

Dynamics between Displacement and Rehabilitation: Livelihood transition of the Koyas affected by the Polavaram Dam in Andhra Pradesh

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Abstract

The Koya community is facing large-scale displacement due to the Polavaram dam, which is completely submerging 371 villages in the Eluru and ASR Paderu districts of Andhra Pradesh. In the post-displacement phase, the Koyas are in the process of severe livelihood transition. Consequently, there is a greater need to discuss the ground realities operational in the region, where the direction of development seems to oppose the sustenance of the tribe, whose daily life was embedded in the ecological habitat. As a result of displacement, the tribes can neither take up their traditional livelihood nor fit into the new habitat completely. Consequently, this is leading the Koya's to take up unskilled menial jobs. As a result of which, the indigenous knowledge held by the tribe for generations is deemed to be "useless" to them after shifting into the colonies.

Keywords: Tribes, Displacement, Livelihoods, Rehabilitation, Resources

Introduction

The concept of sustainability has seen significant transformation over the past few decades. For governments, sustainability initiatives have intensified, including development projects such as conservation parks, reserve forests, and large dams (Adams 2006). The underlying goal of these projects is to foster development that addresses the needs of the growing population. As a result of which, development-induced displacement is one of the major concerns in India and worldwide. Large-scale development projects often result in massive displacement of the population. Globally, it is estimated that approximately 10 million people are displaced each year due to development activities (Cernea 1997, 1999). Displacement caused by developmental projects usually in the case of dams leads to severe socio-economic and environmental problems. On one hand it leads to dismantling of economic systems, loss of existing sources of income while on the other hand it also leads to relocation of people in newer environments where their productive capacities may be less and the competition for resources much greater. This leads to weakening of community structures and

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