

## 7.4 RESETTLEMENT AND REHABILITATION

- People are forced to move out of their land due to both natural and manmade disasters.
- Natural disasters like earthquakes, cyclones, tsunamis etc. render thousands of people homeless and sometime even force them to move and resettle in other areas.
- Similarly, developmental projects like construction of roads, dams, canals and flyovers displace people from their home.
- Rehabilitation means restoration to the former state.

### Reasons for displacement of people

- **Natural disasters** like earthquake, cyclones, tsunamis, volcanic eruptions, prolonged droughts conditions, floods, hurricanes etc.
- **Manmade disasters** like industrial accidents (e.g. Bhopal gas tragedy), nuclear accidents (Japan), oil spills (Exxon Valdez oil spill), toxic contamination of sites etc.

In search of better **employment opportunities**.

- **Developmental projects like:** construction of dams, irrigation canals, reservoirs etc.
- **Infrastructural projects** like flyovers, bridges, roads etc.
- **Transportation activities** like roads, highway, canal etc.
- **Energy related project** like power plants, oil exploration, mining activities, pipelines like HBJ pipeline etc.

- **Agricultural projects**

Projects related with the **conservation of wildlife like national parks, sanctuaries** and biosphere reserves.

## **Resettlement issues**

- As per the World Bank estimates, nearly 10 lakh people are displaced worldwide for a variety of reasons.

Some of them are mentioned below:

- **Little or no support:**

Displacement mainly hits tribal and rural people who usually do not figure in the priority list of any political authorities or parties.

- **Meager compensation:**

The compensation for the land lost is often not paid, it is delayed or even if paid, is too small both in monetary terms and social changes forced on them by these mega developmental projects.

- **Loss of livelihood:**

Displacement is not a simple incident in the lives of the displaced people. They have to leave their ancestral land and forests on which they depend for their livelihood.

Many of them have no skills to take up another activity or pick up any other occupation.

Usually, the new land that is offered to them is of poor quality and the refugees are unable to make a living.

- **Lack of facilities:**

When people are resettled in a new area, basic infrastructure and amenities are not provided in that area.

Very often, temporary camps become permanent settlements.

It is also a major problem of displacement or resettlement that people have to face.

- **Increase in stress:**

Resettlement disrupts the entire life of the people. They are unable to bear the shocks of emptiness and purposelessness created in their life.

Payment of compensation to the head of the family often lead to bitter quarrels over sharing of compensation amount within the family, leading to stress and even withering of family life.

Land ownership has a certain prestige attached to it which cannot be compensated for even after providing the new land.

With the loss of property and prestige, marriages of young people also become difficult as people from outside villages are not willing to marry their daughters to the refugees.

- **Increase in health problems:**

Lack of nutrition due to the loss of agriculture and forest based livelihood, lead to the general decline in the health of the people.

People are used to traditional home remedies.

But the herbal remedies and plants gets submerged due to the developmental projects.

## **Secondary displacement:**

Occupational groups residing outside the submergence area but depending on the area for the livelihood also experience unemployment.

### **Loss of identity:**

Tribal life is community based. The tribal are simple people who have a lifestyle of their own.

Displacements have negative impacts on their livelihood, culture and spiritual existence in the following ways:

- Break up of families and communities are the important social issues of displacement.
- The women suffer the most as they are deprived even a little compensation.
- Inter-community marriages, cultural functions, folk songs and dances do not take place among the displaced people.
- Resettlement increases the poverty among the tribal people due to the loss of land, livelihood, food insecurity, jobs, skills etc.
- Loss of identity of individuals and the loss of connection between the people and the environment is the greatest loss in the process.
- The indigenous knowledge that they have regarding the wildlife and the herbal plants are lost.
- The tribal people are not familiar with the market trends, prices of commodities and policies.

### **Objectives of rehabilitation**

- Tribal people should be allowed to live along the lives of their own patterns and others should avoid imposing anything on them.
- They should be provided means to develop their own traditional art and culture in every way.

- Villagers should be given the option of shifting out with others to enable them to live a community based life.
- Removal of poverty should be one of the objectives of rehabilitation.
- The people displaced should get an appropriate share in the fruits of the development.
- The displaced people should be given employment opportunities.
- Resettlement should be in the neighbourhood of their own environment.
- If resettlement is not possible in the neighbour area, priority should be given to the development of the irrigation facilities and supply of basic inputs for agriculture, drinking water, wells, grazing ground for the cattle, schools for the children, primary healthcare units and other amenities.
- Villagers should be taken into confidence at every stage of implementation of the displacement and they should be educated, through public meetings, discussion about the legalities of the Land Acquisition act and other rehabilitation provisions.
- The elderly people of the village should be involved in the decision making.

## **Case studies of resettlement and rehabilitation**

### **Displacement due to the dam projects, India**

- The Hirakud dam displaced about 20000 people living in about 250 villages.
- The Bhakra Nangal dam was constructed around 1950's and displaced a number of people. Some of them could not be rehabilitated even today.

### **Displacement due to the mining:**

- Due to possibility of the accidents or sinking of the land, people have to displace in and around the mining area.

- Mining take up several hectares of land thousands of people have to be evacuated.

### **Jharia coal fields:**

- It posed a problem to the local residents due to the underground fire.
- Around 3 lakh people were to be shifted and it became a problem to find an alternative site.
- A huge amount of money to the tune of Rs 115 crores has been spent to put out the fire and still the problem persists.

### **Displacement in Japan due to nuclear crisis:**

- A nuclear crisis in Japan was occurred during an explosion in three of the major reactors of Fukushima city due to Tsunami.
- Currently, more than 2,00,000 people have been displaced from their native places and yet many are unable to find an alternative home.
- People were evacuated to protect them for the possible nuclear hazard and exposure.
- They were suffering from acute hunger as all the food supply was interrupted due to contamination of food particles by radiation.