

Displacement in the cost of Life in Kerala shores

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Abstract: Human society and all its implications began when the humanity began to settle in one place and started to his interaction and interrelations with his fellow being. From that moment human being and his socio-cultural features began to be defined in terms of his geographical background too. The environmental and geographical features and its effects on his life are considered to very important and inevitable for his growth as a social and individual being. But later certain disasters developments and conflict induced displacement on his life and deprived himself from his traditional and natural habitats. This displacement seriously affected human socio cultural and environmental existence and sustenance. Kerala which is situated at the south west cost of India, is a province consisting a long area of coastal region at its west, the back waters, forest land a long line of mountain valley at its east. And so, we may find a wide variety of people and lifestyle connected with these features of land. Kerala has a large population (its 80%) live in the nine costal districts named Trivandrum, Kollam, Alappuzha, Ernakulum, Thrissur, Malappuram, Kozhikode, Kannur and Kasaragod. And these areas are dangerously densely populated for the fishing, tourism and other industrial purposes. But unfortunately, these people who has designed their life in terms of their living situations and geographical features are now at the threat of displacement and so their sociological cultural and economic existence.

Key Words: Displacement, Coastal region, soil erosion, tourism, mineral mining.

1. INTRODUCTION :

Man, from the ancient times, began to live in a society settling himself on an area which he found to be proper to live and survive. And it was centered on this area with its all geographical and ecological features he has begun to adapt himself and adopted certain livelihood and structured the norms and customs of his own society. Some at the forest, some other on the hills, planes and the coastlands settled and likewise created the societal habitat. So, we see in every part of the world the people and society with differences and features connected to their own habitat. We have tribal, those who are settled in or at the peripheries of the forest, the farmers who are living in the planes and the valleys, the fishermen who live by lakes and coastal regions and many other named and defined by the geographical and ecological features of their habitat and life situations around them. At any cost, these people may not compromise with any reality which harms or take them away from their own habitat.

But Disaster induced displacement, development induced displacement and Conflict induced displacement force man to move from his natural and traditional habitats which support his life, profession, livelihood, religious believes and social interactions. In India, even though there is no central agency to calculate these displacement rates, various studies speak that natural calamities and disasters, development and conflicts has created a high level of displacement. Even though the estimated numbers are varying the experts in this field insists that further serious studies are to be done on this level of displacement induced by these three in various part of the nation. The internally displaced person in India according to the latest World Refugee survey is 507000. According to studies of the Indian Social Institute 21.3 Million people are displaced induced by development and from the study of Global DIP Project, the conflict induced internal displacement is 3.9 million. (Mahendra P Lama).

2. KERALA COAST AND INTERNAL DISPLACEMENT:

Kerala which is situated at the south west cost of India, is a province consisting a long area of coastal region at its west, the back waters, forest land a long line of mountain valley at its east. And so, we may find a wide variety of people and lifestyle connected with these features of land. It varies from people live in the settlement nearby forest and named in different tribal groups to the people live nearby the vast and long sea shore in different states with different slangs. Among them the costal belt of people is the major victim of the displacement due to the development and the disasters. According to the study almost half of the Kerala coastland is endangered by the soil erosion and ocean expansion due to the global warming and also a major part is to be taken for development which make the displacement a large group of people inevitable. Kerala has a large population (its 80%) live in the nine costal districts named

Trivandrum, Kollam, Alappuzha, Ernakulum, Thrissur, Malappuram, Kozhikode, Kannur and Kasaragod. And these areas are dangerously densely populated for the fishing, tourism and other industrial purposes. The major group of people are fisher men or from the fishermen's family who actually does not want to shift themselves from the coastal region to any other part of the state leaving their traditional habitat and the area.

3. THE REGULAR VICTIMS OF DISPLACEMENT :

India has a long cost line as it shares its borders with the Arabian Ocean and Bay of Bengal which is approximately 7500 Kilometers consisting millions of people. According to the studies of the National Centre for Costal research, a vast area of India costal region is prone to erosion and new land formation by the sea (acceleration). There are many developmental projects going on as building ports, industries petroleum mining and other developmental projects connecting to the land near to the seashore. And in recent years and in the past the coastal region is witnessing a series of disasters and natural calamities one after another. As the coastal areas are highly populated comparing to the other geographical areas these issues compel the governments to displace the people in Large level to the lands which are away from the coast lands. The new acts formulated for the protection of the ocean like Despite Coastal Regulation Zone(CRZ) and the guidelines issued by the government and Coastal Zone Management Authorities are also making the amount and pace of the displacement so severe. By all these issues the people living in the coastal area in the 9 districts in Kerala are undergoing a lot of sociological, economical and other similar problems. The people are always at the frontier of soil erosion, sea level rise, cyclones etc. and they are always vulnerable to displacement. Every year either temporarily or permanently a big number of people are under displacement by force from their natural and traditional habitat to the areas which are not even to help themselves to sustain their socio economical life.

4. DEVELOPMENT BY GOVERNMENT AND CORPORATES :

On this greatest vulnerability to displacement and the suffering, the development projects of the government and corporates play their own part to make it more severe and people suffer more and more. The development is the most important feature of the changing world around. The whole world which, technically divided as developed, developing and underdeveloped and this itself shows that people are so much taken up by this phenomenon. In all these three types the development is focused mainly on two major social facts urbanization and Industrialization which is accompanied by the high rate of exploitation and utilization of resources. The development thus causes for many positive and constructive elements of a country. It changes the life of the people socially, economically and politically and makes them and the system updated. The focus on the industrialization and urbanization which is considered to be inevitable to the development are always with the necessary evil i.e. the construction of infra structures like Dams, factories, roads, power projects, mining etc. without them the even the development is not so possible in its fullest sense. But it creates the miserable other side causing from "displacement" of people from their land and region politically and economically deprived. There are many sociological issues too when people are displaced from their areas of inhabitant. And after all the personal and family issues are for sure when people are displaced.

The multipurpose deep-water sea port which is going to be commissioned by this year in Vizhinjam is said to be the largest of the sea port in India with its 360 acres as its proposed area consisting 130 acres reclaimed from sea. In the beginning the government authorities and the corporates claimed that the port will not make any disturbances for the life, livelihood and the ecology of the area. But now it is becoming clearer the fact that the port will be a huge cause for a future vulnerability for displacement. Even though the port itself has carried out an amount of displacement with its construction, the experts opine that the port in the future will make people flee from the land around it to the safest places. According to the Fisheries Minister Mercykuttyamma , The fisheries minister of Kerala, even before the completion of the full break water reef, the sea is ferocious and the waves are huge and we can expect the what it will be at the completion. And the government is thinking about the alternatives. And the word alternative easily can be defined in terms of displacement. (KA Shaji, 2019)

5. MINING BY UPROOTING THE LIFE OF THE PEOPLE FROM THE LAND:

The people who are living and 'were' living in the coastline mainly from Neendakara to Kayamkulam has a tragic story to tell about the long history of protest and fight against the displacement. The sand dunes of that region were found to be resource of minerals like ilmenite, rutile, zircon, monazite, leucoxene, sillimanite and garnet in 1920. (Sekhar L.K and Jayadev S.K, 2003) And from 1968 two public sector companies are mining for these minerals and made the land a ghost land. People left houses, schools, temples and other buildings and left the place to safer places as the mining began to pollute the water, land and the life. (Haritha John, 2018) The area is turned to be a prone area of soil erosion and in the future more people are to be displaced from the land. A village named Alappad is now reduced its land square kilometers to 7.6 from 89, itself speaks the seriousness of the issue (Unnikrishnan S, 2019). As the company belongs to the state government, the people's protests are still remains futile. People tired of protesting and failed fled from the land selling the properties or leaving it to the companies.

6. TOURISM IN THE COST OF ANOTHER'S LIFE AND PROPERTY:

Kerala is considered to be one of the best tourist spot one must see in his life in one's life time. It is called to be Gods own country by its beauty and other features. People from all over the world visit the place every year in every season. The coastal region of Kerala is considered to be one of the important area for the tourism. The beaches like Kovalam , Varkala Alappuzha , Cherai, Azhikode , Kozhikode etc. are the finest tourist spots where thousands of people visit every day and stay for their refreshments. And so, the Government promotes the tourist department of their own and other private corporates to invest money in tourism in Kerala coast. As a result, many International and National corporates and business groups are attracted to the Kerala coast looking for profit and growth. They buy land and buildings adjourned to the sea coast and construct massive infra structures to attract the tourist and accumulate the profit from it. The huge hotels, resorts, restaurant and other tourism projects are emerging every day and they all need land near by the coastal region. So, they offer attractive rate for the land and people who are poor and in need of money sell out what they have to this big corporates and business groups. In a way, it is silent displacement happens in the coastal region in the name of tourism. Hundreds of families lost their land sold by themselves or deceived by a few real estate mafias left the costal belt losing their life out there. There are many cases of people who are displaced by force or by violence by these big groups and mafias literally displaced from their land. The local authorities and government who are bribed by these groups are in support of them.

7. HUMAN- CAUSED CLIMATE CHANGE AND OTHER DISASTERS:

The disaster induced displacement is a ground reality and unpredictable in all part of the world in one way or the other. Kerala cost is always said to be a regular area of natural calamities, cyclones, depressions and the heavy rainfall after it. Every year thousands of people are temporarily and many permanently displaced from the costal land leaving all their wealth and livelihood behind them. As Kerala situated at the southern part of the Indian Sub-continent it is always affected by the depressions both in the Arabian ocean and the Bay of Bengal and the cyclones which are regular to these kinds of area. The monsoon and the heavy rain fall following it also makes the life of the people live in the coast lands more miserable. The climate change is evident from the climate history of the land from the past few years. The tsunami, the cyclones and earthquakes are regularly hit the land and the coastal region is the prone to the aftereffects of these more than any area. The unauthorized and non-ecological construction nearby the seashore, the wastes from hotels and factories adjourned to the sea, the mining and dredging for local developments are making the life at the cost lands more difficult than ever. And people are forced to leave the area looking for better living.

8. THE AFTER EFFECTS:

The displacement not only dislocates people from their habitat and creates certain problems from them but also it creates many other ecological, cultural, sociological and economic problems. The development and mining done on the seashore may affect the ecological features of the land. It is found out that after the mining started in the districts of Kollam and Alappuzha. The experts found out that after starting the mining in the area the "Mud Banks" (locally named "chakara") became very rare which was regular earlier. And one Mud Banks is like a bonus to the fishermen who gets a huge amount of money from it (Sekhar L.K and Jayadev S.K, 2003). The deepening of the sea may cause for the sand dunes in the backwaters system which is a parallel system used for fishing and in land transportation (RTAC&MRM&PRS-SA, India (Kerala) Component, 2003). The displacement not only destroys the habitat of people but also the trees and nature of the area too. It affects the coconut trees which are proper agricultural feature of the coastal region. It may also seriously affect existence of the Mangroves, which are the ecological features of the costal land and the natural habitat of wide variety of biological lives.

The Kerala coast are densely populated and few are most populated with fisher man community in the country (Census 2001). The displacements compel this community to shift themselves from their land to the geographical areas which does not support their traditional livelihood, profession, life style and culture. It destroys their identity. The schools, churches, temples and a big number of traditional architecture works exclusive to the people and culture of this fishermen community is also at stake when these people loses their land and displace themselves to other places. The sociological features, the language and slangs, the customs and norms, the traditions they follow from ancient times etc. are also destroys unknowingly when this large-scale displacement happens. Moreover, it affects the living of the people, as their living is connected to fishing, selling fish and connected products. When they sent away from the land they continue this which pull them into poverty and deprivation.

9. CONCLUSION:

Displacement is not just a shifting of people from one place to another for the convenience of development, tourism and at the face of a disaster. It means and affect more implications connected to the life, society, culture economy and environment. It is literally like a tree cut from its roots and planted somewhere else where it cannot grow and bear fruit. People of the coastal region of Kerala are very much connected to the land and it features they live. Their life is

constructed a structured in line of the exclusive topographies of the land they live. The after effects are long lasting and it affects not only the people who are displaced but the whole land. The indifferent attitude and silence may one day give way for cries and that day is not far away.

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