

Development versus Displacement

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ABSTRACT

“...development is not just material or economic; it has to be moral, it should be able to instill the values of equality, liberty and dignity in the people; it must provide the persons with courage to protest against injustice. His emphasis on decentralization, community based economics, self-sufficiency, handicrafts, rural development, and use of low capital intensive appropriate technology indicate his vision for a self-sufficient economy”....M. Gandhi (Young India, September 10, 1931). The path to a higher growth level is always challenging. Be it the developed countries or the developing countries, they have to foresee the opportunity cost associated with the desired growth. In today’s world both tangible and intangible assets count a lot. Economies are moving toward sustainable development approach. However, the major problem a country face is the limited availability of the natural resources, be it land, fossil fuel, minerals, etc. The challenge is how to make best use of these resources without breaking the environmental chain. As per Robert Solow, *non-renewable natural resources require a “delicate” balance between the present and future when those resources “really matter”*. After independence, India was propelled on the path of modernization. Modernization, as an ideology of national development was inspired by Soviet models of industrialization. Hence, development policy in India is inclined towards heavy industries and large scale projects. India is the second most populated country of the world as per 2011 Population Census. India occupies 3.3 million Sq Kms of land. According to land-use statics available for nearly 94% of area, approximately 1/3rd of Indian land is covered by forests and barren/uncultivable land, mountains, deserts, etc. and 2/3rd is available for agriculture, mining, industry, residential or commercial use. With the growing population pressure on land, the population density comes out to be 368 persons per sq km whereas the world average is 51 per Sq km. As every project requires land so the above fact already shows the growing problem of the “Land Scarcity” in India.

Key Words : Inclusive development, Displacement, Institution, Justice

INTRODUCTION

Development induced Displacement:

Meaning:

One can define the Development induced Displacement as the forcing of communities and individuals out of their homes, often also their homeland, for the purposes of economic development (Pablo Bose).

Since 2001, India has tried to follow the policy of East Asian Tigers. This requires, labour intensive manufacturing sector along with huge investment in infrastructure and core sectors. India has come up with

projects such as Extension of natural resources, Development of infrastructure (highways, dams, bridges, etc.), Construction of Industrial parks or Urban renewal. One can easily extract the possible benefits from these projects but what about those communities who get displaced. Conservation programs like wildlife re-introduction schemes, creation of games-parks and bio-diversity zones also require land expropriation that can result in huge displacement. The current, Vedanta, POSCO, Yamuna Expressway, Navi Mumbai Airport, Tata Nano, Narmada Dam construction, Hydro projects on Ganga, SEZ, Lavasa are the examples of

modernization through land acquisition.

Since last few years, the debate on Development induced Displacement has drifted toward the classic debate of *power of state* versus *individual rights*.

The idea that State can take away any property for public good is itself controversial. The question that arises is to what extent the govt. should take away an individual's property? If one's interest are served at the cost of another's, how should the government make good for the losses? These concerning issues lay the foundation for Development induced Displacement debate.

Mechanism of Displacement:

There are 3 types of Displacement:

- i) **Primary displacement:** This result with the projects being under taken for countries economic development. This displacement can be voluntary or forced, but mostly forced. Compensation is paid to the affected communities.
- ii) **Secondary Displacement:** This is caused by migration. This happens because the victims face food problem, employment, violence, no proper residence, and cultural break down. Hence they move out for jobs, and safety.
- iii) **Tertiary Displacement:** Under the rehabilitation program, some of the tribal community face problem in adjustment. This leads to tertiary displacement

Consequences of Displacement:

It has been long clear that, those displaced or resettled by the development projects have not usually benefited from the process. Instead they are just left impecunious; losing cultural, social and economic resources. Displacement has led to many social problems. The number of people being displaced is high and the losses, to their community as well as to the coming generation is tremendously large. According to Fernandes (1998), the number of people displaced between 1951-2001 is 21.3 million. He further states that more than 40% of displaced people are of tribal community and rural folk. According to the Central Water Commission, over 3,300 dams have been built since independence and some 1,000 are under construction. Another study of 54 large dams done by the Indian Institute of Public Administration concludes that the average number of people displaced by a large dam is 44,182. The victims

of displacements are the marginal and poor sections. As per the estimate, 40% of those displaced in 1951-1990 period were tribal and another 20% were dalits (Sajal Nag, 2001).

Moreover, there is gargantuan loss to the rural (tribal) people. These are:

- i) **Landlessness:** expropriation of land breaks the foundation of people's productive systems, commercial activities and livelihoods.
- ii) **Joblessness:** There is very high probability of losing jobs both in urban and rural areas who were earlier employed either in services or in agriculture.
- iii) **Homelessness:** Many community losses their accommodation. Even though there is provision of houses but past experience tells something else.
- iv) **Marginalization:** When families lose economic power; they fall in the trap of poverty. Many fail to use their skills thus the country loses the invested human capital.
- v) **Food insecurity:** If cultivable land is undertaken for govt. /private projects the food production is affected. Even, those displaced people get prone to chronic undernourishment.
- vi) **Forced Migration:** The displaced families are forced to leave their native land and move towards near place. This induces social stress as they don't have any other source of livelihood.
- vii) **Loss of purchasing power:** For the poor, losing their land make them loose their purchasing power as there is fall in their income level.
- viii) **Social disintegration:** Not only indigenous culture gets saturated but the inter-trade networks, life-sustaining informal networks, get annihilated.
- ix) **Social upheaval:** The dissatisfaction or the agitation among the people leads to break down of law and order.
- x) **Women and children** are the worst sufferers. Children either falls prey to undernourishment or child labor. Women on other hand become victim of prostitution or go under sexual exploitation.
- xi) **Other risks-** ecological balance is disturbed, flora and fauna habitat gets affected, schooling

of children gets affected, etc.

Role of Institution:

In this debate, government must act as the sole regulator. Here, there is violation of an individual's right. So, the government must advocate for fundamentally sound measures which will restore the property rights of an individual.

The Land Acquisition Act (LAA) 1894 conveys full right to the Government of India to acquire land needed for public usage. Compensation is also determined on account of acquisition. Government can acquire land for "Public Purpose". However there has been misuse of the term "Public Purpose". Government has got power to acquire land for private parties for industrial development in the backward regions also. It's here where the government hoodwinks people. The Act, despite getting modified in 1967 and 1984 does not address the Rehabilitation and Resettlement of the displaced people. Apart from this, Government of India, announced the National Policy on Resettlement and Rehabilitation for Project-Affected Families (NPRR) in 2003. Later, to make NPRR more effective and to make LAA consistent with NRPP, two bills Rehabilitation and Resettlement Bill, 2007 and Land Acquisition (Amendment) Bill, 2007 were introduced in the Parliament which is still pending.

Though several amendments have been made to it, the Land Acquisition Act still fails to address processes of acquiring land for industrialization.

Though there are some alternative acquisition policy adopted by states like Haryana, Tamil Nadu but they too have weakness. The benefit would be transient if these methods were to be implemented.

Development conundrum:

Development and Displacement are two sides of the same coin. We can't go for modernization unless land is acquired. With the existing complexities in the Land Act, 2007, it has become difficult to carry on the process of industrialization. The projects are either state initiatives, or private business plans. Direct acquisition by private players is not allowed in India. So, the question of how to attract FDI or FIIs in India arises. It's not possible to neglect the rural community and leave them on their fortune. In developed nation the State's role in acquiring land is more transparent and the displaced gets appropriate compensation. So the debate becomes even

more important as the opportunity cost for having development is very high.

Solution:

To achieve sustainable growth, India needs to look for more compatible, dynamic and sound policies. This will not only bring huge investments but also allow our economy to achieve growth rate of 8-9% per annum. The existing act needs change as in-

- a) Widen the definition of "Public Purpose", *i.e.* it should include rehabilitation and resettlement aspects, transparency maintained during acquisition by government for private players.
- b) We need to dilute the assumption that the seller is willing to sell, as willingness is often a forced decision
- c) Mandatory monetary and non-monetary compensation for the families
- d) Protection of the Rights of the displaced community
- e) Jobs created should also enroll members from displaced families
- f) Education and awareness regarding economic development, among the tribal and rural folk
- g) Person who lose livelihood but not the land must also be included as project affected person (PAP)
- h) Land market should be made more competitive
- i) Due to asymmetric information, land is often devalued
- j) To establish Regulatory Authority, breaking the real estate development lobby and securing interest of small investors or shareholders.
- k) Tackle the nexus of real estate developers, corrupt politicians and their Public Private Partnership(PPP) projects, which creates black money in the economy

Conclusion:

The corrupt authorities along builders and lobbyist have manipulated the benefits generated with land acquisition in their favor. This practice has not only affected rural community but also middle class investors who dreams of having his own house. The debate of Development induced Displacement has travelled a long way without any concrete solution. The current protest in Jaitapur regarding Nuclear Plant, Noida (Real estate development), Orissa, Andhra Pradesh, Coastal area

which are being converted into SEZs, Narmada andolan, etc occurred was much intensive, which shows the level of exasperation. Acquiring the agricultural land blindly for sinister purpose and rampant industrialization has reduced the overall fertile land which is formed over hundreds of years. The purpose acquisition of land has been changed from public purposes to big industrial houses. This will definitely hamper the socio-economic stability of the country. On one hand, government promise of poverty reducing growth and on the other hand, massive development induced displacement growth cannot move parallel. Hence, the government must come up with some harmonious and progressive land-acquisition policy to take India at the higher growth trajectory.

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