

DEVELOPMENT

- Q1: What do you understand by the term development? Would all sections of society benefit from such a definition of development?
- Q2: Discuss some of the social and ecological costs of the kind of development which has been pursued in most countries.
- Q3: What are some of the new claims for rights which the process of development has generated?
- Q4: What would be the advantages of democracy over other forms of government for ensuring that decisions regarding development are made to promote the common good?
- Q5: In your view how successful have popular struggles been in making the state responsive to the social and environmental costs of development? Discuss with examples.

Answers

Answer 1:

Development is a process that ensures good quality of life to all the people in terms of happiness, harmony and satisfaction of essential needs. It is related to improvement, progress and aspirations of people. This definition of development would benefit all the sections of society as it shows the basic need approach. It allows more people to make meaningful choices and the pre-condition for this is the fulfillment of basic needs like food, education, health and shelter.

The previous concepts of development that were based on only economic growth have not been beneficial for poor people and environment and have resulted in a wide gap between rich and poor and imbalanced ecology. Therefore, a definition that aims towards improving the quality of people's life would justify the essence of development.

Answer 2:

☞ Social costs of development

- A large number of people have been displaced from their homes and localities due to industrialization.
- Displacement causes loss of livelihood and increased impoverishment along with destruction of local culture and community life.
- Displacement of rural agricultural communities has resulted in increased number of urban and rural poor and has brought them into the category of marginalised people.
- It is responsible for many struggles and social disorganisation.

☞ Ecological costs of development

- The present model of development is dependent upon increasing use of energy and is a major cause for environmental degradation.
- Consumption of fossil fuels to meet energy requirements is also a major cause of pollution as well as depletion of natural resources.
- Global warming has increased due to emission of pollutant gases from industries.
- Icebergs of Polar Regions are melting due to global warming. This would cause flooding and submergence of low lying areas like Bangladesh and Maldives.
- Developmental projects have resulted in deforestation, which has created the problem of green house effect, scarcity of firewood, medicinal herbs and food, affecting poor people.
- Rivers and ponds are dry up and level of ground water has decreased.

Answer 3:

The new claims for rights that have been generated by the process of development are as follows:

- The protection of people affected by development from the state and the society as a whole.
- The right of people to be consulted about decisions that affect their lives.
- The right to livelihood of people when their regular livelihood activities are threatened by developmental activities.
- Rights of communities, particularly tribal and aboriginal, to the use of natural resources.
- Rights of future generations to the resources that is common to the entire humanity.

Answer 4:

The advantages of democracy over other forms of government for ensuring common good as the aims of development are as follows:

- A democratic government ensures that the decisions regarding development are taken while keeping the common interest of people in concern and respecting the rights of all.
- Conflicts over resources and different versions of the good life are resolved through debate in a democracy and these cannot be imposed from the higher authorities.
- The developmental priorities, strategies and way of implementations are decided by higher level of political leaders and bureaucrats. ¶ Democratic structure also makes it possible to include the views of common people in the strategy and priorities of development to prevent discrimination and adverse effects.
- Democracy allows every citizen to have a stake and participate in deciding their future and nation's priorities.
- Other forms of governments like authoritarian, monarchical and dictatorship do not involve people in decision making process of development.

Answer 5:

Popular struggles like the Narmada Bachao Andolan and the Chipko movement have played a major role in making the state responsive to the social and environmental costs of development. The Narmada Bachao Aandolan has stopped the government for the time being from raising the height of Sardar Sarovar dam on River Narmada. This project was harmful for the environment and social life of the people. A large forest was submerged during the construction and many people were displaced. The activists have also been trying to persuade the government to offer more meaningful rehabilitation packages to the displaced people. The Chipko Movement against deforestation was successful in Uttrakhand. The people hugged the trees and stopped the contractors from cutting them down. This was basically an environmental movement but the livelihood of the local people also depended on these forests. Thus, it created awareness all over the country about the actions of the government and forced the state to become more responsive.