

Dutch sociologist finds flaws in Gujarat model

It is a criminal offence to not implement Food Security Act as inclusion should be for all, Jan Breman at IIT-GN event

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NOTED DUTCH sociologist Jan Breman Tuesday highlighted the plight of slum-dwellers displaced from the Sabarmati Riverfront in Ahmedabad and said that integration has not been inclusive in the state.

Speaking at the half-day workshop on “Globalisation and Marginalisation” held at the Indian Institute of Technology, Gandhinagar, Palaj, Breman — who is a Professor Emeritus at the University of Amsterdam — said that while that the character of Ahmedabad was that of a middle-class city, all traces of the working class were hardly visible here. On marginalisation, Breman pointed out that the slum-dwellers who have been relocated from the riverfront to places like Ganeshnagar in Piplaj village and Vatva had more opportunities to earn when they were near their work places. Now, they had to shell out Rs 50 daily to commute between the riverbank and their new settlement to eke out a living.

Narrating the present situation, Breman said that many now resided in two-room flats



Jan Breman

that were of very inferior quality and faced water and sanitation issues. “Many houses are rising up in Vatva to relocate the residents moved from the riverfront area. The way these places are designed, Vatva is a planned slum and built to be a slum. Why should people plan a slum?” he averred.

The Dutch sociologist, who has penned *The Making and Unmaking of an Industrial Working Class: Sliding Down the Labour Hierarchy in Ahmedabad, India*, also criticised the NDA government for withholding a report on nutrition of children conducted by UNICEF and the Centre, owing to alleged poor performance of Gujarat.

“There is a report on nutrition that is not allowed to go public and the Government of

Gujarat has not implemented the food security law; this is not an administrative mistake but this is a policy. The government has the report and knows what it is. It is a criminal offence to not implement Food Security Act as inclusion should be for all,” Breman said.

Pointing out gaps in social sector in the state, Indira Hirway — Director and Professor of Economics at Centre for Development Alternatives, Ahmedabad — said that there was no adequate fund allocation in Gujarat’s budget for health and education sector. She said that the state is lagging behind in developmental goals while far too much attention is being given to incentivising investors to set shop in the state and battled for an inclusive growth model.

A panel discussion at the event saw former JNU Professor Ghanshyam Shah, Associate Professor at Gujarat Institute of Development Research (GIDR) in Ahmedabad Tara Nair and Indira Hirway concur that the current global economy that was thriving in the backdrop of globalisation was not sustainable for the world and that alternatives needed to be discovered.