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## Overview of Rehabilitation of Kolhapur District Under Irrigation Project

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**Abstract:** The secondary data, coming mainly from library and archival sources, pertained to the conceptual premises of the present work, enactments made by the Government as regards the rehabilitation of the project-affected population as well as the historical progression of the Warana irrigation project-affected population's struggle for a satisfactory rehabilitation over a period of three decades since the project was announced in 1970.

**Introduction:** This Chapter, being the concluding Chapter of this Thesis, brings together the conceptual and analytical strands in the preceding Chapters and presents the conclusions of this investigation, and the suggestions emanating there from. Within the scope of this work, 'Warana Irrigation Project-affected Families' signifies those families that have been physically displaced from their original habitat in six villages, namely, Amboli, purgewadi, Karade, Sonarli, Tambawe and Wadi Hudumb, within the submergence area of Warana irrigation reservoir in Shahuwadi taluka of Kolhapur district and relocated in 22 settlements in the other talukas of the district. Although originally, a total of 663 families were displaced, only around 500 families could be identified as having relocated themselves in the new settlements; out of which a 50% sample of 250 family heads was drawn. The primary data collected from the sample 250 respondent-family heads pertained to their: (1) personal information, (2) pre- and post-displacement socioeconomic status, (3) post-displacement status of children's education, (4) pre- and post-displacement health status, (5) pre- and post-displacement social issues, and (6) political issues.

As has emerged, the population being studied was uprooted from their generations-old habitats in six villages situated in the verdant lap of Sahyadrian mountain ranges, for the sake of agricultural, and thereby socio-economic, development of 218 villages (114 villages in Sangli District and 104 villages in Kolhapur District) downstream of the river Warana. These beneficiary villages have long since started reaping the benefits of the additional irrigation water, but the majority of the people who made lifetime sacrifices for making Warana irrigation reservoir possible have still been left to the mercy of elements.

The population of the six affected villages was coerced into shifting to 22 new locations for rehabilitation. The Maharashtra Project Affected Persons Rehabilitation Act, 1986, stipulates the provision of certain basic civic amenities in these settlements for assuaging the trauma of uprooting. Ironically, even three decades after the rehabilitation effort began, the situation is stark about many of these amenities. A field survey in this behalf under the present work found that, although primary school with playground, electric supply and state transport bus stops are available in all the 22 settlements, a pucca approach road has not been provided to one settlement, a Samaj Mandir and a Gaon Chavadi are missing from four settlements, water-supply schemes have not been activated in five settlements, cattle stand has not been provided in eight settlements, pucca internal roads and a common pasture (grazing ground) each are not provided in nine settlements.

eleven settlements, open built-up gutters and cremation/burial ground each are missing in twelve settlements, public latrines are missing in fourteen settlements, common dug/bore well is not available in fifteen villages, while lastly, common threshing floor is missing from twenty settlements. Overall, it may be concluded that the Government machinery's rehabilitation effort has consistently remained unfocused and unsystematic and has failed on several counts, for which the hapless resettles are suffering miserably.

One of the likely causes of this failure is that the Government officials are using insensitive, bureaucratic, target-oriented, public administration approach to tackle the sensitive human issues, while the need is to adopt a development- and result-oriented social welfare administration approach.

#### **Representative Personal Profile of a Respondent Family-head:**

The personal profile of a representative project-affected family head that emerges from the analysis of the data collected for this work is that he is mostly 36 to past-61 years old, Marathi-speaking, Hindu male, probably belonging to an advanced caste, either illiterate or poorly educated, mostly running a household of 3 to 7 adults and 3 to 7 minor children. On being displaced from his ancestral habitat he received upto Rs.25,000 only as a compensation from the Government and he is either mildly satisfied or mildly dissatisfied with it. Almost invariably, he had to spend a substantial part of the compensation money on improving the cultivable land and/or residential tenement granted to him at the new settlement.

#### **Pre- and Post-Displacement Socio-Economic Status:**

##### **Agrarian Family**

Prior to displacement, the representative respondent agrarian family was toiling on its ancestral, mostly marginal or small-sized land admeasuring upto 5 acres, but now it has been given government grant land of marginal size (upto 2.5 acres). There never was earlier nor now a person trained in agriculture or agro-ancillary activities in this family. The family has between 1 and 4 family members contributing unpaid labour on its farm. In the new setting, it is probable that the family tills its marginal-sized farm of a richly fertile black cotton soil, but it is also quite likely that the family is unable to provide irrigation water to its entire land holding and has to depend on rains. Although being a cashcrop, sugarcane is the family's first favourite, it also has to cultivate foodcrops such as Jowar, wheat and paddy for its own consumption; occasionally, it may also experiment with other cashcrops like soybean and groundnut. Although, according to this family, the availability of agricultural inputs is good, it does not own a tractor-trailer or an electric/diesel pumpset to make an effective use of these inputs. Milk production and poultry-keeping are the two favourite agro-ancillary activities of this family. The sales proceeds of the crops grown on its farm contribute about half the share to the family's income; hence, for supplementing the family income, some of its members have to work on others' farms as labourers. The family is only mildly satisfied with its agricultural activities, but having been caught in the rut, further reinforced by the poor education level of the family head, it is just pulling on.

##### **Paid Employment Family**

The family head is mostly in permanent Government employment, doing either office work or field work, and variously experienced between 15 to 30 years, has to travel more than 10 km by bus for reaching his workplace and is satisfied with his salary income. Thus, except for travelling longer distance for reaching the workplace, displacement has not affected him significantly.

##### **Self-Employment Family**

The representative self-employed family head has mostly continued his former self-employment activity in the new location also by using family funds. However, because of the reduction in his present income, his satisfaction level also has gone down.

### **Loans and Borrowings**

It was revealed that every one of the displaced family has availed loans of varying sums for one or the other productive purposes. However, more than one-third (38.8%) of the loans have been obtained from the unorganized sector and hence, are unsecured. It is also found that more than half of the borrowers are irregular in the repayment of their loans.

### **Pre- and Post-Displacement Health Status:**

There is an overall increase in the general health problems of the displaced families, and a corresponding increase in their medical expenditure, but they have gained better access to modern medical treatment/facilities, with which they are generally satisfied.

### **Post-Displacement Status of Children's Education**

About three-fourths of the respondent families have school-going children. The number of children varies between 1 and more than 5 according to the nuclear or joint type of family. On the other hand, less than one-fifth families have college-going children. Here also, the number of children varies between 1 and more than 5 according to the type of family. A few both school- and college-going children have to travel distances between 6 and 10 km by state transport bus for reaching the school/college. About one-fifth families do not have education-taking children. About half the families spend between 6 and 10% of the family income on the children's education, slightly more than one-fourth families spend upto 5% and about one-tenth families spend between 11-20% for the purpose. The picture offers a heartening contrast from these children's parents and grandparents, who are mostly illiterate or poorly educated.

### **Pre- and Post-Displacement Social Issues**

Although an increasing number of project-affected families are getting themselves involved in diverse social and economic organizations, actually the level of their social activism is on the wane. This is reflected in the fact that only about one-third of them have chosen to get themselves enthusiastically involved in the activities of one or the other project-affected people's organization. However, the respondents, *per se*, generally carry a good opinion about the work being carried on by these organizations and hence, are the most eligible candidate to spearhead their struggle for proper rehabilitation.

### **Pre- and Post-Displacement Political Issues**

The structured interview schedule administered to the respondent family heads also contained questions about their political activism. It was found that only 1 respondent was a card-holder party member, but around 90% respondents had inclination towards one or the other political party. Three families had at least one member active in village-level politics and one family had a member active in taluka-level politics. In informal talks, majority of the respondents firmly believed that it is the politicians who are responsible for their woes and showered choicest expletives on them. Many simultaneously criticized the Government officials as well as the leaders of project-affected people's organizations. Malice apart, what came through profoundly was their bewildered helplessness and unfathomable anguish.

### **Conclusion and Suggestion:**

Prior to displacement, the representative respondent agrarian family was toiling on its ancestral, mostly marginal or small-sized land admeasuring upto 5 acres, but now it has been given government grant land of marginal size (upto 2.5 acres). There never was earlier nor now a person trained in agriculture or agro-ancillary activities in this family. The family has between 1 and 4 family members contributing unpaid labour on its farm. In the new setting, it is probable that the family tills its marginal-sized farm of a richly fertile black cotton soil, but it is also quite likely that the family is unable to provide irrigation water to its entire land holding and has to depend on rains. Although being a cashcrop, sugarcane is the family's first favourite, it also has to cultivate foodcrops such as Jowar, wheat and paddy for its own consumption; occasionally, it may also experiment with other cashcrops like soybean and groundnut. Although, according to this family, the availability of agricultural inputs is good, it does not own a tractor-trailer or an electric/diesel pumpset to make an effective use of these inputs. Milk production and poultry-keeping are the two favourite agro-ancillary activities of this family. The sales proceeds of the crops grown on its farm contribute about half the share to the family's income; hence, for supplementing the family income, some of its members have to work on others' farms as labourers. The family is only mildly satisfied with its agricultural activities, but having been caught in the rut, further reinforced by the poor education level of the family head, it is just pulling on.

### **Suggestion:**

#### **Union Cabinet**

- a. It is suggested that a National Rehabilitation Authority be created, together with State-level headquarters in every State, to be situated at a location near a large project (and certainly not in the State Capital). The Authority should act as a sentinel for protecting the interests of the project-affected population nationwide and actively pursue their satisfactory rehabilitation, including expeditious payment of displacement compensation, allotment of residential plots and agricultural lands at the new location.

### **References:**

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- 4) Ibid.
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