initiating the programme, now need immediate attention. This paper is an attempt to study and understand participatory governance and the institutional issues that are in question at the ground level and consider how these can be better addressed for the enhanced success of this programme.

* * *

Institutional Reforms in Educational Management — The Issue of Sustainability

R. S. Tyagi

Abstract

Administration of school education in recent years has witnessed a major transformation in approaches, structures and functions. The emphasis has been on structural changes so as to make administration more responsive to the educational needs of people at the grassroots and efforts have been made to transform the traditional centralized, control-based, process-oriented educational administration into a decentralized task-based and target-oriented system of management. The present paper, based on a comparative field study, discusses the extent to which two Indian states have decentralized their administrative structures and functions to the grassroots level and devolved administrative and financial powers to the lower rungs of educational administration. It attempts to analyze critically institutional reforms in educational administration in Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan. It examines emerging structures for planning and decision-making processes at different levels and the extent to which they have actually been made responsive to the

changing needs of educational situations and to the system as a whole. The linkages and coordination mechanisms of various actors have been specifically studied in respect of shifting focus in educational planning and management. The paper advocates the need to strengthen the decentralized structure, forge inter-institutional linkages, completely do away with obsolete rules and procedures and evolve healthy practices and procedures without sacrificing accountability.

* * *

Environmental Degradation to Land Resources in Uttar Pradesh

Sanatan Nayak

Abstract

This paper highlights the extent and causes of land degradation in Uttar Pradesh and the steps taken by the government to control it. The direct impact of human activities on land resources and factors such as increasing population, poverty and land act as a vicious circle of reasons for land degradation. It is observed that irrigation induced water logging and salinity, decline in soil fertility due to disproportionate fertilizer use, and decline in groundwater table are some of the major constituents of land degradation. Though, there is no unanimity in the data collected by different organizations about the extent of various components of land degradation, yet all are aware of the seriousness of the situation. The declining productivity of major foodgrain crops in recent years is closely associated with land degradation. It is suggested that, without serious efforts in terms of right policy direction for judicious budget allocation, conjunctive use of surface and groundwater irrigation, extended participatory irrigation management, and recharging depleted groundwater, it will be difficult to feed the growing population in the coming years.

* * *