



ORIGINAL RESEARCH PAPER

Public Administration

POLAVARAM: BOON OR BANE

KEY WORDS: Polavaram Project, Andhra Pradesh, Boon, Bane

Manovikas Doradla*

Research Scholar, Dept. of and Public Administration Acharya Nagarjuna University, Nagarjuna Nagar, Guntur District, Andhra Pradesh- 522 510.

*Corresponding Author

ABSTRACT

The Polavaram Project is the biggest project in this drive and will easily rank as one among such gigantic projects in the country. This project will be built on the Godavari River at Polavaram in West Godavari district at a cost of about 20,000 crores (the cost is escalating by the day). The stated objectives of this project as per the state government are, to provide additional irrigation to 2, 91,000 ha (7, 19,400 acres); to provide assured drinking water and industrial water needs of Visakhapatnam; to generate 960 MW of electricity and to divert 80 tmc (thousand million cubic meters) of Godavari water to the Krishna river basin to stabilize that basin and use the Krishna water thus saved to provide additional irrigation to Rayalaseema region. The advantages and disadvantages including no of villages and caste-wise families affected are presented in the paper.

INTRODUCTION

Polavaram Project is a multi-purpose irrigation project that has been accorded national project status by the Union Government. This dam across the Godavari River is under construction located in West Godavari District and East Godavari Districts in Andhra Pradesh state and its reservoir spreads in parts of Chhattisgarh and Odisha States too. The rapid speed in the progress of the mega Polavaram irrigation project has become life-threatening for the people affected by the project, as many of them have not yet been assured of or received compensation. The construction of the multipurpose irrigation project is likely to displace nearly 3 lakh people, out of which 50 per cent are tribals and 15 per cent are Dalits, while the remaining are OBCs, all of whose source of livelihood is agriculture.

The multi-purpose project would massively displace people numbering over two lakh (nearly four lakh unofficially) from over 300 villages in nine mandals of Khammam (VR Puram, Kunavaram, Chintur, Bhadrachalam, Velerpadu, Kukunur and Burghampad), Devipatnam mandal (East Godavari) and Polavaram mandal (West Godavari), all of them in the Fifth Scheduled area, besides parts of Konda block in Dantewada district of Chhattisgarh and Motu block of Malkangiri district of Odisha (New Indian Express Report, August 28, 2014).

Most of them are worried about losing their natural place and unknown to any other place they might be shifted. This breaking up of relationship and families is the biggest cause of worry among people. Many of them may not even have thought as government only use caste and religion card to break their unity and dupe them further for a new 'dream'.

DISPLACEMENT OF TRIBALS

The project brings misery to more than 1.5 lakh people, by submerging and displacing 276 villages- predominantly tribal villages in an area of about one lakh acres including forest land. The proposed displacement of such huge population uprooting them from their traditional and natural habitats is likely to cause degeneration in their lives. They will be forced to become migrant labourers and urban slum dwellers to which they will not be able to adjust in their lifetime. The situation thus created is alienating the tribal people from the main stream and leading to many social and political conflicts.

ADVANTAGES OF POLAVARAM PROJECT

- Surplus water of Himalayan rivers will be transferred to the peninsular rivers of India.
- The surplus waters of Godavari river basin can be transferred to Krishna river basin.
- Though there is rich water availability in the coastal

districts like East Godavari, the irrigation department releases water to the first crop season only. The farmers fail to get the water to their second crops. If Polavaram project gets completed, no question of scarcity of water for the farmers for both the crops per year. 68 TMCs of water will be available for the farmers for the second crop.

- There will be no floods and sea water will not sink the villages. Sterile lands become fertile. Nowhere have we seen any crop lands in the coastal regions.
- There will be permanent solution to drinking water scarcity problems.
- Hydro Electric Plants get sufficient water and around 1000 mega watts of electricity can be produced. Even villages get 24 hours power supply with Polavaram project.

DISADVANTAGES OF POLAVARAM PROJECT

- On an estimation of 276 villages and 44,547 families will be displaced from their places. It will be a tough task for the governments to provide permanent shelters for them.
- The project submerges several archaeological sites, wildlife sanctuaries and coal deposits. The government has to face the heat of agitators.
- Some of the political parties such as the TRS, the CPI and environmentalists such as Medha Patkar might turn as agitators against the project.

DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

The no. of villages affected, no. of families affected and caste-wise families affected under the Polavaram project are presented in the Table 1.

Table 1 Villages, Families Affected And Caste-wise Families Affected Under The Polavaram Project

Sl. No.	Name of the Village	No. of affected families	Caste-wise affected Families			
			SC	ST	BC	OC
1	Singaraniipalli	120	2	91	18	09
2	Mavidigondi	113	-	111	-	2
3	Pydipaka	250	106	01	131	45
4	Devanogondi	84	-	81	-	03
5	Chegondapalli	153	-	153	-	-
6	Thotagondi	59	02	55	-	02
7	Parangipadupet	214	20	02	140	52
Total	1029	133	494	259	113	

The table shows that in Parangipadu mandal 7 villages 1029 families including 133 SC, 494 ST, 259 BC and 113 OC community families.

CONCLUSION

Comparatively, there will be innumerable advantages for Polavaram project than the disadvantages. Once the project

gets completed, no wonder, Seemandhra would surpass even Singapore in terms of development.

REFERENCES

1. L.Bharati, V.U.Smakhtin and B.K.Anand (2009). "Modelling water supply and demand scenarios: the Godavari-Krishna inter-basin transfer, India" (PDF), *Water Policy*, 11:140, Retrieved 7 August 2013.
2. Amarasinghe, Upali A.; Sharma and R.Bharat(2008). "Benefits of Irrigation Water Transfer in the National River Linking Project: A Case Study of the Godavari (Polavaram)-Krishna Link in Andhra Pradesh", *Strategic Analysis of the National River Linking Project (NRLP) on India*, Retrieved 4 November 2010.
3. "Polavaram will be ready by 2018, says Devineni", Retrieved 17 October 2016.