Machkund, Upper Kolab and NALCO Projects in Koraput District, Orissa

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Since the 1970s mainstream Indian industries have begun exploiting the resources of the Eastern Ghats, a large portion of which lies in Orissa. This has led to severe environmental degradation with significant proportions of the population, largely tribals, being displaced. Comparative studies of displacement, compensation and rehabilitation in three projects in Koraput district highlights the need for a uniform, but flexible, policy on resettlement and rehabilitation.

AFTER independence, the Indian state assumed the responsibility for "economic growth and national progress" via adoption of the dominant development ideology. This development pattern based on western models involving the transfer of high level technology, heavy capital investment only strengthened the pre-existing power structures and feudal patterns. Centralised planning, macro development and British political and a bureaucratic administration model has resulted in wide income disparities.

This development policy legitimised systematic displacement and dispossession of the resources, labour and in fact the very means of human existence of the dalits, the tribals and the poor. People were forced to replace the socio-cultural fabric and ecosystems which had given meaning to their lives for thousands of years by alien places and were reduced to 'nomads' or misfits'. For the displaced, this constituted a cultural ethnocide. The erosion of people's culture, values and identity began through planned transmigration schemes such as integration, assimilation of skills, individualistic education promotion aimed at co-opting the displaced into the so-called 'mainstream', consumerist society.

The development of industries, mines, large dams and plantations has resulted in a situation where there is no control over floods, drought and other natural calamities. Other projects yet to be commissioned are displacing more people and destroying the resource base of thousands may well be leading to an ecological disaster.

Today more than 30 million displaced people, mostly tribals, dalits and the poor pay the price for the growth of our country. In addition to direct displacement, indirect displacement of cultures, languages, values, health, agriculture and market has occurred through the consumerist formal sector - the cash/market economy. Apart from the fully and partially displaced, another category of victims were the project affected persons (the PAPs) who were not physically displaced but deprived of their livelihood due to the loss of their land and common property resources. The neglect of this category has meant that in the last four decades only 25 per cent of those displaced by the development projects were rehabilitated.

Since the 1970s, after exhausting the resources in the south, north and west of India, mainstream Indian industries have begun exploiting the resources of the Eastern Ghats area of which the state of Orissa accounts for 36 per cent. This area is rich in resources and the process of transferring resources from the periphery to the centre is now visible. In the 1950s Orissa did not have any industry except for a few saw mills and some ice factories near Cuttack. The state had two large dams in 1950 as against 149 in 1990. Exploitation of its natural resources began in the 1950s with the building of the Hirakud dam and the Rourkela steel plant, later followed by mines and more dams.

During the last two decades Orissa's forest cover has declined. In 1981 the state had a forest cover of 59,963.30 sq km. But the NRSA data based on the images of 1981-83 gives a figure of 53,163 sq km. The Forest Survey Satellite Images of 1987 put the tree cover in Orissa in 1987 at 473.37 sq km. The FSI report attributed the decline in forest cover to shifting cultivation and cutting of trees for firewood by the tribals. However, the accelerated capital intensive development programmes could be a major cause for the loss of 6,036 sq km of tree cover in the state during the last four years. This loss amounts to 1,500 sq km per year or around 3 per cent of the total tree cover of the state.

Koraput (undivided district) is Orissa's biggest district. A majority of its population (56 per cent) are tribal forming 24 per cent of the state's tribal population. Today dalits and tribals form 70 per cent of the district's population. The district has 18 large projects with about 5,00,000 acres (2,000 sq km) of its total area of 26,961 sq km (or 7.42 per cent) occupied by these schemes. According to one estimate around one lakh tribals have been deprived of their land, including 4,00,000 acres of forests on which they depended for their livelihood. More than 6 per cent of the district population, mainly tribals, have been displaced (1991). The quality of life indicators like literacy, life expectancy, employment, health are low among the displaced people - the tribals and dalits.


MACHKUND HYDRO ELECTRICITY PROJECT

The Machkund hydro dam was constructed on the Duduma river in Koraput district. The Maharaja of Jeyapore conceived the idea of a dam as early as 1928. Planning continued for nearly two decades. "Displacement" began in the late 1940s. Its cost and benefits were shared by Andhra Pradesh and Orissa on a 70:30 basis. Given the scarcity of records in those days, collection of exact data was not possible. Government officials told the people that the project was to generate electricity. The people had never heard of electricity and were happy to know that they were the first to be chosen in Koraput district for this type of modernisation. But, the people were unaware of 'displacement' and the related consequences. Initially the project authorities did not plan for 'rehabilitation'. The officials involved in the 'rehabilitation' were not aware of the processes required for a humane rehabilitation.

According to a source (Mahapatra 1990:86) 2,938 families were displaced by the project, 1,500 (51 per cent) tribals and 300 (10.21 percent) dalits. Only 600 families were rehabilitated (450 tribal families and 150 others). A decision was taken to allocate 25 per cent of the Dandakaranya a area around Malkangiri, for the rehabilitation of the displaced persons.

The DPs were 'rehabilitated' in an environment similar to that from which they were 'displaced' and so adapted themselves to their new surroundings. Each displaced family was given five acres of land. The land given was fertile and Non-Wood Forest Produces (NWFP) were abundant until the
Dandakaranya project cut the forest around them. Their family life and community support mechanisms have not been destroyed completely. There were few middlemen at that time. The DPs were rehabilitated in a semi-monetised economy.

In two villages people decided against leaving their birth place and presented a memorandum to the chief minister and the local government officials. A freedom fighter Gangadhar Jhola perceived displacement as a new form of enslavement of his people and decided to lead the agitation against it. Ultimately the villagers settled for higher 'compensation' and better 'rehabilitation' than originally envisaged, although displacement itself could not be avoided.

The 'land for land' scheme together with other socio-psychological support, helped the communities move from a barter to a semi-monetised economy. This enabled the displaced to adjust to the new surroundings. The problem of the DPs was the lack of promised irrigation facilities. Those re-settled on a land for land basis became aware of their rights and felt that they had been displaced to provide irrigation to someone else. The displaced tribals and dalits did not have access to school, drinking water, health care and electricity. Though there were no landless, there are indications that processes of class formation and land alienation had begun. However, the Machkund DPs were better off as they were rehabilitated in an economy similar to their earlier one.

As a rehabilitation policy land for land is essential but it can work only if it goes together with the remaining socio-cultural, environmental and economic support systems.

**UPPER KOLAB - MULTI-PURPOSE PROJECT**

The Upper Kolab Multipurpose Project (UPKOL) in Koraput district was constructed to harness the water potential of River Kolab. The project was supposed to irrigate 47,985 ha of agricultural land for kharif and a little less for the rabi crop, in 13,095 families of the 10,058.76 acres of land acquired, 2,805.49 ha of dry land and a house but not irrigation and other facilities. Land was given to a certain number of DPs but by and large the land was dry and not fertile. The moneylenders co-operated with the local leaders in trying to convince the DPs to accept monetary compensation instead of land based resettlement. The compensation amount was given to the DPs and PAPs in different forms. In some cases it was given in a single instalment and in others in two or three.

The DPs who were rehabilitated were each provided with 2.5 acres of dry land and a house but not irrigation and other facilities. Land was given to a certain number of DPs but by and large the land was dry and not fertile. The moneylenders co-operated with the local leaders in trying to convince the DPs to accept monetary compensation instead of land based resettlement. The compensation amount was given to the DPs and PAPs in different forms. In some cases it was given in a single instalment and in others in two or three.

From 57 fully displaced villages 3,067 families were identified for rehabilitation: 1,443 of them tribals, 458 dalits and 1,166 others. For rehabilitating the 3,067 displaced families 9,432 acres of land was acquired separately. A sum of Rs 6,30,23,989 was paid as compensation to the DPs and PAPs. This excluded the cost of the rehabilitation. Out of this Rs 5,71,81,192 was paid for land and trees and Rs 58,43,196 for the homestead.

The project authorities claim that 2,643 (86.17 per cent) of the 3,067 displaced families did not accept land based rehabilitation and were given cash grants amounting to Rs 3,86,77,820 as compensation. To accommodate the remaining 1,330 families 7,774.68 acres were reclaimed and developed into seven camps. Only 424 fami­lies were settled in the camps four to seven and were allotted 675.43 acres of irrigation land, 290.11 acres of non-irrigation land and 212 acres of homestead land. The camps in which the DPs of UPKOL were to be resettled were today used to rehabilitate the displaced by Upper Indravati river valley project.

The DPs of UPKOL already knew about the situation of other displaced persons particularly those displaced by the HAL defence unit at Sunabeda. There was anger and a sense of helplessness among the DPs. The DPs underwent the trauma of involuntary displacement. They were provided with transport to move out of their original villages which dumped them at sites after which the officials disappeared. Many were not rehabilitated at all. The process of rehabilitation is not merely an economic proposition but includes psychological, social, cultural and political aspects. More than 80 per cent of the DPs had to self-rehabilitate via daily wages, sale of fuel-wood and semi-skilled jobs.

The National Aluminium Company (NALCO) was established in 1981 with the aim of producing aluminium from the vast bauxite deposits in Koraput district. It has three operations in Orissa: (a) Bauxite mines in the Panchpatmali hills of Koraput district with deposits of 112.8 million tons; (b) Alumina refinery complex in Damanjodi, Koraput District, 11 kms from the mines. It has an installed capacity of eight lakh tonnes of alumina annually; (c) Out of this 4.25 lakh tonnes are transported to its smelter plant at Angul, Dhenkanal districts. The plant has a captive power plant with a capacity of 55.5 MW as against its actual need of 32 MW. The original cost of the project was estimated at 680 million US dollars but completion of the project has cost the public sector company 980 million US dollars.

The NALCO operations in Damanjodi and Panchpatmali hills have affected 26 villages. 597 families were displaced; 254 are tribal, 56 dalit and the rest belonged to other communities. A few more families will probably be displaced in the near future. Out of the 10,058.76 acres of land acquired, 427.30 acres was for mines, 2,638.96 acres for townships and 6,992.50 acres for the plant. Of the acquired land, 2,805.49 ha (40.94 per cent) was government land which no compensation was paid and 2,834.56 ha (41.36 percent) were agricultural lands. All the surrounding villages depended on this land for many of their needs such as fruits, leaves, flowers, etc, which formed their main food in the lean season. More than 70 villages used the area for sanitary needs and to collect roof materials.

The first notification for land take-over was issued on 12th August 1981, in the Orissa Gazette Extraordinary. A total of Rs 1,48,73,474.52 has been paid as compensation for patta land alone. No compensation was paid for CPR. Depending on the size, on average Rs 150 per tree was paid.
The Nalco displaced people had seen the travails of the DPs of Sunabeda. At the same time, they knew that they did not have the political backing required to prevent the project. Their reaction were predominantly ones of fear, anger and despair. The inhabitants of Barangup trusted the prime minister and were convinced that what Indira Gandhi decided to do was bound to be for their personal as well as national development.

Initially the DPs agitated against the project itself. Slowly they settled down to demanding land, jobs and better resettlement. The agitation went on for several months till a few of their demands were met. In Analabadi village, the people were deprived of their land to rehabilitate those who were to be displaced by the project. There was also agitation in the other villages where land was taken away for the project. The people of the village which was most active in the agitation were shifted to a new spot. Without any agitation the DPs would have not received any benefits.

Out of 597 families displaced 441 have been rehabilitated in the Analabadi colony, for which Analabadi villagers were deprived of their land. 156 more houses were built; 352 of these families have been given one job each, viz., 35 dalits, 14 tribals and 168 other castes. Eight of the employees are women.

Those happy about the formula were the middle classes and the high castes predominantly malis who had more land than they could cultivate. They hoped to get a high price for which they would be able to invest in other businesses. They received more than Rs 50,000 in compensation though the amount paid per acre was only around Rs 2,000. The Malis of the neighbouring villages were prepared to sell their land to the project. If these lands were bought they would be able to cultivate. They hoped to get NWFP is at present under the environmental regeneration scheme of NALCO. They get no NWFP from these plantations since most species planted are commercial varieties like eucalyptus and acacia. PAPs experience total impoverishment and marginalisation in their present state.

The DPs were told that they were making too many demands on the project when they asked that toilets be attached to their houses. The reality is that formerly they had enough place in the forest for their needs. Today they are forced to go to a plot of land belonging to a neighbouring village. Quarrels are frequent since the inhabitants of that village use this place as their pasture land. Similarly, the whole colony (597 families) has around 30 water taps but only about half of them are in working condition at any given moment.

The land from which the people used to get NWFP is at present under the environmental regeneration scheme of NALCO. The victims of these macro-development projects are now rejecting these models of development. They feel that they have been cheated into giving up their lands and access to natural resources for some vague national interest and for the comforts of the minority.

CONCLUSION

The analysis of the three projects have brought out the following concerns:

Development Debate

Macro development projects have led to a systematic exploitation of people and the environment. This has strengthened the power structures which ensure the flow of benefits from the periphery to the centre. The DPs/PAPs neither get on-project jobs due to the mechnised nature of these projects nor become part of the official employment data. If we include the DPs/PAPs as unemployed then the number of unemployed in India would be greatly increased.

Development-induced displacement or loss of land results in the marginalisation and impoverishment of the DPs/PAPs, particularly of the weaker sections. Aware of the overall negative reaction from the people, the project authorities sought the co-operation of the village leaders and presented the project as being for the good of all.

Such development projects which displace people from their own habitat have only benefited the powerful, the high castes and the urban population. These categories enjoy project benefits like irrigation, employment, electricity, and other infra-structural gains, and so are unable to understand the sufferings and the marginalisation of the displaced population. Therefore it is necessary to initiate dialogue between these two groups - the losers (the original owners) and the gainers. In order to question these development models and their approach to the environment and the displaced population. The victims of these macro-development projects are now rejecting these models of development. They feel that they have been cheated into giving up their lands and access to natural resources for some vague national interest and for the comforts of the minority.

Lack of Information and Dialogue

In all the three projects information regarding the project and details of displacement were not shared with the people to be displaced. They were unprepared for displacement. The people to be displaced were not involved in any of the planning of the displacement procedures. The norm was that the displaced people played no role except vacate their habitat. There was no dialogue with the people on the project.

In future, before implementing any project people should be informed the pros and cons of the project. A detailed discussion should be held with all the DPs to ascertain their willingness and to work out the modalities and procedure of displacement, rehabilitation and compensation. This will enable the
displaced people to participate in a meaningful development partnership.

No Partnership in Development

Social investment for the displaced people's development has not been one of the criteria under which a project is judged. In most of these projects the final product is meant for consumers far from the area of displacement, with productivity the highest, if not the only priority and the main criterion for judging the viability of the project.

Though there is usually adequate time, very few projects have trained the future DPs/PAPs in either skilled or semi-skilled jobs. Indeed it is dubious whether the educational criterion should be so rigidly adhered to. The projects that displaced the people have a social obligation to train those who pay the price of development. If literacy is essential then it is arguable that it is the projects social obligation to achieve this target during the long time available after the first announcement of the project.

Not focusing on the displaced people’s development is indicative of the project officials callous attitude. Non-involvement of the displaced people in the project exposes the lack of partnership and therefore lack of development.

Announcements and Reactions

When the decision was taken to displace the people there was no definite commitment either to re-settle them in a humanly acceptable manner or to share with them at least a few benefits of the project in the term of jobs and contracts. NALCOD and UPKOL villages have gone through the trauma of displacement and rehabilitation. The Machkund DPs participated in the struggle for better rehabilitation while experiencing the trauma of displacement and of rebuilding their life in a new environment. The DPs of MACHKUND and NALCOD though powerless in stopping the project were able to gain something which they would not have been able to without their agitation. This was made difficult in UPKOL by the fact that the money lenders and other external elements controlled their economy and exploited the cash-based resettlement.

Displacement

Displacement has been seen as a process that begins with the announcement of the project and continues long after the people have lost their land and livelihood. Such a definition not only includes the narrow concept of physical ouster from the old habitat but also a process of sincere rehabilitation. Displacement or loss of livelihood can result in new village leadership, in some cases new neighbourhoods, and at times in disruption of family life. The danger is greater if the DPs are not resettled immediately after their displacement. Such a situation was noticed in UPKOL in particular, but was visible also among the MACHKUND DPs.

The amount of land taken over for these projects from the people is not always in proportion to the land required for the project. Most of the land is meant for the township and other staff facilities. This raises questions about the need to render so many landless. While the need to give the staff a certain amount of comfort as a mode of preventing high staff turnover and of ensuring that the project is run efficiently is undeniable, beyond a certain limit, it means that the rural poor pay the price for such comforts in the name of national development.

Loss of Resources

The trauma related with displacement or other forms of forced loss of livelihood is felt differently by different caste groups and tribes. The impact of the dam projects on the DPs and in PAP villages mainly took the form of shortage of NWFP. The dam DPs are predominantly tribal who traditionally depended on NWFP for their sustenance. More than 50 percent of their food had come from the forest before their displacement. With displacement they were deprived of this source of sustenance with no alternatives available.

For instance, the UPKOL DPs were given dry land and no access to NWFP. As a result several of them have left the camp within a few years of their being re-settled. The situation was slightly worse in the case of PAPs of NALCO. They had been deprived of their land and CPR and were not provided with any alternatives even in the form of unskilled jobs. In most cases compensation was low and inadequate to begin a new life. In particular NWFP became scarce. Though NALCO has an environmental regeneration scheme under which thousands of trees have been planted, they are not accessible to the PAPs since they arc mostly commercial species and have been fenced off.

The dependence of the landless on the farmers and on the village as a community is more true for the dalits than the tribals. The landless lose their livelihood but arc not entitled to compensation because the land does not belong to them but rather is the property of a few individuals or of the state. The landless particularly the dalits are thus deprived of the infrastructure that sustains them.

The CPR was considered government or village lands and it was assumed that nobody has to be paid compensation for it. In reality the majority in the village, particularly the landless, depend on CPR. In all the projects compensation was not paid for CPR. In the traditional village society the landless castes were an integral part of the rural socio-economic system. They provided a variety of services to the community. The services broadly fall into two categories, viz (1) services requiring manual skills and (2) services requiring non-manual skills and roles. Traditional craftsmen including weavers, blacksmiths, carpenters, cobblers, scavengers, etc. fall in this category. Often these traditional artisans were kept outside the rehabilitation scheme.

Most DPs depend on the resource that according to the legal written document they do not own. Steps must be taken to prevent the adverse consequences of depriving people of their livelihood without providing compensation. The dependence of the poor on the CPR and on the village as a community must be considered while calculating the compensation to be given to each family. For example, just as the landowners get compensation for loss of land, the barber, the tailor, the scavenger and others should be compensated for the loss of livelihood they suffer when the village as a unit disappears or the land that provides them jobs is taken over. This cannot be done if land is only viewed as a source of agriculture and for project construction. It is important to treat land, even that owned by an individual, as a community resource that sustains the landless and compensation calculated accordingly. Else impoverishment of the DPs/PAPs is an obvious consequence.

Modernisation should not be thrust on the DPs. A proper transition should take account of aspects such as their place of religious worship and ancestral links (e.g., cremation or burial ground). Imposition of cultural change without adequate preparation also result in greater deterioration of the status of women. The tribal council is disrupted if the village is not resettled immediately. As a result, when competition over scarce resources seizes and the otherwise egalitarian community begins to break up, the structural support based on their traditional culture also disappears.

Many men try to cope with the tension and disruption caused by displacement and a new economy by resorting to alcohol. Apart from the financial strain, wife beating also increases. In many cases women themselves cope with isolation by taking to alcohol or by gambling during the day. Literacy is low among the tribals and dalits, their exposure to the mainstream economy is limited and, as a result, after they are deprived of their livelihood they find it difficult to cope. A few who get jobs become individualistic.

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Tribal women, depend on the NWFP more than men, since women are responsible for the regular supply of food, fodder, fuel and water. Being less literate than men they cannot get skilled jobs. After displacement they continue in the informal sector within the formal economy, and without any infrastructural support. The T N Singh formula provides for only one job per family which usually goes to a man, so women remain unemployed. Since their land and forests have been taken over by the project, they do not have any activity outside their house. New consumer needs reduce the money at their disposal for food and other domestic needs. Often they are forced to starve in order to feed the rest of the family.

In the NALCO area, the DPs face social problems as the absence of facilities affects women more than men. To begin with, they require greater privacy than men. The absence of a place for sanitary needs causes problems mainly for women. The situation is worsened by the internalisation of many middle class and upper caste values by the tribals and dalits. Such internalisation at times takes the form of new consumer needs often expressed as women's subordination, her role being limited to the home, etc.

In order to avoid the marginalisation of women, special attention has to be paid to aspects of displacement concerning women. Their genuine participation has to be ensured in the planning process of the project and of all the resettlement measures.

In almost all the projects the compensation was considered as rehabilitation. Compensation was given only for patta land and the landless were ignored even in this limited rehabilitation. The DPs of UPKOL were motivated by a group with vested interests to opt for monetary compensation instead of land-based rehabilitation. They had only limited exposure to the monetary economy. As a result, most money they received in the form of cash compensation was appropriated by the money lenders, merchants and some government/project officials who motivated the people to opt for this type of rehabilitation instead of land-based rehabilitation. They were left with no alternative to the land and forests they had lost in their original habitat. Money was scarce, so was food. As a result impoverishment was great among them. The situation of UPKOL DPs who had to re-settle, themselves was worse.

While ensuring that the money due to the poor is not given to them in a lump sum is sensible, the analysis of expenditure shots that merely denying them access to money without alternatives can have negative consequences on the DPs/PAPs. Immediately after their displacement and loss of land CPR, they were integrated into a new economy and had to pay even for daily requirements like food tor which they needed access to ready cash.

Most benefits in the form of compensation, jobs, amenities, etc, have gone to a few persons, mainly from the relatively powerful castes. The dalits, tribals and other landless persons get very few benefits. While the dam DPs are entitled to land-based resettlement, those displaced by bundishes and mines come under the T N Singh Formula that provides one job per family. Both these approaches have many good points, and as such are steps in the right direction. However, one major shortcoming is that rehabilitation of the DPs as of today is the responsibility of the project whose work is judged according to economic not social criteria. This approach considers rehabilitation as welfare and not social investment demanded of the project.

The T N Singh formula was introduced in 1967, to ensure a job for each family displaced by the projects. This is an improvement over the older concept of financial compensation as rehabilitation for land. Often the land acquired is owned by several families. Which of these families is to get the job? Besides, only one job per family is given though there are several adults in a family. Families without an adult are not covered by this scheme. In most cases only men are considered for jobs and the plight of the women is ignored. Moreover most jobs offered to the DPs turn out to be of the unskilled variety and are by no means a compensation for the loss of their total livelihood. Most of these jobs are temporary and little or no effect is made to train the displaced persons to fill more qualified posts in the new project. Very often, even the unskilled workers getting permanent jobs come from outside the area. The T N Singh formula demands that the projects give jobs to the DPs. Very often, the companies shift the responsibility to other agencies like NGOs without any definite commitment to give jobs, training or funds for the rehabilitation schemes. The hopes of the weaker sections to get unskilled jobs if they come under the T N Singh formula/stop as a dream. Most semi-skilled jobs are accessible only to the better off sections, particularly those jobs which need a recognised III diploma.

The projects analysed have shown that land-based resettlement is not always a viable alternative to the dam DPs. It was successful with the Machkund DPs who were given fertile forest land to clear and cultivate. Such fertile land is not available any more. The combination of a growing population, scarcity of land in the command area pressure from the middle farmers and the Forest Conservation Act, 1980 make it difficult for base resettlement to be a viable alternative for those displaced by any project. There is clearly an urgent need for alternative rehabilitation packages.

For people who depend on land and forests for their sustenance, the best alternative remains land-based resettlement. But in reality in recent years they have been given only dry land. Even when the dam is for irrigation, those deprived of their livelihood are rarely provided with its benefits while people belonging to some other area get the benefits. Given the poor quality of land available today, the first alternative to be explored is irrigation. Land-based resettlement is possible only if proper irrigational facilities are provided from the beginning. It would have to be an integral, time bound component of land-based resettlement, not a promise meant for a distant and undefined future.

Secondly, if land is available, there is no reason why this form of resettlement cannot be an alternative in industrial projects as well. Without the rest of the infrastructure needed to sustain the people, land alone is inadequate. Irrigation, and CPR are both necessary. Much of the food of the communities that have traditionally depended on natural resources, comes from CPR, particularly forest. Not replacing the CPR lost at the time of displacement, would force the DPs into destructive practices such as cutting trees for sale as fuel wood. This was noticed among all those who were displaced or otherwise deprived of their livelihood (UPKOL and NALCO).

In all the three projects it is evident that more than 70 percent of the population have a bleak future. In NALCO those who got jobs are happy. In Machkund the displaced families were successfully resettled in a place similar to their environment. In UPKOL the future of DPs and PAPs is worse. The DPS live in a helpless situation with no hope for the future. Most of the displaced people are not happy and worse off than they were before the settlement. The village and community life is lost.

**POLICY IN THE MAKING**

Only in recent years has the welfare of the DPs/PAPs been considered. This is because of pressure both from local human-rights and environmental activists, and from external agencies like the World Bank. The country as a whole does not have a national rehabilitation policy yet.

The absence of a policy and a decisive implementation of ad hoc measures has resulted in the marginalisation of the people, particularly of the weaker sections. They are forced to destroy the environment around them, which they safe-guarded in their traditional society. The DPs have also resorted to other obstructive practices such...
as internalising the culture of the dominant classes that marginalise women. These aspects have to be analysed in order to better understand the consequences of displacement and the true costs of the project. In that sense, the cost benefit analysis itself may need to be looked at from not a sole economic point of view as has been done till now but also from the social and environmental perspectives.

Better resettlement and facilities were acquired only by those who agitated against their displacement, inadequate compensation and improper rehabilitation (NALCO). Some elements of a new policy have so far emerged out of such struggles. Such policies remain at the individual projects level with a national policy yet to be made. One of the features of the policies is to ensure that the oustees "are better off than before the rehabilitation" [Anon 1992a].

Several thousands displaced in the last four decades are yet to be resettled. It is also clear that the traditional concept of rehabilitation is insufficient. It cannot be limited to physical resettlement alone but must also include the economic, social, psychological, cultural and other aspects. At the psychological level the people have to be helped to cope with their sense of insecurity.

The project should have proper records from the beginning not merely of land ownership but also of the occupational patterns in the affected area. A purely economic asset ownership approach cannot ensure a proper rehabilitation scheme. In the negotiations concerning land prices and in the preparation of land takeover, a great amount of injustice is committed. It is important that the land ownership pattern be analysed. It may be in the form of NWFP, the village pasture land, organic manure, herbal medicines or other needs. But the dependence of DPs on these resources is great, much more so in the case of the tribals and similar communities that have had a symbiotic relationship with the forest and have kept a balance between human needs and ecological imperatives.

The experts preparing the scheme of the displaced persons should be able to understand the people's point of view, respect their traditional knowledge systems and interact with them in order to work out criteria suitable for persons who are making a transition to a new type of life.

The Land Acquisition Act is another example of state anarchy. It is not in accordance with the spirit of our Constitution. The process adopted in the field is unethical and anti-people. Invitations of objections in accordance with the law make a mockery of the system. A National Policy on Rehabilitation should be closely linked to a Policy on National Development. In framing the National Policy, the government should primarily involve the displaced persons' expert advice. Though there have been efforts from the various government departments, research institutions, non-governmental organisations, World Bank and private companies, a conscious effort should be made to organise all the displaced persons including the project affected persons at the project, regional, district, state or at the national level. The government should also declare the future projects in public so that people are aware of the development endeavour and can ensure that such projects do not once again override considerations of ecology and human life.