



Research Article

DISPLACEMENT: ITS IMPACT ON TRIBAL POPULATION (A CASE STUDY)

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ABSTRACT

Displacement of people from the originally settled area has been a burning issue in the present day world. Population displacement becomes a major human rights issue in recent years. Displaced person is one who forced to leave his or her own territory or natural place. This mobility of communities by inside or by outside force brings ecological changes and environmental degradation that has been a companion of development. Further, displacement carries on impoverishment and affects adversely the Tribal people specially women and children in particular. The impact of consequent impoverishment as a result of displacement affects the all concerned, but women feel it more than others do. It carries higher joblessness, greater malnutrition and deterioration in their social status. Since access to work declines after the loss of land and property that is also the foundation of the loss of tribal women's relatively status. Tribal people have displaced from their original homeland results socio-economic as well as cultural change. Displacement due to development projects and political causes receive much more publicity and attention, but it is not so in case of the displacement affected population caused by natural calamities like flood, soil erosion etc. This paper presents a descriptive framework to understand the displacement factors, rehabilitation process, socio-economic and cultural perspectives of displaced Boro and Mishing populations in the selected villages.

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INTRODUCTION

Displacement of people from the originally settled area has been a burning issue in the present day world. Population displacement becomes a major human rights issue in the recent years as it results in the impoverishment and marginalisation of large number of families and most of them from the already powerless communities. After the Second World War, various development practices and frequent occurrence of natural disasters in different corners of the world caused uproot of millions of people from their original settled area to another. A significant number of these displaced people are tribal and other economically marginal rural populations who have historically depended on the natural resources for their subsistence. Further, this process has not only dislocated them but also affected their socio-economic, demographic and psychological life patterns.(Vasudeva Rao-2005). A report by the Centre for Science and Environment states that India is the most flood affected country in the world after Bangladesh and that over 30 million people are displaced annually (M.P.Lama 2007).

Displacement and India

The World Bank defined "loss of access" as a form of displacement.

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In other words, the definitional characteristic in forced displacement is not necessarily the physical removal but the imposed loss of asset may take place in situ, without physical removal of inhabitants. Therefore, the policy now covers the "loss of income sources or means of livelihood, whether or not the affected persons must move to another location". In India, four major types of displacement are identified so far (M.P.Lama-2007)

1. Political causes including secessionist movements.
2. Identity based autonomy movements.
3. Localised violence.
4. Environmental and development induced displacement

The total number of people internally displaced by armed conflict, general violence and human rights violations world wide as of the end of 2012 was estimated 28.6 million according to Internal displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC-2013). 5.40 lakh people were internally displaced due to conflict and violence in India reported in April, 2013.

Displacement of tribal people and Assam

The tribal population occupies a vital position in the demographic map of India and constitutes 8.02 percent of India's total population as per population census 2011 [Census of India 2011]. The North East India is the region provides a variegated canvas of tribal settings where about 125 tribal communities in the region display a rich culture. The Schedule Tribe population of Assam has been divided into two: Hills

and Plains tribes. The Boro is the first and Mishing is the second largest plain scheduled tribe of Assam. Boro people live in almost all the districts of Assam But Mishing peoples are concentrated in the 10 districts of Assam viz. Tinsukia, Dibrugarh, Sivsagar, Jorhat, Golaghat, Darang, Sonitpur, North Lakhimpur, Dhemaji and undivided Kamrup District. They are also found in some places in Arunachal Pradesh. They live in villages preferably located on the bank of the river. They can be easily identified with the help of their distinct identity such as Mongolian physical appearance, own dialect, traditional colourful dresses and peculiar housing pattern.

The agrarian tribal people have close attachment with the nature. They usually go for fishing; hunting, swimming, bathing and even collection of drinking water from rivers. Collection of fire wood, food from forest etc. are the different purposes for which the tribal people are heavily depend on the nature. But, these nature lover tribal people are forced to flee to their residence because of natural calamities and man-made incidents like conflicts, riots etc. In Assam on July and August 2012, nearly 5 lakhs people were forced to flee and hence displaced due to inter-communal violence between Boro People and Bengoli Speaking Muslims. These internally displaced people took shelter in more than 300 camps at different places in BTAD. Earlier, more than 8 lakh people displaced in similar cases in 1993, 1996, 1998, 2010 and 2011.

Displacement and Tribal Women

Further, displacement carries on impoverishment and affects adversely the women and children in particular. The impact of consequent impoverishment as a result of displacement affects the all concerned, but women feel it more than others do. It carries higher joblessness, greater malnutrition and deterioration in their social status. Since access to work declines after the loss of land and poverty that is also the foundation of the loss of tribal women's relatively high status. While the access of the whole family declines, that of women declines more than that of men. In the context of development induced displacement, if the project gives jobs, except in women headed families they go almost exclusively to men considered heads of families. If they are rehabilitated land is allotted to men. So, domestic power passes fully to men and from him to his son [Thekkekara 1993]. As a result, after displacement joblessness is higher among women than among men. But for exceptions, women who want to work have to be satisfied with unskilled daily wage labour.

Displacement reduces women to being housewives alone depending on men's single income. But men spent a part of their income on alcohol. Tribal women who are deprived of the resources on the basis of their loss of relatively high status, experience, downward economic and social mobility. Dependence on men grows further among other women whose social status is not the same as that of the tribal [Menon 1995]. It also deprives women of the resource that met the family's food, water and other needs that are traditionally their responsibility. Their role does not change but they have fewer resources to attend to it. (Ganguly Thukral and Singh 1999).

Therefore the worst affected among the victims of displacement is the tribal population and particularly women. So to study the impact of displacement caused by soil erosion and other natural calamities, among the tribal population

especially women in the area under consideration are the need of the hour.

Objective of the study

The main objectives of present study are ----

1. To examine the displacement factors and rehabilitation process in selected villages.
2. To analyze the socio- economic and cultural effect on displaced people.

METHODOLOGY

For smooth conduct of the study purposive cum random sampling method has been applied to select the concerned villages. The study is based on both primary and secondary data. Primary data is collected through observation, interview schedules and conversation with villagers and discussions with leading persons.

Secondary data is collected from Government records and documents, journals and magazines, published and unpublished materials related to the study and internet. In addition, various methods such as descriptive, analytical, statistical and case study have been followed to make a proper study on the topic.

Social and Demographic characteristics of the Study Area

The present study mainly concentrated on Socio-economic and cultural impact on tribal people (especially Boro and Mising) after displacement. The study is composites of the two rehabilitated villages of Sadiya Sub-division in Tinsukia District of Assam. The Tinsukia district is one of the 28 Districts of Assam. The District of Tinsukia was declared as an administrative district w.e.f. 2nd October 1989. The district is located at the North-Eastern part of Assam. Its geographical boundary is covered by the Lohit District of Arunachal Pradesh on the East, the Brahmaputra and Dhemaji District on the West, the slopes of the hilly tract of Arunachal Pradesh on the North and Dibrugarh District and Tirap District of Arunachal Pradesh on the South. The District covers areas of 3790 Sq.k.ms. The total population of the district is 1316948 out of which 675986(51.32%) are male and 640962(48.68%) female. as per 2011 census. Thus out of the total population of the district 1053956 (80.03%) live in rural areas of which 538210 (51.54%) are male and 515746 (48.46%) are female. Scheduled Caste population is 31315 (2.38%), male is 16601 (53.01) and 14714 (46.9%) female. Scheduled Tribes population is 99780(7.6%) male is 57234(57.4%) and 42546 (42.6%) female. While the density of population was 347 persons per Sq.k.m. The sex ratio in the district is 948 female per 1000 males, the literacy rate in the district is 809796 (61.50%) 457356 (56.48%) are male and 352440(43.52%) female. (Census report-2011)

The district has 3 sub-divisions i.e. Tinsukia Sadar, Margherita and Sadiya. There are 1162 village, 88 Goan Panchayats, 3 Anchalik Panchayats and 7 Developments Block in the district. The district of Tinsukia is rich in mineral resources like Coal, Petroleum, and Natural Gas etc. The high quality of coal is found in the Collieries of Makum field, Ledo and Tipong. The Digboi refinery is one of the oldest Oil Refinery in india. Tea Industry is another major industry of the district. There are 91 Tea Gardens and 9 number of Forest based industries which help in the development of the district (District Statistical Office, Tinsukia).

The Sadiya Sub-division is located in the Eastern part of the district, bordering on the North and East by Arunachal Pradesh, on the South by the Lohit River and the West by the Rivers viz. Datung and Dibang. The Sub-division was declared on 2nd October 1979. It is covering a total area of 863.47 Sq.k.m. with 1 block, 12 Goan Panchayats and 148 inhabited Villages. Sadiya Sub-division is located at a distance of about 65 k.m. from the Headquarter of Tinsukia district. Total population of Sadiya Sub-division is 104948 as per 2011 Census. Out of total population 53912(51.37%) are Male and 51026(48.63%) female. Density of population is 116 per sq.k.m. Out of the total population of the Sub-division Schedule Cast 2684 (2.56%), Scheduled Tribes 25896 (24.67%) and others 76368 (72.76%) The literacy rate of the Subdivision is 73904 (70.42%) (Sub-divisional Statistical office, Sadiya)

To make the study more effective two villages have been selected viz. Ambikapur Boro Gaon and Bagaribari Gaon. Ambikapur Boro Gaon is under the Ambikapur Goan Panchayat of the Sadiya Development Block and distance of about 22 k.ms from the Headquarter of the Sadiya Sub-division. The village is situated at the interior place and there is muddy road communication. The village is located on the boarder of Arunachal Pradesh. The village was establishing in 1983. Total population of the village is 422 out of which 217 (51.42%) are male and 205 (48.58%) female. All peoples are belonging to Schedule Tribes. The village people are displace from various District of Assam. There are 326(77.25%) belong to Hinduism and 96(22.75%) Christianity (Field study 2019).

On the other hand, Bagaribari Gaon is under the Kundil Gaon Panchayat of the Sadiya Development Block .The village is in the Southern part of Sadiya Sub-division and on the bank of the river Brahmaputra and located at a distance of 20 k.ms. from the Sub-divisional Head Quarter. The population of the village is 365. Out of which 189 (51.78%) are Male and 176 (48.22%) female. Out of the total population of the village, Scheduled Tribes is 242(66.30%), Scheduled Caste is only 6(1.64%), Ahom 47(12.87%), Tea Garden70(19.17%), There are 141(38.6%) belong to Christianity and 224(61.4%) Hinduism.

Under Resettled & Rehabilitation (R & R) Package the state government allotted 12 bighas of land to each displaced families in Ambikapur Boro Gaon. On the other hand, the displaced population from Amarpur & Bhim-chapori was provided 2 bighas at grazing land in Bagoribari. The Below Poverty Line (BPL) families and widows were covered by the Indira Awas Yojana. There are 18 such displaced families in this village. However, a house costs Rs. 75000 were provided to them (Field study -2019).

Analysis of the surveyed data:

To analyze the socio-economic position of displaced population in the two selected rehabilitated villages three important aspects have been considered viz. occupation, literacy position and workforce participation.

Occupation

The main occupation of tribal peoples is shifting cultivation, collecting forest produce and agriculture, inadequate irrigation facilities made to cultivate only, food crops, primitive agricultural practices. Shifting cultivation, illiteracy,

exploitation, indebtedness etc. have been identified as some of the main problem of agrarian tribal people. Employment opportunities beyond agriculture are few. Mainly tribal people have been making their livelihood by working as daily wage labourers and are found to take loan from private money leaders because of their meagre income and to lead life towards debt bondage. Break-up of the occupational pattern of the two villages is shown in the table-1.

Table 1 Break-up of occupational pattern in the area under consideration (in percent).

Name of the Villages	Livelihood			
	Agriculture & Allied Activities	Services	Business	Any other
Ambikapur Boro Gaon	83.16%	1.25%	4.87%	10.72%
Bagaribari Gaon	79.35%	1.07%	2.85%	16.73%

Source: Field Survey

In the Table: 1, we have seen that agriculture and allied activities is the main source of livelihood in all the two villages. Ambikapur Boro Gaon has the highest (i.e.83.16 p.c.) of the people engaged in agriculture and allied activities. The participation of people in services and business sector is low in all the two villages in comparison to agriculture and any other categories. Bagaribari has much lower percentage in services & business i.e. 1.07 p.c. & 2.85 p.c. respectively. It might be due to its location in a remote area cut off from the mainland of the state. In all the two villages people are engaged as wage labour, contractual labour and participation in rural development programme.

Education

Education is considered as an important factor towards social change. In addition, the issue of educational development is so basic and fundamental to human life its differential levels result in disparities among people and places. Spread of literacy is an important parameter of socio-cultural and economic development among the society. The various dimension of social and cultural change in a tribal society can be under stood in the light of literacy and education. The educational attainment in the selected villages has been shown in the following table -2.

Table 2 Village wise distribution of educational attainment in the selected villages (in percent).

Name of the village	Level of educational attainment						
	Illiterate	Literate	Primary Level	High school level	HSLC	HSSLC	Graduate
Ambikapur Boro Gaon	46.62%	53.38%	58.56%	35.50%	3.78%	2.16%	-
BagariBari Gaon	43.65%	56.35%	66.34%	25.36%	5.25%	3.05%	-

Source: Field survey

The table-2 reveals that Bagaribari Gaon has the higher literacy rate i.e.56.35 p.c. in comparison to i.e. 53.38 p.c. in Ambikapur Boro Gaon. Besides this, literacy rate in both Villages are lower than national average.The table also shows that most of the people have educational attainment up to primary level. A few people have been found HSLC in both villages. But, no graduate was found in the two selected village

Work participation rate of people greatly determines the character of socio-economic development of an area, as also the quality of life of a society. The participation of the tribal people in workforce brings tremendous contribution to gross production of the state. Moreover, the entire chain of production functions is also shared directly or indirectly by them. Hence, their economic contribution is immensely significant, although most of their works remain unpaid, unrecognised and undervalued. Thus, their employment status and contribution need to be rived in the light of this reality.

Major findings

The Boro and Mishing people of the two villages are the victim of displacement. They have resettled in Ambikapurb Boro Gaon in 1983 and Bagaribari gaon in 2004. The major findings and consequences of displacement are as follows --

It has been found during the field survey that the distinct cultural identity of both the tribes (Boro and Mising) are disrupted causing immense socio-psychological stress. They have to struggle with the new environment and have to adjust themselves with the new situation. They also face hardship under the process of globalisation.

They were used to paddy cultivation. Since displaced people were rehabilitated besides the forests they have to depend on the forest and forest produces. The Government allotted 2 bighas of land to each family in Bagaribari. As it was too limited size of agricultural land to them, so some of the women were compel to work as agricultural labour in the neighbouring villages

The tribal women are afraid that their children are the coming generations would be totally depending of the experiences of their brave old world and matrilineal character of love and affection. This strong feeling has mode them more identity conscious and has paved the way for the growth of new trend of tribal revivalism or detribalise.

They now want to revive their lost socio-cultural and linguistic characteristics, which were abandoned due to social change and modernisation in the recent part.

One of their cultural identities is the housing pattern (i.e. Chang-Ghar). But we find in the field survey that 75 percent of houses in Boro Gaon is kuchcha houses. A few 'Chang Ghar's (pile houses) are there in both the villages as the sample of their culture. It might be due to topographical demand as well as sound economic conditions. But, the displaced Mishing people of Bagaribari still living in Chang Ghars with the joint families.

The children and women suffer a lot during the process of displacement. In such a situation, the children are affected by the traditional process of socialization.

The collection of fuel and fodder is pre-dominantly women's job among the Mishings. Before displacement, the women totally depend on forests for these requirements. But after displacement, they have to walk long distances to collect firewood and fodder in Bagarbari. On the contrary, the Mishing women used LPG cylinder as fuel in bagaribari Gaon. With regards to possession of drinking water, their conditions improved as water is available in the villages.

The population of Ambikapur Boro Gaon (89 p.c.) peoples are living Below Poverty Line (BPL) On the contrary, 90 p.c.

population in Bagaribari living BPL. The nature of soil is not as it is to be suitable for production of major food crops i.e. rice & vegetables.

Since Ambikapur Boro Gaon is located in boarder of Arunachal Pradesh. But Bagaribari village is located on the bank of mighty Brahmaputra and Kundil, the people feel insecure that because of possibility of soil erosion by the said rivers and hence further they may displace.

Ambikapur Boro Gaon is comparatively far behind the other villages in the sphere of development. There is lack of drinking water and sanitation facility and absence of electricity service even today. Rural electrification programme is yet to introduce in this village.

The workforce participation pattern in all the selected villages is almost same i.e. mainly agrarian in nature. In Bagaribari 79.16 p.c. population engaged in agriculture and allied activities. The percentage of participation in business activities have not been increasing the displaced Mishing community viz .4.87 in Bagaribari Gaon. But it is small in Ambikapur Boro Gaon i.e.2.85 p.c. only. However, throughout the process of displacement the livelihood pattern has been diverted as other than agriculture sector many of displaced Mishing people engaged in non-agricultural activities.

The female workforce participation pattern in all the two villages is almost the same i.e. agriculture. More than 35.00 p.c. females are engaged in this sector. A few number of women engaged in services mainly as ASHA KARMI, Anganwadi and primary teacher in all the two villages. Noticeably, other than agriculture & allied activities and services, women are engaged as daily basis wage labour, contractual worker, shop keepers and participated in RDPs actively.

Another significant impact of displacement on Mishing women is that the number of housewives has been increasing; the percentages are 42.53 p.c. in Bagaribari Gaon and 46.23 in Ambikapur Boro Goan.

The educational attainment scenario is disappointing in Bagaribari,. Further, most of the people read up to primary level i.e. 66.34 p.c. in Bagaribari, and 58.56 p.c. in Ambikapur Boro Gaon respectively. It has been found during field survey that there is no single member availing vocational education and other technical education like computer course, textile design, nursing etc.

Another significant finding in relation to women participation in SHGs is that in Bagaribar has 5 SHGs run by women satisfactorily. Likewise, Ambikapur Boro Gaon has 4 SHGs but not working satisfactorily mainly due to lack of coordination among the members and lack of proper linkage with block officials and the banks.

MGNREGS is operating in Bagaribari and Ambikapur Boro Gaon get effective employment through this scheme. Total 115 job cards are issued to the Bagaribari Gaon and 103 Job card issued to the Ambikapur Boro Goan. But, the field study revel that both Gaon man-days generated is not satisfactory.

Breakage of joint family into nuclear family is an impact of displacement but in Bagaribari. People of this village still lives in Chang-Ghars with joint families.

Weaving, poultry and cattle rearing are integral part of life of the Boro and Mishing people in particular, and is the source of their self-dependency and livelihood. It is declined in Ambikapur Boro Goan and Bagaribari Gaon after displacement. Displacement changes their cultural identity and thus, dependency ratio become larger the women of Bagaribari, on the other hand, are keeping their tradition, even after displacement. They try to manage bare necessities of their own.

Suggestions

Increase in female literacy is the utmost requirement in the concerned villages since it is the prerequisite for poverty alleviation and empowerment process.

Govt. should take various initiatives and schemes to improve water supply, health & sanitation facility, electrification, improvement of communication & educational facilities for displaced population.

NGOs can act as a catalyst in this process. Especially in the sphere of empowerment and development it can do a lot.

Adequate rehabilitation package and expeditious implementation of the rehabilitation process with the active participation of the affected families should be introduced.

To provide a better standard of living, making concerted efforts for providing sustainable income to the affected families;

The government may form a monitoring cell to examine how these displaced people maintain their own culture, tradition, works and their socio-economic livelihood.

The educational institutions, NGOs, social workers, politicians can provide a platform to these displaced tribal people and women in particular to utilize their capacity of unique textile design in productive and community development purposes through which the rate of impoverishment can be reduced.

To aware and organize co-operative farming system e.g. dairy, piggery, goatery, poultry, fishery etc. with introduction of the concept of entrepreneurship development.

If after due public process, displacement is inevitable, a comprehensive package that will enhance the social and economic security of displaced communities is the least that should be offered.

Displacement is inevitable, resettlement must become an opportunity a mandate for reconstructing production system, raising standards of living restoring, community and kinship relations and minimizing the conflict with the host community.

Project and processes that cause natural-calamity led displacement must be open for public debate. This would facilitate that potentially facing displacement to make informed choices.

CONCLUSION

The paper presents a descriptive framework for understanding the socio-economic cultural perspectives of displaced Boro and Mishing populations. Displacement due to development projects and political causes receive much more publicity and attention, but it is not so in case of the displacement affected population caused by natural calamities like flood, soil erosion etc. At the same time we have seen that tsunami led

displacement had huge coverage but soil erosion and flood affected tribal population in Assam are neglected and deprived of getting adequate R&R facilities. Very recently, the state government fails to give compensation to flood and soil erosion affected families due to non-availability of data on such families in the state. The problem is serious since a number of families are living in embankments even today. As a result impoverishment and marginalization have been widened. Thus, the need of the hour is to set up an independent cell to monitor the matter.

However, a suitable policy on resettlement and rehabilitation with gender equality not only in the central level but also in the state level can be useful instrument. If proper attention is given to these affected people that it can help to utilize their productive capacity properly as well as it helps in to enrich their culture and to maintain unity among diversified socio-cultural identity of different tribal population of the country.

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