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SEZ, WOMEN, DISPLACEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

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INTRODUCTION: The aim of introducing SEZ in India is to spread up economic growth with a bright hope of boosting production, investment, & job opportunities, in the economy. This will be materialized only when SEZ are setup in the backward areas, especially in the barren land of backward districts. But, at any cost, SEZ must not be encouraged at the cost of hampering agriculture. Special facilities & incentives must be made available only when the SEZ are set up in the backward state & not in already developed states. A special Care must be taken in drawing a balance between the developments of economy & minimizing the social, psychological, cultural, and religious Problems.

OBJECTIVES

- 1) To through light on distractions of the displacement of population in SEZ area
- 2) To study the special problems faced by the displaced women.
- 3) To highlight the cultural displacement & related problem
- 4) To evaluate the marginal social benefits of rural farmers
- 5) To discuss the problems related to the re-settlement & re- habilitation.

KEY-CONCEPTS: SEZ, Displacement, re-settlement, re-habilitation, Marginal social benefit, Breakdown of social ties, Homelessness, etc.

METHODOLOGY: Keeping in view the time constraints, only secondary data are extensively made use. Magazines like Southern Economist, Times of India, Women's Link & Inter- net, are made use.

I) SPECIAL ECONOMIC ZONE: (SEZ): Is the 'Path of endless expansion' accepted by most of the Asian countries. SEZ can be understood as 'A geographical area which enjoys liberal economic, labour laws & other special facilities as compared with non-SEZ areas in the countries'.

India announced the policy of SEZ in April 2005 specially to attract large-scale foreign investment. The objectives of the SEZ are- to generate additional economic activity, to boost the export of goods and services, to develop infrastructure facilities, to enhance employment opportunities and to raise the standard of living, to promote investment from domestic & foreign sources, to introduce new technology, to develop backward regions by encouraging industries.

HISTORY OF SEZ: The world first known instance of SEZ was found in an industrial park setup in Puerto Rico 1947. In 1980s China made the SEZs gain substantially. India experimented with the concept of Export Processing Zones (EPZ) from 1965 onwards. SEZ act was introduced in 2005 and in 2006 SEZ rules were formulated. Advantages of SEZ to EPZ are- Its scope is much more than the scope of EPZ. SEZ encourages all kinds of activities like-manufacturing, services and trading. Further, SEZ enjoys a 5 year corporate tax holiday followed by 50% exemption for 2 more years. SEZ retain 100% foreign exchange earnings while EPZ retains only 70% of the same. SEZ are allowed duty free import and 100% FDI investment.

SEZ status: Recent statistics reveal that, there are 580 SEZs with formal approvals, 335 notified and 147 SEZs with in-principle approval. Maharashtra leads the nation with 109 approved SEZs, out of which 15 are operational. Followed by Andhra Pradesh with 102 approved SEZs and 21 operational ones which is followed by Tamilnadu, Gujarat and Karnataka. In state like Gujarat, SEZ has been successful due to port development activity & the Govt. owns waste lands, mud plots and marshes. While in Maharashtra, West Bengal and in Raigad, agricultural land is more fertile and there is an absence of multiple livelihood strategies. This has become a major cause of resistance to SEZs. The SEZ model in Goa became a sensitive issue facing opposition from environmental activists and support from local politicians. Goa govt. now announced scrapping of all the SEZs in the state.

Opportunity cost of agriculture has been increasing today due to the availability of alternative livelihoods, migration to urban sides, structural transformation due to globalization etc. This in turn, leads to boost in the opportunity cost making agriculture an economically unlivable source of livelihood. Hence the farmers are willing to sell lands for SEZs at the right offer price without any reservation. On the contrary only few small holders with agriculture as the only source of livelihood are reluctant to sell their property.

DISADVANTAGES OF SEZ:

Though the SEZ has got many advantages like it boosts the economy of the country, foreign investments, creates employment opportunities etc. It has got some of the serious disadvantages.

- The very SEZ policy is an issue of hot discussion.** It creates heavy revenue losses because of various tax exemptions and incentives. National institute of Public Finance and Policy found that the government had incur a loss of Rs .97,000 cores in tax revenue between 2005 to 2010.

- The problem of land acquisition** – Former's land has been acquired at a cheap rate resulted in making the formers with no alternative livelihood. In some areas it has evoked violence too. The other risk is acquiring huge pockets of prime agricultural land for the SEZ units. For e.g. UP government had given 25,000 acres of

land to set up a power plant which actually require only 50 acres of land. West Bengal made similar mistake in providing agricultural land to TATA small car manufacturing unit.

•**Misuse of land is another problem:** - Promoters will get land with cheap rate in the name of SEZ and will make their fortune by using it for real estate purpose. In fact they use only 25% of the land for SEZ purpose.

•**There is a strong possibilities of SEZs will aggravate regional disparity.** For instance in Thamilunadu, Karnataka, Gujarat and Maharashtra received only 49.5% share in total approvals while backward states like Bihar, North East, Jammu-Kashmir do not have a single approval.

•**Labor laws in the SEZ is another issues of debate.** The state labours Commissioner have no jurisdiction over factories in SEZs.

•**The most important problem is SEZ will divide the economy into two groups:** SEZ and NON- SEZ Economy. As a result one group enjoys all the facilities and incentives and the other will seriously suffer.

IMPACT OF SEZ ON AGRICULTURE:

1) **Threat to Livelihood:** Especially in Karnataka, the approved SEZ will come up only in seven districts. The required land for SEZ is mainly acquired from marginal and small farmers. It is estimated that, nearly 13,94,888 farmers are feared of becoming unemployed by selling their land & due to lack of skills. This will drive them to a miserable & poverty stricken situation, & finally to end up their life too.

2) **Environmental Degradation:** No doubt, that the SEZ has its impact on the environment substantially such as the water pollution, sound pollution, air pollution, etc,

3) **Threat to access to water:** SEZ would also demand huge amount of water, it makes farmers to struggle to get irrigation water. For instance, Mangalore SEZ demands more than 136 million liters a day, apart from the problem of water in Mangalore city.

4) **Threat to Food Security:** The SEZ demands cheap land from farmers in large scale. The SEZ developers make only 25% of the land acquired. The use of agricultural land threatens the food security and the livelihood of the farmers. SEZ is hence mocked as Special Eviction Zones.

5) **Why The Protest** – The beneficiaries of SEZ are only the few, Local culture and social conditions are disturbed, SEZ demands scarce land, water, power, infrastructure, etc. and there is no definite rehabilitation and resettlements. As an alternative strategy, we can go for agriculture based developmental programmes –SAZ instead of SEZ.

DISPLACEMENT: Regarding the problems of the displacement, there is no exact data available as how many families have been exactly affected by SEZ. There is no evidence for how many displaced families have been successfully managed to put back their lives on track after displacement. Experience of the concerned people reveals the fact that, the figure would not exceed 20%. The remaining 80% of the displaced families, even though they are compensated with money and probable job to one male member of the family, their condition is not up to the mark. The rest of the farmers who are displaced have become either landless laborers or have accepted menial jobs to take out a living. Some more are migrated to cities in search of livelihood, and became the victims of all kinds of exploitations. The fate is even their children are laborers in course of their life.

Lack of social support: Every development will bring in some kind of breakdown of social system. In our villages people were known for their 'living together'. They have shared their joys & sorrows for centuries and found meaning of life and living in it, are now simply uprooted when a development has come in. Once the

village gets uprooted, no society comes up and the Families that once lived together for centuries get spilled over.

Break down of the society and consequently, the social system also breaks up the age-old culture. It is said that, (Nehru) there is not a single instance where a society after being broken up due to development, has been re-created keeping the culture practiced by the villagers intact, till date. 'Development' thus has come to mean only in materialist term. In social, cultural, and in other terms, it has meant 'Deterioration'. Country, no doubt is developing by so called development project, but its rich social system, culture, and other elements are get deteriorated.

Due to displacement, the values of the community preserved by the villagers will simply get breakdown. Men folk will switch on to drinking habits to adjust with the condition. The cases of domestic violence will increase in number. They lose their traditional occupation, thus, their agriculture and family conditions are get suffered.

Homelessness: Due to displacement, this problem occurs in most of the cases. The compensation money is not enough to buy them a house in the new area where they want to settle. Hence they are forced to live in poor huts or in slums. Further, due to complete social change after the displacement, women and children have to face uncomfortable situation in the huge presence of unfamiliar men.

Poverty: The economic condition of the displaced become worst in nature due to the loss of land, loss of forest, loss of water sources ,and loss of livelihood. The displaced are thrown in to an unknown world where they have no sure livelihood. Since most of them are illiterates, they cannot find any feasible jobs in the new area. Apart from this, they have the problem of cultural and linguistic constraints too.

WOMEN: The Indian society has made lots of progress in the field of science, technology, Education, & in the field of Infrastructural development. Its corporate houses are making name among the most competent nations across the world. But people have no time to think and find about women whose families are displaced. Among the displaced, the women are the worst sufferers, who constitute more than 50% of the rural population. The fact reveals that, out of 72% of the rural population, 50% are women. Among them 35.4% are employed in different unorganized sections like,-self-employment, family business, farm, & other home industries. Apart from this, they are suffering from lack of education, skills, marketing know-how, & financial constraints.

The situation of women, whose families are displaced due to SEZ, is pathetic. It is because, they have to live in most inhuman conditions, have to adjust to a new society, people, & culture. These women become victims of physical and sexual exploitation and they live without being able to tell others. They have to care for themselves everyday making thousands of compromises which women of non-displaced family cannot even think off.

In recent years, due to the pressure of the women organizations, the govt. in its policy of rehabilitation & re-settlement incorporated the girls above 25 years old. This deprives the other girls who are above 18 years and could be given in marriage. The repeated displacement, migration and drastic change in livelihood patterns have socially and culturally denied the status of the women, increasing violence and abuse against them. It is also a reality that women have been most often alienated from the conceptions of development and their close association with their environment. At the time of large-scale displacement, the issues of women never been discussed, despite the fact that they are worst affected and further marginalized.

Problems of women due to Displacement: The contribution of more than 50% of the population is unaccounted, because they are women. She is facing innumerable problems because of her gender only. In addition to this, their problems are not taken seriously by the policy makers and the corporate leaders. They have shown utter gender insensitivity during the last couple of decades.

Breakdown of social support: Village people were known for their solidarity in social life. The problem of displacement has brought in the breakdown of the social systems. Though it affects everyone, women are the worst sufferers in this respect. They are the key players of the well-knit social system. Thus, women find meaning in life by sharing their joys & sorrows with others. Sudden breakdown of the social and the cultural systems will boost up their problems further. For village women, breakdown of a society is like life coming to an abrupt stop. Cultural disturbances will bring more harm to women because; she is the ambassador of cultural transmission from one generation to the other. Women suffer the most due to displacement and the consequential breakdown of social network. To adjust with situation, the men will surrender for drinks and other evil habits. This will affect on the women in turn, by increasing violence and abuses.

The problem of Degradation: In rehabilitation colonies, women face a number of problems which are related in bringing down her social positions. Their personal problems are less heard. They are not treated equally for jobs in the rehabilitation packages. Very often they are participating in protest movements, but their requirements are not fulfilled. The new environment will minimize their participations, and make them to remain within the four walls. When the rural families are missing their land and other assets, they become literally poor and the dignity of women will also follow the same line.

Economic impact: The displaced are thrown in to an unknown world where they have no sure livelihood. Women played an important role in the traditional type of production where she joined with the male members to toil the land and produced food. Now in another economic system after the development induced displacement, she finds herself in a total loss.

Impact on psycho- somatic health: Loss of land, loss of culture, loss of livelihood, loss of culture & loss of community life leaves behind all kinds of disasters on women. This has a direct bearing on women's' physical and mental health. Social, economic & family insecurities have affected adversely on the health & social status of women. Women are the worst and silent sufferer, the feeling of 'worthlessness' is pondering on them.

Conclusion: Self-reliance of rural women through the income generating Entrepreneurial work and the enhancement in the literacy rate is the ultimate solution for most of her problems. Self reliance of women is-the ability to achieve economic autonomy and to ensure sustainable livelihoods for themselves and their dependents. Programmes encouraging entrepreneurship among women will require a change in societal attitudes than a mere creation of additional employment opportunities for women. The govt. and the NGOs programs are playing an important role in providing employment to rural women and making them independent and self-reliant. Some such organizations are-SGSY, RUDSET, SEWA, NABARD etc. Self-reliance of rural women can be achieved the Govt. and Self Help Groups, Utilization of Govt. schemes, through the substantial growth of the Actual & Potential Rural Women Entrepreneurs.