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A STUDY ON DISPLACEMENT AND REHABILITATION AT POLAVARAM PROJECT AREA IN ANDHRA PRADESH: ISSUES AND CONSTRAINTS

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ABSTRACT

The Polavaram dam is a big multi-purposes dam, located next to Polavaram town, on the Godavari River, in the West Godavari District in the Indian State of Andhra Pradesh. The government has to lay more focus on shifting of colonies and other rehabilitation and resettlement works as it wants to complete the project within a year. The progress of rehabilitation and resettlement process has been slow for the mega project. According to a report, only 3,922 project disturbed families (PDF) have been rehabilitated so far against the total of 98,818 families. Similarly, around 9,000 project affected people were only rehabilitated so far against total 1,92,259 persons (Hindu News Paper 2018).

Displacement and Rehabilitation its negative consequences so far have been addressed inadequately and Resettlement & Rehabilitation policies have been unable to avoid the impoverishment of the displaced population and restore the previous level of well-being (Cernea and Mathur 2008). An effective Resettlement & Rehabilitation programme has to approach resettlement as the management of risk and focus on livelihood reconstruction. So displacement implies an unequal redistribution of costs and benefits. While such adverse social impacts are generally unavoidable, there is great need to minimise such adverse effects and for providing alternative sites for displacement through provision of housing, infrastructure related to education, road, drinking water, electricity, hospital, etc. and also extending suitable remunerative economic rehabilitation support, thus enabling the adversely affected people to regain at least their former levels of living standards. This requires careful planning and implementation of the displacement and rehabilitation management plan with inbuilt monitoring system, both by the project managers as well as the affected lot.

The Study lays an emphasis on extent of Displacement and Rehabilitation measures taken at Polavaram Project area. This study further throws a light upon the Issues and Constraints regarding to Displacement and Rehabilitation at polavaram Project area.

Key words: Polavaram Project, Displacement and Rehabilitation, Issues

Introduction:

The Polavaram Project is located in Andhra Pradesh on the river Godavari, near Polavaram village about 34 KM upstream of Kovvur, Rajahmundry and 42 KM upstream of (Godavari Barrage) Sir Arthur Cotton Barrage, where the river emerges out of last range of the Eastern Ghats and enters the plains. The longitude and latitude of the Project site are 810-46'E and 170-13'N respectively. Polavaram will benefit all the 13 districts of A.P, directly or indirectly. The Project has been accorded national project status by the union government in 2014 (under Section-90 of A.P. Reorganization Act, 2014). Polavaram Project Authority (PPA)

was formed in Jan 2015 under Minister of Water Resources to expedite the project execution. The project is being executed by the Government of Andhra Pradesh on behalf of Govt. of India.

Profile of Indira Sagar (Polavaram) Project:

The *Indira Sagar Project* is a major multipurpose irrigation project which is under construction across the Godavari River at *Ramaiahpet* village in Polavaram Mandal, West Godavari district. The Dam is to be constructed straight across the Godavari River some 15 km north of *Rajmundhry* in East Godavari district. The dam will be constructed at a level of 150 feet (47 m). The submergence will stretch along the *Sabari* River, a tributary to Godavari, up to the borders of Orissa and Chhattisgarh. *Polavaram* is a major project on the Godavari River named after Polavaram Mandal the closest town in West Godavari district of Andhra Pradesh. Despite the lack of clearance from central government agencies and ministries, the chief minister went ahead with the foundation stone ceremony for the construction of the right main canal on November 8, 2004 and the endeavour was renamed the *Indira Sagar* Project. Polavaram has undergone change of names by four different governments over the years. "Sriramapada Sagar", "Sri Sita Sriramapada Sagar", "Polavaram" and "Godavari Srujala Sravanti" are the names that have all been used for the project. The only actual work that has been undertaken over the decades relates to the recently started canals.

The main issue concerning the project is the submergence of at least 276 villages (up to 2, 00,000 people) of which 259 villages are in Andhra Pradesh, 10 in Chhattisgarh and 7 in Orissa. A vast majority of the people belongs to Scheduled Tribes and lives along the Godavari and adjacent smaller riverbeds upstream of the barrage. As so many times it has happened in India's history of water development, people from the Scheduled Areas are being asked to give up their lands for benefiting non-tribals. Resettlement and rehabilitation report of polavaram dam was carried out in 1996 by Subba Reddy (CESS, 1996). The problem is the magnitude of human displacement and submergence due to Polavaram project. As noted earlier, the project may displace 2,00,000 people in 276 villages besides submerging 37,743 ha of land – of farmland, forests and wasteland. The livelihoods and habitation of many tribal and poor people are likely to be at risk.

National Resettlement and Rehabilitation Policy (1997):

As a result of uproaring efforts of the social researchers, social workers and activists etc. the central Govt. has planned to introduce Resettlement and Rehabilitation policy in the year 1998. Though national policy on Resettlement and Rehabilitation has been issued by Rural and Urban development Ministry of government of India in 1997, it was left without any peoples' participation and dialogue. A draft of the same is disseminated to the public for the discussion and to evolve sound and safe policy to address the emerging needs of the country. As part of it, there were round tables and discussions took place and in the general agreement central Govt. decided upon few but important aspects such as minimizing displacement, application of the terms eminent domain, public purpose, participation of the affected persons, historically advanced rights, compensation should be at replacement value not the market value, Common Property Resources and permanent income, Preventing marginalization, regional planning, rehabilitation is a right of the DPs and duty of the project implementers to the displaces (Fernandes W. , 1995). A revised form of the National policy on Resettlement and Rehabilitation has been promulgated without dialogue or interaction with the concerned one and people came to know about it from the newspaper advertisement on 26th February 2004.

National Resettlement and Rehabilitation Policy (2003):

The policy is applicable only to projects displacing 500 families in plain areas and 250 in hills. Positively speaking, the policy tried to give broad definition to Project Affected families including agricultural family, common property resource dependent and landless people, but restricted the benefits to people lived at least in the area 3 years. Moreover, rehabilitation has been recognized as a need and not as a right. Most importantly, on the one hand the policy is applicable also to those displaced ten years prior to its promulgation and on the other hand, the policy does not reduce the poverty risks, and neither accepts rehabilitation as a right nor makes it mandatory, but says if the project desires. The policy does not create an avenue for social and physical infrastructure for rehabilitation but compels the project affected families (PAF) to spend all their compensation to start their life afresh. Policy, on the one hand, has no provision to control the trend to acquire more land than required and, on the other hand, nothing is said about the prior informed consent (Fernades, 2005, p.125).

The provision for land for land subject to the availability of Govt. land in the district, and relocation site free only to BPL families which is detrimental to the development of the displaces. The policy is based on LA amended in 1984 which favours private sector. It lacks the sensitivity to the sufferings of the Displaced Persons/Project Affected Persons (DP/PAP) and found the intrinsic opening to liberalization started in the mid-1980 and formalized in 1991 a new economic policy. The policy of rehabilitation is only to ensure that displaces' struggles do not pose an obstacle to project.

Instead of responding to the need to prevent impoverishment R&R 2003 legitimizes it by giving a semblance of benefits without the social and economic infrastructure that rehabilitation requires. Public interest is to take the place of the public purpose which helped project authorities to change objectives after getting clearance. The R&R policy seems to be a bundle of confusion and contradiction. On the one hand it makes enormous promises and safeguards the interests of the oustees; on the other it continue endorsing the displacement of people even without rehabilitating them. It fails to cover policy contents, in five topics, as

suggested by World Bank; the first independent agency drafted and implemented displacement policy, on involuntary resettlement, new land settlement, induced development, indigenous people, and cultural property (Fernades, 2005). R&R policy takes PAPs for granted and they do not have any participation in the decision making process in the course of their own future. R & R policy's concept of displacement looks it as a norm and not as an exception. It fails to address the problems of culture, religion, social organization and community life.

Resettlement and Rehabilitation Policy (2007):

In order to reduce the increasing pressure against the development projects displacing millions of people the UPA Government's The Ministry of Rural Development has issued a notification on National Policy on Resettlement and Rehabilitation on 31st Oct.2007. The policy accepts the basic principle *eminent domain* to acquire private property, "leading to involuntary displacement of people depriving them of their land, livelihood and shelter, restricting their access to traditional resource base, and uprooting them from their socio-cultural environment. These have traumatic, psychological and socio- cultural consequences on the affected populations which call for protecting their rights" (Gazette of India, 2007). The policy calls for assessment of socio-economic impact (with 400 families and above in project area) on displaced people, quantification of costs and benefits that accrue to society at large, and of the desirability and justifiability of each project. But the policy fails to define what is meant by 'society at large'. The policy also fails to recognize communities and families below 400 and individuals with integrity and rights. The social impact assessment is extended to public and common properties like burial ground, water source and recognized the need of their reestablishment in the resettlement site which is not practiced in any development projects in the country in its full sense. It calls for effective monitoring and grievance redressal mechanisms but does not describe what mechanisms and how it should be monitored. The policy sets its objective as active participation of affected people in resettlement and rehabilitation practice which becomes an oasis in the desert in Indian context where the contradictory principle *eminent domain* is active. The policy treats the oustees differently; people of *enmasse* 400 above as one category and below another category in relation to social reconstruction (rearticulation) responsibility (7.22.2 & 7.22.4).

The policy directs the Resettlements and Rehabilitation administrator to make necessary administrative arrangement for the rehabilitation and resettlement of affected families but "the overall control and superintendence of the formulation, execution and monitoring of the rehabilitation and resettlement plan shall vest in the Administrator for Rehabilitation and Resettlement" (5.4) which is also contradictory to the objective of the policy active participation (2.1.b), harmonious relationship (2.1.f), and consultation with the representatives of the affected families including women and representatives of the requiring body (6.14.1).

The policy approaches the resettlement positively by rehabilitating groups or communities in groups which speeds up the social reconstruction of the social capital. The policy made a drastic improvement than previous ones by accepting resettlement and rehabilitation schemes or plans become an integral part of the cost of the project for which the land is being acquired. In earlier times the resettlement and rehabilitation cost was borne by Govt. which may be prime cause to increase the number of displaced but not resettled people on the roll. The policy directs the administrator to ensure the progress of the resettlement before the actual

displacement begins and shares the equity of the project with displacees. The policy calls for benefit sharing with the oustees and projects affected people. The guidelines directs the project authority to use the land only for specified project and if not, have to return to the persons from whom the land is acquired which seems to be impractical.

Displacement and Rehabilitation:

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 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 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).

The major component of Polavaram Project affects the houses and lands, both patta and government lands, due to submergence and construction of irrigation infrastructure and such aspects are required to be assessed as per the provisions of State Land Acquisition Act. The project displaced person are required to be resettled nearer to project National and Andhra Pradesh R & R Policy 2005. Therefore there is greater need for a detailed socio-economic survey of the affected households and identification of the households eligible for displacement and rehabilitation as per the provisions of National and Andhra Pradesh R & R Policy 2005 leading to formulation of a detailed displacement and rehabilitation action plan for the project affected families under the project.

Statement of the problem:

While the projects are the building blocks of development, the irrigation projects result in submersion of houses and house sites rendering the people homeless, besides causing loss of agricultural land affecting the overall social fabric of the affected community. While such adverse social impacts are generally unavoidable, there is great need to minimise such adverse effects and for providing alternative sites for resettlement through provision of housing, infrastructure related to education, road, drinking water, electricity, hospital, etc. and also extending suitable remunerative economic rehabilitation support, thus enabling the adversely affected people to regain at least their former levels of living standards. This requires careful planning and implementation of the resettlement and rehabilitation management plan with inbuilt monitoring system, both by the project managers as well as the affected lot.

Need and Significance of the study:

While the projects are the building blocks of development, the irrigation projects result in submersion of houses and house sites rendering the people homeless, besides causing loss of agricultural land affecting the overall social fabric of the affected community. While such adverse social impacts are generally unavoidable, there is great need to minimise such adverse effects and for providing alternative sites for resettlement through provision of housing, infrastructure related to education, road, drinking water, electricity, hospital, etc. and also extending suitable remunerative economic rehabilitation support, thus enabling the adversely affected people to regain at least their former levels of living standards. This requires careful planning and implementation of the resettlement and rehabilitation management plan with inbuilt monitoring system, both by the project managers as well as the affected lot.

They are forced to migrate from their natural habitat due to variety of reasons like group violence, riot, development projects, infrastructure development, natural disaster etc. Forcibly ousted from one's land and habitat carries with it many risk. Some of the identified interlinked potential risks intrinsic to displacement are:

- i. Landlessness.
- ii. Joblessness.
- iii. Homelessness.
- iv. Marginalization.
- v. Food Insecurity.
- vi. Increased Morbidity and Mortality.

Review of Literature:

Janaki Rao. P & Chandrakala. P 2020: in their study found that the sample of 156 polavaram project affected households are selected out of 3120. Sex-wise distribution of the heads of the households of the sample respondents reveals that overwhelming majorities of the 96.8 per cent are males and an insignificant percentage of the respondents are females. Age wise analysis of the data relating to the respondents shows that the age group of 51-60 years. The mean age of the respondents stands at 45.27 years. The data indicate that most of the respondents are middle aged i.e. 41-50 years. For the purposes of present analysis castes are divided into three categories the majority of the respondents 57.1 per cent to the ST category, while 14.1 per cent belong to SC category. Majority of the sample respondents i.e. 86.5 per cent belongs to Hindu Religion followed by Muslims, 9.7 per cent, while Christians constitute 3.8 per cent. Educational status of the respondents shows that majority of the respondents i.e. 51.3 per cent are illiterates, while 28.2 per cent of the respondents are studied up to primary level of Education and nearly 19.5 per cent of the respondents completed their secondary education. Difficulties faced by the respondents in getting compensation process 27.5 per cent

of the respondents reported that they did not get compensation in time, 12.1 per cent respondents felt they were cheated by the middle men and 9. Per cent respondents reported lawyers demand more percentage from the compensation.

The Hindu News Paper 2018: The Polavaram dam is a big multi-purposes dam, located next to Polavaram town, on the Godavari River, in the West Godavari District in the Indian State of Andhra Pradesh. The government has to lay more focus on shifting of colonies and other rehabilitation and resettlement works as it wants to complete the project within a year. The progress of rehabilitation and resettlement process has been slow for the mega project. According to a report, only 3,922 project disturbed families (PDF) have been rehabilitated so far against the total of 98,818 families. Similarly, around 9,000 project affected people were only rehabilitated so far against total 1,92,259 persons.

Trinadha Rao P. (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.

Objectives of the Study:

1. To examine the nature of displacement and rehabilitation carried by Government of Andhra Pradesh in the polavaram affected area.
2. To identify the level of awareness about the Polavaram project and the Resettlement & Rehabilitation package.
3. To recommend measures to promote rehabilitation for displaced families in study area.

Hypothesis

H1. Displacement and Rehabilitation are playing crucial role in the changing status of polavaram affected families in Andhra Pradesh.

H2. Displacement and Rehabilitation improves the quality of life for Polavaram affected families.

Methodology of the Study:

The present paper is entirely based on Secondary data collected from Government agencies reports, R&R Polavaram Website Government of Andhra Pradesh, N.G.O reports, Journals and related Books on displacement and rehabilitation of polavaram affected area.

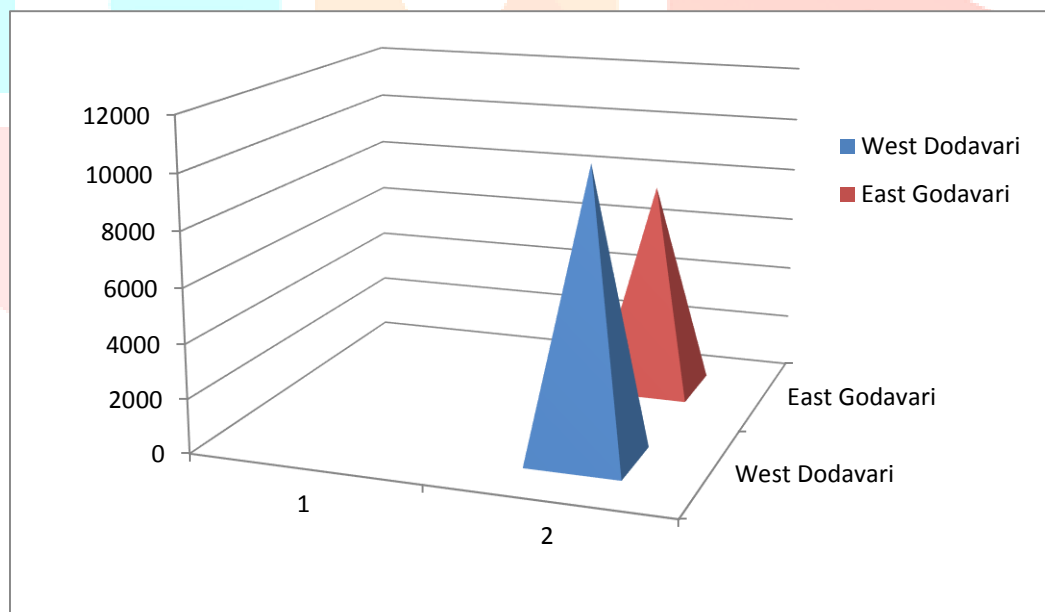
Data analyses of the study

Table No.1
Submerging Habitations of Polavaram Project Area by District Wise Project disturbed Families (PDF's)

S. No	District	Total PDF's
1	West Godavari	10429
2	East Godavari	7483

Source: R& R Polavaram Website Government Andhra Pradesh

Figure No.1
Submerging Habitations of Polavaram Project Area by District Wise Project disturbed Families (PDF's)



Source: R& R Polavaram Website Government Andhra Pradesh

Table No.1 and Figure No.1 clearly shows that submerging Habitations of the Polavaram Project area by district wise project disturbed families namely West Godavari and East Godavari. West Godavari district is having 10429 project disturbed families (PDFs) were submerging habitations whereas 7483 project disturbed families (PDFs) were submerging habitations were having East Godavari district respectively.

Table No.2
Submerging Habitations of Polavaram Project Area by Mandal Wise Project disturbed Families (PDF's)

S. No	District	Mandal	Total PDF's
1	West Godavari	Kukunooru	3024
2	West Godavari	Velerpadu	4094
3	West Godavari	Polavaram	3311
4	East Godavari	Devipatnam	5142
5	East Godavari	V.R Puram	2124
6	East Godavari	Kunavaram	217

Source: R& R Polavaram Website Government Andhra Pradesh

Table No.2 shows that the submerging Habitations of Polavaram Project area by Mandal wise project disturbed families (PDFs). West Godavari was having three mandal were having submerging habitations namely Kukunooru mandal was having 3024 project d disturbed families (PDFs), Velerpadu mandal was having 4094 project disturbed families (PDFs) and Polavaram mandal was having 3311 project disturbed families (PDFs) respectively. Whereas East Godavari district was having three mandals were submerging Habitations namely Devipatnam mandal was having 5142 project disturbed families (PDFs), V.R. Puram mandal was 2124 project disturbed families (PDFs) and Kunavaram mandal was having 217 project disturbed families (PDFs) respectively.

Table No.3
LA and R&R Status
(Work, Submergence, Land to Land R&R Colonies)

COMPONENT	TOTAL Involved		COMPLETED		BALANCE	
	Physical	Financial (Rs.In Crs)	Physical	Financial (Rs.In Crs)	Physical	Financial (Rs. In Crs)
West Godavari District						
LA (in Acres)	52459.23	3962.06	52457.87	3912.61	1.36	49.45
R&R(inPDF's)	34672	6664.52	2584	416.76	32088	6247.76
Total		10626.58		4339.37		6297.1
East Godavari District						
LA (in Acres)	106329.41	7894.9	50924.37	746.68	55405.04	7148.22
R&R(inPDF's)	70929	13953.74	1338	384.94	69591	13568.8
Total		21848.64		1131.62		20717.02
Vishakhapatnam District						
LA (in Acres)	4110.15	84.15	4073.64	72.93	36.51	11.22
R&R(inPDF's)						
Total		84.15		72.93		11.22
Krishna District						
LA (in Acres)	3524.48	666.37	3331.59	666.37	192.89	0
R&R(inPDF's)						
Total		666.37		666.37		0
Grand Total						
LA (in Acres)	166423.27	12607.48	110787.47	5398.59	55635.8	7208.89
R&R(inPDF's)	1,05,601	20,618	3,922	802	1,01,679	19,817
Total		33,225.74		6,200.29		27,025.45

Source: Water Resources Dept., Govt. of Andhra Pradesh Revised (Dt. 21 Oct 2018)

Table No. 3 clearly shows that among four districts West Godavari, East Godavari, Krishna and Vishakhapatnam Land Acquisition was involved of 166423.27 acres and financial requirement was involved Rs.12607.48 crores for entire polavaram project whereas Land Acquisition was completed for 110787.47 acres and Rs.5398.59 crores payments were completed while Land acquisition for 55635.8 crores was remained as Balance and financial payments for Rs.7208.89 to be made as balance.

It was noteworthy that 1,05,601 project disturbed families for R&R and financial payment requirement of Rs.20,618 crores was involved for the project 3,922 PDFs were provided rehabilitation and 802 crores rupees financial support was completed where as 1,01,679 PDFs to be provided rehabilitation and 19,817 crores rupees to be paid. However land Acquisition of 192.8 acres only was left for rehabilitation in Krishna district and whole financial support was completed.

Conclusion:

The study will be relevant to the society as to assess the effect of Displacement and Rehabilitation its negative consequences so far have been addressed inadequately and Resettlement & Rehabilitation policies have been unable to avoid the impoverishment of the displaced population and restore the previous level of well-being. While such adverse social impacts are generally unavoidable, there is a great need to minimise such adverse effects and for providing alternative sites for displacement through provision of housing, infrastructure related to education, road, drinking water, electricity, hospital, etc. and also extending suitable remunerative economic rehabilitation support, thus enabling the adversely affected people to regain at least their former levels of living standards.

Implications

- This study will be help to understand the aspects of Resettlement & Rehabilitation programme has to approach resettlement as the management of risk and focus on livelihood reconstruction.
- This study will also useful to society as the attitude of the displacement implies an unequal redistribution of costs and benefits.
- .The study can helps the policy makers to take effective measures for the welfare and development of Displacement and Rehabilitation plan for the project affected families at polavaram project area.
- The study may suggest overcoming the obstacle for effective implementation of Displacement and Rehabilitation package for the project affected families at polavaram project area.
- It also explores how the project affected families at polavaram project area get confidence to improve their Socio-Economic conditions, if needed it may suggests better policies for their further improvement in all aspects.

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