

Development of Omkareshwar Dam and Displacement of weaker group of Society

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ABSTRACT

The concept of development is a historical legacy. In terms of economic growth, the term "development" literally denotes "improvement of societies economic standing," "enlargement of individual living prospects," and "improvement of life quality." So because concept of development appears to have taken on varied shades of meaning as well as importance over space and time, the theory of development is polymorphic. As a result, development can be defined worldwide in terms of industrial and technological advancement. Development is a type of social development that cannot be comprehended in isolation. The research of local dynamics, spontaneous processes, as well as 'informal' change processes should not be separated from the research of development actions as well as popular reactions to these efforts. Development seeks the welfare of others. In the name of development most of development agencies systematically exploit people and the environment. Development-induced displacement or loss of land results in the marginalisation and impoverishment of the people particularly of the weaker sections. The paper contends that the state must strike a balance between its efforts to promote development and those to make it sustainable, just, and equitable. The article focuses on the issues that arise in the allocation of compensation and resettlement in such projects. The Omkareshwar Dam in Madhya Pradesh, India has seen dam-induced displacement, which is used as an example.

Keywords: Displacement, Omkareshwar dam, sustainable development, Madhya Pradesh

INTRODUCTION

Development projects have led to a systematic exploitation of people and the environment. This has strengthened the power structures which ensure the flow of benefits from the periphery to the centre. The Displaced people/Project affected people (DPs/PAPs) neither get on-project jobs due to the mechanised nature of these projects nor become part of the official employment data. Development projects which displace people from their own habitat have only benefited the powerful, the high castes, and the urban population. These categories enjoy project benefits like irrigation, employment, electricity, and other infra-structural gains, and so are unable to understand the sufferings and the marginalisation of the displaced population. (Manoeuvres, n.d.)

Therefore, it is necessary to initiate dialogue between these two groups—the losers (the original owners) and the gainers. In order to question these development models and their approach to environment and the displaced population, the victims of these macro-development projects are now rejecting these models of development. They feel that they have been cheated into giving up their lands and access to natural resources for some vague national interest and for the comforts of the minority. (Morrison, 2014)

In all these projects information regarding the project and details of displacement were not shared with the people to be displaced. The projects that displaced the people have a social obligation to train those who pay the price of development. Not focusing on the displaced people's development, it is indicative of the project official's callous attitude. Non-involvement of the displaced people in the project exposes the lack of partnership and therefore, lack of development. (Oyefara & Alabi, 2016)

Displacement has been seen as a process that begins with the announcement of the project and continues long after the people have lost their land and livelihood. Such a definition not only includes the narrow concept of physical oustees from the old habitat but also a process of sincere rehabilitation. The danger is greater if the DPs are not resettled immediately after their displacement. (Randell, 2016)

When people are displaced from their homeland, their economy and social relationship and ties get affected to a great extent and the effects of such displacement on oustees population, may get reflected in the form of:-

1. Dismantling of production system;
2. Disorganization of residential settlements;
3. Loss of many jobs and assets;
4. Disruption of local markets;
5. Severance of link between producers and their customers;
6. Dislocation of informal social networks such as short-term credit, food security, etc.;
7. Disappearance of legal organization and formal and informal association; and
8. Abandonment of symbolic markets such as ancestral shrines and graves.

The above mentioned 8 facts are also found true for the studied populations. The cumulative effect of all these is impoverishment through landlessness, joblessness, homelessness, marginalization, food insecurity, loss of common property resources, increased morbidity and destruction of social fabric and local economy. It also raises legal issues. (Bandhopadhyay, 2016)

Dams: Symbols of a Modern India

After more than 300 years of British colonial rule, India gained Independence in 1947, providing the country with the opportunity to become an independent, self-sufficient and modern nation. It was believed that India

needed punarjanma (rebirth), punaruddhar (renaissance) or navnirman (radical reconstruction), with India’s past described as a heavy burden by India’s first Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru. The aim of dam construction was to provide electricity, flood control, irrigation and drinking water, with the government viewing dams as a solution to India’s history of famines and droughts. Symbolically, Nehru referred to dams as the “temples of modern India,” symbolizing the country’s independence, progressiveness, and self-sufficiency, a matter discussed in detail in subsequent sections. While the Indian Government marketed dam development as beneficial to society as a whole, Nehru believed that in order for the State to have control over India’s future development a degree of totalitarianism and authoritarianism was needed. As a result, dam projects, while advertised to benefit society as a whole, were top-down state-led development projects that were implemented and controlled at the national level. This led to the creation of a socio-economic and political environment which advertised an independent India by means of industrialization, marked by a high human-cost, such as the displacement of India’s tribal population. (Lee & Vivarelli, 2006)

Displacement due to Development of Omkareshwar Dam

In 1965, the Omkareshwar Project was envisaged as an irrigation and power dam to be built in Madhya Pradesh, India. A Comprehensive Project Report (DPR) was submitted in 1983, but because to construction delays, both the design and the budget have altered dramatically over time. Along the Narmada and Kaveri Rivers, the Omkareshwar Project region is located (a tributary of Narmada). It comprises extensive natural forest regions along the Narmada's north and south banks, and also agricultural holdings owned by the 30 villages impacted. (De, 2020)

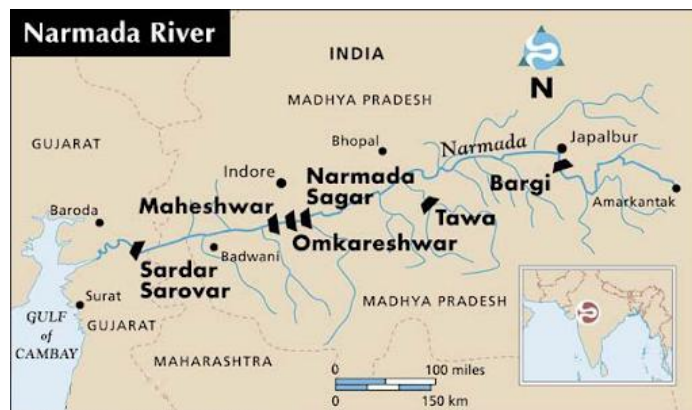


Figure 1: Narmada Landscape Restoration Project

The collecting of data is the first step in any genuine endeavour to address the effects of displacement and restore people's livelihoods. Individuals who aren't counted at the start have a slim possibility of getting rehabilitated afterwards. The Omkareshwar Project, as per the Narmada Valley Development Authority (NVDA), will impact 3024 families (around 15,120 persons from 30 villages). (Gill, 2012)

Table 1: Representing number of displaced people due to dam project

Name of Village	Population (rounded)
Ekhand	2,000
Goal	5,500
Goghalgaon	2,500
Indhawadi	2,500
Kamankheda	1,500
Karoli	1,200
Kelwa Buzurg	1,400
Paladi	1,300
Saktapur	1,350
Sukwa	1,000
Toki	1,500
Panthiaji	350
Total:	22,100

The unavailability of reliable surveys on the amount of submergence at FRL and MWL, as well as the planning authorities' incompetence, make it tough to identify a fair estimate of the number of people who would lose their lands or homes as a result of this project. Furthermore, such estimations must account for the people who will be displaced as a result of the canals after the irrigation portion of the project is completed. These people have the same right to resettlement as those in the submergence area under the Madhya Pradesh Resettlement Policy. As a matter of fact, the Environment Ministry of India has made the provision of land to canal-affected people one of the conditions for the project's environmental clearance, with a time-bound plan to be submitted by December 1993. (Dinda, 2016)

Another prerequisite for the restoration of peoples' livelihoods is a detailed resettlement plan that is developed in collaboration with the affected communities. To date, no resettlement plan exists for the Omkareshwar Project, thus making it unlikely that even the 15,120 people who are officially acknowledged as project-affected, will have their livelihoods restored. (Randford et al., 2015)

LITERATURE REVIEW

The current reviewed literature for the present study emphasized on various issues and concerns of impact caused by large number of ongoing development projects. Some studies focus on the full displacement, relocation, and rehabilitation process. The majority of the works concentrated on gaining a better grasp of impact assessment and discussing it in a wider context. Some authors looked at the relationship between social impact assessment and planning and policymaking, as well as the major concerns and debates in the field of social and environmental impact evaluation. Furthermore, few studies in the field of social impact assessment cover a wide variety of problem-solving approaches in both development actions as well as research methods.

(Srinivas & Nayak, 2018) The concept of development is a historical legacy. Because the concept of development appears to have taken on varied shades of meaning and significance over time and space, the theory of development is polymorphic. As a result, development is defined globally in terms of industrial and technological advancement. Development is a type of social development that cannot be comprehended in isolation. The research of local dynamics, endogenous processes, as well as 'informal' change processes should

not be separated from the research of development actions as well as popular reactions to these efforts. Development is concerned with the well-being of others. Most development agencies systematically abuse people and the environment in the name of development. People, especially the weaker portions, are marginalized and impoverished as a result of development-induced displacement or land loss. The purpose of this article was to draw attention to the concerns of displacement, dispossession, and poverty caused by the NALCO Company in Odisha's Koraput area.

(Long & Sabates-wheeler, 2017) This article examines how social protection is framed in connection to forcibly displaced populations (refugees, asylum seekers, and internally displaced persons) and low-wage workers. As per the definition of social safeguards, any public or private initiative that provides income or consumption flows to the poor, protects the vulnerable from livelihood risks, and promotes social rights and privileges of the marginalized; with the overall objective of lowering the social and economic vulnerability of poor, vulnerable, and marginalized groups. This concept contains a focus on economic welfare, which is common in traditional definitions of social protection, but it also acknowledges the interconnectedness of economic, social, as well as political causes of vulnerability.

(Morrison, 2014) As the world's attention is drawn to massive dam projects around Asia, it's worth emphasizing that disputes over the politics of dams and the environmental effects they produce in India are nothing new. Floods triggered by catastrophic dam failure, higher water tables, high expenses and low returns—all of these issues, and more, can be considered in the context of reservoir projects that are ten, one hundred, or even a thousand years old. The author of this paper identifies some of the important challenges in the political ecology of current dam projects and shows how these same issues have played out in southern India over the last thousand years, implying that historical focus to the political and cultural sense of reservoir construction may help us to understand some aspects of modern conflicts.

(Quetulio-navarra et al., 2013) Social capital is frequently used to compensate for a lack of other forms of capital among the poor. The social capital approach has been employed in analysing the adaptation as well as integration of involuntarily displaced individuals into their new environment due to its high known applicability and link with the various characteristics of poverty. The outcomes of studies that looked at the role of the social capital in conflict as well as development-induced displacement circumstances are reviewed in this study. Despite the fact that both types of displacements are involuntary or forced, they vary in terms of the importance of social capital in terms of its primary sources, formation pattern, and drivers. The number of social capital research on forced relocation appears to be minimal, and they are mostly focused on first-world nations and conflict- and development-related displacements. Similar research in developing nations and in the framework of disaster-induced relocation, the third type of involuntary displacement, should yield fresh and relevant insights about the importance of social capital in resettlement communities.

(Secretariat, 2013) To achieve quick economic expansion, India has invested in industrial projects, dams, roads, mines, power plants, and new towns. This has been greatly enhanced by extensive land purchase and subsequent population displacement. Among all Internally Displaced Populations, Development Displacement Population is

the single greatest category (IDPs). Over the last 50 years, over 50 million people in India have been displaced as a result of development projects. Dams (16.4 million IDPs), mines (2.55 million), industrial development (1.25 million), as well as wildlife sanctuaries as well as national parks are among the 21.3 million development-induced IDPs (0.6 million).

(Buelles, 2012) This report explores how minority as well as majority interests might be reconciled in state-led development processes, using the Indian tribals impacted by the Sardar Sarovar Dam Project (SSP) as a case study. The SSP poses a threat to the livelihoods of around 100,000 people, the majority of whom are Indian tribal minorities. Landlessness, joblessness, homelessness, marginalisation, and food shortages are all risks involved with development-induced displacement, and the SSP makes tribals more vulnerable to them. When looking at the SSP, it becomes clear that the tribals are not receiving enough compensation, resettlement, or legal protection. This has prompted national and international discussions about human rights violations, highlighting worries about the protection of minority populations affected by state-led growth. The focus is on what it implies to be a citizen of a country in terms of legal representation and state protection, as well as how sociological groups' under-representation can result in the formation of second-class citizens. By studying the role of minority rights in state-led development strategies, the goal is to go beyond existing discussions of human rights neglect in the framework of the SSP.

(Maitra, 2009) The study investigates the dynamics of the problem of Development Induced Displacement, as well as the theoretical, legal, as well as policy matters that have stymied India's ability to implement development projects smoothly. Modern India has become entangled in a battle between the state's macro-development objectives and the unfavourable implications for the people directly affected by the project. Despite the fact that the demands of time and the logic of liberalisation policy need the continual articulation of development initiatives, it is also critical to overcome the disempowering impacts of displacement on its people. Despite recent government initiatives, formal policy declarations and regulations controlling compensation and resettlement issues have been found inadequate. The paper contends that the state must strike a balance between its efforts to promote development and those to make it sustainable, just, as well as equitable. The article focuses on the issues that arise in the allocation of compensation and resettlement in such projects. Dam-induced displacement experiences at the Sardar Sarovar Project in the Narmada River Valley Project in Gujarat, India, are emphasized as examples.

(Rangarajan et al., 2006) In the framework of India's environmental conservation challenges, the issue of human displacement and rehabilitation from wildlife areas is a recurring and essential concern. Few people will be aware of the earlier precursors of massive dislocation of local peoples during the construction of National Parks in the United States and Reserved Forests in India, both of which originate from the late nineteenth century. People who herded, harvested forest products, or cultivated land were displaced as a fundamental aspect of twentieth-century nature conservation throughout southern and eastern Africa and India, albeit the drama carried out at different times and in different ways. Displacement has frequently been accompanied by deprivation and expropriation of those who have been displaced in order to improve levels of nature

preservation. Few would disagree that sequestering land for preservation has disproportionately harmed local residents, particularly those who have been displaced.

CONCLUSION

The process of involuntary population displacements; rank among the most economic, demographic, and social pathologies; triggered by industrial and urban development. The language of “right of way”, of “footprints” for new industries, of “special economic zones (SEZs) or of “protected areas (PAs) and “exclusion zones” is now louder and more demanding than ever. All these demands result in physical and economic displacements. The physical displacement tends to displacement of knowledge; skill and techniques neither to remained useful for their habitat. The intangible displacement due to involuntary development pushes the poor to the process of pauperization.

There is no denial of the fact that if the quality of life of people is to be improved, development projects are a must but there is general consensus now that development should not be at the cost of people and their environment, while the social activists and the academicians have put the issue of R&R on the national agenda.

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