Chapter 4

PROBLEMS OF DISPLACEMENT: PSYCHOLOGICAL AND CULTURAL FACTORS
INTRODUCTION

The quest for unending development saw man reaching to such a stage where the enduring pursuit of desire envelops the underdevelopment of their fellow brothers. Right from the beginning of civilization, mankind had unending problems. The wisdom and ability to do away with those problems have made human beings the champion of their destiny and master of the material world. But the sky has got its limit, so as the gigantic strive of populace. The process of development has started taking its toll. It is mostly the poor, deprived, downtrodden and backward section of the population residing in the remote corners of the society, who is bearing the burnt of expansion. Since every development project requires large patches of land and that can easily be available in the remotest part of the society, the planners fall back to these areas for their existing requirements. The poor and boorish agricultural people are generally not literate enough to realize and pose opposition to the loss of home and continuous source of income. As a result, overtly the victims of development loose their dwelling and livelihood and covertly their culture, civilization and the bonding with the natal place of residence.

The whole process ends with painstaking relocation but it starts well beyond that. The time when the villagers come to know about their fate, trauma and fear starts creeping in with snail pace. By the time, the complex process of resettlement comes to a halt, the villagers psychologically no longer remains in the position to re-initiate their loss livelihood. The unending process of rehabilitation goes on and at times remains unachieved. The bombardment of outside values completely destroys the culture, tradition, norms, values and beliefs of the host society. Thus, the victims of displacement find themselves completely out of their traditional homely world, where they used to enjoy every bit of life. The new relocation site carries with it trauma, fear, uncertainties, cultural shock, food problem, health hazards, adjustment problem and most importantly the opposition and conflict with the host population.

PSYCHOLOGICAL FACTORS

Psychology stands for the mental construct of a person at a particular moment of time. A person with satiated ego shows happiness and pleasure. But on the other hand, something or anything goes against the spirit and will, or pinches the mind, he
becomes terribly disturbed. The persons, affected by the latter, don’t remain within him and behaves on instant reaction. The event that destroyed the oustees from their settled life and repudiated them on the streets to beg or to die invited enough wrath from the residents of the region. The victims were totally shaken and shattered and were in no position to even react zestfully.

Reaction to an event behooves the courage and boldness to show protest. But, the poor, illiterate, timid and backward sections of Singrauli residents were lacking those qualities. Though they wanted to react, but were not capable to do so. It narrates the trauma, fear and psychosis of the victims. They were in a state of helplessness and only teardrops were the source of protest, which couldn’t fetch any relief to them. So the forced relocation, zapped the inhabitants into a confused state where they had no option but to rely and depend on the destiny. They were unsure about their future residence, business, and source of livelihood. The poor were not even confirmed whether they would be declared inheritors of the property earned by their forefathers. For the confirmation of their claims, they repeatedly knocked the door of the project authorities, but of no use. Lack of concrete official papers confirming the claim, coming in the way and the authorities were unmoved from the pathetic condition of the poor. The residents of the region waging forfeited combat and battling for the right of inheritance to their own land and house, which were taken forcibly by the outsiders. The unending tale of plight and suffering of the people of Singrauli region and their psychological stature on specific instances can be assessed in the following passages.

Fear of Relocation

Every bird has its nest and so as the human beings where they rest in peace amidst their kith and kin. The familiarity of the place of residence and the acquaintance of the relatives surrounding them, is the greatest consoling factor for any one. It creates a bold feeling among the person that they can sail through the enigma successfully, and can fight and defeat the problems coming in their way, with the help of their relatives. So the phrase, ‘United We Stand’ comes exactly true in the life of the villagers. But the fear of relocation brings within its womb the fright of breakdown of traditional source of strength i.e. the crumbling of the structured ties of kith and kin cemented in the village.
The fear of relocation is more traumatic to the old and aged persons, who have spent maximal span of his/her life in the familiar village set-up. They have their feelings ardently attached with the paternal house, agricultural land, shrines, monuments, wells and ponds. The psychosis of abandoning the place of greatest social and religious significance has made the aged more furious and some of them fell ill to the extent that the health problem took their lives. Women, the compassionate and tendered part of society, are also not too far behind and showed the sign of frustration. They are the most suffered and less visible part of society, who has to pacify the trauma from within and from their male family members exposed to outside world.

But the problem of relocation is not instantaneous and prolongs for years. According to Hari Mohan Mathur, "the trauma of displacement is a long drawn process. It begins even before displacement actually happens. Once a decision to locate some project is taken, all plans for construction of schools, hospitals, roads and other development works in the area are shelved. Even some existing facilities or services may be withdrawn. Nobody comes forward to invest in land that is soon to submerge. No bank offers loan any more. Since dam takes years to build, hardship to the people also gets prolonged. For some there seems to be no end to displacement. Even before they finish resettling in an unfamiliar place, other projects come up forcing them to move elsewhere again."¹²⁵ So the process of relocation starts a vicious unending process of chaos and trauma and is understood only by the victims who come across the problem of displacement. The residents of the Singrauli region narrate the same tale of fear and psychosis to anyone and everyone, who go to them in order to decipher the enigma attached with displacement. It is the harsh reality that, if we deconstruct and decode the problems of displacement, the debunked and naked truth is same for all corners of the globe.

**Trauma, Uncertainties and Insecurities**

The act of forced relocation carries with it the trauma of evacuating the familiar and homely place of residence, uncertainties about the prospects in the strange, alien and hostile relocation site and the insecurities the oustees has to face in near future in terms of economic, social and cultural perspective. In the words of

Varma, "No trauma can be more painful for a family than to get uprooted from a place where it has lived for generations and to move to a place where it may be a total stranger. And nothing could be more irksome than being asked to switch over to an avocation which the family has not practiced before."\(^{126}\)

There lies another truth behind the uncomfortable process of displacement, that it doesn't discriminate between the rich and the poor and the big and the small. It affects everyone on similar scale, whoever comes into its way. It is the compensation part of the process, which shows the seeds of humanly created distinction between the favored and the unflavored. According to Partridge, "The people displaced by development project must move elsewhere. They have no choice in the matter. There is strong element of compulsion in displacement, as it affects entire communities. It evicts the literate, the weak and strong, skilled and unskilled, the poor and wealthy, healthy and the crippled alike. It disrupts long established social networks, and with them the social support system through which the very young, the very old, the poor and other at-risk members of the community are sustained. Whether they are capable or not, they all must go. All of a sudden the people find themselves literally on the streets."\(^{127}\)

In case of the victims of NTPC, they could not come to know about their fate of relocation for long. The illiterate and semi-literate were not conscious enough to understand the Section-4 notification regarding the acquisition of land for Government purpose. By the time they could understand about this, it was too late. It was a huge gap of time since section-4 notification was made and the actual acquisition of land took place. In cases it ran for Years. The whole period running into several years symbolizes for the pain and suffering of the villagers. The person who come to know that after certain period of time he has to die, he dies even before that because of the fear of dying. In similar way, the residents of the region were leading a dying life and were trying to search life with the constant struggle and protests in opposition to the acquisition of their home and land.

But the project authorities had callous approach to the pain and suffering of the future victims. The residents were not even consulted in the process of their relocation and were quite uncertain about their future. They were not knowing in

\(^{126}\) Varma, S.C.; Human Resettlement in Lower Narmada Basin; Bhopal; Narmada Valley Development Authority; Government of Madhya Pradesh

\(^{127}\)
details about their relocation site, and were even unsure as if they could get a plot or not. What would be the future course of livelihood and how they could settle between the strangers was a moot question pinning on everyone’s mind. They were finding themselves quite insecure in the absence of awareness about laws and regulations governing displacement. No one was available to help out the poor and backward population and they themselves were lonely trying to fight out the lost battle.

**Emotional Reaction to Displacement**

The time when residents of Singrauli region were getting displaced from the place of inhabitants, they demonstrated blend of reaction. Some had ire and fury, other were under anxiety, fear and trauma. There were few, showing happiness and other who preferred to remain calm and neutral. They had various reasons behind the feeling, which they authenticated during relocation, but majority of the residents were against displacement. “Most people feel that the advantages of rehabilitation are offset by greater disadvantages which they can’t always describe or explain. The attack on the identity of individuals or groups, the breakdown of status and communities, the disappearance of any feeling of social togetherness, the ending of any feeling of harmony between people and their environment are all mixed up in a highly complex manner. The low esteem in which the efforts of the public concerns are held is due to equally deep-seated reasons. The first of these is the feeling of having lost all landmarks while the structure of the society is crumbling away. To protest is to exist, and the problem of social identity has become fundamental for this group of people who feel that their existence is threatened and can’t find their way towards a new collective identity.”

Most of the residents were mentally not prepared for the resettlement. **Enakshi Ganguly Thukral** writes, “The psychological preparedness for displacement is never given consideration. What happened in the case of Nagarjuna oustees is bound to result. Even though they had been informed about their impending displacement, they didn’t vacate their land. Finally, many had to be forcibly evacuated by the army. In the case of the Rihand project, the oustees were not informed in advance. When the waters were released they had, literally, to run. In the

127 Partridge, William L.; Involuntary Resettlement in Development Projects; Journal of Refugee Studies; 2(3); PP-373-384
case of the Koyna dam too, people were completely unprepared. ‘...there was no time to bring our household goods. The waters rose so quickly that we had to run for life. The water came and every one cried Run! Run!’ So also were the oustees of Pong dam caught unaware.”129

With the aim to dent into the psyche of the respondents regarding the feeling, they come across at the time of relocation; question was asked to categorize the feeling into the given options. A methodological problem was observed during interrogation of this question. Most of the respondents were not born at the time of relocation and could recall only from those stories heard from their forefathers. Some others, who were in their tender age, were not mature enough to recall the events. Still some other, who were the victims of displacement and showed strong protest at that time grew so old that the picture of displacement had faded away from their mind. Anyhow, we can’t dig the graves and have to rely on the responses given by present residents of the area. Below mentioned table indicates the responses of the victims of displacement.

**Emotional Reaction to Displacement**

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<th>%age</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No Response</td>
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<td>0.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Scared</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>56.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nervous</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Happy</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>14.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3.6</td>
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There were only 2(0.8%) families out of the 250 dwelling surveyed who preferred to reserve their comments on the issue pertaining to emotional reaction to displacement. There may be several reasons. May be they could not be aware of the feelings, their forefathers came across or, they may not be able to recall those bleached incidences after the gap of nearly 20 years. On the other hand, it may also be possible that they didn’t intend to recall the dreadful incidences, which shattered them thoroughly. Most people said they felt scared. This was the most natural reaction of the villagers and can be the case with any one, even living in urban area, who is on the

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128 Electricité de France International (EDF); Environmental Study of Singrauli Region, Chapter-3; Socio-Economic; PP-48-49
129 Thukral, Enakshi Ganguly; Big Dam Displaced People: Rivers of Sorrow Rivers of Change; 1992; P-15
verge to be thrown away from their house and other belongings. 141(56.4%) of the respondents voted in favor of the option which stood highest in the chart. Second largest preference belonged to the category nervous, which rates 95(38%) of the respondents. Overall, 236 responses received, showed scare and nervousness, which shows that the residents of Singrauli region were under tremendous psychological pressure at the time of displacement.

Surprisingly, there were 37 (14.8%) families in the region who showed pleasure at the time of resettlement. This response was contradicting the majority replication of fear and anxiety. When verified, the demystification of reality uttered that the respondents were those who were under false promises and lure from NTPC. At the time of relocation, NTPC committed various promises to the residents ranging from permanent jobs, house to agriculture land and so on so forth. These respondents showed pleasure at the time of relocation in the hope that the process may come as a boon to them and can completely transform their life style. But what happened on the contrary compelled the victims to sob and moan on their destiny. 9 (3.6%) responses received didn’t feel any affect of displacement on their lives and preferred to remain neutral. These are those categories of people who mostly gained from the whole process of relocation and belong to higher economic and social strata of the region.

Attachment to Old House

The place of birth and the locale where one grow up has lots of importance in one’s life. People generally keep fondling with the cherished memories of their childhood and the place where they spent such an important span of their lives that nurtured them into a fully groomed person. The patriarchal ancestral house where one borns and brought up becomes more important in this light. It carries with it social, religious, cultural and historical importance. The child is father of the man and inculcation of culture and tradition and the appropriation of man as mature, serious and responsible human being take shape during the period of childhood. So, consciously or unconsciously the loss of house and dwelling had a deep-rooted psychological impact on the mind of the residents of the Singrauli region. Loss of such an important memorial, attached with immense gravity, can never be gratified in one’s life.
The response received unconditionally confirmed the point of view discussed above. Out of 250 responses undertaken, 242 (96.8%) reply took the majority side. There were only 8 (3.2%) modern respondents who had nothing to do with the places of greatest attachment. They may be those respondents born after relocation or were not grown enough at that time to recall the importance of the traditional paternal house to their lives.

Secure at new Relocation Site

Security signifies to a state where there is no threat of outside invasion and the residents of the locality feel comfortable in the presence of acknowledged surroundings. Peace and ease of mind always take place in the presence of friendly environment and with the co-operation of the neighbors always willing to come out for help in distress and needs. The village community is known for its interconnectivity, dependence and self-reliance. Generally, in the closed knit places like villages, those living nearby in close proximity are supposed to be relatives, even though not attached with blood ties. But forced relocation tears apart the social and economic base of the self-dependent and self-reliant village community, and people had to face various problems in the new set-up.

Mridula Singh and others say with reference to two projects, Sardar Sarovar and Tehri, “The transitional phase is the most crucial for the oustees because if they can overcome the hurdles in an alien area then only can they begin their life afresh. But the plans are so inadequate that the oustees continue to struggle for years together. In both the projects a small amount of money is allocated as rehabilitation grant. The money is not sufficient. The settlement sites are not prepared to start their life easily. It takes more than one or two years to build their houses. Even for their daily needs they have to make their own arrangements. It, therefore, becomes difficult to them to cope with all these problems combined together. Therefore, under no circumstances should the government be allowed to displace the people without first ensuring that the details of their rehabilitation are worked out.”

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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>242</td>
<td>96.8</td>
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Those co-operating and facilitating each other in the agriculture mode of production have become a healthy competitor and started fighting for the share of the scarce resources available in the new urban set-up. So the process of relocation had dent into the self-reliance of the villagers and they were forced into such a consumerist society where every one is trying to snatch bread from other’s mouth. In this atmosphere of selfishness and competition, one can hardly think about peace of mind and security. So the process of acquisition of agricultural land and forced relocation of the residents widely opened the gates for the urban economy and way of life, in the earlier closed agrarian society.

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<td>84.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>15.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Physical Relocation</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.4</td>
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From the table, it is apparent that not much of the residents settled in the resettlement colonies are happy with the scenario presently available over there. When asked whether they feel secured at the new relocation site, the villagers openly criticized and rejected the set-up of the resettlement colonies. They vehemently opposed the concept of resettlement colonies and said, it did not suit to their rural mentality and pattern of living. Out of 250 residents interviewed, 211 (84.4%) showed their dismay and apathy towards the resettlement colonies and the new relocation site and said the lack of friendly neighborhood is always missed over here. Now they have to live and adjust with the strangers as their neighbor, with a completely different mind set-up and standard of life. This is not matching with their design of activity, forget about the feeling of security. They can’t expect help and support even in their wildest dream from their neighbors in the new relocation site, which is creating a continuous feeling of insecurity in their mind. 38 (15.2%) families confirmed with the present status and showed invulnerability to the new place of residence. They belong to those categorize of people who are generally considered as self-reliant or having wider economic base. Because of their economic independence, they are less reliant on others for their necessity, and because of that they feel secure. 1 (0.4%) person among the respondents had not faced the physical relocation i.e. only the agriculture
land of the family was acquired and they were living in the old, traditional dwelling. Because of this, he was unable to share his feeling on the issue.

**Loss of Religious Gods, Idols and Monuments**

Religion, in this part of the world, can broadly be defined in two ways. The first, defines religion in terms of its social function i.e. religion as a system of beliefs and rituals with reference to the sacred which binds people together into social groups. The second approach explains it as any set of coherent answers to human existential dilemmas- birth, sickness and death – which make the world meaningful. The implication of this definition is that all human beings are religious, since we are all faced with the existential problems of disease, aging and death. Beliefs and rituals have been found to be the main component parts of religion every where. It may however, be kept in mind that the conception of the exact nature of supernatural differs from society to society and people to people. For some the supernatural may be constituted of ghosts, spirits, monuments or traditional place attached with religious significance, for others it may be an impersonal power, which pervades every thing in this world. For still others, it may be manifested through a pantheon of anthropomorphic gods, goddesses or any ‘totem’, representing the religious sentiments of family, village or entire community. So the religious sentiments pervades any and every thing found in this world, mortal or immortal, and any act of separation from those symbols of solace embody fright and anxiety.

The residents of the Tehri region, who are undergoing physical relocation due to the upcoming hydro power project, are experiencing the same trauma and dread. Mona Mehta writes about the religious attachment of the people to the area, and relocation generated pathetic mental condition of the residents of the Tehri region. In her words, “‘Where are our gods?’ ask the people who are being uprooted from here and relocated 28 Km away because of the construction of the Tehri dam. They are also upset because their famous landmark –‘Sangam’ – meeting point of two holy rivers, will cease to exist. In New Tehri Town, the authorities have tried to replicate every thing down to the last details, right from the temples to the mosques, schools to the clock tower. The town is complete with a district jail too. But something is still amiss. The temple ‘replicas’ are sans any idols or believers. You can’t recreate our ancient temples and the idols anywhere. The holy confluence of the Bhagirathi and
Bhilangana, which made old Tehri a popular destination among devotees, will soon cease to exist because of the dam. These two rivers will later merge into another to become the Ganga. From the new Tehri Town, they won’t be able to see the waters at all. The streets of the new hill station bear a deserted look. Those like Kusum, a Sociology teacher, are grieving over the future loss of their kirtan mandalies, ancient mandirs and holy rivers. You can’t recreate a society just by building new towns, says Kusum. She is unable to reconcile with the fact that the 184-year-old town, where she was born, will cease to exist soon. For the residents of Tehri, it is a case of ‘paradise’ lost. Tearfully, Kusum says, ‘I have lost my gods, my sangam.... and my Ganga’.

So religion is human response to the apprehension of something, or power, which is supernatural and supersensory and the residents of the Singruli region, like others, represent the same devout feeling. When consulted the locals, they had deep-rooted attachments to the traditional gods, monuments and idols. There were many, who showed deep emotional feelings attached with the house, wells, ponds, trees, and even stones found in the villages. They had fondest memories attached with the traditional paternal sites of religious and cultural significance. Some of them narrated; they often visualize those places in their dreams and at times their dead ancestors remind them to restart worshipping those religious monuments. So the inhabitants of the region, though placed in an urban set-up, where these religious feelings have less significance, didn’t debarred them from their feelings and emotions. The invasion of the Singrauli region by alien materialist culture and newly created mind set-up, has not been able to diminish from the minds of the people, their deep rooted values and beliefs attached to the patriarchal place of residence and the totems found over there.

Wrath of Gods

Beliefs and rituals have been found to be the main component parts of religion. Ritual consists in the observance, according to prescribed manner, of certain actions designed to establish liaison between the performing individual and the supernatural powers. Beliefs are a charter for the rituals, as also a rationalization of the same. These beliefs ensure that the rituals will be observed. The desire to worship the place, monuments and idols of religious importance is based on the sole motive to attain ‘nirvana’ (mukti), to perform ‘purushartha’ i.e. human aim, or, to appease the

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130 Mehta, Mona; In new Tehri, people long for their gods; The Times of India; Tuesday, Dec’ 20th, 2001.
supernatural to avoid their wrath and receive blessings. In village culture, the place where one born and brought up, have a deep religious significance. This place is attached with innumerable numbers of local deities and also family gods and goddesses. It is also believed that if these gods and deities are not worshiped properly, the vengeance can destroy the whole community. On the other hand, if pleased, the blessings of benign god can flourish and affluence the society. Thus, the main reason behind the religious attachment and adoration of people, to the deities and the totems, bear with it the incitement to enchant gods and shun their vengeance.

But forced relocation from traditional place of residence, devoid the people of Singrauli region with the chance to please their gods in order to avoid wrath. Some of the families showed nervousness that their not worshipping of those monuments and gods buried under the dam or NTPC project may bring chaos in the family. There were others who believed that their present pathetic condition and miseries are due to the wrath of gods and other deities. Most of the elders and the aged fell sick after displacement. They could not adjust to the new culture amidst resettlement colony. They were under constant pressure that they are not fulfilling their duty by worshiping gods, and are behaving against the wishes of god’s ‘calling’, a word coined by Max Weber. Even the Hindu philosophy embedded the fourth stage of lifecycle as ‘sanyasa’ and prescribed enchanting of mantras to propitiate gods and deities, a way to attain ‘nirvana’. There were innumerable cases narrated by the residents that their father and elders died in the resettlement colonies, because of psychological fear of abandoning the ancestral place and not propitiating of the traditional deities.

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<th>Feeling</th>
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<tr>
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<td>39</td>
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<td>211</td>
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The feelings of the residents of Singrauli find place to the question, whether they think that their not worshipping of traditional gods, goddesses and other deities may bring wrath on the society? Majority of respondents stood in favor of the query and affirmed. 211 families thought in favor of the question and showed their anxiety. There were only 39 families out of 250 interviewed, who didn’t show any botheration. They were not bothered about the existence of god and other deities, and said they are the masters of their own destiny and god doesn’t have to do any thing with it. Indeed,
they were rich and prosperous part of the society, and it is well recognized fact that, one generally thinks of god at times of crisis.

Social Alienation and Conflict from Host Communities

The term social alienation denotes the estrangements of individuals from themselves and others. Karl Marx saw human estrangement as rooted in social structure, which denied people their essential human nature. Alienation occurs when, once objectified, man no longer recognizes himself in his product, which has become alien to him. Marx saw alienation both as a subjective state – as people’s feelings of alienation – and as a structural category, which described the social and economic arrangements of capitalism. There are four particular manifestation of alienation. Firstly, the worker is alienated from the product of his labor. Secondly, he is alienated from the act of production. Thirdly, the worker is alienated from his human nature or his species being. Fourthly and finally, he is alienated from other men, since capitalism transforms social relations into market relations, and people are judged by their position in the market rather than by their human qualities. Overall, the term alienation stands for any feeling of separation from, and discontent with society; feeling that there is a moral breakdown in the society; feelings of powerlessness in face of the solidity of social institutions; the impersonal, de-humanized nature of large-scale and bureaucratic organizations.

The theoretical conception of alienation developed by Karl Marx in capitalist mode of production, noticed in the comparative study of Sardar Sarovar and Tehri, done by Mridula Sing and others. They write, “They no longer have access to the resources they were dependent upon prior to their displacement. Their skills and their lifestyle had been built around a resource base available to them. Displacement has put them at a further disadvantage because those traditional skills are no longer of any use. The same people who could build their own houses and make their own agricultural tools now find themselves dependent on others for these things.”

Thus the process of displacement throws the residents out from their own resources, symbols, products, themselves and their relatives. Their traditional skills and qualities no longer remain valid to fetch them livelihood in the new economic set-up. Ironically, they could not learn easily, those new skills, valid in the urban

131 Singh, Mridula and others; Displacement by Sardar Sarovar and Tehri: A comparative Study of Two Dams; MARG; 1992; P-27
atmosphere. So, the oustees are forced into such a vicious circle of frustration where they find themselves helpless and can do nothing. The residents of the Singruli region went through the same experience of alienation where they had no jobs for them in the new atmosphere. They became dependent on NTPC for jobs and shops. Agriculture activities were standstill because of the acquisition of agricultural land. They had no roof over their head as they were forced out of their houses. The estrangement of the population from the fellow kith and kin, earlier living surrounding each other worked as straw in the fire and engulfed the whole community into protest and demonstration, a gesture showing annoyance with the destructive policies of the Government. As a whole, the project authorities to create ground for the upcoming power project destroyed Singrauli region completely.

Their trauma and frustration further aggravated when they could not find a friendly atmosphere in the new resettlement colony. The authorities forced the residents for resettlement to such a place where they no longer able to adjust because of the hostility of the host people. The host populations, living around that place since time immemorial, found the newcomers as their competitors. They thought that the arrival of thousands of jobless and homeless people to the place, would enhance the competition for scarce resources and may in cases, the host be outsmarted by the immigrant. Thus, the arrival of oustees to the new resettlement colonies triggered competition and conflict with the host population, for which the proletariat, who had already lost every thing, was not mentally prepared. The whole situation aggravated the problems of the oustees and put them in soup. They were on the fringe of the social and economic bases and the psychology governing the urban culture was not suiting to their mentality, resulting in frustration, anguishes and alienation as a whole.

Dependency Syndrome

The residents of the region became silent victims of development policies without being conferred the credit of such a big sacrifice in favor of nation. The washout had nothing left in their hand and was not in the position to restart their lost livelihood on their own. Acquisition of every thing, necessary for a sustainable life, threw the oustees to look towards NTPC for every bit of necessity. In a way they were dependent on NTPC for plot in resettlement colonies, adequate compensation for the lost property and also permanent and contract jobs in the project.
The poor, who had never seen big amount in their lives, could not able to embrace the handsome money received as compensation and the cash was spent as sand in the sieve. Due to expenditure in luxurious items, the oustees developed addiction for that kind of lifestyle. But they were hardly left with money in their hand and were shun of any other source of livelihood. As a result, they started demonstrating against NTPC for more resources, because the earlier money received as compensation was no longer with them and they had daily requirements. NTPC, to construct the project peacefully, tried to appease some of the oustees by giving more money and other resources. This has created a feeling among the oustees that their hue and cry in front of the world community can retrieve empathy as well as better compensation package from the authorities. They no longer willing to work and shed sweat for earning of livelihood and created a kind of dependency on the NTPC for their day-to-day necessities.

In the words of Director of local run NGO called Srijan Lokhit Samiti, “the accomplishment of demands of the agitating landoustees, created a kind of dependency syndrome, they became greedy and fraud, and expected to grab as much money as possible from NTPC and any other resources. Due to this, the whole region observed floods of agitation against the Government and NTPC policies with regard to displacement and rehabilitation, which continues till date. Those, perfected complete dependence on these resources, have made it their business, prefer to sit on agitation and fetch money from the authorities. They are no longer willing to do any thing else, keep apart hard work to earn money.” But, on the other hand, an activist, working for the cause of the displaced and downtrodden, says, “The victims of displacement were self dependent and living a peaceful life before displacement. They had a sustainable livelihood and were happy with their pleasure and sorrow. They didn’t require any one for their day-to-day activities and requirements. This is NTPC who dent into the peaceful life of the people and brought turmoil. So, NTPC is culprit for their miseries, and thus, this is their responsibility to help the oustees re-establish and regain their lost livelihood. NTPC has to take care of the oustees until they reach at least their old status, if not able to better off.”
Inheritance Question

Apart from that, the youngsters who were small children at the time of displacement or even those born years latter started asking for jobs from NTPC. Since their childhood, they continuously watched their forefathers, sitting idle, doing nothing constructive, and fighting from NTPC for money and other facilities. The society and the family where one born and brought up socialize the children accordingly and nurture in them, the existent culture. Naturally, the young section learned from the society and started imitating the same behavior. The logic behind their demand was that, since NTPC destroyed them completely by acquiring their home and land, so now it is their responsibility to take care of their generations to come. Being the son or daughter of a PAP makes them eligible for more compensation and job, as they are the natural inheritors of their father and families. So they don’t want to work and earn and expect NTPC to provide resources in their hand, to execute their luxurious lifestyle. Dependency Syndrome and the Inheritance Question are two most burning problems existing against the NTPC authorities and they are trying to deal with it. These two problems are continuously shaking the peaceful atmosphere of the region and bringing the sharper attention of the national and international community.

Women Nightmare

Psychologically, the whole experience of resettlement and rehabilitation was traumatic for the women as they are supposed to be the carrier of traditional values of the family in particular and society in general. At new places, they had mammoth adjustment problems in comparison to their male counterpart, who mostly remains out of the house for livelihood or other reason. Due to breakdown of social and community structure followed by economic collapse, evils like alcoholism, gambling and prostitution was the natural outcome of displacement. These social problems took toll in the form of affecting the lives and status of women and the violence afflicted on them. In other words, women find themselves caged at completely strange place surrounded by various social and cultural evils.

Thukral expressed entirely different aspects of trauma the women were experiencing. She says, “Sanitation is a major problem faced by the displaced women. But since this is a problem peculiar to women, it seldom draws any attention. The
women in Singrauli, who had earlier gone to the forests, found without alternative sanitation facilities provided to them, with nowhere to go. The women of Kohadiya, a resettled village of the NTPC, in Madhya Pradesh, said sanitation was a major problem—an embarrassing experience everyday. There were no toilets, no forests and no fields—since they didn’t receive agricultural land in exchange for land lost. Not only did this make their lives physically uncomfortable, it also make them more vulnerable to violence of other kinds like physical and sexual harassment.”

Ms. Rajul Dixit, member, Mahila Utpiran Samiti, Singrauli agrees with the views expressed by Thukral. She says, “recent years have experienced growth of violence against women. Be it due to sanitation or some other reasons. But the resident women of resettlement colonies are experiencing various kinds of problems ranging from eve teasing to rape.” In her observation, “due to relocation and breakdown of social and cultural mechanisms, earlier acting as safety valve against the problems, the residents of the region has experienced complete degeneration in social and cultural values. As a repercussion, women suppose to be the softest target, bearing the brunt of it.”

CULTURAL FACTORS

Culture is learned and shared patterns of behavior. It is a collective expression for symbolic and learned, non-biological aspects of human society, including language, custom and convention, by which human behavior can be distinguished from that of other primates. Some refer to the culture of social groups as the total set of beliefs, customs, way of life, values and even ideology. Thus culture of a society has all encompassing appearance. It governs the lifestyle, values, beliefs, dressing pattern, eating habit, behavior, custom, way of talking and so on so forth. It is a general consensus among the scholars that the culture of an area differs from other and even in the same community, there can be multiple conflicting sub-cultures. There is no special skill required to learn the existing culture. Consciously or unconsciously, the place and society where one grows-up, instill the culture as part of socialization. So the role of society where one grows up and socializes, becomes noteworthy for the development of man as the porter of culture. If the society and the accompanying individuals are carrier of good habits, naturally the forthcoming...
generation will be righteous, and on the contrary, the destructive capacity of culture will spoil the whole atmosphere.

In the developing societies, there may arise the problem of 'cultural lag', a term coined by W. F. Ogburn. He noted changes in culture were not always or necessarily congruent with economic changes. A cultural lag exists when two or more social variables, which were once in some form of agreement or mutual adjustment, become dissociated and maladjusted by their differential rates of change. The same thing happened with the residents of the Singrauli region. The sudden invasion of this remote and until recently closed region by development project has changed the entire social and economic prospects. All of a sudden the whole region experienced scintillating changes in economic inflow. The project rendered with it, the new dazzling culture and lifestyle, which distracted the poor residents especially the youth. The residents found themselves in a stage of 'cultural shock', as they were seeing these things for the first time in their life. Not able to withstand and behold their tradition and culture, they swept away with the forceful current of alien and attractive civilization. As a result, the whole region underwent gradual changes in behavior and life pattern.

Social and Cultural Degeneration

Inception of the project and change in the economic base of the region has greatly affected the culture and civilization. Until recently, the whole region was creeping under darkness and was self-centered. The residents had nothing to do with the outside world and were happily living with their problems and miseries. They were self-sufficient and independent community and knew it better how to tackle with the insurgent problems. But the arrival of new culture of the rich saw commodification of every thing. They had created the lifestyle of the rich as their 'Reference Group' and tried to imitate the same. The people started running after the bright light of the cities, luxurious items; and borrowed culture and dressing pattern. But lack of money, resources and ability to follow the culture of the project authorities was coming into way of these landless, homeless and poor people. As a result, the whole region observed degeneration in the earlier 'pious culture.'

Not able to imitate resulted in the breeding of frustration and deep rooted instinct to follow the path of cheating, burglary, stealing, drinking, gambling etc.
There was no respect for elders left in the community and the brothers were fighting for share of property. Desertions of parents, quarrel, separation, breakdown in the families were the common affair. There was no respect for the elders. Women didn’t show interest in keeping their in-laws with them, keep apart the regard, care, attention, protection and services they deserved in old age from their son and daughter-in-law. Youngsters and the youth were trying to follow ‘MTV’ and ‘Star TV’ culture. Their dressing pattern, style of life, behavior and way of talking perceived a drastic change. They were no more the same boorish lads, what they used to be before displacement.

A free-lance journalist, situated at Navjivan Vihar of Vindhyachal Super Power Project says, “the region has observed cultural degeneration during the years. Selfishness, greed, jealousy, frustration and leg pulling, all these mingling together created a ground for the evil society. Cut throat competition for the scarcely available resources made the residents blind towards the means to achieve their goals. No one was bothered about the other competitors standing in front; they may even be their closed relatives. So, the concepts like values, ethics, moral etc. were all forced to the back and instead, greed, temptation, hunger, breach of trust etc. were having reasonable ground for foreplay in the selfish society.”

Loss of Cultural Heritage, Sites and Monuments

Man always feel proud of his social, cultural and religious belongings and wants to be specified with those references. The place, house, the monuments, idols, sites, rivers, ponds, totems, symbols etc. all play an important role in associating man with the nature. This man-nature relationship lives long with the human species and is irreparable. One can’t re-construct or re-create the importance attached with these symbols, even though if exactly constructed physically at some other place. Kalpana Sharma writes with reference to Sardar Sarovar, “The symbol of the submergence was the sight of the 1000-year old Shoorpaneshawar temple, almost disappearing, with only a small part visible. Many villagers stayed on in their huts as a symbol of protest and had to be virtually dragged out to higher ground. As a result, their meager belongings were washed away even as their fields near the river edge were fully
submerged." But the problems of the Singrauli residents were multi-facets. They were not only loosing the religious symbols, but also the cultural heritage sites and monuments deeply attached with their life. At times the bigger losses are recognized and the petty things are forgotten. So the loss of small monuments and totem attached with the place, ponds, wells and even stones were the biggest loss of the people for which they still lament after 20 years.

**Dressing Pattern**

Dressing pattern symbolizes for the status as well as the economic prosperity of a person. It also denotes the progress, mental development and maturity. If a man imitates the latest fashion clothes, that shows he is up-to-date and not lingering behind. At the same time, it is a matter of great debate among scholars that what would be the parameters of dressing pattern. What can be said as adequate pattern of dressing as we are visualizing varieties of dressing habits floating around different corners of the world? Delving into the traditional Indian mentality, where decent look is given utmost importance, can be taken as parameters for the evaluation of the dressing pattern of the residents of Singrauli region.

It was observed that the landoustees, especially the youngsters, are well versant in the latest dressing patterns of the country. Very few including old and aged persons are using 'dhoti' and 'kurta', the traditional clothing. The stitching of pants and shirts used by them, were exactly the same found in any other part of the country, in consonance to the latest fashion. It seemed, in an overview that the residents of the area are running with the time in terms of dressing pattern, despite the trauma and uncertainties they faced.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pattern</th>
<th>No. of Persons</th>
<th>%age</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Latest Dress</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>56.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traditional</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>17.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remains Same</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>25.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

133 Sharma, Kalpana; Sardar Sarovar: New Twist to and Unending Story; The Hindu; Survey of the Environment; 1994; P-152
In an attempt to ascertain the viewpoint of the residents, questions were asked from them regarding their dressing pattern. The response received shows that majority of the residents took favor of the latest dressing pattern. This shows their open mind and maturity of thinking, to allow and admit newer aspects to their life. Out of 250 families interviewed a majority of them i.e. 142 (56.8%) asserted that latest dressing pattern has ingringed in the region after displacement. On the other hand, 44 (17.6%) people were having conservative opinion. To their view, present dressing pattern is in traditional form. The respondents taking this stand, were mostly the representatives of the old and aged generation of the population residing in Singrauli. Some responses in favor of status quo were also received and it outsmarted the conservationist response. 64 (25.6%) families felt that there is no change in the dressing pattern and habits of the residents. To my mind, close association to society and slow pace of change, could well be the factor for their unnoticed and overlooked response towards change in dressing pattern.

Change in Religious Rituals

Religion binds the natural world to unnatural, mystique world of supernatural powers. Every one tries to please and soothe the supernatural in their favor and solicit its blessings. There are different ways and methods, prescribed in different religious textbooks, for reaching to the almighty, superpower named god. Religious ritual stands for the ceremonies and sacrament as well as the special methods required during appeasement of god on occasions of great religious importance such as Holi, Dipavali, Durga Puja, Janamasthmi etc. The logic of propitiating the god shows the human being's attachment to its traditional culture. Development process and the introduction of modern values, continuously undermine the importance of religion as a power, and suggest instead the importance of science and technology. According to the spirit of new scientific pattern of thinking, there is nothing beyond the control of man and with the proper use of wisdom, human species can control any thing and every thing. The feeling of being superpower and the master of the universe devalued the religious importance from the mind of the human being. Now man started searching for the mysteries of life in science and technology, instead of religion. Keeping in mind the changing parameters of life and the technologies used to
overcome the problems, questions were asked to verify the mentality of the residents of the Singrauli.

### Change in Religious Rituals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feeling</th>
<th>No. of Persons</th>
<th>%age</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>207</td>
<td>82.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>17.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

207 (82.8%) respondents confirmed change in the religious rituals since the years. They sighted various reasons behind the alteration of the intensity with which religious rituals were observed earlier. Foremost among them were shun of money, time, resources, patience and belief. The acquisition of agricultural land and shattering of the economic base, threw the residents of the region into urban-industrial atmosphere. Here they have no time, patience and most importantly money and other resources, to celebrate the festivals, and other occasions of ‘rites-de-passage’ with same intensity and vigor, what they used to do earlier. Result was the change in the pattern of celebration of religious rituals. Rest of 43 (17.2%) families stood with the nature and tradition, and said they are celebrating the religious rituals on the same pattern, without any change. May be, time was not cruel on them and because of that, they are living in the same old world with the same kind of customs and ceremonies. They didn’t show any change or altercation in the thinking pattern attached to the religious values and beliefs.

### Feeling about Calendric Rituals

Related to our earlier question, we delved further deep into the mind of the respondents and tried to fathom their attachment to calendric rituals celebrated with the change of season and agricultural production such as with the harvesting of wheat, maze and rice. There are several festive occasions in rural India attached with the calendar such as *Makarsakranti* or *lodhi* on 14th of January. Those living in the resettlement colonies could hardly understand the meaning of these concepts due to industrialization of their activities. They were no longer living in the rural agricultural world and instead semi-urbanized their way of life. In this atmosphere they had nothing to do with the agricultural activities and harvesting occasions. But there were few old and aged and also those left with little bit of agricultural land could
understand the logic of calendric rituals. So the answers received enveloped both kind of response.

For the convenient of analysis, we had segmented the responses into various categories such as very strongly, strongly, somewhat, less strongly, least strong and lastly, don’t know.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feeling</th>
<th>No. of Persons</th>
<th>%age</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very Strongly</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>4.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>43.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>37.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less Strongly</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Least Strong</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>11.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don't Know</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

11 (4.4%) respondents showed attachment to religious rituals very strongly. On the other hand, 109 (43.6%) families felt strongly attached. These are the respondents progressing forward with their tradition carrying with them. 94 (37.6%) showed a confused state of mind and said somewhat. They were those progressive individuals, reaching into a confused state of mind. They were not able to decide the goal of their life, either to stay with tradition or to modernize completely. 7 (2.8%) respondents had twinkling relation left with the tradition and thus they choose the response less strongly. 28 (11.2%) families showed complete sign of breakdown in the relation with tradition and remained with the negative response of least strong. They were the richest and modernized lot of the community and were not at all bothered about their past customs and tradition. Only 1 (0.4%) household was completely unknown about the concept governing calendric ritual and responded as don’t know.

**Inter-Caste Interaction and Marriage**

Inception of power and mining projects into the Singrauli region shattered the traditional social structure and pattern of life based on traditional village atmosphere. Now the residents found themselves into industrialized world where the agricultural mode of production was replaced by the industrial activities i.e. they moved from ascribed to achieved society. Industry requires competent and skilled person
irrespective of their caste and creed. This atmosphere of openness allowed the upper and lower caste to work together, which bridged the distance and also initiated healthy interaction between the one time hostile communities. Caste rivalry took somewhat back stage and every one started thinking in terms of personal benefits. Apart from this, the new resettlement colonies cemented the people in such a manner that there was no caste distinction between most of the upper and middle caste in terms of location of plots, and they were living happily in close proximity. Some kind of discrimination was made by the authorities with reference to the lower castes such as chamars and especially the dharkars. Dharkars considered equivalent to chamars, were allotted plots in the outskirts of the resettlement colony, where there was cremation ground earlier. But overall, the caste interaction has improved and people have moved towards the concept of caste equality.

In terms of the inter-caste marriage, the region symbolizes with the rest of India. It is still not permitted and those practicing have to be socially ostracized. Parents have not modernized to the extent that they allow their children to go for inter-caste marriages. When asked to illustrate reasons, they said, inter-caste interaction is one thing and marriage another thing. Marriage being sacrament establishes eternal ties between two completely unknown families, and if it is inter-caste, invite various problems in the long run. Difference of culture stands in the way of stable relationship, which latter grows up into adjustment problems. You will be socially boycotted at the first instance; forthcoming generation from the couple could be inferior in mental and physical capability. Most importantly, the parents said they wanted to keep children under their clutches so that they obey parents.

Overall, caste consideration still lingers at the back of the mind of the residents of Singrauli region. Though they are trying to come out from the shackles of such a monstrous social evil, but it will take years to fully overcome this devil. The narratives done above with regard to caste interaction received confirmation in the discourse of Ms Rajul Dixit, working as different capacity in the region such as Dy. Director of local NGO, Srijan Lokhit Samiti; President, consumer congress, Singrauli and Member, Mahila Utpiran Samiti, Singrauli. She says, “overtly, the whole region has experienced changes in caste interaction after the inception of the project and inculcation of western ideology among the residents. But they are resilient on the question of inter-caste marriages. They want to carry on their traditional custom with
them, as it marks their superiority in terms of caste status. So the villagers, as the case with the whole nation, maintains double standard.”

CONCLUSION

The sole motive behind lettering this chapter is to ascertain the changes brought about in the comparatively closed society like Singrauli, due to inception of alien culture. In this context, first and foremost question, which pins one’s mind, is, whether the society was able to resist the impacts or completely swept away in terms of culture and tradition in the wave of new values and beliefs. Apart from that, to gauge the trauma and frustration, if ever, faced by them during resettlement, which psychologically paralyzed the whole community. The conclusion drawn paints a totally negative and grim picture of resettlement and rehabilitation in terms of psychological and cultural impacts.

At the time of displacement, psychologically, the whole region was under severe uncertainties and trauma. They were zapped and didn’t know how to react from this unnatural man-made calamity which was going to destroy the whole region completely. A few, however, showed pleasure and welcomed the arrival of the project, under the temptation of permanent jobs and better expectation of life. But to their dismay, this feeling of happiness didn’t last too long. Residence had deep-rooted cultural and religious feelings attached to the ancestral place and was not ready to forego it easily. Coupled with this, they were quite uncertain about their future, especially about residence, occupation and source of livelihood. They were totally blind and visionless about their future prospects, which was adding to their anxieties.

When displaced, the residents developed ‘identity crisis’, as they had nothing left with them, not even place of inhabitance with which they could get identified. Their irony further got aggravated when no one, even the close associates and relatives showed willingness to recognize these oustees. Straw was added to the already ignited fire when they found that even NTPC, who was the main culprit and responsible for the plight of the residents, didn’t show botheration for the woe. They considered PAPs as potential beggars before NTPC, always demonstrating for compensation. The migrants somehow managed to grab plots from NTPC in the resettlement colonies and tried to resettle themselves. But adjustment problems and conflicts from host communities were coming into way. Apart from that, they were quite nostalgic about their paternal houses, ponds, wells and parochial deities. They
had fear that abandoning the paternal place of residence and not propitiating the traditional gods and goddesses may invite wrath.

Landlessness and joblessness turned the diligent and laborious residents of the region completely dependent on project management. Now they were not willing to work and started eyeing toward authorities for everything. The identical feeling of dependency passed on to their protege as inheritance. Now, the children of PAPs, even born much after displacement are asking for jobs and other works from NTPC. The whole region is completely under the shadow of turmoil and rage. The victims considers NTPC as delinquent for their miseries and expects them for bail-out by giving jobs and better compensation package, so that they could restart their lost livelihood.

Culturally, the region was under tremendous shock. Earlier, they were quite independent and homogenous community, completely ignorant about outside values and culture. Inception of various projects and arrival of educated people, carrying altogether different cultural values and beliefs, put the region under turmoil. Shun of money, job, land and livelihood created bitter feeling and animosity between family members for share of property and compensation. Elders lost respect and were considered as burden on dwellings. Result was desertion of parents and elders begging for survival. The young impressed by the bright and dazzling culture and lifestyle of the project persons tried to imitate. But due to lack of money and resources were coming in the way. Thus they adopted illegal means such as cheating, stealing, burglary etc. to achieve the radiant aspirations of life. The whole region was under spur of liquor, drug, degradation in the status of women, breakdown in joint-families, as the boorish and virtuous people could not able to handle the complexities of life brought about by the foreign culture. Though the dressing pattern modernized in the region due to continuous interaction with the outsiders and also by watching TV. Inculcation of modern values and beliefs plunged the feeling of the residents towards traditional rituals attached with religion and calendar. Now the residents have no time, money, patience and resources to celebrate these festivals on the same scale, what they used to do earlier. Inter-cast interaction and modernist concepts like caste-equality have accelerated but acceptability of inter-cast marriage is still a distant dream.