

## ***ABSTRACT***

### *Case Title:*

### **India: A tale of rehabilitation of people displaced due to dam construction (#250)**

### *Subtitle:*

Describes the process of rehabilitating people displaced due to construction of the Bargi Dam, from initial agitations to eventual resolution of conflict.

### *Description*

The construction of the Bargi Dam (1971-1990) on the river Narmada affected 27432 ha of land and displaced 5,475 families. Initially provision was made only for payment of compensation for land and property. The lack of planning for human problems led eventually to an agitation lasting over several years.

On receiving complaints from the affected people the Commissioner of Social Welfare intervened in 1986 and convinced the state to prepare a rehabilitation plan of Rs.100 million (US\$ 2 million). Delay and mismanagement, including rehabilitation work in places not affected by the dam, led to the displaced people coming together to form a Union.

Demonstrations began in 1992, demanding fishing rights and protesting against the complete filling up of the dam. In 1994, the Chief Minister met the displaced people, accepted responsibility for rehabilitation, and agreed to some of the demands. To speed up the works, a divisional level planning committee was set up which drew up a rehabilitation plan, but its implementation was held up due to delays in obtaining funding.

In 1996, violent demonstrations resumed demanding reduction of the reservoir water level. The Chief Secretary visited the affected area, met the Union, and agreed to demands. The cycle of non-implementation, agitation and subsequent agreement to some demands was repeated in 1997.

Since then rehabilitation work has been carried out in cooperation between the Union and the government. The state has been providing about Rs.14.5 million (US\$ 0.3 million) every year since 1998. A number of rehabilitation steps have been completed, including distribution of residential plots, allotment of drawdown land and construction of infrastructure as per the master plan prepared in consultation with the Union. On the whole the displaced people appear satisfied with the measures taken by the government and are cooperating in their implementation.

### *Lessons Learned and Replicability*

- Need for a well prepared rehabilitation policy to be included in the project plans, which is to be adopted uniformly.
- Need for proper dialogue with the affected persons during the plan stage itself to prevent problems during execution.
- Need to have some flexibility in rehabilitation policies to allow changes as per local needs, and need for quick decision making at the lowest practical level regarding such changes.
- Need for political interventions if the process is not effectively in place.
- The routine government style of obtaining funds for executing sensitive rehabilitation projects can lead to resentment among the people resulting in law and order problems. Decentralization of powers to the field level with speedy execution is imperative in such cases.
- There is need for cooperative institutions with representative of concerned government departments and displaced people who have shifted to the rehabilitation site to address the grievances of the people in a proper manner.

### *Importance of Case*

It is a truism that planning for big multipurpose projects should incorporate considerations for human problems such as displacement of people and their loss of livelihood. This case illustrates how a neglect of this can lead to

long-drawn conflict situations that may eventually be resolved by resorting to original planning principles and IWRM.

*Tools Used:*

- C5.1 Conflict Management
- C5.3 Consensus building
- A1.2 Policies with relation to water resources

*Keywords:* rehabilitation, dams, campaigns by displaced people, conflict, cooperation

## **MAIN TEXT**

### **1. Background and Problems**

The Bargi Dam project in the state of Madhya Pradesh (known officially as the Rani Avanti Bai Sagar Project) was constructed at the village Bargi on the river Narmada, 9 Km away from the city of Jabalpur. The multipurpose project was to irrigate 402000 ha of land through the 137 km long left bank and the 95.5 km long right bank canals, and generate 105 MW of power. It was also supposed to be a source of water supply for the city of Jabalpur. The total length and height of the constructed dam is 5380 meters and 69.50 meters respectively with a maximum water level of 424.26 meters and full water level of 422.76 meters. The construction of the dam was started in 1971 and completed in the year 1990; in the same year it was filled to its full capacity of 422.76 meters. The left bank canal is still under construction while the right bank one has not been taken up so far. Generation units have been installed to produce 90 MW of power. The reservoir is the source of a fish catch of 325 tonnes.

The creation of the dam involved the submergence of a large amount of land, much of which was occupied by people and devoted to agriculture. There was no specific rehabilitation and resettlement policy regarding affected people existing when the RABS project was taken up for construction in 1971. There was, at that time, only a provision for payment of compensation for land and property coming under submergence. This lack of planning for the human problems arising out of the dam construction led eventually to an agitation lasting over several years.

The dam, when completely filled creates a lake 70 km long, submerging a large amount of land in the adjoining districts of Jabalpur, Seoni and Mandla. Prior to submergence, a survey was made indicating that 19 villages from Jabalpur district, 48 from Seoni and 95 from Mandla would be affected. Out of them 22 villages would be affected completely and 140 partially by the submergence. Of the 27432 ha of land affected by the submergence, 15507 ha was private land, 8478 ha forest land and 3447 ha government land. The land was acquired and compensation was announced of which Rs 184.062 Million (about US\$ 4 million) was paid to 12854 people ousted by the dam.

Mistakes made in the survey resulted in the submergence of an additional 249.53 ha of land in 50 villages of Mandla district and 149.20 ha of land in 25 other villages. After acquisition of this additional affected land, a further Rs. 14.5 Million (US\$ 0.3 million) was paid as compensation. On the other hand, some of the land demarcated submergeable was not covered by the water. These include 77.4 ha land in Jabalpur, 146.9 ha in Seoni and 22.1 ha in Mandla districts. The compensation paid previously to 252 displaced people in three districts is being returned by them in installments and the land acquired is being restored.

At the start the Government developed 6 villages from these 3 districts as model villages for the rehabilitation of displaced families. A total of 5.74 ha. residential land was acquired and 543 plots were developed for the rehabilitation of the displaced people. Two of these villages were in Jabalpur, three in Mandla and one in Seoni district. Out of the total of 5475 families displaced due to the project only 89 families settled in these model villages; 5123 families settled on some other safe place in the same village according to their liking and 263 migrated towards the city for suitable employment opportunities.

However, little actual progress was made in providing infrastructure to these “model” villages and that little was also without any planning or any consultation with those affected about their needs. The report [4] states for the model village Jamunia : “In the name of the model village, only buildings for primary school, Public Health

Centres (PHC), veterinary hospital and cooperative societies have been constructed, which are non-functional as no such plans were envisaged by the Government. Serious thought has not been given to the idea of model villages that human beings are to be settled there ."

## **2. Description and Action Taken**

### **2.1 Initial rehabilitation measures of the Government and formation of the Visthapit Sangh**

On receiving complaints from the affected people, the Commissioner, Social Welfare, Government of India intervened on his own in 1986 and was able to convince the state to prepare a rehabilitation plan. A Divisional Rehabilitation Committee was formed for the preparation of a detailed Rehabilitation & Resettlement Plan for displaced people under the Chairmanship of the Commissioner, Jabalpur Division. The committee suggested a resettlement plan of Rs. 100 Million (US\$ 2 million) in 1987 to the Government for providing essential infrastructure services to the displaced people. The proposed resettlement plan was approved in a meeting held on 25.04.1988 under the chairmanship of Chief Secretary, Government of MP.

Provisions under the Resettlement Plan were as follows:

1. Identity Card be given to each affected person.
2. Rehabilitation grant @ of Rs.2700/- (US\$ 60) per house.
3. Free residential plot of size 90'x60' to each affected person
4. Providing essential services like schools, primary health centers (PHCs), ration shops, water supply arrangements, electricity, roads, panchayat bhavan, night shelter, post office building, cremation ground, market place, etc.
5. Employment opportunities for the affected persons.
6. Transportation facility to carry the materials of the houses for those whose houses had been acquired.
7. Additional payment of 20% cost of the house for dismantling of the house and transportation of the materials if transported by the affected persons by their own arrangement.

A rehabilitation unit of the Rani Awantibai Sagar (RABS) project headed by a rehabilitation officer started functioning from August 1988. However the funds were not utilized properly and some of the funds were spent on villages where displaced people had not settled; e.g. 5 school buildings were constructed in village Barginagar and a hostel and school building in Sukri, neither of which had any displaced people; a building was constructed in the office of Collector, Mandla district. Some roads, buildings and handpumps were constructed which came under submergence when the dam filled up. Buildings e.g ration shops and PHCs were constructed where the government scheme was not even functional.

Delay in execution of the decisions relating to policy matters and progress far below expectation of implementation gave rise to discontent amongst the displaced people. They started coming together with the intention of forming a union. The Narmada Bachao Andolan and the Bharat Jan Andolan activists visited the affected area to assess the prevailing situation and felt that a union was necessary in order to fight for their rights. In 1991, a grand union named "Bargi Bandh Prabhavit Avam Visthapit Sangh" (hereafter the Union) was formed.

### **2.2 Incidents of Conflict**

The following traces the sequence of main incidents which eventually developed into a conflict between the Union and the Government.

- The first major meeting by the Union was called on 11.4.92 in the presence of Dr. B.D.Sharma, now the President of the Bharat Jan Andolan, and a memorandum was sent to the Commissioner, Jabalpur Division. When no action was taken, they demonstrated against the government by taking out a rally before the Commissioner's Office at Jabalpur on 15.6.1992. The rally was called off after getting an assurance from the Commissioner of early settlement of the demands raised by them.

- On 1.8.1992 "Doobenge par hatenge nahin" (We will drown but not move) was the slogan of the Satyagraha (Demonstration) initiated in village Bijasen due to lack of action on the part of the Government. The Demonstration was called off on 26.8.1992 on the assurances of the district authorities that matters pending at the district level would be resolved immediately and government level demands would be sent to Bhopal.
- On 19-20.9.92, a two-day boat rally was called by the displaced people against the auctioning of fishing rights of the reservoir with the slogan "Zameen Doobi Yaha Hamari, Bandh Ki Machhli Nahi Tumhari" (Lands under submergence are ours, Dam's fish are not yours). It was followed by mass fishing in the reservoir in which a large number of Satyagrahis were arrested. However the rally had no effect on the administration and fishing rights in the reservoir were auctioned on 23.10.92. 5000 outraged displaced people marched on foot to the office of the Commissioner to protest against the above action. However no success was achieved.
- On 10.06.93, Satyagraha (Demonstration) was called in Bijasen Village against filling up the reservoir completely with the slogan "Doobenge par hatenge nahi" (We will drown but not move) of 1992. During this Demonstration, the Secretary, Narmada Valley Development Authority and the Collector, Seoni invited the representatives of Union in order to discuss the matter open heartedly. The discussions were held in August 1993 and the Union was assured that firm steps would be taken for fulfilling the demands and that too within a stipulated time limit. As a result of the discussions, the reservoir was not filled up completely and the government acceded to the demand of not charging royalty on 20% fish catch for self-consumption, which marked the first success for the Union. The Demonstration was called off on 5.8.1993 after 55 days.
- A petition had been filed on behalf of the displaced persons, to maintain the reduced level of the Bargi Dam at 418 meters instead of having the F.R.L of 422.76 meters, before the M.P. High Court. The division bench of the MP High Court, after considering the merits of rival contentions, dismissed the writ petition vide an order-dated 26.11.1993.
- Committees at the district, division and state level were formed by the MP Government through their order-dated 3.9.93 for proper rehabilitation of the displaced people. The committees were to review the infrastructure provided to the displaced people and prioritize the works as per the needs of the displaced people and get them sanctioned and implemented.
- Unsatisfactory progress on rehabilitation and resettlement issues led to mass demonstration by all the peoples' organisations of M.P. in Bhopal on 18.4.94. A group of representatives met the Chief Minister requesting him to sort out the problems. The CM assured them of visiting Mandla and looking into the displaced people' problems and demands.
- On 11.5.1994, The Chief Minister, accompanied by several ministers, public representatives and officers of the Narmada Valley Development Authority, Commissioner, Jabalpur and Collectors, Seoni, Mandla & Jabalpur, had extensive discussions with the President Bharat Jan Andolan, Dr. B. D. Sharma, representative of the Narmada Bachao Andolan, Ms Medha Patkar and displaced people' representatives in Bijasen. The government fully accepted its responsibility for rehabilitation of the displaced people.

### ***2.3 Interval of Cooperation 1994-96***

As a result of the long sequence of agitation and wrangling, some agreement was eventually reached between the displaced people' representatives and the government, the main features of which are outlined below.

The rights for fishing and sale in Bargi reservoir were given to the affected people for 5 years in 1994 on a cooperative basis. A federation of 54 cooperative societies started functioning from September 1994.

The state level committee constituted earlier was dissolved and a new state level committee was formed under the chairmanship of the Deputy Chief Minister, for policy decisions and reviewing the progress of actions taken.

A Jabalpur division level planning committee was constituted in August 1994 under the chairmanship of Dr. B.D. Sharma with displaced people' representatives, subject experts, non-governmental and governmental persons as members for preparing a socio – economic rehabilitation plan for the displaced people with a micro village planning based on available natural resources surrounding the reservoir. Besides Dr B.D. Sharma, this also included a number of environmental activists including Ms Medha Patkar. The terms of reference were as follows:

1. To transfer fishing rights in the reservoir to cooperative societies of affected persons. To help fishermen in acquiring fishing nets, boats and also assist them in introducing improved techniques in fishing and marketing by way of loans etc.
2. To conduct a socio-economic survey of displaced people in the project area in order to assess their present status and their requirements in relation to jobs, community services and other needs.
3. To take up afforestation activities in the denuded forests of project areas and to involve displaced people in forestry activities according to the principle of joint forest management. To take up horticulture activities in denuded revenue lands.
4. To declare a 5 km. wide strip around the reservoir fringe as project area and assign special priority for intensive development of this project area to create job opportunities.
5. To take up watershed development and soil conservation work in the project area for employment generation and intensive development of the area.
6. To create water transport facilities in the reservoir areas
7. To prepare a plan for identification of settlement sites in the project area and to ensure settlement of displaced people away from forest areas.
8. To prepare a plan for a road network connecting all rehabilitation sites with important town and villages around the areas.
9. To prepare plans for electrification of villages in the project area.
10. To ensure drinking water arrangement in settlement sites and villages in the area.
11. To utilise drawdown land for cultivation by displaced people who are dependent on cultivation. Further efforts to ensure crop production by providing irrigation facilities to drawdown land, wherever possible.

The recommendations of the committee were not satisfactorily implemented due to non-availability of financial provisions and delays in obtaining sanction from the N.V.D.A headquarters in Bhopal. To speed up the implementation, the state level committee on 20.1.95 decided that the divisional level committee would itself execute the rehabilitation related works. On behalf of the committee, all the administrative and financial powers for sanctioning works upto Rs. 1.0 Million (US\$ 20000) were delegated to the Commissioner, Jabalpur. The Finance department issued the delegation of powers order to the Commissioner, Jabalpur on 19.7.1995. Various rehabilitation works got delayed on account of the 6 months interval between January and July.

There were further delays due to lack of coordination between the Divisional Commissioner office and the RABS field project office, which was to actually execute the rehabilitation works. As a result the Union started demanding the appointment of a Rehabilitation Officer on Special Duty in the Divisional Commissioner's office for rehabilitation related work only, for speeding up their issues, who would work as per the direction of the Commissioner, Jabalpur. However no rehabilitation officer was appointed and the responsibilities were given to the Collector Jabalpur, who, owing to his busy workload, could not discharge these functions, leading to delay in the execution of rehabilitation related works.

1994-96 was a 2 years collaborative effort between the Union and the government. Procrastination in the implementation of the rehabilitation plan due to delay in sanctions, non-availability of funds pending policy decisions etc. was experienced. Master plans for roads, electrification etc. were made but not executed. Dr. B.D. Sharma resigned from the chairmanship of the Planning committee in July 1996.

## ***2.4 Renewal of Conflict***

A critical evolution of the rehabilitation process 1994-96 was made by the Union in its 'Sameeksha aur Apeksha' report submitted to the Government of M.P. in April 1996. Nonreceipt of any response from the government led to a dharna (Demonstration) being started on 21.7.96 with the slogan "Koi Nahi Hatega, Bandh Nahi Bharega" (No one will move, Dam will not be filled up). The main objective was to get the full water level reduced from 422.76m to 418m and the location of the dharna was at the 418 m mark. A round of discussions between the district administration and the Union on 19.7.1996 was a failure. The demands were as follows:-

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Malay Raj Mukerjee, 27.01.05

1. Declaration of a Rehabilitation Project Area.
2. In order to properly execute the rehabilitation work, appointment of an independent field Rehabilitation Officer with proper staff.
3. Inclusion of financial provisions for implementation of the rehabilitation plan in the budget with Rs. 50 Million (US\$ 1 Million) made available for rehabilitation works in 1996- 97
4. Reduction of water level to 418 meter on 15<sup>th</sup> December every year and allotment of land available for cultivation on lease to displaced people. Electric/ diesel pump sets to be installed for irrigation of drawdown land.
5. Provision of 300 days' employment in the year to every Project Affected. Government to start the schemes in the submergence area under the self – employment budget.
6. Preparation of a Master Plan containing infrastructure arrangements for electricity, water, education, road, hospital, water transport and food grains.
7. Immediate disposal of land acquisition and compensation related cases.

On 17.8.1996, the Executive Engineer RABS intimated the Collector, Seoni that due to heavy rainfall in the catchment area the water level would cross the mark of 418 m, where the dharna was being organised and could lead to a mishap. The RABS officials visited the site with a rehabilitation package which was rejected on the spot. The displaced people demanded discussion with the Chief Secretary / Chief Minister at the spot and shouted slogans against the government.

Meanwhile, faced with rising water level on 18.8.1996, the district administration had another round of discussion with the agitators. Slogan shouting started and there were attempts to instigate the agitators, Sensing the tense situation and anticipating violence, 11 persons were arrested for preventing breach of peace and taken to the boat. The arrested persons incited the crowd, which resorted to pelting stones and wielding sticks, which caused injuries to the police. The Sub Divisional Magistrate ordered the police to disperse the unlawful assembly which it did. Cases were registered against 11 persons.

On 19.8.1996 Ms Medha Patkar reached Bijasen and took the reins of agitation in her hands. The District Magistrate and Superintendent of Police toured the spot to take stock of the situation and were informed of hostile action by the agitators against government personnel. On 20.8.1996 the officials visited the dharna site to discuss the matter with Ms. Medha Patkar. The water level was reaching 418 m but Ms Patkar refused to give up the dharna. In light of her attitude, rising water level and continued slogan shouting, Ms. Medha Patkar was arrested for preventing breach of peace and taken away by boat. She refused to furnish security for breach of peace, and was remanded to judicial custody.

On August 1996, a writ petition under art. 226 of the constitution of India was filed in public interest by Ms. Medha Patkar in the M.P. High Court at Jabalpur. The High Court rejected the demand of Ms. Patkar for an inquiry into the incident of arrests made on 18.8.96 and her arrest on the 20.8.96.

Finally talks were held on 30.8.96 at Rukhad in Seoni between the Chief Secretary and Ms Medha Patkar and members of the Union, which led to the Demonstration being called off. The Chief Secretary again visited the dam affected area on 2.10.1996. The following demands were accepted by the Government based on these discussions:

1. Reservoir water level would to be brought down to 418 mts. on 15<sup>th</sup> December every year. Drawdown land totalling 2700 hect. which become available for winter wheat crop would be given on ten year leases to all affected families. Diesel pump sets would be provided to displaced people for agriculture work on drawdown land.
2. Employment opportunities would be generated based on the natural / physical resources in the displaced area.
3. An officer from the Indian Administrative Service would be appointed as Director (Rehabilitation).
4. Medical facilities and ration would be provided to the cut off areas by boats.
5. Proper budget allotment would be made for rehabilitation works (including Rs.50 Million (US\$ 1 million in 96-97)

- However, the budget of Rs.50 Million was delayed resulting in only Rs.30 Million being spent. Some infrastructural work such as roads, school buildings, hand pumps, soil conservation works, electrification

were taken up. However, Rs.9.3 Million was spent on establishment and similar expenses of the rehabilitation division, which was protested by the Union.

- The National Alliance of People's Movements (NAPM), New Delhi, filed a petition in August 1996 at the NHRC regarding the plight of the Bargi displaced people. The NHRC team visited the Bargi area on 12-15 September 1996 and reviewed the situation and submitted their recommendations to the state government. and kept on monitoring the action taken on them. The first I.A.S. Director (Field) Rehabilitation, RABS took over in January 1997.
- A village level microplanning exercise for rehabilitation was taken up by the Union. This consisted of activities such as provision of drinking water, soil conservation, small irrigation bunds, lift irrigation schemes, housing, education, grazing land etc. The report was submitted to the Government in August 1997 with an outlay of Rs. 60 Million (US\$ 1.2 million).
- With issues remaining unresolved displaced people went on a sit in strike and then hunger strike in Jabalpur in August 1997. The government acceded to most of the demands resulting in the strike being called off. Mr. Basant Rao Uike was appointed in the chairman of the planning committee in August 1997, thus filling up the vacancy after a year.

## 2.5 *Return to Cooperation 1997-2002*

Since the above incidents rehabilitation work has been routinely going on with both the govt and the Union working in cooperation. The intervention of the Narmada Bachao Andolan (NBA), a non-government organization supporting the cause of project affected people, has also been reducing over the years. Since 1997-98, around Rs.15 Million (US\$ 300000) has been provided every year by the government for doing infrastructure works and for meeting the establishment expenditure of the implementing division.

## 3. **Outcomes**

The various measures taken up for the benefit of the displaced people are enumerated below:

- Distribution of pattas of residential plot to displaced people.  
Leases of residential plots have been distributed for resettlement of the displaced people on revenue land. Proposals have been sent to the Government for regularisation of the displaced people who had settled on forest land after encroachment.
- Return of acquired land  
The revenue department vide order dated 20.8.1997 issued the order for returning mistakenly acquired land from the displaced people which was not required for the project in lieu of the land acquisition money being returned in 10 equal installments.
- Allotment of draw- down land

The reservoir water level is being brought down to 418 meters on 15<sup>th</sup> December every year. The land coming out of the submergence that becomes available for agricultural purpose is being given on lease to the displaced people. The Irrigation department vide orders dated 21.5.1999 authorised district level committees chaired by the Minister-in-charge of the district, to allot the drawdown land for a period upto 10 years in place of a normal period of 3 years. Accordingly, lease rights for 3136.9 ha of draw- down land was distributed to 3489 displaced people of which 111 were in Jabalpur, 2200 in Mandla and 1178 in Seoni district. On 5.1.2000 the Union activists had a round of discussions with the Chief Minister as a result of which the minimum allotment of drawdown land by the district level committees was increased from 1.0 acre to 2.5 acres vide order date 1.3.2000 of the NVDA, so that the displaced people would become financially self reliant with larger land holdings.

- Infrastructure work : As per report 6, over Rs. 100 Million (US\$ 2 million) worth of infrastructure service in the form of 95 roads, 165 culverts, 114 handpumps, 17 school buildings, 47 community and panchayat buildings, 6 primary health centres, 6 tribal hostels are examples of assets that have been

already created as per the master plan prepared in consultation with the Union, local representatives and the NVDA officers.

- Primary Health Centers: Relaxing the normal criteria, Government released the orders for establishment of primary health centers in village Jamthar, District Mandla and village Ishwarpur, District Seoni.
- Piped water supply scheme to village Jhinhrai has been provided
- A bridge across the Balai river for connecting the villages which became cut off during the rainy season is under construction.
- Lift Water Irrigation: Village Binjha has been provided drinking water supply and lift water irrigation scheme.
- Electricity: Out of 153 villages where the displaced people were inhabiting, only 23 remained for electrification. A power substation is under construction in Sailwada for providing electricity to the remaining villages.
- Joot Shilp Training: To raise the life standard of the displaced people and for their economic rehabilitation, women are trained for hand weaving and joot shilp in two centers so that they can start their own small-scale industry.
- Benefits to Adult members of the displaced people family: Adult sons of the displaced people families who have completed 18 years of age in June 1990 would be treated as a separate family and be eligible for facilities available under various Government schemes. Displaced people have been provided loans under the self-employment scheme Swarna Jayanti Swarozgar Yojana.
- Mobile Hospital & Ration Shop  
Mobile hospital and ration facilities were being provided by boats to the villages, which do not have proper road connection and become cut off during the raining season.
- Fishing: In 1994 a federation of 54 primary cooperatives of displaced people were authorised for fishing and sale for 5 years. When the federation started work it received from the Narmada Valley Development Authority a grant of Rs. 0.5 Million (US\$ 10000) and an interest free loan of Rs. 0.5 Million repayable over five years. The loan has been returned in full in two installments by the Visthapit Union. 15 boats have been provided to Gram Panchayat in order to facilitate displaced people for water transportation. Loans were sanctioned from the cooperative banks for the purchase of nets for the oustee-fishermen. Registration fees and stamp duties on the agreement and sale of fishing have been waived for societies. Total fish catch was 2081 tonne from 1994 to 1999 by Bargi Bandh Visthapit Matsya Utpadan Evam Vipanan Sahakari Union Maryadit, Jabalpur. The royalty on 80% of the fish catch was given to Government by the Visthapit Union at the rate of Rs. 6/- per kilo. However there were a number of complaints of non-distribution of profits to a large number of fishermen by the chairpersons of the societies. As a result the M.P. State Fisheries Corporation has taken over the management of fishing.
- In March 1998 the government appointed Ms. Urmila Singh, a cabinet minister from Seoni, as the chairman of the planning committee to give further impetus to the rehabilitation works.

In April, 2002 the NVDA got an exercise done by its Field Director to ascertain the number of works remaining to be provided to the displaced people to ensure proper living conditions in these villages. The intention is to complete the remaining works so that the NVDA can close its rehabilitation division. The District Rural Development Authorities of the 3 districts have been directed to take up as many works as possible from their own funds to reduce the finance outflow from the NVDA. These include 5 school buildings, 16 panchayat buildings and 4 primary health centers. The NVDA is presently concentrating on monitoring the execution of the works so that the rehabilitation works can be ended. On the whole the displaced people appear satisfied with the measures taken by the government and are cooperating in their implementation.

**Location:** Jabalpur, Mandla, Seoni districts, M.P,India

#### **4. Lessons Learned and Replicability**

- Need for a well prepared rehabilitation policy to be included in the project plans, which is to be adopted uniformly.
- Need for proper dialogue with the affected persons during the plan stage itself to prevent problems during execution.
- Need to have some flexibility in rehabilitation policies to allow changes as per local needs, and need for quick decision making at the lowest practical level regarding such changes.



- Need for political interventions if the process is not effectively in place.
- The routine government style of obtaining funds for executing sensitive rehabilitation projects can lead to resentment among the people resulting in law and order problems. Decentralization of powers to the field level with speedy execution is imperative in such cases.
- There is need for a cooperative institutions with representative of concerned government departments and displaced people who have shifted to the rehabilitation site to address the grievances of the people in a proper manner.

## **5. Contacts**

### **5.1 Organisations:**

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