

SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMPOVERISHMENT RISKS IN DISPLACEMENT OF TRIBES UNDER POLAVARAM IRRIGATION PROJECT

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ABSTRACT

Development through displacement is part and parcel of the ongoing process of planned development. Annually, on an average 10 million people across the globe are getting affected by forced displacement to accommodate different types of development projects. Among them, majority of the displaced belong to poor and marginalised sections of the society. The number of people so far displaced in India by different such projects range from 7.5 to 20 million. The involuntary displacement and resettlement often causes certain problems which have socio-economic and cultural implications. The objective of the paper is to understand and appreciate the nature and magnitude of social and economic risks of impoverishment being undergone by the project-affected tribal families in the event of their displacement. Impoverishment risk is examined with special reference to customary rights and privileges, land alienation and livelihood security. In the study area, it was found that many of the respondents were living in inaccessible areas that even lack minimum basic services and facilities. However, the newly constructed resettlement colonies with most of these facilities did not necessarily attract as a pull factor for them to leave their original habitat. Similarly, some of the study areas are often affected by floods and the respondents incur huge loss in physical property like houses, crops, plantations, trees etc. Even such situation leading to heavy losses do not voluntarily push them to move to safer places. Leaving apart some of the tribals who are landless and marginalised, others by and large expressed their emotional attachment to forest and land and want to stay back in their old habitat where they survived and thrived for several generations. But they are not left with any option.

Introduction

Development through displacement is part and parcel of the ongoing process of planned development. The life of people living across the globe is increasingly getting

affected by forced displacement to accommodate infrastructure projects such as industries, power plants, roads and irrigation, defense, coal and mines including sanctuaries and parks. Annually, on an average 10 million people are being affected by such

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projects and majority of them belong to poor and marginalised section of society. In India, among all the infrastructure projects, dams are considered as the single largest cause of displacement. Though estimates vary, there is an agreement that dams were responsible for displacement of nearly three-fourths of the displaced. As per the latest information available, a population of 21.3 million have been displaced between 1951 and 1990 in the States of Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Odisha. Of them, 8.54 million (40 per cent) are tribals and of those only 2.12 million (24.8 per cent) tribes have been resettled so far. The incomplete rehabilitation of the displaced tribals has further compounded their woes as they are pushed into a vortex of increasing uselessness, unemployment, debt bondage and destitution (Planning Commission: 2002-2007).

Displacement and Impoverishment

Involuntary displacement and resettlement causes certain problems and risks, which have economic, social and cultural implications. According to Cernea (1997), the following are the recurrent characteristics or risks that contribute to impoverishment of displaced people. They are (1) landlessness, (2) joblessness, (3) homelessness, (4) marginalisation, (5) increased morbidity, (6) food insecurity, (7) loss of access to common property assets, and (8) community disarticulation. Further, he clarified that the eight fundamental impoverishment risks discussed above, affect various categories of people differently and tribal populations are more vulnerable to those risks discussed above. The report of World Commission on Dams (UNDP: 2000) also reveals that a sudden increase in impoverishment is the most common visible impact on the lives of people affected by development projects. The commission found that all over the world, dams have physically displaced an estimated 40-80

million people. Many of the displaced were not recognised (or enumerated) as such, and therefore, were not resettled or compensated. Where compensation was provided it was often inadequate, and where the physically displaced were enumerated, many were not included in resettlement programmes. Those who were resettled rarely had their livelihoods restored, as resettlement programmes have focused on physical allocation rather than the economic and social development of the displaced. Indigenous and tribal people have suffered disproportionate levels of displacement and negative impacts on livelihood and culture. According to Mc Cully (1996), the impact of displacement on tribal people affected by large dams has been overwhelmingly negative in India. In a review of studies made on the resettlement areas, he found that majority of the ousters have ended with lower income, less work opportunities, inferior housing, less access to resources of the commons such as fuel, wood and fodder. Studies have further shown that the generic risk of displacement of tribal people gets aggravated everywhere because of different economy and culture of tribal groups (Fernandez 1981, 1993; L.K.Mahopatra 1994).

Tribals and Displacement in India

According to 2001 census, the scheduled tribes constitute 8.2 per cent of the total population. Scheduled tribes distinguish themselves from other communities with their distinctive culture and isolated habitations and lay behind the rest of the society due to their socio-economic backwardness. A significant number of tribals have historically been dependent on natural and common property resources for their subsistence. Due to development projects they were forced to move out of the place where they lived for generations. Apart from depriving of their lands and livelihoods, displacement also attracts other traumatic psychological and socio-cultural disturbances as well. In this

process tribals were also victimised by scattering of kinship groups, family system etc. (Biswaranjan Mohanty: 2005). The working group on development of scheduled tribes set up during the Seventh Five Year Plan cautioned that displacement of tribals faces more risks than that of non-tribal population due to the following reasons. The first and foremost is the cultural aspects of tribal life. The kinship of the tribal groups is confined to their habitation which is limited to certain specific areas. Therefore, any displacement leads to a crushing blow to their socio-economic life. The other factor is attributed to their low level of education, and a tradition of a life of comparative exclusiveness and isolation and their difficulty in adjusting in an alien environment. The third and equally important is their dependency for living on including trade, profession and calling, roots and fruits, minor forest produce, forest raw materials, game and birds and the natural surrounding and endowment. And finally, scheduled tribes being economically the weakest of all communities, find it harder than the others to settle on new avocations on a different site settlement (Ministry of Home Affairs : 1984).

Arguments Relating to Displacement and Rehabilitation of Tribals

The different views that have been put forward regarding the displacement and rehabilitation of tribals can be broadly classified into two schools of thought. The first school stressed the need for integrating the hitherto isolated tribal communities into the mainstream society. Those who advocate such relocation argue that with this there will be improvement in rural livelihoods of the tribals at the same time help preserving the forest and its resources. The protagonists of anti-displacement school feel that the life styles of tribals are closely linked to the surrounding landscape and have over time developed a

fine balance with nature. Any disruption of this equilibrium results in irreparable damages to not only the livelihood of these communities but also the natural system of the area.

In a study aimed at coming out with a comprehensive rehabilitation plan for the tribes in nine villages of Similipal Tiger Reserve in Madhya Pradesh, Alexander et al. (1991) examined the various benefits and advantages that they can avail of by shifting to good sites. The main argument in this study was that tribal area is characterised by lack of basic amenities and facilities. Still there exists complacency in the community but such attitude is limiting the scope for material prosperity and improved standard of living. However, for a community living in such a condition, the necessity for dislocation and any programme for rehabilitation can be made into an opportunity for development. Although development or change involves disequilibrium, nevertheless it provides the impetus for eventual betterment of oustees. Conversely, in one of the contributing papers to the World Commission on dams based on the review of studies made in Independent India, A. Patwardhan (2000) maintained that many tribal communities live in relatively isolated areas, which are remote, hilly and in the vicinity of the forest, characterised by poor infrastructure and lack of basic civic amenities. Because of this, there are attempts to portray displacement as "development opportunity" for tribal people. Some of the evaluation studies have shown that in the relocated areas access to basic infrastructure like health care, education, sanitation, drinking water has improved. But according to her, improvements in amenities do not necessarily lead to improvement in the standard of living of tribals. Therefore, displacement cannot be a pre-condition for the tribal people to get access to basic public facilities like health care, education or transport. It is their right.

The Polavaram Project

The construction of Polavaram multipurpose dam across the Godavari River was first conceived by the British administration in 1941. But it received major thrust after Independence by various Governments formed in the linguistic State of Andhra Pradesh. The Polavaram project is located in Andhra Pradesh on the river Godavari, near Polavaram village, where the river emerges out of last range of the Eastern Ghats and enters the plains. The submergence will stretch along the Sabari River, a tributary to Godavari, up to the borders of Odisha and Chhattisgarh. Multi-purpose in nature the project envisages irrigation benefits to an extent of 7.20 lakh acres of the upland areas of East Godavari, Visakhapatnam districts under left canal and generation of 960 MW hydro electric power. In addition, this project under its left canal envisages 23.44 TMC of water supply for industries in Visakhapatnam Township and steel plant, besides domestic water supply to villages and towns enroute diversion of 80 TMC cft. of water through the right canal to Krishna river to augment the supplies of Krishna basin. The project submerges 37,782 ha (93,359 acre) of land of at FRL (+150 ft). This includes Government lands, private lands and forest land (Project Report: 1995).

Proportion of the Displaced

Different figures have been quoted by various authors and agencies in respect of number of people and villages going to be affected by the project apart from the extent of loss or damage that may occur to physical properties. The Centre for Economic and Social Studies (Subba Reddy: 1996) has conducted a more systematic and reliable study to assess the number of households and the number of project-affected people and nature and extent of damage caused to immovable property in the project-affected areas. The data brought

out by this survey helped the Government while preparing for the rehabilitation and resettlement package. According to the survey, the number of families likely to be affected is 27,798 with a population of 1, 17,034 spread over 276 villages. About 75,000 acres of cultivated land will be submerged, besides an extent of about 20,000 acres of fallow land and some thousand acres of forest land. Among the households, 13401 (48 per cent) represented tribal, followed by 6077 (22 per cent) BC, 4246 (15 per cent) SC and 4074 (15 per cent) FCs. Although the affected population are spread over three districts, the major displacement will take place in Khammam district. Out of the 276 settlements coming under submergence, 205 (74 per cent) settlements belong to Khammam district. East Godavari and West Godavari respectively account for 11 and 15 per cent of the settlements. About 42 per cent of the displaced persons will be tribals and 15.27 per cent will be scheduled castes, Thus, weaker sections account for 63.4 per cent of the displaced (Sarma : 2006 , Trinada Rao : 2006). The main objective of the paper is to understand and appreciate the nature and magnitude of socio-economic impoverishment risks being undergone by the project- affected tribal families in the event of displacement and rehabilitation. Impoverishment risk is examined with special reference to customary rights and privileges, land alienation and livelihood security.

Methodology

The study is mainly based on primary data collected from selected respondents in all the three affected districts following a multi-stage random sampling procedure. To begin with, from each district one or more mandals were selected depending on the number and size of people affected. Thus, Devipatnam from East Godavari, Polavaram from West Godavari, and three mandals viz, V.R. Puram, Kunavaram and Kukkunur from

Khammam were selected where the number of people displaced is on the higher side. The villages / settlements selected from East Godavari were (1) Paragasanipadu (2) Kondamondalu (3) Agraharam (4) Bodigudem and (5) Talluru. The district of West Godavari was represented by (1) Thotagondi (2) Thutigunta (3) Kotha Mamidigondi (4) Singannapalli and (5) Mamidigondi. From the district of Khammam the following settlements, viz., (1) Sriramagiri (2) Venkatayapalem (3) Amaravaram and (4) Uppair were studied. From the selected villages of each district, names of the affected households were listed down and from the list 100 households were selected on a random basis aggregating a total sample of 300. The selected sample respondents were contacted in their respective residence and required primary information was collected with the help of a semi-structured interview schedule by trained local investigators. Some of the important variables covered in the study in respect of impoverishment risks include customary rights and privileges, land alienation and livelihood security. Further, with the help of Focused Group Discussion, additional data were procured regarding magnitude of displacement, extent of loss, suggestions to combat displacement and proper resettlement.

Tribal Respondents Selected for the Study

The tribals affected by the project in the study areas predominantly constitute Koyas and Konda Reddys. The rest include Koya Dora, Kole Dora and Konda Kammari. Koyas are one of the major peasant tribes of AP and some of them still continue to practise slash and burn cultivation. They also depend on forest resources to supplement their food and meagre agricultural returns. Currently, the Koyas are in a stage of transition. Some of them have lost their best land, which they used to cultivate and are getting reduced to the role of tenants and agricultural labourers.

Konda Reddis (Rulers of Hill) are recognised as Primitive Tribal Group of AP. They usually live in isolated hilly tracts, valleys, adjacent plains and cleared forest areas. They are primarily shifting cultivators and largely depend on flora and fauna of forest for their livelihood. Of late they take up settled cultivation as well. They also depend on forest to sustain their livelihood. The Koya Doras form another tribal community of Andhra Pradesh, inhabiting the forests as well as the plain areas of East and West Godavari, Adilabad, Warangal, Khammam and Karimnagar districts that depend on agriculture for their living. The Konda Kammaras are mostly seen in the East Godavari district of Andhra Pradesh and traditionally they subsisted mainly by making agriculture implements to the neighbouring agricultural tribal populations. Now majority of them have shifted to agriculture. Konda Reddies who are economically better placed come first in the social hierarchy followed by Koya Dora and Konda Kammara. Tribe-wise distribution of the respondents selected for the study is given in Table 1.

In general the sample studied showed that Koyas constituted more than half (57 per cent) of the respondents studied while Konda Reddys constituted one-fourth of the total population and the rest constituted Konda Kammari, Koya Dora and Kole Dora.

Resettlement and Rehabilitation Package

To address the woes and grievances of project-affected people, the Government of India came out with the national Resettlement and Rehabilitation (R&R) Policy in 2005. The main objective of the policy is to minimise displacement and to identify non-displacing or least displacing alternatives and to plan the resettlement and rehabilitation of project affected families, including special needs of tribals as well as vulnerable sections. The Government of Andhra Pradesh also came out with a Policy on Resettlement and

Table 1 : District-wise Distribution of Tribal Respondents

Name of tribe	East Godavari	West Godavari	Khammam	Total
Konda Reddy	40	17	17	74(25)
Koya Dora	35	1		36(12)
Konda Kammani	20			20(7)
Kole Dora	4			4(1)
Koya	1	82	83	166(55)
Total	100	100	100	300(100)

(Figures in parentheses indicate percentage)

Rehabilitation (R&R) for the project affected families of the State in 2005 (For details see R & R Benefits for project affected families, Government of AP). In line with the Government of India's guidelines, the State policy also emphasised minimising displacement by exploring non-displacing or least displacing alternatives to the project designs. The State policy suffers from various deficiencies as it assessed the loss mostly in monetary terms without considering their constitutional rights and privileges including their socio-political and cultural fabric. Moreover, no special provision has been made to provide any special welfare measure including employment. However, the recent amendments made in the R&R policy vide G.O.Ms.No. 119, dated June 26, 2006 made it mandatory to provide land for land to the project-affected tribal families which is a welcome step.

According to P.Trinadha Rao (2006), the major deficiencies in the R&R package announced by the Government of AP for the Project Affected People (PAP) are the following : To begin with, the R&R package is defined in a narrow sense with major emphasis on monetary terms of compensation without adequately considering the non-monetised

and self-sufficient economy of tribes in the region. In addition, the package also does not mention anywhere that the rehabilitation and resettlement work will take place only in the Scheduled Areas. In all the three districts, villages have been identified to provide compensatory land to the affected people and the process of acquiring land from the affected tribal families also initiated. Simultaneously, construction of model colonies is also taken up to rehabilitate the PAP. In East Godavari, one such model housing colony was built in Pedda Bhimpally area. Here 194 houses were constructed for rehabilitation of PAP.

Socio-economic Background of the Respondents

In the sample studied, 83 per cent of the respondents were men and 17 per cent women. Most of the respondents fall in the age group of 30-40 years. Further, it was noted that those who were above 60 years constituted only 3 per cent of the population. This indicated shorter life span of the population due to poverty, malnutrition and lack of adequate health facilities prevailing in the study area. Marital status showed that most of them were married. Examination of family system followed by the respondents indicated that most of them followed nuclear

family and the rest either joint or extended family. Leaving around one-third of those who professed Christianity in the district of West Godavari, rest of them professed Hindu religion. Educational status of the respondents showed that the highest number of illiterates (62 per cent) was reported in Khammam, followed by East Godavari (52 per cent) and West Godavari (49 per cent). Among the sample studied, illiterates constituted 54 per cent leaving a few who studied up to post-metric and rest of them completed their studies mostly either at primary or secondary level.

Information about ownership of the houses showed that except for a handful of those who stayed in leased houses, most of the respondents had their own houses. The housing scenario in the study area showed that in Khammam three-fourths of the respondents and in East Godavari more than half lived in kutchra houses and in West Godavari more than half of the households lived in pucca houses. In terms of number of rooms more than half of the households in West Godavari lived in single room, while in East Godavari more than three-fourths stayed in houses with two rooms. But in Khammam, nearly half of them lived in houses with two rooms. Most of the villages studied were located in very interior areas and adjoining forests without proper basic services and facilities. A few of the study villages were totally cut-off from the main land and the only way to reach out is through waterways.

Cultivation is the main occupation followed by nearly half of the respondents. In East Godavari most of the respondents eke out their living by working as wage labour. Similarly, in West Godavari also nearly two-thirds of the respondents derived their daily living by working as wage labourer, while in the case of Khammam most of the respondents pursued cultivation as their main occupation. Due to very small holding and very

low productivity of the land, the tribal households eke out a living by engaging in diversified economic activities. In East Godavari, the major source of income was from Minor Forest Produce (MFP), followed by wage labour and agriculture. While in West Godavari, the most important source of household income was earned from wage labour, followed by MFP and agriculture. The other sources include livestock and trees. While in Khammam, the main source of income was from agriculture followed by wage labour and MFP. The other major activities include livestock and toddy tapping. Distribution of income earned in a year at the household level showed that in all the study areas, nearly three-fourths of them had income below ₹ 20,000, indicating that most of the respondents live below poverty line.

Ownership and Possession of Land

In general, land possessed or owned by respondents was classified into those used for homestead and agriculture based activities. In the study districts, the area under homestead held by the respondents ranged from one cent to 40 cents. In Khammam, the plots in which the houses constructed were relatively bigger in size as compared to the other two. Most of the homestead land occupied by the respondents either belonged to the community or inherited from forefathers except for a few who purchased or received through gift. Data showed that in the study area, among the sample respondents, 32 per cent of them did not own any cultivable land and the rest 68 per cent owned cultivable land and pursued agricultural activities. Distribution at the district level showed that the highest number of landless (42 per cent) was reported in the district of East Godavari followed by West Godavari (41 per cent). Landless respondents were less in number in Khammam where they constituted only 10 per cent of the respondents. Further, sample showed that 42 per cent of the respondents

possessed private land. Out of this, 80 per cent of them had valid patta and the rest do not have any relevant land document. Most of the transfer of private land among them was made possible through family inheritance. More number of respondents possessed irrigated land in Khammam, followed by East Godavari and West Godavari. Among those who possessed irrigated land, nearly half of them did not have valid land titles. The common crops cultivated in the non-irrigated area constitute paddy, maize and chillies and in the irrigated area paddy, maize, jowar, bajra, tobacco and chillies. Examination of the possession of *poramboku* land showed that in East Godavari only one per cent of the respondents occupied an area of less than one acre, and the same distribution in Khammam is 2 per cent who held less than two acres. Those who encroached forestland were more in Khammam as compared to the other two districts. The above analysis showed that though nearly two-thirds of the respondents owned cultivable land pursued agricultural activities, many of them do not have valid title of the land possessed by them.

Dependency on Forest Resources

In the study area, many marginal and small farmers, including landless tribals are unable to sustain their livelihoods for more than six months particularly after rain as they rely mostly on rainfed agriculture. During lean season forest resources are serving as a source of subsistence. Therefore, after the rainy season they depend heavily on fruits, vegetables, roots, tubers, flowers, fish, birds etc. Similarly, other forest items like forest wood is collected for firewood and for making shelter and other essential household items like furniture, agricultural and hunting implements. Dependency on MFP, fruits, medical plants and herbs is very high particularly in West Godavari followed by East Godavari and Khammam. More than three-fourths of the respondents in Khammam and one-third of the respondents

in East Godavari depend on forest for grazing and the proportion of those in West Godavari was very small. Most of the respondents in East Godavari and West Godavari reported that they do not hunt animals or birds in the forest while the practice of hunting of animals and birds is still prevalent among some of the respondents in Khammam. Dependency on fish in the streams available in the forest was reported by some of the respondents in East Godavari and Khammam. The above description showed that dependency of tribal respondents on forest resources for their sustainable livelihood is very high in all the study areas.

Problems Encountered in the Villages

Apart from lack of basic services and facilities, these villages are affected by natural calamities like flood, cyclone etc. invariably every year. Respondents informed about huge loss that they incurred in floods almost every year. On certain occasions, flood washed away their dwellings, damaged their standing crops, trees, plantations, cattle, etc. Therefore, information was collected from the respondents about the loss they incurred to their physical properties during the last three years (2003- 2006). Those respondents who were victims of flood constituted 81 per cent in East Godavari, 97 per cent in West Godavari and 89 per cent in Khammam. In East Godavari, altogether 34 per cent of the respondents reported loss of property in the floods during the period under reference with a total loss of ₹ 2,40,000 indicating average loss of ₹ 7,059 per head. In the case of West Godavari, 80 per cent of the respondents reported loss due to damage of their houses in the flood during the period. The cumulative and average loss stood at ₹ 5,90,000, and ₹ 7,375, respectively. In Khammam, data showed that floods damaged houses of 67 per cent of the respondents and the cumulative loss incurred by them amounted to ₹ 3,30,000 indicating an average of ₹ 4,925 per head. Of the total sample respondents, 60 per cent of the

respondents' shelter was affected and the cumulative loss incurred by them during the period amounted to of ₹ 11,60,000, which comes to ₹ 6,409 per head.

Those who were affected by crop loss constituted 65 per cent of the respondents in the study areas and the cumulative loss incurred amounted to ₹ 22,02,000 indicating an average loss of ₹ 13,190 per head. The extent of loss of crop was reported more in Khammam where 78 per cent got affected by flood, while the same distribution was 37 per cent in East Godavari and 52 per cent in West Godavari. The total loss incurred in East Godavari and West Godavari stood, respectively at ₹ 6,08,700 and ₹ 8,55,000 with an average of ₹ 18,451 and ₹ 16,442, while in Khammam, the same amounted to ₹ 7,39,100 and the average loss was ₹ 9,476 per head. Information in respect of value of cattle lost in the flood showed that at the aggregate sample only 24 per cent of them reported to the tune of ₹ 1,74,000 indicating an average value of ₹ 7,250 per head. More loss was reported in East Godavari due to the death of cattle. At the same time less number of respondents reported loss of trees and plantations in the study area. The above information showed that the respondents were threatened by natural calamities, like flood and cyclone leading to huge loss of their physical assets.

Measures Taken for Rehabilitation of Project Affected People

Though acquisition of land is a slow process, efforts to acquire land from the project-affected families (PAF) are going on. In East Godavari an area of 645 acres is to be acquired out of which all the area have been acquired from the tribals. While in West Godavari the area of land to be acquired from the tribals amounted to 667.85 acres. Out of this, an area of 253.16 acres have already been acquired, whereas in the case of Khammam land acquisition is yet to take off due to the

resistance exerted by the project-affected families. As a result of this, although an area of 5370 acres have been earmarked for acquisition, so far no land was acquired from them. In West Godavari, land in three villages has been acquired, but compensation has not been paid yet. In the district of Khammam three locations in three different mandals were selected for rehabilitation of PAF in model colonies. But so far not a single family occupied the houses constructed at the new settlement. Similarly, the compensatory land for distribution among the outstees has been identified. In the course of interaction with some of the respondents who have seen the land identified for distribution among the outstees informed that they were not happy with the location and quality of land. They commented that the land is located very far from their original habitat and not at all fertile, as such not suitable for cultivation. To make it suitable for cultivation, the land need to be developed which require heavy investment.

Model colonies were under construction to rehabilitate the project-affected families. Pedda Bhimpally colony is one such housing complex constructed to rehabilitate them. In this complex 194 houses were constructed. A public function was organised on 2 October, 2006, and keys of the houses were distributed to the affected families. In this colony, there are two types of houses, the first category is for a single occupant with single room with one door costing ₹ 40,000 and the other consists of two rooms with two doors and two windows which costs ₹ 80,000. Each house is provided with a toilet cum bathroom. The following facilities are also made available to the residents within the complex which include primary school, anganwadi, and water supply with common taps, handpumps, overhead tank with a capacity of 40,000 liters, open drainage system, a community hall, and playground and a shopping complex and temple under construction. When the study

was conducted, 50 families were partially shifted retaining their old houses in the village to cultivate their fields. Interaction with some of the oustees showed that they are not happy with the newly constructed houses in terms of its design and facilities. However, youth showed satisfaction with the new facilities and surroundings.

Impoverishment Risks in Displacement and Rehabilitation

The tribes covered in this study are a well knit cohesive group. All of them live in Scheduled Areas where they enjoy several rights and privileges. Due to the persuasion and assurance given by the project officials, some of them partially shifted to the new colonies constructed for the rehabilitation of the affected people. Others are undecided or not ready to shift to the new settlement. For those who are reluctant to move out and at the same time making the proposed shifting inevitable are likely to face lots of mental worries like tension, anxiety and insecurity. In the event of involuntary or forced resettlement they will face a variety of socio-economic problems leading to their impoverishment. In the light of the data presented in the earlier part of this paper, let us highlight some of them in brief.

Customary Rights and Privileges

All the tribes affected by the project reside in the Scheduled Areas. Scheduled Areas are created based on provision made under the Article 244 and the Fifth Schedule of the Constitution. Such areas have special rights and the governor of the respective states have powers to make regulations for better governance and for protecting the traditional rights of tribal communities. The introduction of Panchayat Extension of Scheduled Areas Act (PESA) in the Scheduled Areas further strengthens the benefits extended to the tribes residing in these areas. It provides in

principle control over natural resources and recognises the traditional rights of tribal communities over the natural resources. Further, according to PESA directives, gram sabha should be consulted before making the acquisition of land in the scheduled areas for development projects and before resettling persons affected by such projects in the Scheduled Area. Thus, the power of tribal community in the Fifth Schedule Areas has implication not only for livelihood but it is equally relevant to the socio-cultural life of the inhabitants. But in the R&R package there is no guarantee that they will be rehabilitated in the Scheduled Areas. If this does not happen, then with the moving out of the Scheduled Areas they will be deprived of special rights, like land transfer regulation, including certain protective measures.

Land Alienation

The tribal groups covered in this study are basically peasants sustaining their livelihood by undertaking cultivation. Traditionally most of them resorted to shifting cultivation but now take up settled cultivation as well. Landholding data showed the extent of land alienation as so severe both in East Godavari and West Godavari districts that nearly half of the respondents are landless and eke out a living by engaging in wage labour and other means. However, the situation of landholding among the respondents in Khammam is relatively better where three-fourths of them still hold agricultural land.

The land cultivated by the respondents belongs to private land and Government land. Data showed that some of those who cultivated private land do not have any valid pattas. Though the number of respondents cultivating irrigated land is small, among them, nearly half of them do not have valid land titles. Those who have encroached forestland for cultivation was reported in Khammam, and in the same district few cases of those who

occupied *poramboku* land for cultivation also was reported. In the event of shifting, those who do not have valid land title particularly in respect of private land may be deprived of compensatory land. Similarly, those tribals who have been cultivating forest and *poramboku* land for quite some time may also be deprived of their compensation under the R&R package, as the Government had not given them any valid patta to their land that they have been cultivating for generations. Such a situation may lead to further marginalisation of the tribes.

In the RR package there is a provision for providing land to land compensation to the affected tribal households. But the land identified for distribution is very far from the present settlements. Moreover, the quality of land is also very poor. To make it fertile and suitable for cultivation requires additional investment of money which is not earmarked in the R&R package. If they are resettled in the new area and make them cultivate in the land given to them using the traditional method without either developing the land or by using any modern technology may end them up in further pauperisation. Therefore, the above aspects need to be taken into consideration and the displaced should be rehabilitated in the command area ensuring that they get benefits from the project by availing of irrigation facilities.

Livelihood Security

Although cultivation and wage labour are the main vocations of the people, the main source of income is derived from forest. Forest resources serve as a major source of livelihood and employment for them. Dependency on forest resources for making agriculture on forest wood for making shelter, agricultural implements, household furniture and firewood is very common in all the study areas. A variety of MFP is gathered from the forest and

marketed that provide financial support to them during lean season. Similarly, they collect a variety of food items like fruits, roots, tubers vegetables etc. that support their daily life. Once evicted from the present locality they will be deprived of forest resources that they depend on heavily for their very existence and survival. Any amount of money will not compensate for the loss that they may incur if they are shifted from their original settlement. In the event of shifting, majority of the respondents in Khammam wanted to continue the same old occupation, while those who are landless agreed to take up new vocation. For such people there is a need to identify appropriate income generating programme by providing adequate training

Conclusion and Suggestions

The paper examines the nature and magnitude of socio-economic impoverishment risks of project-affected people due to loss and deprivations undergone by them in the event of their displacement and rehabilitation from their original habitat under the multi-purpose Polavaram project in Andhra Pradesh. Most of the project-affected families belong to tribals and for them land and forest are very essential for their bare minimum sustenance. Although cultivation and wage labour are the major vocations of the respondents, the major source of income in all the study areas is derived from the forest resources. In Khammam, nearly three-fourths of cultivated land in the affected area is owned by the tribals. Similarly, most of the encroached forestland and *poramboku* land are held by tribals in Khammam where they take up cultivation. As a result of this, resistance against the project in Khammam is very strong as compared to East Godavari and West Godavari. Due to these reasons acquisition of land for the project and implementation of R&R package is slow in Khammam as compared to the other districts.

The tribes affected by the project are very vulnerable and reside mostly near the forest and adjoining hilly tracks. Their life and culture and day-to-day activities are closely linked to forests. Historically, they enjoy certain traditional rights over the forest resources. They also enjoy special privileges and rights as they live in the Scheduled Areas. But they may lose all these privileges with their displacement from the original settlement. There is also no guarantee that they will be shifted to Scheduled Areas so that they can continue to enjoy the same rights and privileges. Since the kith and kin of the tribal families are confined to certain geographic areas and as such their displacement to a new and alien environment negatively affects their social life. For these tribes any amount of money as compensation will not bring back their traditional environment where they enjoy their traditional moorings and culture. Uprooting from their original habitat without ensuring and creating similar environment leads to their socio-economic impoverishment. In addition, involuntary resettlement is also giving them psychological problems like mental worries, trauma, anxiety, tension and insecurity.

In the study area, it was found that most of the affected people are living in inaccessible villages located in remote areas. Some of the villages even lack minimum basic services and facilities. However, the newly constructed colonies with most of the basic services and facilities are not necessarily acting as a pull factor for the people to come and occupy. In the original settlement although they lack most of these facilities they lead a contented life with whatever resources they have. Similarly, it was reported that most of the villages are affected by floods and they incur huge loss in physical property like houses, crops, plantations and trees invariably every year. The recurring floods and the huge loss that followed do not compel them to move

to safer places. Particularly, those who possessed land and not ready to shift from their original settlements were ready to face the nature's fury and associated huge financial loss. Therefore, either lack of basic services and facilities in the village or the huge loss that they incur in the flood is not necessarily acting as a push factor for them to leave their original habitat. Leaving aside the tribals who agreed to shift due to deprivation of their land and poor economic condition, others, by and large, expressed their emotional attachment to forest and land and want to stay back in their old habitat where they thrived and survived for several generations. The following are some of the important recommendations that emerged from the study.

- * The benefits of Polavaram project should first go to the project-affected families. Those who preferred to resettle near the command area should be given preference and provided with adequate quantity of water for irrigation.
- * Although some of the legislations have imposed certain restrictions to the tribals in respect of their free access to forest resources, the study showed that their dependency on forest for their very survival is largely intact. Therefore, caution may be taken to ensure that they were resettled in villages located very near to the forest and ensure its benefits to them.
- * Tribal villagers in the submergence area fall under Scheduled Areas notified in the V Schedule of the Constitution. Under the 73rd CAA, land can be acquired for the project in such areas with the consent of local bodies by passing resolutions to that effect. Forceful takeover of the land from the tribals amounts to violation of the V Schedule of the Constitution as it deprives them of control and ownership of natural

resources and land essential for their way of life.

- * In the study area most of the homestead land is in the name of the community. Respondents have occupied forestland, private land and some of them are cultivating the forestland. They also possessed fallow land and Government land without proper patta. If they get displaced they will get deprived of the ownership right that they enjoy now. Appropriate measures should be taken to ensure their right over land.
- * In all the three districts model colonies have come up. The older generation are particularly not happy with the house constructed for them. According to them the room is too small, no backyard space for vegetable cultivation, the plinth area provided in the toilet cum bathroom is too small and no provision

has been made to construct shed for the bovine animals owned by them. While planning of houses for the PAP, active participation of beneficiaries and their customs and cultural practices need to be taken into consideration.

- * Under the package, those who are eighteen years are eligible for an independent house. Therefore, there is a need to fix a cut-off age while deciding allotment of houses to the oustees. This is because a man who is 17 years old and being shifted and got married at an age of 18 years is not eligible for an independent house. In the tribal area they can occupy any community land and construct their own house. But in the new settlement area this is not possible. Therefore, the cut-off age for allotting independent house should be brought down from the existing 18 years.

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