

Magnitude of Displacement: Implications and Future Solutions

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Abstract

The magnitude of displacement in Orissa is a matter of deep concern as the benefits of development could not be attained by the poor and backward people despite our planned effort since independence. With the introduction of new economic reforms in 1990-91, the government of Orissa is inviting several companies to extract its natural resources for economic development of the state. But in the name of development the interests of the local inhabitants are neglected and they become worst sufferer of the development strategy followed by the government. Acquisition of land for these purposes poses a greater threat to the displaced community and alarming the situation day by day where the government is planned to develop large projects. The extraction of resource for economic development is leading to large scale development - induced displacement which has put up public resistance against forcible land acquisition by the government which has been totally neglected. The Draft—Orissa Resettlement and Rehabilitation Policy, which came into existence in the state on May 2006, as an alternative mechanism, is relatively good in many point of view, but ignores some major issues which plays a vital role for the livelihoods of millions of people. Though the policy promises several additional sops for project affected families, but the activists quoted it, 'as a mere public relations exercise of the government'. Therefore, an appropriate, adequate and effective policy measures for the resettlement of displaced inhabitants in the project affected area is the need of the hour.

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Introduction

Every year the lives and livelihood of more than 10 million people across the globe are affected by forced displacement by the way of so called development and it is more rampant in case of backward and developing regions. Orissa is passing through a phase of industrial growth. With the commencement of the new economic policy in 1991 the situation of Orissa is gradually worsening where people have put up brave resistances against forcible land acquisition and mindless mining and industrialization at the cost of life and livelihoods of millions of people. The extraction of resource for economic development is leading to large scale of induced displacement, which becomes an emerging issues for both public and government while land acquisition. Investors perceive Orissa to have much better growth prospects than in the past and shown a keen interest to make investments in the production of steel, aluminium and ferroalloys, power and ports.

A fear of risk, a feeling of nervousness and uncertainty has gripped the minds of these people. The displacement of the poor people is subject to impoverishment and heart braking miseries. Promise of cash compensation, employment, housing, and education and health facilities has not been taken seriously for the people to be affected by the projects. Under this backdrop, the need of the hour is to analysis the consequences of past displacement scenario, the feasibility and effectiveness of government rehabilitation measures in Orissa and the growing socio-economic problems of the displaced people in the state. The study has been conducted by collecting information from various published and unpublished secondary sources of government and non-government organizations to fulfil the following specific objectives.

1. to study the socio-economic impact of the displaced persons;
2. to find out the problems of the displaced persons; and
3. to suggest policy implications based on the findings of the study.

Results and Discussion

It is true that the development gets accelerated by means of industrialization as it promotes the standard of living of the masses but at the same time this process inevitably involves displacement of large people. The problem of displacement arises when it is decided to set up a new plant or project in a habituated area either by public sector or private sector. In recent year globalization as a part of New Economic Reform (NER), welcomes the entry of foreign technology, foreign investment and foreign companies in order to enhance the development process of the state. But the problems of displacement become acute since the government policy is not attractive for the affected mass. People are emotionally so attached to their village culture, customs and professions that they are not ready to hand over their land and houses inherited from their forefathers which they have been enjoying for ages. Displaced people are not satisfied with the government compensation and the sudden social change is not acceptable by them.

The forced displacement of people for the purpose of various development projects has been going on in India for a very long time. Over the last decade, both development and its accompanying displacement have accelerated. The unprecedented growth and economic boom in recent years has had a multiplier effect on the development activities which aggravated the situation. The magnitude of displacement also shows increasing trend in India in general and more particular in the state. Among the development induced displacement, the hydro-projects top the list, by mines, and others. Magnitude of displacement and acquisition of land due to establishment of some industrial projects in Orissa is reflected in the Tables-1 and 2.

Table 1: Magnitude of displacement in 1995

Types of projects	Displaced persons	
	Number of displaced persons	% to total
Hydro-electric multipurpose	3,25,000	59.44
Industrial	71,794	13.13
Mining and others	1,00,000	18.29
Sanctuary	50,000	9.14
Total	5,46,790	100.00

Source: Orissa Economic Journal, 2008

Table 2: Magnitude of rehabilitation in 1995

Types of projects	Total displaced	Total Rehabilitated	Percentage of Rehabilitation
Hydro-electric multipurpose	3,25,000	90,000	27.69
Industrial	71,794	27,000	38.03
Mining and others	1,00,000	60,000	60.00
Sanctuary	50,000	15,540	31.08
Total	5,46,790	1,92,840	35.27

Source: Orissa Economic Journal, 2008

It has been observed in Tables -1 and 2 that the percentages of rehabilitated persons are very much negligible in comparison to that of total displaced person. It also reveals that the number of people displaced is the highest in case of hydro-electric project followed by mining and industry (Table-1). The introduction of new economic policy since 1991, the domestic private sector and multinationals have assumed the role of industrializing the state mainly through the mineral based industries rather than through any value additive industries. Sociologist has identified eight interlinked potential risks intrinsic to displacement. These are landlessness, joblessness, homelessness, marginalization, food insecurity, increased morbidity and mortality, loss of access to common property and social disintegration (Carenea, 1988).

Orissa is one of the backward states in the country despite its abundance resources. In the post independence period lots of projects have been constructed in different parts of the state but this have raised the issues of displacement, resettlement and rehabilitation. The plight of the displaced persons (22,144 families) of the *Hirakud Dam* constructed in 1948 has been aptly brought out some problems. Regarding their compensation of the age old habitation which includes agriculture land, house, trees, well, were neither paid properly nor satisfactory. In many villages compensation for trees, tanks, houses and land was not paid at all. The compensation was given to the persons against the title of holdings. Similarly in case of IDA funded *Salandi* irrigation projects disadvantageous location of the colony and inadequate supply of amenities and means of livelihood made the occupants disenchanted. In *Rourkela Steel Plant*, the money that was received by the displaced persons was mostly spent on alcohol and rest on food and clothing. So the displaced persons were pushed into an atmosphere of uncertainty. This project has not provided large employment opportunities, caused heavy immigration of people from other parts of the state. The construction of *Rengali Dam Project* in the early seventies had untold story.

Development induced displacement are also seen in IB valley, most of the inhabitants of the valley are the displaced people of the *Hirakud dam* projects during 1950s. They have not been provided with the permanent *pattas* of the land on which they have settled. In 1985 Orissa power generation corporation (OPGC) that came up with a thermal power plants acquiring 1100 acres of land, has displaced many families. Displaced families due to thermal plants were settled in IB valley area. For the third time these people have been displaced by the coal mining of MCL in 2000. Thus the many persons of the area have become destitute due to displacement times and again for various development projects. NALCO had displaced 4044 person out of which land displaced person was 34. Substantially affected persons were 1381 and less affected person were 2629. Out of which 57 were rehabilitated either directly by the company or indirectly by the contractor.

Rapid industrialization leading to urbanization, exploitation of mineral wealth, depletion and denudation of forest and natural resources and the abode of the aboriginals not only creates hardship for the displaced tribal but also disturbs their former way of life. It has serious consequence on the employment, income and standard of living of these poor people. There production systems are dismantled, community structure and social network are weakened, traditional authority and the individual social contract and economic dependencies among family and kinship group are ruptured. A great tension is created regarding loss of agricultural land, home, employment and future course of action. Rapid industrialization displaces these persons by making them homeless, jobless and destitute. They pass through uncertainties struggling for their own existence.

The question of rehabilitation arises when People of the project area are not satisfied with the package or compensation given to them by the government or company concerned. Sudden social change as an outcome of industrial development is not being accepted to them and ultimately they started hesitation against the decision taken by the government. It is an enigma, comes after the displacement. Thus in order to satisfy the demand of the people government has been adopted various policy measures from time to time, but various study reflects that the policy measures are neither adequate nor meets the demand of the affected people. Among several policy measures the rehabilitation policy 2006 is one among them. But the effectiveness of this policy for the project displaced people is questionable as far as the recent incident taken place in the state with the establishment of POSCO at Kalinga Nagar, Nandigram in West Bengal, and Steel Plant at Gopalpur etc. the statement of anti-displacement movement at Kalinga Nagar reflects that people are not willing to accept the type of humiliation imposed by the government on them. They opined that they were forced to accept displacement without better R&R package in the name of development, which is the actually development of MNCs and their agents.

The Draft-Orissa Resettlement and Rehabilitation Policy, which came in May 2006, is relatively good in many aspects, but evades some major issues which are bone of contention between government and people. The main provisions of the policies are::

- (1) The Policy calls for preparation of Social Impact Assessment (SIA) report and Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) report by the Requiring Body for all projects.
- (2) Wherever there is large-scale displacement, the Policy provides that the State government shall appoint the Administrator for Resettlement and Rehabilitation, who is an officer not below the rank of District Collector, to oversee the resettlement and rehabilitation plan.
- (3) The Commissioner and the Administrator for Resettlement and Rehabilitation are not independent of the State control. They have been empowered to “take all measures for the resettlement and rehabilitation of the affected families” but are “subject to the superintendence, directions and control of the appropriate authority”.
- (4) Under sub-clause 4th of Clause 6.4, only those project affected families who are/were having possession of forest lands prior to the 25th October, 1980 will be included in the survey of the Administrator for Resettlement and Rehabilitation.
- (5) According to the definition of “affected family” as provided in sub-clause (s) of Clause 3.1 of chapter III, the affected family, among others, must have been “residing continuously for a period of not less than three years preceding the date of declaration of the affected zone.
- (6) The Resettlement and Rehabilitation Committee to monitor and review the progress of implementation of resettlement and rehabilitation schemes is constituted by the State Government under the chairmanship of the Administrator of R&R. But the Committee is not independent of the State government, as the State government prescribes the rules and procedures of the Committee.
- (7) Draft National Rehabilitation Policy 2006 (NPR) in its preamble recognizes psychological and socio-cultural consequences on the displaced populations which calls for affirmative State action for protecting their rights, the need for “the active participation of affected persons”, “Social Impact Assessment”, “Environmental Impact Assessment”, “the desirability and justifiability of each project”, “Tribal Development Plan” etc.

But it has been under debate and unsatisfactory in many ways. The entire policy is non-participatory and more powers lies in the hands of bureaucracy. In this regard, it would be appropriate to take the following steps to address the displacement issues and improve the situation.

Suggestions

1. Minimal displacement is desirable at the cost of development. If displacement is unavoidable, then it should be voluntary rather than forcible. Again it must be adequately compensated timely.
2. The people likely to be affected must be get full information regarding the desirability of such project and the rationality of proposed displacement.
3. Land acquisition in the project area must be humane and equitable.
4. There should be provision of “part land and part cash grant”. Alternatively if the displaced family refused such allotment and wanted to make its own individual arrangements for rehabilitation, the family was paid a full “rehabilitation grant”
5. In addition to this, certain other rehabilitation benefits were also provided by the project to the displaced families. Those are free transportation; transit sheds from immediate shelter and house building materials at concessional rate, and common facilities like roads, schools, electricity, community homes, grazing grounds, cremation grounds, tanks, wells, and tube wells for drinking water.
6. The middle men became active to take advantage of the ignorance of the tribal and enjoy their money. So government should show a soft corner for middle men.
7. There should be compensation of land in place of land.
8. The government must identify special economic zones (SEZ) in non-agricultural areas so that minimum loss of private land is occurred. Government must directly purchase of land from the people by the companies by negotiations.
9. Government should give emphasis on extensive plantation to avoid environmental hazards.
10. The NGOs should play promotional and developmental roles for the betterment of displaced people.

Conclusion

From the above analysis it may be concluded that the rehabilitation measures undertaken by the government is not adequate and appropriate. Though development is essential in a backward state like Orissa but it should not be done by impoverishing people. So in this context, the planners and policy makers should adopt a just and appropriate policy framework. There is also imperative need for balanced reconciliation between displacement and resettlement. While implementing the developmental projects a participatory approach to development should be initiated with the involvement of the local people which has been always neglected in the state. Forced displacement should be avoided from the humanitarian point of view. A separate strategy should be carried out for different category of people while initiating the development project in different location in the state.

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