

## Development Induced Displacement and Plight of Tribal Women in Kalinga Nagar, Jajpur District of Odisha

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### Abstract

Human rights are essentially the rights of people both as individuals and in groups. They are based on mankind's demand for a life in which the inherent dignity of a human being will be respected and protected. Violation of human rights in general and rights of tribal women in particular have been viewed against the canvas of basic freedoms, liberty, rules of law and the due process of law. Violation of the rights of tribal women during industrial displacement in Kalinga Nagar, Jajpur district of Odisha is immeasurable. As tribal women are intimately related with their culture and tradition, it is very difficult for them to adapt in a new environment.

**Key Words:** *Industrial Development, Displacement, Resettlement, Economic Development, Tribal Women, Gender*

### Introduction

To understand the impact of displacement and deprivation on the tribal, one has to begin by looking at their traditional social structure. The tribal society accorded a higher status to women than the caste societies (Fernandes:2009:163). There is a community ethos in the management of common property resources that encompass the natural resources such as land, forests and water resources. In the gender-based division of work, women remained in charge of the family economy and production. Due to their active part in the family related cultivation and production, tribal women are considered economic asserts. This relatively high status is symbolical by bride price that was not meant to buy a wife but was a mode of compensating the family for the loss of a worker (Fernandes & Menon:1987:72-73). It is observed that more women in tribal community means more sudden plots under possession of the family, more area under cultivation, more forest collection, more production, more earnings and better economic prosperity. Therefore tribal women are taken as equal partners of men and enjoy greater freedom in matters of selecting their mates and work, economic possession and movements (Mohanty: 2009:130-138).

Displacement and or eviction not only deprives the family of its common property resource (CPR), but also alienates the women from the source of her economic autonomy on which her relatively high social status was based. Changes in the traditional social systems also involve a transition to individual land ownership which introduces a new power relations in tribal society that formerly maintained a separation of male and female realms and roles. Even in the re-settlement colony, the tribal women rarely maintain their economic autonomy. In land-based resettlement, land is allotted in the name of individuals, invariably men. Women had decision-making power in the family and controlled its production and economy as long as the community sustained itself on CPRs. With individual 'patta' (legal entitlement) becoming the norm power is transferred to the male head of the household and from him to his son. She ceases to be a decision-maker and becomes fully dependent on men (Thekkerara:1993:30).

### **1. Resettlement Compensation and Women:**

Compensation which is a critical issue in resettlement planning, is seldom addressed satisfactorily. It has been realized by Mahapatra through survey of R&R literatures that payment of compensation is the first and foremost resources for a displacement is the first and foremost resource for a displaced family to plane its future course of life(Mahapatra:1999:54-74). The very first requirement to determine the rate of compensation is to abide by the market value of the land. In this the actual and potential use of the land also becomes relevant for assessing the tribal people face mainly arise from neglecting to compensate their losses. The tribal people have little experience of handling cash and therefore, compensation paid in cash rarely helps them in regaining their previous levels of living. It quickly slips through their fingers on drinking, wedding, ill-planned business enterprises and in other socio-cultural festivals. People also never able to get the true value for their land, as it tends to get undervalued for compensation purposes. As tribals do not possess legal titles (Patta) over common property resources the R&R policies do not recognize them as landless. Women are not considered as landless in a strict sense of the term, since the land documents are in the name of the male members of the family. This has serious implication for the giving of compensation to women and for an equal right to resettlement and rehabilitation benefits. Involuntary resettlement has a particularly adverse impact on women as they have no control over the cash compensation that is paid to the man of the family (Thangaraj: 1986:267-269). With the loss of control over the land, forest and water resources tribal women no longer take active part in the family related cultivation, production and have to loose hold over community resources. Displacement alienates the women from the source of her economic autonomy.

### **2.Forced Displacement and Tribal Women:**

Involuntary displacement is rarely achieved without the use of force but where the tribal people are involved, eviction invariably carried out in the most ruthless manner imaginable (Bhatia: 1997:82). Any sign of resistance to move always invites the severest police action and worse. In Kalinga Nagar, there was excessive use of coercive methods by the district authorities against the tribals(The Samaj:January8,2006). The sad and serious event at Kalinga Nagar took place on 2nd January, 2006 when the tribals protest against inadequate compensation for the land. This led to the loss of 13 human lives including one police officer and 12 tribals. Some local people pointed out to the researcher without disclosing their identity that some goons threatened and harass them. One elderly women informed that she had never seen police previously in her life until the incident of police atrocities on them. Lack of education and exposure make the tribals very much fearful and tribal women are more

afraid of the situation. During the period of tension and chaos the tribal women had to manage the house hold, console the fearful children and share the trauma of the male members.

### **3. Life of Tribal Women in Re-Settlement Colonies:**

Many sites developed to resettle tribal people often fail to attract them, as the availability of livelihood opportunities is a factor that is not taken fully into account in resettlement plans. The prospects of living in new settlements is not very attractive for them due to their attachment with their own soil, hamlets near the forest land. Living in clustered colony with small houses conflicts with their traditional dispersed pattern of living in a tribal village. In the re-settlement colonies due to lack of space in the living rooms, the tribal women has to adjust with other members of family and sometimes with the elder member of the family. It severely affect their privacy. They also face acute problems in transit colonies where they compelled to use community toilets. Their insecurity further is enhanced due to inadequate street lights. They were more secured in their own hamlets though some of these are situated near the forest. The law and order problems in the newly built-up industrial colony make their life isolated, insecured and to a large extent miserable.

The gender-based division of labour dictates the tribal women to play their role as care-taker of the families. They have to collect water, fuel for cooking and to prepare food for the family. They suffer most due to lack of infrastructural facilities and basic amenities of life in the settlement colonies. Due to insufficient water-posts or tube-wells, they have to wait for hours together only to collect few pots of water. They have to walk a long distance to collect fire-woods. The restricted and compact areas become unattractive due to their neglect of socio-cultural aspects of tribal life. Tribal women do not find a free land for their social and religious congregations and for their dance.

### **4. Field Data and Vulnerability of Women:**

It is evidenced from the analysis of the field data collected from the household survey of the oustee families of the Kalinga Nagar Industrial Complex through a random sampling that majority of the women belonging to Schedule Tribe and others are Schedule Caste and some of them belongs to General Caste. However, when the educational level of persons in the oustee households is analyzed, it indeed gives a discouraging picture of the quality of human capital which indicates socio-economic vulnerability and susceptibility to poverty and livelihood insecurity of the oustees. It has been found that around 85 per cent of the tribal women excluding 0-6 age group population are illiterate. Moreover, those who are literate are only literates from the official record with less than 10 years of formal school education. Most of them only can write their names. Among the oustee families very rarely women have been qualified upto graduation degree. It is because of the low level of education, very few among the earning members of the oustee families at present get employed in the formal and organized sector economic activities. Most of the women are employed as class IV group employees in the industries. In the other hand they are deprived of the agricultural products. Their land in rehabilitated areas is too small to cultivate any crops as result of which for all such families agriculture is no longer a major source of livelihood. Some other people do small and micro business and others have taken up self-employed type informal sector services such selling formatted country liquor(Handia), collection of minor forest products like honey, kendu leaves etc.

It is because of unsecured and informal nature of employment the tribal women of Kalinga Nagar Industrial Complex live a very miserable life. The majority have, virtually become landless. The younger generation lack necessary technical and vocational education to earn their living by entering into government or private jobs. They have become ecological refugees in the grafted steel city set up in their own homeland. It is also reported that many women from the remote resettlement colonies like Gobaraghati, Trijanga, Sansailo etc, seasonally migrate to other places to work there as unskilled and semiskilled workers on contract and indentured basis. Some of the tribal women of the Kalinga Nagar area now earn their living by doing casual wage work in other small scale industries and businesses establishments of the nearby town Jajpur Road. Many work as construction workers, and the majority are unskilled and semiskilled labourers. As a result, the majority of them do not have the minimum living standard.

### **5. Life after Displacement:**

Displacing the tribal people from their homeland the government and company authorities heave a sigh of relief that the displacement work is over and they would get a better chance to construct industries in this locality. But the real suffering comes to the life of displaced people in general and women in particular in the rehabilitation colonies. With a limited locality they have to adjust forever which is against their way of life. Generally tribal people prefers to moves freely in a large peripheral and lead their livelihood. But in rehabilitation colony they became exhausted with the so called modern confined and limited way of life.

It is claimed that among all the oustees of development projects in India, the displaced persons of Kalinga Nagar Industrial Complex were given one of the best R & R package. The displaced families were provided with land-based and job-based rehabilitation in order to sustain their living in the changed socio-economic ambience of the region. Authorities of IDCO, Jajpur district plead that people of this locality were motivated to sacrifice their hearth and home, after getting the R & R package. The oustees are assured that after setting up of public sector as well as private sector steel plants, the economic benefits of the local population in terms of industrial jobs and higher level of earning will be available to the affected local people in future. However, the local people claim that, authorities evacuated many of the displaced families without their consent. It has proved and justified the hypotheses numbers '6' and '8' here that, lack of participatory approach and coercive action by the district administration from the beginning of the project has created an environment which is not conducive for a cordial relationship between project authorities and affected people. After displacement, the families are sent to the transit camp, where they face problems due to lack of the availability of the basic needs. People were asked to move Gobarghati Transit camp and Trijanga transit camp, which is nearly 7 km away from the site. At that time, the site chosen for resettlement of the displaced people of Neelachal Ispat Nigam Ltd, and Mid-East Integrated Steel Ltd., JSL Stainless Ltd. and others was highly inaccessible and located in remote areas. There was hardly any road and transport facility and land allotted to them in the resettlement sites was not suitable for agriculture. Therefore, people virtually starved or half-fed without having even potable water to drink. The innocent tribal people felt deprived and deserted in the transit camps. All the members of a family have to adjust in a single room till completion of their own houses in the rehabilitation colony. Women are particularly unable to maintain privacy within a single room as other in-laws are also sharing the same room. Most of the houses are half build due to paucity of funds. They are unable to get lone from the banks,

because most of them have no legal entitlement (Patta) over the land. The local people are spending their compensation money for the household expenditure as they are jobless and unable to work in any company due lack of skill. The land provided to them by IDCO is not enough for cultivation. There were inordinate administrative delays in ascertaining legal heirs and issuing of ID cards to the displaced persons. The displaced persons, especially those who are residing in the transit camps revealed that there has been inordinate administrative delay in releasing the resettlement and rehabilitation benefits to them by the project authorities. For example, release of the first installment of house building assistance is taking months together precise due to procedural delay and this has unnecessarily caused wastage of time and cost overrun in respect of construction of houses. Similarly, release of the maintenance allowance has taken months after evacuation of the oustees because of considerable delay in the entire draconian process. All this facts substantiates the hypothesis number '7' that, the unfulfilled commitment and broken promises by project authorities have resulted in an inordinate delay in the resettlement of the evacuated people in the colonies. Besides, there are lot of issues in which administrative delays are happening which is responsible for the growing dissatisfaction among the displaced persons staying in the transit camps and resettlement colonies.

#### **6.Observation Based Case Studies:**

While making field study, the researcher found that no tribal women come out to interact primarily due to lack of exposure or fear of dire consequences. Very few of them open their door but hesitated to share their experiences. Both financial and time constraints compelled the researcher to confine the field study within two months. Therefore data has been collected from only those women who finally agree to share their experiences of displacement and resettlement.

##### **Kamali Munda:**

Kamali Munda at the age of fifty is staying in the Gobarghati Colony. She is displaced from the village Madha Pur , Khurunty Panchayat, by Nilachal Ispat Ltd. She has lost her husband in the prime time of her life. She has only one son and two daughters. Her son is the only earning member of her family. The authorities provided compensation money and land in Gobarghati colony, which is inadequate to build a house. Now she is staying in a thatched house in her land. They are unable to maintain privacy in a single room. In her room only few utensils and certain cooking materials are found. When asked about her present state of living, she openly condemned this life and urged the authorities to settle them in the colony. She has been cut off of all relationship with her other relatives due to displacement. Moreover, she complained that the authorities are not providing food stuff as promised to them. The life in transit camp being confined, they are only remembering free tribal life of the past.

##### **Hara Jamuda:**

Thirty seven years old Hara Jamuda has been displaced from the village Chandia. At present, she is working as Group IV employee in the Gobarghati government school. She has lost her husband Ati Jamuda in the tribal agitation of 2<sup>nd</sup> January 2006. He was killed by police firing while opposing the acquisition of land for the TATA Steel. Hara is the only earning member of her family as her parents-in-laws are so old to do any work. At the same time, she has the responsibilities of two daughters and two sons. At present, she is earning Rs. 12000/- per month. It is somehow enough to maintain a simple tribal life. But she is feeling helpless with the loss of her husband. For her, life is only full of struggles

and she is deprived of communitarian tribal way of living. Now Hara does not see any future for her family and being an illiterate lady she reconciles to her fate. She does not dream, unlike others, to get a job for her son and daughter in the steel plant, nor any miracle to rescue the family from its present predicaments.

#### **Tulashi Bawea:**

Tulashi Bewea is now 65 years old. She is resettled in Trijanga colony coming from village of Bangargadia. In Bangargadia she was having a good life. She lost her husband and her only son in an accident. She has not yet received her pata of 10 decimal homestead land in the resettlement colony and leads a very miserable life in transit camp, with very few aluminum utensils and other household belongings. She feels lonely being detached from her kith and kin. She is getting only old age pension (Rs300/) per month. The living condition of Tulashi is miserable and she is compelled to lead a life in scarcity. Tualish virtually started weeping when, asked about her previous land holdings and living condition before being shifted to the Trijanga resettlement colony. This illiterate lady has been compelled to live solitary life of sufferings and destitute.

This clearly shows that in Kalinga Nagar the displaced tribals are no way satisfied in the changing environment. The oustee families provided with one regular grade IV category jobs in the different industries could lead comfortable life for sometime only. It is a fact that many among them now reside in good cement structured houses. But, majority of them feel the pinch of unsustainable living. Many of them foresee a gloomy future for their progenies as they are left with no other alternative except eking out a wage-based living from the informal sector economy of Kalinga Nagar Industrial Complex or as a contract worker of the steel plant with just one-fifth of the monthly earnings of a regular grade IV category steel plant worker. As there was no systematic plan for the resettlement and rehabilitation of oustee populations, the majority continue to languish in poverty.

It is true that in 1991, the Kalinga Nagar Industrial Complex was set up in the mineral rich backward and tribal inhabited pockets of Sukinda Block of Jajpur district with twin objectives to improve the socio-economic condition of backward people and to accelerate the pace of economic development of the country. It has broader social goals. But, the people involuntarily displaced by this economic project units could not get justice. They could not be made the prime beneficiaries of the development project. Rather, the poor and vulnerable sections among them have become development victims and they feel that they are being deprived of their sustainable and peaceful living. This naturally calls for utmost state care for the displaced and project affected people in the backward tribal areas and suitable modification of the ongoing development strategy that further marginalizes the marginalized poor.

#### **Conclusion**

Involuntary resettlement experience suggests that its impact on tribal people in general and tribal women in particular has become disastrous. Development creates both winners and losers, but it is the tribal women who invariable end up as losers in comparison with their male counterparts. In the resettlement colonies of Kalinganagar the data collected by the researcher prove that majority of the tribal women have ended with lower incomes, less work opportunities, inferior housing and less

access to the resources of the commons such as fuel-wood, worse nutrition and physical and mental health.

The state of affairs or the paradigm of rehabilitation and resettlement policy could change drastically only with the adoption of human rights approach into developmental endeavors. It would not only have effects on the structure of the economy, but also influence societal growth on the basis of equality and justice.

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