

DEVELOPMENT AND TRIBAL DISPLACEMENT: REFLECTION ON CORE ISSUES

Author(s): Muktikanta Mohanty and Muktikanda Mohanty

Source: *The Indian Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 70, No. 2 (APR.-JUNE, 2009), pp. 345-350

Published by: Indian Political Science Association

Stable URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/42743900>

Accessed: 11-04-2020 18:50 UTC

---

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact [support@jstor.org](mailto:support@jstor.org).

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at <https://about.jstor.org/terms>



JSTOR

*Indian Political Science Association* is collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *The Indian Journal of Political Science*

## DEVELOPMENT AND TRIBAL DISPLACEMENT : REFLECTION ON CORE ISSUES.

**Muktikanta Mohanty**

*Is evil outweighed by the larger 'good' arising from development projects ? Why displacement ? For whom? Who decides the public purpose, the propriety of displacement? Whether the evaluation of resources of the affected people, which includes their social, cultural and other aspects of life, could compensate them adequately ? Since displacement is a traumatic experience for every one undergoing it, how does it affect tribals differently ? What are the social constraints that prohibit tribals from taking appropriate advantage of any development projects? What are the root causes of these constraints ? Whether the various Acts concerning compensation, rehabilitation and resettlement and impact on tribals can be viewed as a whole on relocating gender ? These are some of the vital questions currently debated and the status of tribal women is also closely linked to this general debate, as all these aspects have radically altered the discourse regarding displacement and resettlement into an issue of development.*

The model of development underwent a metamorphosis and became a techno-managerial model with exclusive emphasis on growth. The concerns of justice have almost come to be abandoned with the inauguration of the new economic reform in the name of structural adjustments. 'Industrial revolution caused innumerable dramatic changes in the whole range of social arrangements from the nature of the State to the processes and purpose of the governance. It was in the wake of these changes that the state acquired relative autonomy involving totally new forms of legitimization' [Amaratya Sen, 1999; 44 ]. The shift in the role of the State from an interventionist to that of a regulatory mechanism or even when act as a profitable institution calls for deeper attention.

The end of the 20th century may be identified as the era of displacement in India caused by disasters that ranged from natural calamities to man-made tragedies like wars, and also caused by the more positive effort of man in the name of development. Though displacement does not usually seem to be discriminatory, but the magnitude of the impact of displacement on women is enormous as they are vulnerable during such emergencies and they are usually the prime guardians of culture and community. Development-induced displacement in the country has brought severe economic, social and environmental problems to the displacement people and the magnitude of this displacement and severity of the problem is very high on tribal women due to incorporation of industrial projects in Orissa.

The Indian development experience in terms of development and displacement in the process of transition is closer neither to legal rational authority syndrome nor to Marx's alternative notion of development. It is carrying in itself several ingredients, not only a promise for development but also of constraints. The overall State and its administrative instruments are under tremendous pressure, as the people are increasingly demanding the realization of

the promise. The built-in structure is not designed for this purpose, in spite of the fact that the State is mandated by the Indian Constitution to play a transformative role, it ran into several dilemmas both on the frontiers of displacement and also of development

The development projects have raised questions of equity, fairness, justice and equality before law, in the matter of distribution of benefits and burdens. Today the project affected people are no longer in a mood to suffer displacement along with its concomitant attributes like occupational degeneration, social disorientation, pauperization, loss of dignity and often getting cheated of the compensation amount, which serve to make the experience a trauma.

Since development induced displacement is a traumatic experience for everyone undergoing it, how does it affect tribals differently? If whole families are being affected, why should there be a need to focus separately on women? A review of existing studies on displacement and rehabilitation reveals little information on the gender dimension of the problem. Almost all analysis on displacement and policies on relocation assume the household or the family to be the smallest unit of convergent interests where the benefits and burdens of policies are shared by all members. Yet there is evidence today that the burden of change is far greater for women, especially tribal women and that they have even less access to the benefits of development than that of men.

Most of the industrial projects have invariably come up in tribal dominated & hilly areas. The issue of people being forced to abandon their homelands is a matter of global concern. In India, the displacement of local tribal inhabitants due to large development projects such as industries has received a fair amount of attention from activists, researchers and media alike. However, the nature and consequences of development caused by urban development or by the development of industrial clusters is an area that has so far received scant attention [Mohapatra 1994; 37]. It is a matter of deep concern that the fruits of development could not be percolated to the tribal and poverty stricken people, despite our planned efforts. In the name of development in all irrigation projects, hydro-electricity projects, industrial and mineral belts, the local inhabitants have been victimized. The interests of the uprooted tribals and weaker sections have been relegated to the background because of defective rehabilitation and compensation. The problem of development of tribals is mainly linked with the backwardness of the tribal areas, poverty of the people and the nature of development policy.

The Land Acquisition Act only deals with compensation and not rehabilitation of project affected persons whose lands have been acquired. The responsibility of the state towards the affected persons ends with the payment of compensation only. The Act considers the payment of compensation to individuals who have legal ownership rights over land. This means that under this Act no compensation is payable to landless labourers, forest land users and forest

produce collectors, artisans and shifting hill cultivators. The Act is again anthropological in nature. The calculation of compensation on the basis of market value not only deprives the landowner, but it also hides the various socio-cultural dimensions of land ownership in an agrarian society. Land does not only have a market price at the time of acquisition, but it also serves various social, political and psychological functions to its owner. The ownership of a small piece of land can empower a landless family and increase the status and prestige of that family in the local milieu. A piece of land supports a family for a number of generations, not simply its present members at the time of acquisition.

The Act only recognizes individual property rights, but not community rights over land. As a consequence, the rights of the tribal and non-tribal communities over common land do not find any place in this law. The land is valued at market price as entered in sale deeds in the native area on the date of notification. Usually, in sale deeds the price is quoted low intentionally to pay less registration fees which is calculated on the basis of value of land. The delay in the payment of compensation, bureaucratic hurdles, and meager amount of compensation as compared to that given by central projects, unholy alliances between rehabilitation cash assistance department & the role of brokers or middle man seem to be the most commonly accepted issue.

The displaced persons lose their social status and are treated as development refugees by the state whereas they are treated as destitute by the host community which they consider as a life long stigma imprinted on them. Also, in the unfamiliar environment in rehabilitated colony they are ill-treated and seen as encroachers & unnecessary nuisance created by the host community. Thus communal harmony is destroyed. These important dimensions of land and its ownership in an agricultural society are not considered for calculation of its value while giving compensation to a land loser.

There is lot of confusion in Rehabilitation & Resettlement (R & R) policy because each department of the government has a different R & R policy. The tall promises of proper rehabilitation with provision of all basic amenities have not been fulfilled by any industrial house or by government itself. A comprehensive package of rehabilitation with all basic facilities like proper infrastructure network, hospital, school, recreational club etc., promised by the state government, became a distant dream for the displaced people. The resettlement colonies were not & have not been till date developed. The families could not move & start their new lives. The transition phase being so prolonged, the compensation amount instead of being used to rebuild a livelihood has been utilized in taking alcohols & narcotic drugs, and for events such as marriage, medical expenses or has simply been frittered away. The provision for rehabilitation-cum-periphery development is completely overlooked by the industrial houses

as well as the government mechanism.

Misutilization of compensation amount even creates disintegration of family. Single and undivided family is disintegrated into so many nucleus families. Kinship, family- solidarity, love and affection of a family are totally lost. This ultimately disintegrates village- solidarity, tradition & culture of a society. This is quite evident in tribal societies.

Excess land acquired for projects, has been a constant feature of every industry. The government followed the principle of 'land for land' policy. But it is observed that, the land provided to the oustees for agricultural or homestead purposes were often low quality, non-irrigated, undulated and so unsuitable to such purposes. Irrigation facilities to the resettled area have more often remained an elusive promise and civic amenities provided, of which a detailed list is found, remain in paper only. Due to scarcity of land, some times authority is not able to provide land to each displaced family & cash is paid in lieu of land.

Employment is the prime rehabilitation benefit to the displaced people. But preference for jobs is given to those who have lost more agricultural land and the homestead. There is no provision of vocational training for self employment for the DPs. It also happens that industrial units may be fully operational, making profit but job assurances have not yet been fulfilled. Families have swelled their numbers during the intervening period and the names of members of so many families have been stroked off from the enumeration lists. So many families have been migrated from their homeland out of frustration. Till date the practice of R & R policy has been more than half blind to the plight of the displaced women particularly tribal women.

Most of the industries are using ground water for their furnaces; resulting into acute shortage of drinking water. The ground water level is considerably lowered. It has long-run impact on the nearby villages. A number of natural streams originating from hills have gone dry. Reduction in water level of wells & ponds in the villages has created severe water scarcity problems. The villages located at the downstream to these industries have been severely affected due to the pollution of their water bodies and streams by the effluents from the refinery plant. The waste water generated from workshop and garage which contains high percentage of oils and grease materials is being discharged to the adjacent hill slope without proper treatment. The waste water finds its way to hill slope which ultimately gets mixed with the stream and river let. The villages surrounding fly ash pond and red mud pond are affected during the rainy seasons.

Almost all industrial houses significantly contribute towards air pollution. The captive power plants are mainly responsible for dust pollution. Similarly due to very low density of trees around the plant site, the smokes & pollutants along with fine dust and particulate matter affect the local villages. Due to insufficient sprinkling of water at the plant sites, huge

amount of dust flies up resulting in heavy dust pollution. This problem becomes all the more serious during winters and results in thick smog like situation. Due to dust pollution, there is an increasing trend in the number of respiratory diseases in the surrounding villages. Noise pollution is found to be a major problem around the industrial area. The functioning of conveyer belt causes lot of noise pollution. Plantation around the conveyer belt can effectively reduce the noise pollution but one can hardly find plantation or green belt exists around the conveyer belt. Other sources of noise pollution include frequent movement of vehicles.

The displaced persons are not provided with the right kind of information about the proposed projects; the reason for taking up the project in their areas, expected benefits from the project, the rehabilitated package, the date of acquisition of their land and physical displacement from their land, peripheral developmental benefit to the local people, job opportunities and the like. Thus, the mere announcement of construction of a project in their area creates a lot of agony and anguish. Many a times, the benefits are highly exaggerated & when these are not availed by the displaced people, they ultimately take recourse to violent method either to achieve their demand or to stop the implementation of the project. In both the cases there is need of development of confidence- building process.

The five decades of development experience in India has thrown up several challenges to the development debate itself. Development initially aimed at rapid growth, with a dose of distributive justice. The classes were expecting greater share in the wealth generated from rapid growth and the masses were hoping for a better life through distributive justice. This provided the context and also the support base for the governance in the first two decades of independence. That accounts for political stability and considerable legitimacy that the system initially enjoyed. It was from the late sixties that the signals of restlessness started appearing, rendering governance difficult. The state, in the process of reacting to these signals, responded both through responsive, as well as repressive forms. Responsive measures included Rehabilitation & Resettlement policy and of land reforms. The repressive steps included arbitrary laws, restrictions and regulations, more powers to the police and paramilitary forces.

Unless proper care is taken, industrialization may have a great adverse impact on agriculture and ruin the economy of the villages. So, if development is viewed as economic indices, then what kind of development we have achieved in course of time? The question is still difficult to answer.

#### **References :**

1. Cernea, Michael, M.[1997], '*Public Policy Responses to Development Induced Population Displacement*', *Economic and Political weekly*, Vol.33, No.26,June 15, pp.1515-23.
2. Dhyani, S.N. [1994] , '*Crisis in Industrial Relations*', New Delhi : National Publishing House.

3. *Fernandes, Walter (2004): 'Rehabilitation Policy for the Displaced', Economic and Political Weekly, 39, No 12, March 20-26, pp 1191-93.*
4. *Fernandes, Walter and Mohammed Asif (1997): 'Development-Induced Displacement in Orissa 1951 to 1995: A Database on Its Extent and Nature', Indian Social Institute, New Delhi.*
5. *Goodman, J. [1985], 'Development induced Displacement and Rehabilitation in Orissa', New Delhi : Heritage Publishers.*
6. *Government of Orissa [2006] 'Orissa Resettlement and Rehabilitation Policy', Department of Revenue.*
7. *Sen, Amartya [1999] 'Development as Freedom', Oxford University Press, New Delhi.*
8. *Kothari, Smitu [1996], 'Whose Nation? The Displaced as Victims of Development', The Indian Journal of Labour Economics, Vol. 39, No. 2, April- June, pp.176-85.*
9. *Mohapatra, L.K. ( 1996) 'Good intentions or policy are not enough: reducing impoverishment risks for the tribal oustees', in A.B.Ota and a. Agnihotri ( Eds) Involuntary Displacement in Dam projects, Prachi Prakashan, New Delhi.*