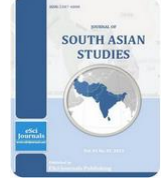




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## Book Review

### WHEN GODAVARI COMES: PEOPLE'S HISTORY OF THE RIVER JOURNEYS IN THE ZONES OF THE DISPOSSESSED

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By R. Umamaheshwari, AAKAR books, Delhi, 2014. pp. 486, ISBN 978-93-5002-309-9, 595.00.

There has been outburst in well-researched literature largely on Displacement due to emerging needs of development and its consequences on Human life, generally finding the fault lines in inadequate resettlement and rehabilitation (R&R) of inhabitants living by the side of rivers and other waterways. R. Umamaheshwari, a PhD in History and an independent Journalist is the latest in the scholarly club of Development. Unlike other intellects of this genus; her work embraces passionate account of resentment against selective mode of development where corporate and investment interests are more entertained and locals remain powerless. This book embodies the real story of Displacement of under develop classes of submerged villages as result of development forced by Polavaram (Indra Sagar) dam under the National multipurpose project Andhra Pradesh – Telangana.

This books stands in the different category among the other literature on Development as it genuinely moves in a novel approach and keeps the reader involved through her story telling technique. This piece of literature is devoted to represent rise and fall of India's one of the significant social movements turning into a mere fragmented resistance against construction of a destructive dam and brings a view of Godavari as a geophysical entity to a disputed political Godavari. It fully evokes the pain and horror experiences by the tribals, Adavasi, Dalits, fishing and farming communities because of displacement and deprivation stemming from losing their livelihood. This book also provides a detail

account of paradigm of Development tempted by money and profits by phrasing it as "Investment induced Displacement" which is more to control lives and less to facilitate them to repair the damages.

The author gives details of the problem very concisely. Her argument glides through the experience of her journey into the submerged villages through her account of alterations on the ground from the years 2006 to 2013, along the Godavari to delve into realities and labeled it as "people's journey" through her sight. Her work and unfolding of experiences are aided by some tremendous black and white images. Her research is noticeable due to her long stay in the locality because that endows with a clear picture of so-called R and R strategies engendering more and more sufferings especially in health and education sectors. Her work is mostly derived from her diary notes, observations, conversations with locals and other relevant stakeholders and most importantly her gradual increased scene of emotional association with Godavari in a human perspective. Writer intends almost utterly on people's voices from the apprehension of submergence zone. It is not the description of history through chronological order of events or in term of an archival past but a description of a present stirring into the past where river will not be more than an economic commodity. Writer calls it as people's history because it is simply not an issue of controlling waters but injuring their feelings of belonging and association with river to maintain their livelihood from generations.

Disenchantment of people settled alongside the Godavari River does not emanate from the challenges of the veracity of displacement alone but danger of losing

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the complete way of life, a socio cultural pattern, learned art of endurance and survival along the waterways are the prime root of their disagreement. The author not only narrated the history which was not done before, but also depicted the present day challenges of development paradigm by putting an end to a civilization nourished in centuries and minimizing the prospects of many professions linked with existing lifestyle near waterways. In traveling around on the Godavari, with its course, the author provides the reader, a detail of likelihood to congregate these marginalized people and their philosophies of life, and prospects to uphold their interests as communities, which are brutally abridged to nonentity. It is important to note that the author discusses frameworks and the intentions of development under the spectrum of socio-cultural and geographical spaces. Realities pertaining rehabilitation and resettlements are best recorded by the author's endeavour to include faces, voices, concerns, opinions and disillusionment expressed by them. The author precedes the unheard voices; distress and pain of neglected people in the region who neither share the apprehensions of development to improve their lives nor convinced that their underdevelopment is caused by ~~submerge~~ submersion of Godavari River.

Author lucratively pulls the reader to be aware of the arguments and counter arguments by traveling to those sites and through her interactive knowledge and information. Despite the fact that writer listed the different standpoints, but strongest theme emanates from her work is advocating the people bearing of Godavari as a way of life. Writer sheds light on people's perceptions of long established ways of living along the river. When Godavari comes up to, fetch new life to crops, green fields, and swamps, it also brings people to harsh and hard of face of nature, where many are trapped and have to live at the empathy of State authorities for their survival. However, local inhabitants strongly deem that the destruction and devastation from a Godavari's arrival to their life is neither permanent, nor catastrophe.

She also explicates the official stand of constructing a dam based on need to amass the Godavari waters and avoiding the wasting away to the sea. She investigates deep by tracing back to the British Raj to utter that rise in Godavari waters or drought has always been a source of a defying but locals have familiar to live ~~with~~ by the river. Life along Godavari is simple for these dispossessed, where it comes and goes, giving back their spaces to them. Problems stem from the State's perception which is a contrast to the people's acuity and is built on viewing Godavari as an economic resource to be effectively utilized rather a way of living. Author lists the developmental targets, potential and recreation benefits foresee by polavarma dam based on her extracts from the Detailed Project Report (DPR) as irrigation benefits, water supply, and hydropower generation as well as carefully files the threats to persist the Ecosystem as well as biotic resource, mammals, nomadic birds and other species.

The author also raises the relevant questions about ownership of waterways and credibility of laws being pro-people or pro-developer in absence of giving vetoing power to the people. She highlights the notion that Displacement is not a mere activity of relocating people but it fosters the emotional displacement involving psychological setback to the inhabitants by forcefully altering of their habitat. Most relevant despair is that there is no effective methodology for quantifying the displacement in an emotional context.

This book commences a debate between the agricultural needs versus industrial needs and tribal livelihood versus modernity along with uncovering the false mode of development where people have less prospects of getting on board for shaping their destiny. The writer portrays a very clear picture of a very complex phenomenon and just one line from the book "Godavari and investments in Hyderabad are at stake" depicts the standpoint of book that "development induced by investment causes only displacement." Her work is not just a mere addition in developmental literature but confers life to a dying social movement of dispossessed classes.