

## IMPOVERISHMENT RISKS AND THE HUMAN COST OF INDIRA SAGAR DAM PROJECT: A CASE STUDY OF DEVARAGONDI VILLAGE IN ANDHRA PRADESH

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### Article Info

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### Abstract

Development-induced displacement is a global phenomenon with severe implications for the socio-economic rights and livelihoods of affected communities. This study examines the specific impacts of the Indira Sagar multipurpose project on the village of Devaragondi in Andhra Pradesh, India, where over two lakh people, mainly tribal communities, were displaced. The study uses anthropological tools to assess impoverishment risks, including landlessness, joblessness, homelessness, marginalization, food insecurity, and loss of access to common property resources. The study reveals that inadequate implementation of the rehabilitation and resettlement policy has exacerbated impoverishment risks for the displaced people, including loss of their traditional livelihoods and displacement from their ancestral lands. The study underscores the need for effective policy implementation and adequate compensation and support for displaced communities to mitigate impoverishment risks associated with involuntary displacement. The study highlights the vulnerability of tribal communities to displacement due to concentration of development projects in their areas.

## INTRODUCTION

Development induced displacement is a situation where people are forced to leave their homes due to development projects such as the construction of dams, industries, roads, and airports (Caroline Aboda, Frank Mugagga, Patrick Byakagaba, and Goretti Nabanoga;2019). Large dams built for hydropower, irrigation, water storage and/or flood control have led to the involuntary displacement of millions of people over the last century (Michelle Hay, Jamie Skinner and Andrew Norton; 2019).

Among development projects, large dams are the biggest agents of displacement. It is estimated that nearly 40.80 million people have been displaced worldwide due to the reservoirs created by large dams. A World Bank review of 192 projects worldwide for the period 1986 and 1993, estimated that 4 million people were displaced annually

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by 300 dams on an average large dams. In India alone, it is estimated that some 21 million to 42 million people have been displaced by dams and reservoirs. At the national level, the tribals constitute at least 55 percent of the persons displaced by development projects such as irrigation systems, hydroelectric projects, mining operations, power-generating units and mineral-based industries (Saxena, 2006).

Due to large development projects in tribal areas, millions of tribal people have been uprooted from their lands and homes. It is largely the tribal group that is paying for the development of nation. Because most of the development projects are being constructed in mountain valleys, forest and remote areas where many of the tribal groups have been living for generations together for their survival and sustenance. Many tribal pockets are crammed with natural resources such as minerals, making tribals vulnerable to displacement. A majority of the displaced people have not been properly resettled or given adequate compensation. For instance, in India 75 percent of displaced people have not been “rehabilitated” (Fernandes, Walter et al.1989; Fernandes, W, 1991). Their livelihoods have not been restored; in fact, the vast majority of development resettlers in India have become impoverished (Mahapatra, Lakshman K. 1999).

Involuntary displacement from one’s land and habitat carries with it the risk of the migrant becoming poorer than before displacement, since a significant number of migrants do not receive adequate compensation for loss of their assets nor effective assistance to re-establish them and make them productive. Cernea M. M. (1990; 2000; 2006; 2009) in his multiple studies identified some risks associated to development induced displacements including; landlessness, homelessness, joblessness, food insecurity, loss of access to common property resources, increase in diseases, social disintegration.

The major issues facing tribal communities today is the continuing process of displacement. The tribals of Andhra Pradesh have been the disproportionate victims of displacement due to so called development projects such as setting up of industrial projects, construction of dams, and mining. Development projects in Andhra Pradesh are emerging as new sources of displacement in the scheduled areas. Because of development projects as well as process of displacement many tribal communities in Andhra Pradesh are uprooted from their land resources. The previous record of AP governments on resettlement and rehabilitation is appalling. In this background, this study was conducted in the village Devaragondi of Polavaram Mandal in Andhra Pradesh to access the impoverishment risks of project affected people after their displacement due to Indira Sagar Project.

### **Study Area and Methodology**

The Indira Sagar multipurpose project, after a long wait of many decades (more than 70 years), picked momentum in 2004 when construction of the dam started. The project is aimed to provide irrigation to 2.914 lakh ha (7.20 lakh acres) area, in four districts of Andhra Pradesh, namely West Godavari, East Godavari, Visakhapatnam and Krishna. The project has the potential to generate 960 Mega Watts of Hydro-electric Power and other benefits. The Indira Sagar project comes under National River Linked Project, which ensures greater equity in the distribution of water between drought-prone and rain-fed areas by enhancing the availability of water in the former. The Indira Sagar Project (Polavaram Dam) displacing more than 2.0 lakh people, by submerging 276 villages’ predominantly tribal villages in an area of about one lakh acres including forest land.

The present study has made an attempt to access the impoverishment risks of project affected people after their displacement due to Indira Sagar Project. An ethnographic study is conducted in the newly-resettled tribal village of Devaragondi, inhabited by the Koya tribe. The study is mainly focused on post-displacement socio-economic status of the project displaced families and their present state of living by using household survey, interviews, and focuses group discussion.

The village Devaragondi is a newly established R&R colony, constructed close to the Polavaram mandal headquarters which is 2 km from the village. The village is submerged by the Polavaram dam and it is the first village as a model village shifted from the old village which was located in the dam site. The Devaragondi village is a tribal village, inhabited Koya community. The villagers shifted from the old village to new R&R colony in 2012.

The total population in the village is 316 of which males constitutes 133 and females are 183. The Devaragondi village comprises 105 households (Actually, there were 115 households including newly married households but after shifting to the new R&R colony, 11 households, who were single, died due to ill health and displacement trauma). The 105 houses are pucca houses (buildings) constructed under R&R scheme. Among the 105 households, 62 (59%) are nuclear families, 37 (35.2%) are single-woman-headed and 6 (5.7%) are single-man-headed

The primary occupation of most Koya households (95) in the newly settled village is casual wage labour both agriculture and non-agriculture works, engaged in dam construction works, agriculture and other allied works. Five households have started petty business/ self-employed and two households are settled in government jobs. The secondary occupation is agriculture. Although, the villagers have received land-to-land compensation under R&R package for their loss of agriculture land in old village, the compensation land which they received is located nearly 20 km from the newly settled village. The villagers are facing difficulties for cultivation so most of the households have given their agriculture lands on lease to local farmers. For lease, the farmers will pay Rs. 15,000 to 20,000 per acre per a year. In the village, of 58 households who received agriculture land under R&R in new location:

- 38 households have leased out their fields to the outside farmers.
- 18 households cultivate fields on their own,
- One household is not cultivating his fields because it is submerged by the right canal.

The major crops are maize, paddy, pulses and vegetables. The compensation lands which the villagers received under R&R is totally rain-fed cultivation and very recently, the farmers have received bore-wells under land development schemes but the bore-wells are not functioning due to rocky soil.

The prevailing wages in the village are:

- For agriculture work: Rs 300 to 400
- For non-agriculture work: Rs 300 to 400
- MGNREGS work: Rs 150 to 180

### **The Displacement Effect and Impoverishment Risks**

Displacement not only takes away of the web of life but also snaps its continuity and thus renders people ineffectual with coherent personalities and consistent character. Michael Cernea points out that being forcibly ousted from one's land and habitat carries with it the risk of becoming poorer than before displacement. He also discussed that the displacement is associated with impoverishment risks that have potential risks intrinsic to displacement: Landlessness, joblessness, homelessness, marginalisation, food insecurity, increased morbidity and mortality, loss of access to common property resources, and Social disarticulation. Adding to these eight risks, Mathur (2007) identified an important risk that is loss of access to community services, and others have added violation of human rights.

Following Micheal Cernea's 'Impoverishment Risks and Reconstruction' model, the impact of displacement has been revealed from the imperial data and the problems of the villagers have been presented in the following section. The displacement due to the Indira Sagar project results in altering the traditional livelihoods of the

villagers because they are evicted from their lands, habitation and rich resources such as forest, grazing lands and water bodies.

### ***Loss of Agriculture Lands***

In tribal communities, land is not simply a factor of production as for other people but source of spirituality as well. The traditional land base holds important symbiotic and emotional meaning for them as the repository for ancestral remains, clan origin sites and other sacred features important to their religious system. The tribal society and their culture, religion, identity and their existence are intimately linked to the land they hold (Mathew Areeparampil, 1989). As an aboriginal leader from Australia said “*My land is my backbone..... I can stand straight, happy, proud and not ashamed about my colour because I still have land. I can dance, paint, create and sing as my ancestors did before me.... My land is my foundation. I stand, live and perform as long as I have something firm and hard to stand on. Without land... we will be the lowest people in the world, because you have broken down our backbone, took away my arts, history and foundation, you have left us with nothing*” (Mathew Areeparampil, 1989 quoted Roberts 1978; 5-6).

In the old village, the primary economic activity of the households was agriculture and they used to cultivate both food crops and commercial crops. In the old village 59 households possessed 163.61 acres of agriculture lands (table 1).

**Table 1** Comparison of Wealth Ranking/Occupational Categories of Households in the Old Village & New Settled Village

| Occupational Details  | Old Village           |                            | New Settled Village   |                            |
|---|-----------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------|
|   | Households            | Possession of Land (Acres) | Households            | Possession of Land (Acres) |
| Landless<br>(Depending on agriculture wage and other labour wage) | 55<br>(47.4)          | 0<br>(0.0)                 | 55<br>(47.4)          | 0<br>(0.0)                 |
| Marginal Farmer (0.1 to 2.5 acres)                                | 23<br>(19.8)          | 34.87<br>(18.0)            | 29<br>(25.0)          | 45.31<br>(27.7)            |
| Small Farmer (2.5 to 5 acres)                                     | 28<br>(24.1)          | 106.97 (55.3)              | 25<br>(21.6)          | 88.9<br>(54.3)             |
| Medium Farmer (5 to 9.9 acres)                                    | 8<br>(6.9)            | 51.47<br>(26.6)            | 5<br>(4.3)            | 29.4<br>(18.0)             |
| Others<br>(Salaried, business, selfemployed)                      | 2<br>(1.7)            | 0<br>(0.0)                 | 2<br>(1.7)            | 0<br>(0.0)                 |
| <b>Total</b>  | <b>116</b><br>(100.0) | <b>193.31</b><br>(100.0)   | <b>116</b><br>(100.0) | <b>163.61</b><br>(100.0)   |

Source: Field Data

Household wealth ranking categories in the old village and new village shows that out of 116 households, no changes in landless & ‘others’ households.

□ The number of small farmers’ households has decreased from 28 to 25. □ The number of marginal farmers households has increased from 23 to 29, □ The number of medium farmers’ households has decreased from 8 to 5.

The total land recorded in the old village was 193.31 acres. In the new village, the villagers received just 163.61 acres under R&R land for land compensation. After dislocation of the village, the high proportions of households become casual wage labourers. And 19 households still have agriculture as their main economic activity. Although, the households that lost land have received land in new location but those lands are rocky, barren, and have no irrigation facility, the agriculture being totally dependent on rainfall. The Government of Andhra Pradesh has provided bore-wells under N.T.R Jala Siri programme to all farmers but the bore-wells do not work because the soil being rocky, the water level is very deep.

As the compensated land is 8 km away from the new resettled village, the villagers face difficulties in visiting their agriculture fields day to day as they cannot afford transport cost every day. These circumstances are prompted most of the households (30) to lease out their lands to the local farmers for Rs 10,000 to 15,000 per annum per acre. A total 92.31 acres of land is leased-out to non-tribals.

#### ***Loss of Podu Lands***

In the old village, 50% of households (58) used to cultivate podu (shifting cultivation), on 192.67 acres of land which located in the VSS lands. Podu was a subsidiary economic source to the villagers and they used to cultivate pulses (red gram, black gram and green grams), cereals, maize, jowar, goa, and vegetables etc. With these crops, households had food security throughout the year and the surplus produce could be sold out to local merchants. In addition, they used to get seasonal fruits, all kinds of tubers, roots, honey and uncultivated vegetables and leaves for their household consumption as supplement food. The villagers were evicted from these podu lands and have not been compensated by either cash or land.

A major proportion of income which households used to get from podu cultivation is lost because they don't have access to podu lands in the new resettled village. This has upset the household income.

#### ***Loss of Forest and Traditional Livelihoods***

The traditional livelihoods of Koya tribe in the old village were based on settled agriculture (dry and wet) and podu cultivation, collection of non-timber forest produces (NTFP), hunting and gathering, and livestock rearing. In addition, the villagers used to engage in Forest Department works such as construction of check dams, plantation, weeding, bushes cleaning, boundary stencches. After relocation of the village, the traditional livelihoods of the village is disturbed. The tribals now don't have access to forest for collection of non-timber forest produces and podu cultivation is stopped as no podu land is available in the new village. No collective work has been initiated in the new village because CPR is inaccessible. The livestock is decreasing because there is scanty land for grazing. Employment opportunities are limited; the villagers are engaged in casual wage labour work both agriculture and non-agriculture and around 10 to 15 households are engaged in dam construction works for unskilled labour work.

#### ***Loss of Common Property Resources (CPR)***

In the new village, people have been deprived of Common Property Resources (CPR). A 68-year-old widow, Mrs. Thati Lakshmi, said that she was unable to manage her livestock in the new village because forest, common lands and water resources were not available. As grazing was a major problem for livestock, she sold out a large proportion of livestock, keeping only a few for livelihoods. She said she could not manage her large number of livestock (milch animals, small ruminants, poultry and others) in the old village because there was common lands and plenty of grazing patches around the habitation. All the villagers could share the resources equally and never experienced grazing scarcity and water shortage.

A 39-year-old man, Mr. Thati Posarao, said that in the old habitation they had plenty of resources such as forest, community forest under VSS (Vana Samrakshana Samithi), common lands, grazing lands, fish ponds, trees



(tamarind, mango, toddy, jackfruit trees, custard plants and other productive plants). Villagers collectively utilized these resources and distributed the benefits equally. When the villagers went to the dense forest for hunting and gathering, they did not carry any food from home but were never hungry or thirsty because they used to get food such as tubers, fruits and vegetable leaves from the forest. Now, the villagers don't have access to CPR and no collective effort has been initiated in the new village.

The most important loss of CPR is VSS (Vana Samrakshana Samithi) lands with an extent of 460.09 acres. A women's group consisting of Mrs. Made Veerayamma, Mrs. Thati Laxmi and Mrs. Sode Singaramma in a focus group discussion said that they were deprived of accessing VSS lands in the new settled village, which has adversely affected their household income. They said that in the old habitation, households had formed a forest management committee under the VSS associated with the forest department. Collective efforts were made in collaboration with the forest department in promoting community forest and the committee had been protecting the forest and the villagers have received community entitlements over the VSS lands in 2009 under Forest Rights Act, 2006. With the provisions of FRA 2006, the legal rights have been given to the tribes that they can collect NTFP (Non-Timber Forest Products) in the forest and community forest for self consumption and sale. The villagers were engaged in collection of NTFP and VSS land preparation works for entire year, and they used to get good income from the VSS. In the new village, the government has not allotted VSS lands and is not bothered about the loss of VSS lands. The villagers have filed a petition in the high court for legal justice for loss of VSS and CPR. All women in the FGD said that they have lost not only tangible assets but also intangible assets such as symbiotic relationship with the forest, childhood memories and emotions. The list of CPR availability and in old village and new village is mentioned in the table 2 as follows:

#### ***Loss of Livestock***

Prior to their displacement, all households had livestock as their subsistent livelihood. Both the men and women in the village reared livestock in the CPR lands. With the plenty of water resources and grazing lands, all the households kept a large numbers of milch animals, drought animals and small ruminants (goats), poultry birds. The villagers had used drought animals for agriculture purpose. But after shifting to the new settled village, out of total 105 households, only 62 per cent of households have livestock; the remaining households have sold out their livestock due to water and grazing scarcity. Even the size of livestock in the new village, has decreased by 75 per cent.

**Table 2 Access of CPR in the Old Village & New Settled Village**

| CPR Access    | Availability | Old Village  | New village          | Purpose |
|---------------|--------------|--|----------------------|---------|
|               |              | If yes, access and purpose of utilization          | If Yes, Availability |         |
| Forest        | Yes          | Yes, forest based livelihoods and NTFP collection. | No                   | -       |
| VSS Lands     | Yes          | Yes, forest-based livelihoods and NTFP collection. | No                   | -       |
| Grazing Lands | Yes          | Yes, for livestock                                 | No                   | -       |
| Common Lands  | Yes          | Yes, for livestock grazing and play ground         | No                   | -       |

|              |     |  |    |   |
|--------------|-----|--|----|---|
| Common Trees | Yes | Yes, seasonal fruits: Collective & household consumption | No | - |
| Streams      | Yes | Yes, for agriculture, drinking & fishing                 | No | - |
| Ponds        | Yes | Yes, for agriculture, drinking & fishing                 | No | - |
| Firewood     | Yes |  | No | - |

Yes, household consumption and for sale

Source: Field data

### ***Loss of Employment***

The main concern of the displaced families is the state of employment in the new village. In the newly settled village, employment opportunities are limited and people have to work as casual labour in both agriculture and non-agriculture works. Mr. Buragma Eswara Rao, a 42-year-old man, said that due to loss of their traditional livelihoods, they are facing many difficulties to get employment in the newly settled village. Many villagers are engaged as casual labour works but the work is available only during the agriculture season. In the new village, 49 per cent of households are landless and they don't have any alternative employment and they are struggling with the limited employment opportunities. Even the landholding households are facing difficulties because many of them have given their compensated land to local farmers on lease so but the income they get is not sufficient for their survival. The villagers said that they had never experienced such difficulties in the old habitation as they had access to forest and water resources.

### ***Food in Security***

Eviction from the rich resources results food in security in the new village. Mr. Tellam Paparao, a 50-year-old man, said in a FGD that in the old habitation they had plenty of resources such as own agriculture lands, podu, forest and water bodies. The dependency on market was very less and they used to cultivate all varieties of crops and sell the surplus in the market. In addition to their crop productions, they used to get all kinds of seasonal foods, roots, tubers and vegetable leaves from the forest for their self consumption and also for sale. He said that they had food security throughout the year and in lean season (during the heavy rains) they could managed by selling forest products like firewood in the market. Mr. Buragam Laxmanrao, a 40-year-old man, said though he was landless, he and his family could survive because of the forest and agriculture works. In the new village, he is facing lots of difficulties in managing his household due to work scarcity. In new village, 41.9 per cent of households have food security only for 6 to 9 months because of non-availability of work and no access to forest.

### ***Loss of kitchen gardens***

A women group said in a FGD that in the old habitation they had kitchen gardens on their house premises where they grew vegetables such as brinjals, bendi, beans, pumpkin, ridge gourd, drumsticks for household needs but in new village they don't have enough space for kitchen proper gardens. However, in the limited space they have on their premises, they have small kitchen gardens with few varieties for their consumption.

### ***Women vulnerability***

Among Koya community, woman plays an important role in decision making at household and community level. In the old village, the women were empowered and their economic contribution to the household income was very significant. They collected NTFP (such as broom sticks, seasonal fruits, vegetables, Kovala Giguru (gum), soap nuts, tubers and roots, vegetable leaves etc) in the forest and CPR for household consumption and for sale.

The Girijana Cooperative Corporation (GCC) and local traders often visited the village for purchasing these productions. In addition, both men and women were engaged in fetching of fuel wood for sale to the local traders. The women were also engaged in VSS work and Forest Department work on daily wage basis. In the old village, women had adequate employment resources and the major portion of household expenditure was borne by them. In the new village, employment opportunities were limited and the condition of women was vulnerable. They were deprived of self-sustainable livelihoods and had to depend on wage labour work.

After relocation, 11 elderly members between 60 years and 70 years died in different situations within the span of three years from the date of relocation. Among them, seven were women. They had difficulties in adjusting to the new village. The symbiotic relation they had with the old habitation and forest was broken. Due to mental sickness and financial crisis in the new surroundings, they had fallen sick and died.

### ***Effect on Education***

The old village had a primary school (up to 5<sup>th</sup> class). After completing primary education, children went outside the village to Gunjavaram or KR Puram where tribal residential schools were available. In old village, many children dropped out from secondary school. During festivals, when the children returned to their village they stayed longer and longer there, and many did not go back to the school.

In new village, all children get schooling, and their parents are aware of the special awareness camps conducted by the ITDA in coordination with the education department. Due to competition between private and government schools, the Government of Andhra Pradesh has been conducting special enrolment drives every year during the summer and teachers are regularly meeting the parents and discussing the progress of their children's education. The Government is putting attention towards strengthening Government schools to achieve 100% enrollment and retention across the state.

### ***Effect on Health***

Though the health status in the new village was good, the villagers say they felt better in the old village. The old village experienced seasonal epidemics and people often suffered from malaria and typhoid. In new village, people had similar situation but elderly people reported that they were suffering from knee pains, acidity and gastric problems. Mental sickness was also noticed among the elder people. They said they were comfortable in the old village and the forest was everything for them but in the new village they were deprived all the resources which cannot be restored.

Among the villagers, six people were diagnosed with sugar complaint. Out of them, four had recently come to know from the doctor when they gone for medical checkup at PHC (Primary Health Centre), Polavaram that they were suffering from sugar. Two members had already been suffering from the sugar compliant since the old village. Mrs. Pamu Posamma, a 45-years-old woman, said that she had been suffering from sugar for the last 10 years in the old village but had never felt weakness and knee pains in the old village. In the new village she has started suffering from severe knee pains and backache because the drinking water in the new village was causing health problems.

In the new settled village, it has been noticed that institutional deliveries have been reached 100 per cent and the pregnant women are being closely monitored by the ASHA worker and ANM and also Anganwadi workers whereas in old village due to lack of transport facilities and monitoring by the health department, institutional deliveries recorded very less.

### ***Effect on Local Drink (Toddy)***

Misra Kamal K. and Narendra Bondla D.J. (2007) have mentioned in his study that toddy for adivasis is a basic necessity as it is connected intimately with its social, nutritional and ritual life. In the old habitation, there were



plenty of toddy trees available in individual agriculture lands and common lands, all the villagers including children like to drink toddy everyday during the toddy season. It is a part of their culture and they offer toddy to friends and relatives. In Koya culture, all the villagers collectively celebrate the toddy festival by consuming toddy and enjoying the whole day with tribal folksongs and dance at sacred groves. Mr. Pamu Ramakrishna said Koyas offer toddy to elders to honor them and the elderly people like to have toddy every day during the season. He also said that they make country-brew (*toddy chiguru*) a local liquor which they consume every day. After shifting to the new village, the villagers cannot drink toddy because there are no toddy trees in the new village. He was worried that all men including youth are habituated to the local liquor and are spending a large part of their income on it.

### ***Loss of sacred groves and impact on religious practices***

Sacred forests represent a traditional form of community-based conservation around the world. Ormsby (2010) has mentioned that sacred forests, also referred to as sacred groves, are sites that have cultural or spiritual significance to the people who live around them. In tribal culture, sacred groves play vital role in their day-to-day life. Tribal people believe that they are protected by the supernatural power of sacred groves as their refuge. The elder people of the village said that in the old village, their forefathers had set sanctified areas around the village and arranged a set of rules and customs to follow and practice to ensure their protection and security. Villagers used to celebrate festivals to the sacred groves and local deities; they offered animal sacrifices at the sacred groves. The village elders said that they strictly followed the set of rules and customs in every aspect: in agriculture at the time of sowing the seeds and harvesting, the villagers used to do worship (pooja) at the sacred groves. Without offering pooja they never ever started agriculture. Before collecting NTFP, villagers used to offer first fruit/productions to the sacred groves. In the old village, the daily activities of the individuals and community initiations were linked with the sacred groves and the instructions of the village leader/priest were followed.

After shifting to the new village, they have lost their sacred groves and are not practicing their rules and customs. Village elders Buragam Pentaiah (70 yrs) and Sode Singaraju (60 yrs) said that the sacred groves had submerged in the dam site and no one in the village was ready to reset the sacred groves in the new settled village because all the villagers were confused about where they were going to be resettled. The people were busy and concentrated on compensation for the loss of their assets. Because there were no sacred groves in the new village, the villagers were not following traditions and customs, they said.

Nearly 95 per cent of households are not following their religious practices. The main reason is that all the households have accepted Christianity. In the FGDs held with the men group and women group separately, men and women said that they accepted Christ and follow the practices of Christianity. They also said that in the old village they used to celebrate festivals celebrating village deities named Bhudevi (Earth), *Gangamma* (Ganga), Toddy festival and *Raju Kodukula Panduga* (Sons of King's Festival) every year and also followed Hindu festivals like *Sankranti* (Pongal), Dussera and Christian festivals like Christmas. However, after shifting to the new village, they have more access to church and have built two churches in the rehabilitation colony.

They are following Christianity only, they said.

### ***Social Disarticulation***

Due to displacement, the social networks within the village and neighboring villages got disturbed and the neighboring villages got scattered in different locations. The Deveragondi village is a revenue village under Mamidigondi panchayat, both the villages were located inside the forest and shared the village boundaries and forest. Most of the households of the villages are related to one another and they used to meet during marriages and other functions. They have established marital relationships among the relatives in both the villages.

Every day people from both the villages interact with each other. The people collectively work in the forest department and would work in each other fields when labour was scarce during the harvesting season. The old village had a pond called *Mottikava Cheruv*, which belonged to five neighboring villages (Devaragondi, Mamidigondi, Ramayyapeta, Chegondapalli, and Singannapalli). It was used to irrigate about 100 acres of land and the five villages equally shared water for their agriculture lands. Fishing was also done collectively and the catch was distributed equally among the households of five villages. Now, these valuable informal associations have got dismantled.

In the old village, a formal association was formed as VSS committee to manage community forest. Much work was done collectively and CPR provisions were equally distributed among the households. The villagers respected the caste panchayats and obeyed the village elder. In the new village, though the formal association still existed, no collective work was initiated because there was no access to VSS lands. The caste panchayats had lost its earlier high prestige. Instead of approaching the village elder, people were calling the police for immediate actions.

In the old village, people had access to the trade market within the village where they would sell the crops and non-timber forest productions, fuel wood to local traders. The local traders had developed good relations with the villagers keeping producers to purchase their productions. In the new village these relations have been disrupted because the forest was no longer available and also the extent of agriculture is decreasing.

#### **Perception of Project Displaced People towards the Dam and its Benefits**

Displaced people had different perceptions of the displacement and the use of dam and its benefits. This was captured in FGDs held with different groups of people: the men, the women and the youth.

**Relocation of the village:** Men and women were not happy in the new village as they were deprived of access to forest and resources. Mr. Pamu Rama Krishna said he was not ready to leave his own place to new location because his unforgettable childhood memories were linked to his village. He said he had strong ties with the forest and his ancestor's lands due to which he could not leave his own place. The youth were also not happy in the new village.

Mrs. Thati Laxmi and Mrs. Pamu Posamma said that though they have more access to basic amenities compared to the old habitation, but they felt comfortable in accessing resources in the old habitation. They also said that due to employment scarcity in new village, the youth are migrating to the nearest towns in searching of employment.

**Awareness on R&R benefits:** All participants in the FGD said that due to Indira Sagar project, they had lost their homes, lands and other resources. They were involuntarily displaced from their homeland to new locations. They complained they had not received adequate compensation for their loss of assets. They said they were not aware how their assets were evaluated.

**Dam and its benefits:** Men and women participants said that they were worse off now after the dam. Their traditional livelihoods and employment had vanished. They claimed that only people from the plains and rich people would benefit from the project. The women said that they should be given fertile lands under land-for-land program in the project command area so that they could benefit from the project. However, the Government was not listening to the common people. Ms. Boragam Aswini, a 28-year-old woman, said: "We get very less benefits but the extent of loss is large which cannot be made good."

It has been revealed that in the FGD that all the men are expecting provisions of Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act, 2013. The men said the government should allot VSS lands to the new village to restore their livelihoods. Echoing their thoughts, the women group

said they expected the Government to provide some training and promote household industries to have employment within the village.

The youth said that currently they are struggling in searching of livelihoods but the situation may be changed in the future if the Government provided training to the youth and women for creation of new livelihoods in new village.

## **CONCLUSION**

Due to lack of transparency in implementation of R&R, the displaced families in the village are not fully compensated in some of components of rehabilitation and resettlement. The following components are: Crop loss compensation an amount Rs. 15,000 per acre has been made for only one year, while the government had promised that crop loss compensation will be paid for 3 years. Thus, all the land loss households have not received full compensation. It has happened in most of the villages which come under first phase of implementation of R&R. Assets valuation was not done properly with the authorized/certified officers. The villagers were offered less compensation amount on their immovable assets like house structures and trees, whereas non-tribal people received maximum compensation on their fixed assets. Non-tribals have bribed and manipulated officials. Further, many of tribal people have not received full compensation on their loss of assets.

The compensated land (extent 1.75 acres) which was allotted to the PDFs (two families) has been occupied by the neighboring villagers. The neighbours prevented the land owners from entering their lands because those lands are legally disputed under the LTRA, 1/70 between non-tribes and tribes. A similar situation is also faced by four families in Mamidigondi newly resettled village (tribal village). The case is still pending and no officials responding to this issue.

In the newly settled village, few households have not received land due to lack of documentary evidences and technical errors occurred in the beneficiary list.

Mrs. Tellam Ramayamma, w/o Paparao, has received land extent 2.50 acres in the Pragadapalli area under land for land but land patta has not been issued. She has approached concerned R&R officials to get patta but no officials are responding to her grievance. Similar issues have been noticed in all displaced village in the project area.

In case of homestead, house plots allotted to boys (attained 18 years) have not been issued patta. In some cases house patta issued to four members (boys – attained 18 years) but plots have not been allotted to them.

5.2% of households (Nuclear households 2, Single-Woman-Headed are four) have not received R&R entitlements because they were considering as non-residents of this village (though they had settled in the old village long back). These four households have approached the R&R authorities and representation is given several times in several meetings. Their grievances have not been redressed. Their human rights have been violated.

R&R implementation authorities have failed to provide R&R household packages to girl child who had attained 18 years. The policy under G.O.Ms No. 68 (paras 6.2 to 6.14) considers the elder son/girl who has attained 18 years old as a separate family and received household package. After many struggles and agitations, later the R&R authorities included girls (attained 18 years) in the R&R plan. In the village, household package for girls was sanctioned in the 2014 and paid through the RFCTLARR Act, 2013. After many struggle, girls were added in the beneficiary list and 27 girls received household package in the village. The similar issues have been noticed in all displaced village in the project area. It has been revealed that even now, girls are deprived in accessing house site and housing scheme (Indira Awas Yojana Scheme), as per the Act, 2013 (31(1), 38 (1), the Government should provide R&R household package to every project displaced families.

To conclude the project brought the tribal people few benefits but more suffering. Though the villagers are paid compensation for their loss of assets and also offered land to land compensation but the dam-induced displacement and resettlement created socioeconomic impoverishment risks on the lives of the relocated community. The Government should rely and take necessary actions to address those problems of displaced population immediately and further, the Government should enhance the monitoring mechanism to fulfill lacuna in implementation of R&R policy in the project-affected area. Due to improper implementation of the policy, the affected population especially tribes are not fully compensated. Unless the Central and state government puts special attention to proper rehabilitation and resettlement of displaced families, especially tribes, they will continue to be victims of such programs and be drawn into pathetic situations.

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