



Displacement and Rehabilitation in Coastal Karnataka : An Analysis

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With the increased modernity and the demand for infrastructure creations are increasing. The natural resources are limited and the human demand are growing manifold. In order to provide the amenities to the public at large the governments in the different parts of the world are compelled to initiate the development programs. This is because, today, development of any country is judged by its infrastructure development like number of dams, industries, mining, communication and transportation network, defense bases and other large projects. Such mega projects are considered as symbols of 'National progress'. These projects require large tracks of land to achieve the national progress. Displacement has become a common phenomenon, which results from a variety of development projects. Displacement or the involuntary and forced relocation of people has come to be acknowledged as among the most significant negative impacts of large water resources development projects like dams and other projects. Due to displacement resettlement and rehabilitation are to be carried out and these have been becoming critical issues of concern these days. Development projects that displace people generally give rise to several social, economic, ecological and environmental problems. The last few decades have shown a rising increase of such problems in developing nations due to accelerated provision for infrastructure building. In an estimate due to infrastructure programme the last decade has observed resettlement of 80 to 90 million people. In India resettlement researches indicate that during the last four decades over 20 million people resettled, but as much as 75 percent of them have not been rehabilitated and more than 40 percent of them are tribals and poor sections of the society. Efforts are being made by NGO's, activists, governments and donor agencies to chalk out concrete written national guidelines to deal with the problem. In the absence of concrete guidelines and written policy the toll of involuntary displacement is mounting day by day without any planned remedial measure. The effects of displacement are quite severe and needs utmost attention of the policy makers and the planners. Right from the beginning with the inception of any development project the impact of resettlement and rehabilitation on affected people has not received serious consideration. Lack of clear objectives consistent procedures and adequate resources for addressing the resettlement results in serious adverse effects on the people displaced. This is where the role of governance comes into picture and one need to address the issues involved in the resettlement and rehabilitation issues. The agency involved in Resettlement and Rehabilitation is nothing but the government which is legal guardian of the masses. At this juncture the role of government is much more as it has to safeguard the larger interests of the population.

Sea Bird Project :The Union government felt the need to strengthen the national defense project, particularly the naval defense. Accordingly they made a plan for it and executed in the west coast in Karwar, Karnataka State. Coastal Karnataka consists of three districts, Dakshina Kannada, Udupi and

Uttara Kannada. The existence of western ghats east and Arabian sea at west have reduced the availability of land for cultivation and settlement in coastal areas of Karnataka. Large number of people lives in coastal Karnataka right from Karwar city at north to Mangalore city at south. Some major projects have come to this place engulfing vast portions of land leading to various inconveniences to the people at large.

Sea Bird Project is a Naval Base of Indian Navy Situated on West coast of Karnataka state towards the south of Karwar city of Uttar Kannada District. It is the largest Naval base in Asia and is spread between the city of Karwar at North and the town of Ankola at the south. The foundation stone for the base was laid by late prime Minister Rajeev Gandhi in the Year 1985 and the actual construction work started from 1999 onwards. A Vast area of land near the coastal belt between Karwar and Ankola cities was acquired for the Naval Base.

Private land acquired for the Project	: 2418 Acres
Forest land used for the Project	: 7771 Acres and 39 Guntas
Government land used for the project	: 89 Acres and 5 Guntas
Total land Used for the Project	: 10,279 Acres and 5 Guntas
Number of Houses acquired	: 2510
Total Number of Families Affected	: 4032

by land acquisition (Source: Office documents of S.L.A.O., Seabird, Karwar)

The Sea Bird Project was supposed to cost Rs. 5000 crores when planned, and now it has already consumed more than 2480 crores, The Naval Base has the capacity to hold 10 warships and now second stage with an additional expenditure of 2500 crores is proposed. After compilation of second stage the base will develop as full scale Naval Command & will house 25-30 warships, Aircraft Carriers and also Submarines. The Naval Project was first proposed to be set up in Kerala or Goa but was shifted to Karwar because of the strong political will developing in these states against the huge project. The huge Naval base was proposed to be constructed in the 1980's because the Indian Government wanted to keep its naval fleet out of the reach of Pakistan's F-16 Planes rage with a strong Naval Base and the Soviet Union was to help and finance the Construction of the base, since the United states of America had Strong presence in Pakistan as well as in Diego Garcia in Indian Ocean, to have a counter balance in the region the soviet Union was inclined towards India. The construction of Naval Base was justified on the pretext of strengthening the Naval Power of the Nation. A vast and thickly populated area between the city of Karwar and Ankola town was acquired for the project. According to the statistics department report the average density of population per square km of Karwar

and Ankola Talukas is 156. But the density of population of acquired areas is much more. Two villages of Arga and Kodar of Karat Taluka were totally displaced and 11 more villages were partially displaced. The whole area towards the western side of the National Highway 17 was sealed off for the people. People were deprived of access to the beautiful beaches stretched 32 km between Karwar city and Ankola town. 2418 areas of private land comprising of 2510 houses effecting 4032 families was acquired. Along with this 7861 acres of forest and government lands were also used. A large people who were displaced by the project were the agriculturists and the fishermen who lost the lands which they cultivated and Sea inhabited by them for generations. They lost their vocation and source of income and became jobless and dependants. Even though the lands were being acquired through Government Notifications in the Year 1985, there was no Serious movement on the side of the government to speed up the project till 1998, When the then defense Minister George Fernandez took the initiative to establish the project at full – scale. Because of the delay in implementing the project the people of the area thought that the Naval Base may not come in full –scale and were not mentally prepared to be displaced from their villages. Since there was no serious move from the central government to speed up the project, the state Government which was in charge of acquisition of lands and rehabilitation of the people to be displaced was also working at snail pace. After the soviet Union disintegrated and the cold –war between the two power blocs came to an end in the 1980's and with change in government brought the work of the project almost to a standstill which made the state government to go slow on land acquisition, displacing the people and rehabilitating them. The work on rehabilitation centers also slowed down and even though the people were allotted the sites in the various rehabilitation centers, they were not displaced from their lands till 1998. The Government of Karnataka represented by the Deputy Commissioner of Uttara Kannada District, the special land acquisition officer, Karwar, the central Government and the Indian Navy were the agencies involved in this rehabilitation process. People living on the western side of National

Highway between Karwar and Ankola were displaced. The Rehabilitation Package given to them was very meager and arrived at without any Scientific study. The distance from the Karwar city and the national rates prior to 1985 were taken into consideration by the land acquisition authorities to fix the land compensation rates. The authorities were influenced by a section of the displaced people to increase grant amount instead of increasing the land value because their land holding was less the effects of which were very far-reaching on the economic, Political and social set up of the area. Rehabilitated peoples interests were not heard properly, because of their political affiliations. The acquired areas were thickly inhabited by agriculturists, fishermen and other dependant classes. The displaced People developed hatredness towards the governmental agencies because of their previous experiences with the authorities. The response of the government to the problems of the displaced people was not up to their expectations and the benefits given by the government have failed to reach completely to the displaced people .All this happened may be the government could not workout a proper, complete and fool – proof rehabilitation project to provide benefits to the displaced people. The meager compensation paid that too after many years, proved fatal to the land dependant families. The displaced people were forced to approach the court of law for more compensation and the Hon'ble high court of Karnataka has fixed a compensation of Rs 11000.00 per gunta of land which was confirmed by the supreme court of India as against the average compensation of Rs 610.00 per gunta which was awarded to the 4032 displaced families. Even then the naval authorities are refusing to pay the amount to the displaced people. All this happened due to improper governance. Had they applied the famous POSDCORB formula of Public administration they would have made wonders but due to lack of vision and proper administrative skills the problems are compounded. Hence the planning activity must be strengthened, Good deal of planning, and control mechanism systems were evolved. They must devise useful people friendly programmes in a welfare state.one must develop a spirit of insight into the functioning of administration.

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