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**From Hills to Plains: Some Missing Aspects
of Socio-Cultural Life of the Displaced
Population of Sardar Sarovar Project,
Gujarat**

Arjun Patel



Centre for Social Studies
Veer Narmad South Gujarat University Campus,
Udhna-Magdalla Road, Surat – 395 007

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Abstract

This paper describes the process of displacement of tribals from the hills to resettlement in the plains. It discusses the issues of social disarticulation and re-articulation of the displaced families of the Sardar Sarovar Project. Based on empirical evidences drawn from earlier studies of the author, the paper explores various types of social disruptions in the socio-cultural life of the displaced population due to the change of habitat from hills to plains.

It is observed that the `community life' of the tribals of submerged villages was in a state of flux at the relocated sites. The present development induced displacement, resettlement and rehabilitation policy based on individual criteria does not concentrate on the system as a whole. It considers only tangible things, which are easy to count and compensate for resettlement and rehabilitation. Looking to the kinds of socio-cultural disruption and their institutional and non-institutional disarrangement, it is argued that such factors are to be considered for minimizing socio-culture risks and impoverishment. Disruption of socio-cultural aspect is comparatively less in resettled villages which are near their old villages and where the hosts as well as displaced population are of similar social backgrounds than those who are settled in far off places and have different social groups.

Therefore, the paper argues that it is time to acquire the lands in the vicinity of the project area for the displaced population, as experimented in the case of Taloda, in order to minimize community disarticulation in the process of resettlement and rehabilitation.

JEL Classification :

Key words : displacement, resettlement, rehabilitation, community disarticulation

From Hills to Plains: Some Missing Aspects of Socio-Cultural Life of the Displaced Population of Sardar Sarovar Project, Gujarat*

*Arjun Patel***

Brief Introduction to the Problem

Social disarticulation is one of the major risks in displacement and resettlement involving the scattering of kinship groups and informal networks of mutual help (Cernea 2000a: 19). Cultural identity is often placed at risk in uprooted communities. The loss and destruction of important cultural sites, shrines, religious objects, the interruption of empowerment, sacred and secular events as well as rituals undermine the community sense of itself. The fragmentation of social groups that may occur in disasters, resulting in the disintegration of networks of mutual assistance, has frequently undermined the reconstitutions of community (Cernea 1997). Ted Downing and Carmen Garcia-Downing (2009), are also of the opinion that not enough attention has been given to the psycho-socio-cultural (PSC) improvement inflicted by involuntary displacement. Mitigation of PSC damages has proved much more problematic and projects rarely consider or attempt to mitigate these risks (Cernea 1997: 67-68). The disarticulations of spatially and culturally grounded forms of self-organization, social interactions and reciprocity constitute a loss of essential social ties that at least access resources, compounding the loss of natural and man-made capital. Therefore, people's adaptation to social disarticulation produces new behavior patterns that influence their access and control over resources. Further, this may lead to important consequences in understanding institutional processes in resettler adaptive strategies, which is crucial to identifying the specific socio-cultural nature of risks. Cernea (2000a) identified that interest in forced displacement, displacement and resettlement often results in greater important of affected households.

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** Professor, Centre for Social Studies, Surat.

By using the social and cultural anthropological approach¹, this study tries to focus on only one of the least addressed aspects; both at the operational level and in social research called social disarticulation of IRR (Impoverishment, Resettlement, Reconstruction) model suggested by Cernea (Cernea 1996: 32, Cernea 2000b, Theodore E. 1996, Bapat Jyotsna 1994: 2, Punalekar: 1998:298) through the experiences of the Development Induced displacement², resettlement and rehabilitation (DIDRR) and resettlement and rehabilitation (R&R) phenomenon of Sardar Sarovar Project, (SSP) Gujarat. Cernea argues that social disarticulation is an expensive yet un-quantified loss of social capital.³ Such 'elusive' disintegration processes undermine livelihoods in ways uncounted and unrecognized by planners and are among the most pervasive causes of enduring impoverishment and disempowerment. This study explores the risks⁴ of social dis-articulation that impoverished the community life of the DIDRR during the process of displacement and relocation. It also tries to analyze the reasons responsible for such dis-articulation. At the end, it also offers policy level suggestions to minimize this risk.

The paper is based on the author's association⁵ with the socio-economic village studies of SSP, Gujarat and his involvement in the monitoring and evaluation exercise carried out by Centre for Social Studies (CSS)⁶, Surat. Empirical evidences are mainly drawn from the studies that author has conducted for pre-resettlement as well as post-resettlement stages. Of the 19 Submerged Villages (SVs) of Gujarat, the author has studied three villages: Zer (Patel, Arjun 1983b), Kadada (Patel, Arjun 1983a) and Turkheda⁷ (Patel, Arjun 1983c). In post-resettlement phase, two studies were carried out on the 'initial integration of the Narmada oustees at relocated sites' of Gujarat (Patel, Arjun 1988a)⁸ and the DIDRR experiences of the displaced families of Madhya Pradesh (MP) and Maharashtra (MH) settled in Gujarat (Patel, Arjun 2010). The former study represents the case of displaced families of Gujarat settled within the state while the latter study deals with displaced families who came to resettle in Gujarat from neighboring states of MP and MH.

The tribal displaced populations of SSP uprooted from their natural social setting which was often surrounded by hills, forest, river, stream and valleys with less exposure to the outside world have resettled in a new socio-ecological setting often in the plains. The displaced populations of SSP have shifted from an economy based on agriculture–forest–river–animal–husbandry–fishing to one solely based on the agriculture, from non-monetized to monetized economy, from relatively isolated place to a place having more exposure, from so-called ‘little tradition’ to ‘mainstream tradition’ and last but not least from relatively more egalitarian tribal to a non-egalitarian non-tribal social structure⁹.

Naturally, the displaced tribal population has to experience psychological stress and trauma in order to relocate from one socio-cultural set up to another which happens to be relatively quite alien to them. This is particularly more worrisome in the case of extremely vulnerable groups such as tribals¹⁰.

The concept of social disarticulation is used here in the sense of dismantling of communities social organization, disruption of informal and formal networks, associations, local societies, kinship (*Biradari*) relationships, lineage ties, mutual services, support networks, and mass celebration of occasions such as marriage, funeral, rituals, fairs, festivals, weekly market, dance, music, life style, diet, languages, etc. which were built over generations by the communities. The word ‘community’ is used here in the sense that the matters related to socio-cultural aspects which contribute to a sense of belongingness, social and psychological security, and an assurance of cohesion and togetherness to the people. The feeling of ‘oneness’ or ‘we-ness’ is central in creating such community bonds.

The paper is divided into five sections. The first section provides a brief introduction to the problem. The second describes various aspects of community dis-articulation including disturbance in community life, disturbances of socio-cultural life and the present status of the assimilation of the displaced population of SSP. The factors responsible for the community dis-articulation are described in the third section. The fourth analyzes the flaws in DIDRR policy packages offered to the

displaced population and the fifth provides concluding remarks as well as offers few policy suggestions for re-articulation of socio-cultural aspects of the displaced population.

Dimension of Community Dis-Articulation

Impact of alienation from forests, river, mountains and social surroundings

The way of life of the tribals¹¹, particularly of the interior villages of the submerging villages (SVs) of SSP was very much attached and interwoven to the local surrounding to such an extent that it was difficult to separate the two of them. The socio-cultural and economic life of the tribals was based and guided by the forest, streams, hills and the river. Several studies (Fernandes, Menon and Viegas 1988, Patel Arjun 1994, Thakur & Thakur 1994, Vaid 2004, Misra 2006, Parthasarthy & Patnaik 2009, Reddy 2010) have mentioned about the relations of the tribals in terms of their socio-cultural, economic life with the forest. In the SV, as described with some details at a later stage, the tribal culture was totally unique to plain areas based on the local milieu. Their economy revolved mainly around four sources; on agriculture, forest, animal husbandry and fishing.

In SVs, the displaced tribal populations were depending upon the forest in varieties of ways. One of the important uses of forest was the cultivation of land¹² for their livelihood, sometimes by paying fines. In the study of interior villages namely Kadada and Ferakada, all the families were cultivating the forest land; in some cases, more forest land was cultivated than revenue land. The availability of land for cultivation as well as for residential purpose was not a problem in the SV as land was abundantly available in the forest area. In SV, the tribals usually lived in a scattered manner on or near their farm land¹³. The forest not only provides the source of living for the present generation but also provides security to the next generations¹⁴ in the tribal region of SSP.

The present DIDRR policy does not recognize the distribution of forest land as compensation since it is considered as 'encroached' and illegal by the authorities. The issue of forest land was important and non-government organizations (Patel, Anil 1994) have fought on this issue in the court. However, data shows that only 5 acres of forest land were distributed at relocated sites against a loss of 1665.5 acres of land to the selected 820 PAFs (Project affected families) from MP and MH resettled in Gujarat (Table:1). On the whole, as mentioned in table 1, the aggregate land status has reduced at the relocated site. The displaced populations were upset due to the loss of their source of their livelihood and also worried about the unsecured existence of the next generation, as majority of the relocated sites were located in the plains.

Table: 1 Comparative land (in acres) status (Absolute as well as Average) at SV and relocated site

Particulars	Total Land	Revenue Land	Forest Land	Irrigated	Un-Irrigated
Possession of land at SV	8635.9 (10.53)	6980.4 (8.51)	1655.5 (2.02)	2517.3 (3.7)	6111.6 (7.45)
Land under submergence	6052.6 (7.38)	5311.6 (6.48)	741.0 (0.90)	1767.3 (2.16)	4150.3 (5.06)
Land remained un-acquired in SV	2583.3 (3.15)	1668.8 (2.04)	914.5 (1.12)	750 (0.91)	1961.3 (2.39)
Land received at relocated site	4109.9 (5.01)	4104 (5.0)	5.0 (0.01)	1792.3 (2.19)	2291.3 (2.79)
Aggregate land at SV and relocated site	6693.2 (8.16)	5772.8 (7.04)	919.5 (1.12)	2542.3 (3.10)	4252.6 (5.19)

Note: Figures in parenthesis shows the average land holding of Project Affected Families (PAF). This is calculated on the basis of the Project Authority Land Records, SSPA, Vadodara (Patel, Arjun 2010:25).

Due to the availability of fodder in the forest land, the tribal farmers were engaged in animal husbandry in the SV.¹⁵ Tribals living in the forest areas owned more number of cows, bullocks, goats and chickens for functional as well as economic reasons. It provided them a sense of economic security, particularly at critical times.

The project authority had not made any provision of grazing land with the assumption that the displaced population would manage on their own with the host villagers in this regard. However, in reality, clashes¹⁶ were reported between the displaced populations and the host villagers over sharing of common property resources. Further, in absence of forest land, the displaced families were not in a position to own such animals. The number of domestic animals reduced significantly (Table 2). The displaced populations either sold the animals or donated them to their relatives or abandoned their animals in the forest¹⁷ permanently.

Table 2: Changes in the possession of cattle wealth by the families at SV and relocated site in MP and MH

Cattle	Percentages at SV (N=820)	Percentages at Relocated Site (N=820)	Difference (in average)
Cow	3637 (4.43)	895 (1.0)	-3.43
Bullock	2758 (3.3)	1959 (2.3)	-1.0
Buffalo	1238 (1.5)	667 (0.8)	-0.7
Calf (Buffalo)	707 (0.8)	370 (0.4)	-0.4
Calf (Cow)	1371 (1.6)	540 (0.6)	-1.0

Note: Figures shown in parenthesis are average numbers of cattle that the displaced families owned (Patel, Arjun 2010:27).

In addition to the forest, the tribals were also attached to the river, streams, etc. It has also created implications in the life of the tribal at the relocated site. In SV, they were obtaining many things free of cost from the forest and river in the surroundings. Earlier, in SV, the displaced tribal populations had access to fodder, fuel wood and other minor forest products such as *timaru* leaves, gum, *lakh*, the roots etc. In the lean season, they used to sell the head loads of teak wood in the nearby weekly market and receive some money out of such sales (Patel, Arjun 1983a, 1983b and 1983c).

Except salt, rest of the things which were necessary for their day-to-day life was available from their local settings¹⁸. The communitarian basis of the tribal life in the SVs was also affected due to the shift from non-

monetized to monetized economy. The tribals in SVs lived according to their tradition and culture. They were doing 'subsistence farming' and getting enough grains and vegetables from their field for the sustenance of their family. Due to non-monetized economy in SV, the life of the tribals was dependent upon communitarian basis. They were using practice of '*sata-padhhati*' i.e., exchange of labor¹⁹ in kind or in lieu of services or commodity extensively, particularly in the interior villages. This practice also helped in consolidating solidarity²⁰ among the tribals. At the relocated site, the barter system was replaced by market economy and contractual relationships. This was also one of the reasons which pushed a few of the tribals to migrate elsewhere in search of work.

In the plains, it was also observed that visits to fairs and *Haat* i.e., weekly markets notably reduced, particularly those who had settled in distant places. After their arrival at relocated sites, instead of the *Haat*, the tribals of the relocated site in Vadodara district started visiting nearby market places such as Bodeli, Vaghodiya, Naswadi, Dabhoi, etc. Of course, the intensity in their socio-cultural and daily life has remarkably reduced²¹. Due to this decreasing trend, women also reduced the frequency of movement outside the community which they enjoyed, to places such as the *Haat* held in SV.²²

It is feared that the forthcoming generations of the project affected population (PAP) would completely forget the traditional socio-cultural arrangement of *Haat/Mela* in the future. The displaced families have to mold themselves in the new market network which is quite alien to them. This risk would impoverish them in many ways.

Disturbance in institutional/non-institutional arrangements

In contrast to the situation of the non-tribals, the tribals have a much deeper sense of community life. They not only do their agricultural or house construction work together but also remain united in informal institutions such as *Panch* for cooking vessels, caste *Panch*, *Bhajan Mandali*, etc. In the SVs, the people have collective arrangement for fulfilling their community needs. For example, at the time of social occasions such as marriage, death, child birth, etc., they usually organize

a community feast for which they need utensils for cooking. They have evolved an informal collective institution called *Panchs*, which usually handles this activity. Similarly, informal institution called *Bhajan Mandali* was one of the most important collective arrangements which not only gave them enjoyment, refreshment, change in the monotonous way of life, but was also useful in consolidating the solidarity among the tribals.²³ They usually assembled through the *Bhajan Mandal* at the time of good or bad social and religious occasions.²⁴ Likewise for solving social issues pertaining to marriage, death, divorce, etc., tribals have evolved a common and informal system for Tribal/Caste *Panch* institution in most of the SVs.²⁵ These informal systems suit their needs and circumstances.

However, such informal arrangements have got dislocated at the relocated sites since the displaced families of a village have not been resettled at one place. For example, the displaced populations resettled at Tentlav, Ambavadi and Parvetha have not brought their utensils with them because a part of the population of their native village has not been evacuated. Of course, those resettled at the adjoining nearby villages of Khadgada and Chhindiapura came from the same village, viz., Khalvani. They borrowed utensils from one another; it was possible, because the distance between the two resettlement sites was small, only three kms (kilometers). Collective arrangement of community cooking utensils may appear as a very small matter to the urbanite people. However, it is an important arrangement from the point of view of the tribal village. Due to the resettlement at different sites, the arrangements of *Bhajan Mandalis* in many new relocated sites have disintegrated. Musical instruments belonging to the original *Bhajan Mandali* now stand distributed. Since the leaders of the caste council in the SVs have now resettled at different²⁶ villages, the caste council as a cohesive unit has ceased to exist.

Interestingly, some displaced families have joined the caste councils of the host villages. However, the displaced populations did not always find it convenient to work with the members of the caste council of the host villages. The displaced populations at Khadgada revealed in their talk that their opinion and views were often ignored by other members of the

host community. Displaced populations have also faced difficulties in joining the formal Panchayati Raj institutions. It was reported that not a single member in the relocated site was elected as member or a *Sarpanch* (the village head, elected formally by the people of the village) in any of the relocated sites (Patel, Arjun 1988b) till the late nineties. The displaced families of Ten talav complained that they are not consulted or even informed by the host villagers in the village affairs. The Vasavas resettled at the distant site at Ambavadi feel that they do not have a competent leader—a person who can take initiative and guide them. Also, many displaced population leaders feel that they have become powerless at relocated sites.

Similarly, the displaced families resettled at distance places such as Ten talav and Ambavadi find it difficult to secure the services of cooks, priests and other related functionaries. As a result, they still depend upon their native village. Non-formal institutional arrangements such as Pujaro and *Badvo* (sorcerer who dispenses herbs) lost their importance at the relocated sites. Both were needed for lighting the Holi fire in the village and they performed a key role in the socio-cultural ceremonies. At the time of mental and physical illness, the magicians were more important to them than doctors. The *Badvo/Bhuvo* was considered to be the village doctor. All such arrangements disappeared because of the fragmentation of the villages.

Disruption of communitarian basis of the tribal life

Earlier in their SV, the kith and kin of the tribals lived in and around the surrounding villages comprising about 10–15 villages. The kinship members served an important function, particularly at the time of performing rituals and religious rights. Their relatives visited them on the occasion of child birth and at the time of sickness. They offered items such as *bajra*, *mung*, jaggery, coconut, ghee, oil, etc. on such occasions. The rituals and festivals of the tribes provided meaning and depth to their lives, and solidarity to their social structure. Besides, kinsmen provided security to the individuals. Borrowing money from kinsmen when needed was easy (Phillips 1998).

The endogamous circles of the displaced populations have changed altogether due to the displacement and relocation, particularly to far off places from their endogamous circles. People resettled at Khadgada and Chhindiapura did not experience much difficulty in visiting relatives as they have resettled in villages located within the endogamous circle. However, displaced populations resettled at distant places i.e., beyond their endogamous circle, felt that their links with the residents of the native endogamous circle seem to have weakened²⁷ and they were experiencing difficulties²⁸ in maintaining their old social relations with the original villagers.

The most discomfoting matter for displaced populations at distance places from their SVs such as Tentlav and Ambavadi was that they had to keep the dead body for one whole day, as it takes time for their kith and kin to reach these places. On the occasion of death in a family of displaced populations, the elders from the host villages used to come to console them for their bereavement. It seems that as time passes, the displaced populations would be losing their contact with the residents of the SVs, particularly of those who have resettled at distance places from the SVs.

Impoverishment through mainstream culture

Absorption of the tribal community into Hindu fold is not a new phenomenon. It was an old social process and observed by many commentators [Ibbetson, Risely (1999), etc.]. It was observed that the speed of imitating the Hindu culture at the relocated site of the displaced populations increased significantly, as they came from hills to the plains; hence, the chances of exposure have intensified. The process called Sanskritization²⁹ was found in almost all relocated sites.

The process of imitation of the Hindu upper caste value system among the tribals of submerged villages was more evident in the early eighties (Gangopadhyay 1983). The tribals have increasingly modified their animistic practices³⁰ in the direction of orthodox Hinduism and ordered its manner of life in accordance with the same model. Numerous instances of this process indicate that the tribals of relocated sites have

increasingly tried to emulate the values and norms of the upper caste Hindu social system. For instance, a great majority of Tadvi inhabitants of Rajpipla taluka now invariably describe themselves as heirs of Rajputs, the ruling class. They claimed that they are the descendents of the Rajput king of Patai Raja.

Instead of the traditional *pujaro/badavo*, they started inviting a Brahmin priest for performing rituals in their ceremonies. They started worshipping Hindu gods in addition to their own. The absorption of tribals into Hinduism is found in every matter such as their festivals, dress pattern, life style, diet, rituals and custom. The Hinduisation of the tribal is found reflected in the change of their names, customs, and culture, the gods and goddesses they worship, and in their way of life. The tribals are increasing forgetting the tribal way of life.

Educated tribals are increasingly giving up animal sacrifice and consumption of liquor. They adopted vegetarianism and teetotalism and sanskritized the ritual and pantheon. Many of them put *tilak* mark on their forehead. Few have started performing *puja* in front of the *tulsi* plant. They imbibed the non-tribal values of the heaven, hell, luck, god, *atma* (soul)-*parmatma* (god), etc. They have their own Gurus. Sect³¹ is becoming popular among the tribals who identified themselves as progressive. Likewise, the ceremonies and rites related to birth of a child, marriage, and death are increasingly changing on the lines of the Hindu upper caste; of course there are variations among them on the basis of the exposures and the group. Relatively, the Tadvi of the rock-fill-dykes of the roadside area were more influenced than the Dingri Bhil of interior villages such as Antars, Dhumana, Chharbara, etc. Tribals of the SVs, particularly of zone II (somewhat interior to the road site) and III (more interior to the road site), have been facing difficulty in assimilating themselves with the new situation; it was as if they were caught in-between two cultures. They felt that they were neither on the side of the tribals nor on the side of the *Ujaliyat*, i.e. the non-tribals. They were not in a position to give up the tribal tradition completely by adopting the non-tribal ethos. In reality, many of the tribals, particularly of the interior villages, are at present not giving a serious thought to their culture. They are giving priority to search for a space in the new economic structure.

It is observed that even the interior villages are increasingly transforming from tribe to caste. They have become a part of the Hindu hierarchical social structure. The process of transforming from tribe to caste was observed by many researchers (Risely 1999, Nathan Dev 1997, Majumdar 1969, Sinha 1963). The author has written a long chapter describing the process of Hinduization among the tribals of South Gujarat (Patel, Arjun 1999) in one of his edited books. The value systems and life styles of Hindus are now being imbibed by the tribals, who rejected this alien culture for years by staying in isolated places such as hillocks and valleys to save their own independent identity from the dominant castes ideology, which they have now increasingly co-opted in the name of joining the mainstream.

One can compare the process of Hinduization of the tribals with the ideals of *Panchsheel* that were laid down by India's first Prime Minister, late Jawaharlal Nehru, for the development of tribals and to integrate the tribals and other weaker sections into the mainstream of the Indian society along with their traditions and culture. The Indian constitution³² and the ideals laid down in *Panchsheel* have provided comprehensive framework for the socio-economic development of the tribals and prevented them from exploitation by other groups of society and it should be introduced in such a manner that their traditions and culture remain undisturbed and there is no loss of identity by tribals (Prasad and Jahgirdar 1993:153).

Ghurye and Elwin belong to different schools of thought. Elwin maintains that the effects of contact upon those who are imperfectly integrated with Hindus are disastrous resulting in moral degradation and psychological depression, which Elwin called the 'loss of nerve'. Ghurye believes that integration is a step forward and liberates a tribal from harmful effects (Subba and Som 2005:80). Gaventra maintains that the adoption of individual customs and value system are necessary to internalize the dominant ideology, which ultimately leads towards the maintenance of the un-equal society (1980:7-30). This is how the Indian ruling classes not only make inroads into tribal areas and exploit resources in their favor but also consolidate their hegemonic position as

the ruling class by inculcating their value system in the name of 'public interest'; thereby consolidating the social order in their favor.

Factors Responsible for Community Dis-Articulation

Fragmentation of a village as a geographical unit has occurred mainly because sufficient land was not found in a district/taluka/village to accommodate all the displaced families. In the process of displacement and resettlement, fragmentations of the SVs took place for a variety of reasons. This can be considered as one of the most important factors responsible for disruption of the social fabric of the displaced population.

Firstly, it is estimated that due to the construction of SSP, a total number of 46,719 displaced families were likely to be affected from a total of 245 villages. Out of this, around 15,091 displaced families of MP and MH have shown willingness to resettle in Gujarat; of this 6473 displaced families already relocated in Gujarat as on 29/2/2008. The rest, i.e. 31,628 displaced families have decided to resettle in their respective states. Thus, the displaced population has been distributed across the states.

Secondly, the data on displacement show that the majority of the villages were affected not fully but partially. Out of a total of 245 villages of Gujarat, MP and MH of SSP, barring four villages, the remaining 241 villages were affected partially (Soni: 2007:4). Out of 192 SVs in MP (shown in table-3), majority of the villages lost less than 50% of their land. It means that the affected families were bifurcated at two places; one at the SV and another at the relocated site.

Table – 3: Percentages of land under submergence in the villages of MP

Land under submergence(in percentage)	MP(<i>n</i>=192)
Less than 10	82
11 to 25	32
26 to 50	30
51 to 75	14
76 to 99	4
100	1

Source: Soni, 2007:5.

In other words, some of the families had to stay at the SVs while some had to move from the SVs. Thus, the displaced population of a state was distributed into three places; at the SV itself, at the relocated site of the respective state and of other states.

Besides, 21 PAFs of SVs of MP only lost houses but not land whereas PAFs in 9 SVs lost only government waste land and not revenue land. Thus, similar to SVs, all the families of a SV have not lost their entire land and houses; hence compulsorily, they have to adapt to living in two sites at a time.

Thirdly, displaced populations of a particular state or district or taluka or village had not resettled in a particular state or a district or a taluka or a village. This point is elaborated at a later stage.

Fourthly, the land acquisition policy was not applied uniformly at different stages within³³ the state as well across³⁴ the states (Patel, Arjun 2010). The DIDRR policy was also responsible for fragmentation of the displaced populations of MP and MH.

Fifthly, the time-gap also caused difficulties for settlement of the displaced population as a 'community'. It was observed that due to the administrative conveniences all the displaced populations were not displaced and resettled at once; hence, they missed the equal chance of choosing land at the relocated site. The phase-wise displacement³⁵ not only created divisions among the displaced families but also proved unfair and unjust; particularly, for those who lived in the interior villages, it proved disastrous. We have seen this in the case of the Nayakas of the MP. In the phase-wise schedule, the Tadvis of rock-fill-dykes who were relatively well-exposed to the outside world were given the first chance to select the land before tribals from relatively isolated places. In the process, those who required extra care were given the least priority. Hence, they had no option but to move to far off places; as there was no vacant land left in nearby places for their accommodation. This is how the villages and also the social fabric of the tribal society have got fragmented.

The problem of fragmentation of the SVs was so acute and severe that many relocated sites were unable to fulfill the minimum criteria for availing basic civic amenities³⁶, as stipulated in the Government Resolutions (GRs). Of course, the project authority had to relax its stringent rules and provide the minimum basic amenities. However, it has compounded other types of problems. For instance, in a number of villages, it was seen that they had primary schools but not a student as hardly 10–15 families resided at the relocated sites.

Status of rehabilitation after passing a decade at relocated sites

It is observed that in many of the relocated sites, the displaced families are yet to become part of the main village even after they spent a decade in it. They are still seen as outsiders; by others as well as by themselves. If anyone was asked about the whereabouts of the displaced families they would reply ‘Oh are you asking about the people of Navi Vasahat’ (i.e., are you inquiring about the people of relocated site?). Sometimes, the displaced populations are referred to as the Bhilalas (indicating derogatory people) who have come from MP or MH and settled in their village. It seems that the feeling of a separate settlement of the displaced populations may not be erased in near future. The ‘*Navi Vasahat*’ i.e., relocated sites, also creates an obstruction for developing an independent identity as a part of the village. This has affected their self-esteem and group-dignity. They still have a feeling that they are alien to the village. This can be treated as social marginalization.

Re-Articulation: Flaws in the DIDRR Policy

On the basis of the reasons identified for social disarticulation in the whole process of DIDRR, the following flaws need to be considered. First, it is learnt from the experiences that the displaced population needs to be relocated nearer to the villages, and preferably in the area of their endogamous circle. In DIDRR, as described here, the proximity of the relocated site to SV played a crucial role. It was observed that those who were relocated nearer to the relocated sites are facing few problems compared to others. Therefore, it is advisable to acquire land in its

vicinity of the relocated sites to rehabilitate the displaced families in order to minimize community dis-articulation. This would add a new dimension to the 'better' the (DDIRR) policy and packages towards the PAPs.

Second, the process of integration seems to be easier where the social group of the relocated sites and the host villages have similar socio-demographic characteristics. This is what we have seen in the case of the Khadgada village, where the integration was relatively less in the Chhindiapura village, where the socio-demographic characteristics the host villagers and the SV are different. Phillips (1998) has also suggested that while planning for the DIDRR the ethnic similarity is important as far as the tribal people are concerned. He has advocated the acceptance of the Taloda model. The PAFs –the Pawras, Vasavas and Tadvis of MH shifted to Taloda are located site that was developed by cutting of forests in nearby places. It was in continuity of their cultural milieu, ethnic composition, ecological surroundings, land quality, irrigation and language and corresponds well with their living pattern at the SVs. The cutting of forests for the purpose of resettlement has been a dilemma to the Government of India and the World Bank due because of ecological considerations.

Third, at many of the relocated sites, the displaced populations were treated as a 'separate village' and not as a part of the host village. Many of the residential units of the relocated sites were located at a distance from the host village, as they did not find land to accommodate all of them together. This has also created social dis-articulation. It is imperative that they should be considered as a part of the village and not as a separate site, preferably within a distance of around 1.5 km.

Fourth, the number of the displaced families also does matter; therefore, it is advisable that they should be resettled in sizable numbers as a unit of at least 50–100 families, so, that it can comfortably exist as a group and reasonable level of amenities can be provided.

Fifth, it is also observed that different communities need different programs/packages. The PAPs are not homogenous as it was generally

believed. The DIDRR policy needs to be sensitive to the variations among and within the tribal community.

Sixth, it is highly necessary to involve sociologists and anthropologists in the process of DIDRR. The disarticulation has arisen due to gaps in the conceptualization of the term 'rehabilitation' more comprehensively. The current policy and programs are mainly guided by economic considerations rather than sensitivity to social dimensions. DIDRR policy of SSP had not made any provisions for its integration in the socio-cultural spheres. In this regard, the displaced families were neglected.³⁷ Similarly, no provision was made for the CPRs and that has created a major disruption in the socio-economic and cultural life of the displaced families. Kibreab rightly observed that despite the significant role in sustaining the livelihoods of the rural/tribal poor, the CPRs have been either neglected or underestimated by policymakers and planners of development projects. (Kibreab 2000:313).As elaborated in the text that absence of natural resources such as forest, rivers and, pasture land has resulted in the impoverishment of displaced families. This is a policy lapse that needs to be considered at the earliest. A more socially sensitive DIDRR policy can be achieved by involving sociologists/ anthropologists/social workers in the formation planning and implementation of policy.

Concluding Remarks

As seen from our narration, the displaced population, particularly the tribals who lived in a 'social setting' surrounded by hills, forests, rivers and, valleys, were involuntarily uprooted and relocated in a strange socio-ecological environment in the plains. It is not merely physical dislocation but a real dislocation from non-monetized to monetized economy, from an economy based on agriculture–forest–river–animal husbandry to agriculture-based economy, from a relatively isolated place to a place having more exposure, from so-called 'little tradition' to 'mainstream tradition', and lastly but most important from a tribal social structure which is more egalitarian to a non-tribal social structure which is non-egalitarian.

It showed that the displaced families who have been uprooted from a particular set-up had to struggle through the entire process of re-socialization and readjustment in an unfamiliar environment, which had resulted in a great deal of psychological stress and trauma. Human beings also depend on social and cultural systems, so socio-cultural risks exist. When displacement weakens or dismantles social networks and life support mechanisms, social authority system collapses and groups lose their capacity for self-management. This can cause social discontinuation, the dispersion and fragmentation of existing communities and cost of existing community and cost of reciprocity networks, all of which increase powerlessness, dependence and vulnerability (Cernea, 2000a).

Dismantled social networks that once mobilized people to act around common interests and to meet their most pressing needs are difficult to rebuild. This loss is greater in projects that relocate families in a dispersed manner, severing their earlier ties with neighbors, rather than relocating them in groups and social units. A detailed sociological study by Behura and Nayak (1993) on a dam project in India also showed a similar trend pertaining to various manifestations of social disarticulation within the kinship system such as the loosening of intimate bonds, growing alienation and anomie, weak control on interpersonal behavior and lower cohesion in family structure. Marriages were deferred because of dowries; feasts and gifts become unaffordable. They have observed that resettler relationship with non-displaced kinsmen was eroded and interaction between individual families was reduced. As a result, participation in group activities decreased; post-harvest communal feasts and pilgrimages were discontinued, and common burial grounds became shapeless and disordered.

Consequently, the displaced populations in relocated sites have become more vulnerable (Sah 2003:36). In the words of Cernea (Dutta, Ashirbani 2007), "the forced population displacement breaks up living patterns and social continuity. It dismantles the existing models of production, disrupts social networks, scales up the impoverishment of those who were uprooted, threatens their cultural identity and increases the risks of epidemics and health problems."

Cernea (2000a: 30) has also noted that social disarticulation can worsen powerlessness, dependency and vulnerability. Social disarticulation is especially common when existing social groups cannot resettle together, but may also occur when existing group loses its ability to act effectively.

Cernea has drawn inferences that forced displacement tears apart the existing social fabric. It disperses and fragments communities, dismantles patterns of social organization and interpersonal ties; kinship groups become scattered as well. Life-sustaining informal networks of reciprocal help, local voluntary associations, and self-organizational mutual service are disrupted. This is a net loss valuable “social capital” that compounds the loss of natural, physical and human capital. The social capital lost through social disarticulation is typically unperceived and uncompensated by the program causing it, and this real loss has long-term consequences (Cernea 2000a: 30).

Thus, dislocation has far-reaching socio-economic and cultural implications for the affected. Social disarticulation has occurred because of the resettled population being deprived of linkage with others and loss of social-economic status. The ad-hocism in the policy has resulted in breaking up of kinship structure. As a result, the informal networks of mutual help, community-based associations, and self-organized service arrangements were dismantled. Mahapatra (1990) opined that apart from the immediate economic loss, displacement brings about social and cultural dislocation. The families lose their traditional mechanisms of social control, leading to social tensions and resulting in problems such as alcoholism, crimes, suicide, prostitution and delinquency. They were to a great extent marginalized at the relocated site as they feel that the village in which they have been resettled was not their own village, they were ‘outsiders’. Also, relocation broke the traditional social links and economic institutions which had helped them to face natural disasters in the past.

In this sense, the experiences of the SSP are not qualitatively unique. Rad Cliff Brown (1881–1955), a proponent of the ‘structural-functional’ approach has also rightly argued that for the survival of the society, the

integration within a culture is important; if such integration breaks down, there will be social disequilibrium. This experience suggests that DIDRR needs to take an approach that integrates social, economic and political aspects of resettlement. This is the lesson that policy planners have to learn from this exercise.

End notes:

¹ The use of social and cultural anthropological approach is not fully recognized in the relocated sites program. It includes social behavior, generally in institutional forms such as family, kinship system, economic organization, political organization, law, religion, social control and the relations between such institutions, in short social structure. In addition, social-culture anthropology is concerned with cultural phenomenon such as technology, values, world view, art and language. It covers both material and non-material culture. (Das Kedarnath: 2004:38).

² The phenomenon of development-induced displacement can be defined as the forcing of communities and individuals out of their houses and homelands for the purpose of economic and national development (Bjorn Pettersson: 2005).

³ This is a net loss of valuable "social capital" that compounds the loss of natural, physical and human capital. The social capital lost through social disarticulation is typically un-coercive and uncompensated by programs causing it and this real loss has long-term consequences (Cernea 2000b).

⁴ Frequently the terms "risk" and "danger," or "hazard" and "danger," or "hazard" and "risk" are used as interchangeable and overlapping. Some sociologists explicitly reject the distinction between risk and danger. Risk may be defined as the possibility embedded in a certain course of social action to trigger adverse effects in terms of losses; destruction; functionally counterproductive impacts; deprivation of future generations, etc.

⁵ I was associated with the study related to SSP at two levels; first at the level of pre-resettlement studies carried out during the 1980s pertaining to socio-economic aspects of the displaced populations of SSP of submerging villages. I have also presented a seminar paper (1994) on the theme.

⁶ CSS studied each of the 19 submerging villages of Gujarat and also worked as an independent agency to monitor the DIDRR programs of GoG between 1985 and 1997. With regard to ME exercise, the CSS has submitted 24 six-monthly reports to the Narmada Planning Group.

⁷ The first village located at the road site, considered as comparatively well-exposed with the outside world belongs to Rajpipala taluka of Bharuch district while the other two villages were located in the Naswadi taluka of Chhotaudepur districts and were relatively isolated from the outer world.

⁸ The study was carried out in five sample villages having diversified characteristics in terms of distance from the SV, the social groups resided at the new sites as well as the host village, duration of stay in the new site, etc. The study was carried out in a comparative framework.

⁹ The tribals, appear to be similar but there exist minute differences among the various tribal groups. Similarly, the tribal PAFs of MP and MH have their own unique cultural identity and distinctiveness in their social organization, language, rituals and festivals and also in their dress, ornament, art and craft.

¹⁰ In the case of SSP, this is more applicable to the PAFs of primitive tribes such as Dunagri Bhils, Nayakas, etc. who were in a primary living stage. They are very unique in all spheres of their life. (For more details, see: Joshi: *Aa Pan Gujarat Chhe Dosto'* (1983).

¹¹ Most of them constitute separate socio-cultural groups with distinct customs, traditions, kinship and inheritance system. Of their life style beliefs, religious practices and customs, some are akin to those of dominant mainstream Hindus, and many more are entirely alien. Notwithstanding their social, cultural and economic differences, they are closely knit social groups.

¹² The tribals were using this land as per their requirement and its availability. The forest land was available in abundance; both for cultivation as well as building the new houses and the tribals do not worry much for their future generations.

¹³ The logic behind this is that they can take care of their farm and houses simultaneously. They can easily work in the farm, guard their farm from animals and save time. There is less chance of fire and more importantly they believe in witches and bad spirits which are kept away by following this type of settlement pattern of living.

¹⁴ In fact, parents follow the usual practice of living separately from the son immediately after marriage. The married son starts new life by cultivating additional patches of land and constructing a hut adjacent to his kin. They collect building materials from the forest free of cost and the kin and relatives extend their help in building the house.

¹⁵ The tribals used to leave their animals for grazing in the forest. Supervision was not required. The animals used to come back to their place on their own in the evening.

¹⁶ The host villagers of Khadgada have shown their opposition when the displaced populations were given residential plot in a village pasture land. They registered their protest in spite of being similar social groups and some of them were relatives of the

displaced people. It shows the importance of economic interest over social bonds. Likewise, the Bhils of the host village at Chhindiapura fenced their pasture and to assert and protect their 'ownership' on these resources (Patel: Arjun: 1988a).

¹⁷ We are also told that the animals, particularly the hens and goats have not survived in the changed environment.

¹⁸ They can afford to spend their life with just Rs.500/- or so throughout a year but it is not possible at the DIDRR site as for each and everything they required cash. At DIDRR site, the requirement of money has increased. This has also made an impact on change of their behavior from subsistence to earn more.

¹⁹ For every task, they were cooperating with each other. They built their houses, and cut the grass and crop with the help of each other. They not only exchanged commodities but services of bullock and labor too.

²⁰ Usually, the practice of the '*sata-padhhati*' was very much prevalent among the kinsmen, and people living in a *Phaliya* of a village.

²¹ For PAFs of Khadgada and Chhindiapura, there was not much difference, in view of their shifting to new sites. They continue to patronize these places of fairs as before. In this region, no new fairs have been started. None of the old fairs have been discontinued. However, since the villages such as Tentlav and Ambavadi are located at a distance from the old settlements, the PAFs here do experience some difficulty in attending the fairs held in and around their native place. Only the younger members from PAP families visit the fairs held at the old places.

²² At the new site, women generally do not prefer to go to the nearby local market; generally their male members go for purchasing the necessary commodity from the market. Thus, it has restricted the freedom of the women.

²³ It also provides an opportunity for building a strong community life. *Bhajan Mandali* is one such mechanism through which people of a village and of neighboring villages come together and strongly developed bond among themselves. It also gives a chance for meeting each other, greet and share each other's social matters.

²⁴ It was customary among these villagers to sing *Bhajans* on the 40th day after a child was born, or as part of a death ceremony, or on the day of *Katha* (religious story-telling).

²⁵ The caste council operated at different levels such as: village, group of adjoining villages, etc. This council is consisted of an assembly of certain villages; they listen to the problems of the villagers and in one or two sittings, they arrived at decisions and the concern party had to agree. The tribals are not familiar with the modern institutions of police, court etc. which they consider time and money consuming and with very little say of the concerned parties in the decision-making process.

²⁶ For example, the *Panch* at Khalvani village had three leaders; Magan Jita, Poon Jita and Morar Jita. All these three leaders have now resettled at three different villages: Khadgada, Chhindiapura and Thapavi. As a result, the *Panch* stands dissolved.

²⁷ For example, Janakbhai Ratilal Tadvi, PAP of Tentlav, told in an interview that he had organized a religious discourse at home. He invited his relatives from native place. Out of thirty relatives whom he had invited, only five could turn up. Food and the rest of the arrangements, he had made for the invitees remained unused. It was a wasteful expenditure. But more than that, he felt deeply disappointed.

²⁸ Earlier, the distance being short they used to go to the place of marriage on foot. Here, except their close relatives, none from the native village attended marriage functions, as they had to spend as much as Rs. 50 towards conveyance. Since the number of such guests had declined, the cash collected by way of presents or cash gifts had also declined.

²⁹ M. N. Srinivas (1952) calls it sanskritization. As a mode of upward mobility, the low castes adopt over a generation or two, upper caste gods and customs such as vegetarianism. Many go beyond adopting individual customs to internalize the dominant ideology.

³⁰ Beliefs in *Bhuva-Bhagat/Pujaro/Badavo*. The tribals of this area have more faith in *Bhuva Bhagat*. They believe in many local deities such as *Vaghaniya Dev*, *Dudhiya Dev*, *Bhaganiya Dev*, etc. protect them in difficult situations.

³¹ This sect has given rise to a whole new series of religious rituals and festivals such as Hanuman Jayanti, Shri Ram Naomi, Ganpati Puja, Shankar Ranti, and others.

³² Article 46 of the Indian constitution mentions about taking special care of the weaker section of society and to protect them from social injustice and all forms of exploitation.

³³ Land was first acquired in 1962 for construction of office blocks, residential colony to accommodate construction officials, and for the road leading to the dam. The land was acquired under Land Acquisition Act of 1894 and the affected landowner families were provided a compensation of Rs. 250 per acre of lost land. The land acquired thereafter was offered 'Land for Land' policy. The definition of the PAFs was also widened thereafter.

³⁴ In the absence of a national DIDRR policy, the compensation packages for the displaced population of SSP were not uniform across the states. Relatively large numbers of the displaced population of MP did not find suitable land in their respective states and some displaced families of MP and MH have decided to settle in Gujarat.

³⁵ SSP acquired land in six different phases. In the first phase in year 1962, the land of Gora colony and in the second phase in 1965, land at Kevadiya village for building staff office and colony was acquired (Joshi 1987). The land of third, fourth and fifth phase lands of the villages of Gujarat were acquired in the post-1980s. In the last phase, i.e.;

sixth phase in the 2000, displaced populations from MP and MH were resettled in Gujarat.

³⁶ The new sites shall be linked to the main road. They will have a drinking water well, a platform for 50 families, one for every 100 families, one *Panchayat ghar*, seed store, park, dispensary, and a village pond for every 500 families.)

³⁷ It was felt by the project authority that this was their personal matter and will automatically get resolved over the years and hence there is no need to do anything in this regard.

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