CHAPTER - II
REVIEW OF LITERATURE
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A voluminous body of literature on displacement exists across diverse regions, contexts and countries of the world.

While dams in India or China or indeed the world over have displaced many belonging to the weaker sections of society, during the last 50 years, some 3300 big dams have been constructed in India and another 1000 are under construction (Courtland Robinson, 2003). Many of them have displaced vulnerable groups of society. In India, the situation of the Adivasi or tribal people is of special concern as they are reported to constitute between 40 to 50% of the displaced population in certain areas of development-induced displacement. As a result of misguided state policy, project affected communities have been subject to sudden eviction, lack of information, failure to prepare rehabilitation plans, low compensation, loss of assets and livelihoods, traumatic relocation, destruction of community bonds, discrimination and impoverishment (Mander, 1999). There are no official records on the number of people displaced from large projects since independence. In 1994, the government mentioned the figure of 15.5 million internally displaced and acknowledged that 11.5 million were still awaiting rehabilitation. However, calculations based on the number of dams constructed since independence indicate that as many as 21 to 33 million persons are likely to have been displaced.
It is true that the construction of big dams and other projects are necessary for nation building but the feelings and aspirations of the local people should not be neglected. Displaced people from the projects are not benefited rather they have become impoverished losing their economic, social and cultural resources (Koening, 2002).

Today the number of IDPs has outnumbered the refugees around the world. It's not a new phenomenon, still lack a comprehensive count of IDP numbers simply because they are not documented. Although they are noted to be the largest ‘at risk’ population in the world, yet arriving at an appropriate definition for them has been a slow and complex task (Velath, 2003, Nath, 2005).

From a perusal of the diverse literature on displacement spanning across disciplines like political science, sociology, anthropology, migration studies and human geography (and the list is hardly exhaustive) we can sieve through a variety of important works. The political economy literature divides resource-based explanations on resource abundance or “resource curse”- where economic rents offered by primary commodity exports are seen as generating conflict (de Soysa 2000, Ross unpublished data) and those focusing on resource scarcity- where population growth and resource degradation and scarcity are seen as generating conflict (Homer-Dixon, 1999). On the other hand, identical distinction is the greed/ grievance
dichotomy focusing on the presumed motives of actors (Collier and Hoefller, 1998) where the resource-curse paradigm is associated with conflicts driven by greed to control abundant resources and resource scarcity is associated with grievances over the degradation and lack of resources.

Recent writings in political science and political ecology (Reno 1998, Suliman 1999, Peluso and Watts 2001) challenge the link between scarcity and poverty with violence. The resource-curse hypothesis, on the other hand, used by many political scientists and ecologists working on environment and resources show that resource abundance and large scale processes of environmental extraction, rehabilitation and amelioration are associated with violence more often than scarcity per se (Peluso 1993, Schroeder 1995, Ross 1997, Ross 2001, Peluso and Watts 2001).

Rural people have actively chosen to define their identity in terms of the resources they have traditionally accessed and used. They do this not only because their lives are dependent on these resources but because it is a practical method of claiming ownership against other groups as well as the state.

Wittayapak (2008) deals with history and geography of identification related to resource conflicts and ethnic violence in Northern Thailand. Here how the conflict between the Hmong hill tribe and the lowlanders took place were dealt in. The low lander raided the Hmong
villages and cut down the lychee trees which belonged to the Hmongs. The low land villagers alleged that the hill Hmong tribe encroached on the watershed forest to grow lychee, cabbage and ginger and blocking and contaminating the streams. The Royal Forest Department (RFD) said that it would not intervene in the dispute between the Hmong and the lowlanders as they viewed the raid by the lowlanders as a point scoring dispute rather than an environmental issue.

The pattern of social injustice and spatial unevenness has long been thought of as defining features of gentrification. There are long standing statements about gentrification induced displacement, as socially vulnerable groups are forced to move out of their neighbourhoods (Glass 1964; LeGates and Hartman 1986; Marcuse 1986; Lyons 1996; Atkinson 2004). The quantification of displacement is a lasting empirical challenge for gentrification researchers and qualitative approaches at the neighborhood scale have often been viewed as promising ways to address this issue (Atkinson 2000; Newman and Wyly 2006).

When discussing about gentrification in the academic circles as well as community activists or journalists- the question of where the former inhabitants moved to is often asked. This question is very much in line with Millard Ball’s (2002:834) statement “(that) gentrification does not merely affect the single property or neighbourhood that is gentrified; the people displaced have to move somewhere, and the consequences can ripple up the
‘chain of moves’ that is initiated”.

As gentrification is now conceptualized as a global phenomenon (Smith 2002; Atkinson and Bridge 2005), it is of particular importance to inform debates on the nature and socio-spatial impacts of this process with views from a diversified panel of cities.

These seminal studies were path breaking and pioneering works and were important in that they generated much interest and had a spiral effect on future studies. On the other hand the effect of Weiner (1978, 1983, 1993) continues to be felt till today, such was the quality of their contributions, and the framework and paradigm suggested and postulated by these attempts continue to be starting blocks for contemporary studies.

While literature specific to north east India is by no means negligible, we can organize the same into the following broad themes: -

It is not easy task to review of displacement related issues and works even in relation to northeast India. However the works of Weiner (1983), Misra (1980) were important in generating much interest and acting as a catalyst to generating more interest and further research.

Of late the issue of climate change and environmentally induced migration has received much attention (Gann and Das, 2004). Several conferences and workshops have focused on issues pertaining to migration, development and displacement and here as well, as in the global context (Potrykowska, 2005; Novosak, 2008) workshops and conferences and
brainstorming sessions have been frequently held (Kumar, 2002; Kumar, 2006) and seminar volumes, doctoral dissertations (Bhuyan, 1977), presidential addresses at conferences (Das, 1980) have produced much literature but few solutions to a contentious issue. Indeed beyond academic efforts, the role of the Governor of Assam and that of the Supreme Court (that repealed the IMDT Act in July 2005) have failed to solve the matter of illegal migration from across the international border.

Apart from displacement of population from natural disasters like earthquakes, floods etc. the other factors which displaced population in the North East India are government policies and development projects, ethnic clashes and migration of population from across the border. The most important causes, which have added to these humanitarian problems in the North East, are the ethnic clashes and the migration of population to the region from across the border (Das, 2002).

Haokip (2002) is of the opinion that there is no clear-cut definition on the IDPs although they share so many common characteristics with the refugees; they are not eligible for protection under international refugee law as they are confined within the territory of their countries. Today the number of IDPs is outnumbering the refugees around the world, yet the countries concerned have failed to adopt any mechanism to deal with the situation. Most of the countries do not want any international involvement in the matter and the problem is considered as a mere law and order
problem only. They think that if the matter is exposed in the eyes of international communities, the image of the concerned countries would be tarnished in the eyes of international communities. Therefore the IDPs have little hope or no hope at all for a long term solution of their problem.

Most big dams have negative social benefits but it gives positive benefits to a few selected powerful groups. Big dams start well in the beginning but often tend to end with negative impacts. There was a time when everybody loved them. The fact that they do more harm than good is no longer a conjecture. They cause floods, water logging, salinity and other problems like spreading of diseases. Displaced people from the projects are not benefited rather they have become impoverished, loosing their economic, social and cultural resources (Koenig 2002, Roy 1999).

The United Nations guiding principles on internal displacement defines “internally displaced persons are persons or group of persons who have been forced or obliged to flee or leave their homes or place of habitual residence, in a particular as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situation of generalized violence, violation of human rights or natural or human made disasters, and who have not crossed an internationally recognized state border” (UN 1999, Kalin 2000).

The risks and reconstruction model developed by Cernea explains the causes of impoverishment (risks) and the ways to address the issues to reconstitute livelihoods. His model also helped in addressing the
joblessness, homelessness, landlessness, food insecurity, risks to host population etc. Eight primary risks are linked in three separate ways. First as caused by impoverishment, they influence one another. For example, health problems caused by resettlement exacerbate economic problems. Second, the risks and the actions to address them are linked, thus if landlessness is a problem, this can be addressed by providing land. Thirdly, mitigating the different risks can work synergistically to reconstitute more sustainable future livelihoods (Cernea 2000, Koenig 2002).

Mooney (2005) deals in detail on the concept of internal displacement and the case for internally displaced persons. Many have different opinions about internal displacement and internally displaced persons. Some consider the term ‘internally displaced persons’ is the persons who are uprooted by conflict, violence and persecution. If this group of people crosses the border then they are considered as refugees. On the other hand ‘internal displacement’ is a much broader concept, which includes millions of persons uprooted by natural disasters and development projects.

Internally displaced persons (IDPs) who were forcibly uprooted within their own countries by conflict, violence etc. did not find a place in the international agenda until the last decade of the twentieth century. Internal displacement is not a recent phenomenon. It existed prior to the World War II or even during the World War II. Even then as late as 1988,
the international community failed to take any action when 250,000 Sudanese starved to death because their government denied humanitarian access to them. But in the case of refugees who fled across borders— the international community did take action. But this system of international protection and assistance for those who crossed border did not extent to persons forcibly displaced and at risk within their own countries. This group of people remained under the jurisdiction of their own governments and largely beyond the reach of the international communities (Cohen, 2006).

Jesse Newman (2003) has stressed on the issues of the Sri Lankan displaced women. According to him resettlement has meant merely the return to their geographical place of origin and no more. Sri Lanka has been witnessing massive civilian displacement since 1983 numbering over 1 million people in total (Norwegian Refugee Council, 2002)

Newman (2003) is also of the opinion that most of the displaced persons do get displaced multiple times and for varying length of times; fleeing from their homes to the temporary welfare centers to the homes of friends and relatives or to the jungles.

Internal displacement has been borne heavily by children who are compelled to dropout of school because there are no schools in the areas where camps are set up (Mander, 2006). Joseph C. (1999) deals in detail on the ethnic conflict in Bhutan between the Ngalong dominated state and the Lhotshampas (people of Nepali origin residing in southern Bhutan). He
stresses on the politico-economic roots of ethnic conflicts and their relation to the process of modernization and development. The impact of conflict on children in Bhutan is tremendous as the Lhotshampa children were deprived from getting admission in the schools due to their status of citizenship in Bhutan (Hart unpublished data).

Return populations are human resources because when they return to their places where their homes and infrastructures have been destroyed. When they arrive in their places of origin, they work hard to rebuild it. For reconstruction of the states, the international agencies can provide the required capital and the returnees may get the opportunity of employment and helps to fulfill the state development objectives (Petrin, 2000).

In order to achieve rapid economic growth, India has invested substantial funds towards industrial projects such as dams, roads, mines, new cities etc., which have been possible only through the acquisition of land and subsequent displacement of people. According to the figures available from the Indian Social Institute, there are 21.3 million developed induced IDPs. These include displacement of people by dams (16.4 million) Mines (2.55 million) Industrial development (1.25 million) and wild life sanctuaries and national parks (0.6 million) (Lama, 2000).

Displacement caused by conflict in the states of Jammu and Kashmir, Gujarat and in the northeast have displaced more than 6,50,000 persons. Data related to north east is very scarce but it is expected that more
than 2,50,000 persons may have been displaced due to the conflict. The IDPs in the northeast particularly in Assam lives in the temporary relief camps in most deplorable conditions. They are not treated at par with other displacees in the country and the government treats the issue merely as a law and order problem. Of course it is true that India too does not have any clear-cut policy on the IDPs like many other countries. So many displacees in the state of Assam are forced to live in temporary makeshifts and abandoned buildings in most precarious conditions with little health care facilities (SAHRDC, March 2001)

Jewitt, S. (2008) deals with the conflict in Jharkhand. In the beginning the movement was dominated by Adivasis (Tribals) but later on the movement had to broaden its scope as Adivasis declined as a proportion of the region’s population. Thereafter support hinged around the grievances created by economic transformation, which united otherwise desperate groups in opposition to exploitative and locally insensitive ‘dikus’ (outsiders). Finally, Jharkhand became a 28th state of India on 15th November, 2002.

It is difficult to present exact data on IDPs caused by conflict in the region. Some data published by government and some other agencies may be given. Tens of thousands of Bengali Hindus and Muslims were displaced all over Assam in violence during the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s particularly during the anti-foreigners movement led by students and the dominant
community of the state. During the worse phase of violence in July – September 1960 about 50,000 Bengalis mostly Hindus crossed over to west Bengal seeking shelter there. Again in 1972-73, 14,000 Bengalis fled to West Bengal and elsewhere after the riot broke out over the language issue. However the real figure mentioned here is not the real one as the government accounted only those persons who lived in the camps of West Bengal. Thousands died in the riots during the Assam agitation between 1979-85, almost 2000 in the village of Nellie alone (Bhaumik 2005, Hussain, 2000) and detailed analysis on the Nellie incident have been carried out (Kimura, 2003).

The seven sister states in the geographically isolated and economically underdeveloped North East are home to 200 of the 430 tribal groups in India. Unfortunately the persistent influx of migrants in the region from neighbouring countries have led to ethnic conflict over land and fighting for political autonomy or secession. While in general official sources tend to ignore the issue, the Supreme Court in July 2005 during the Repeal of the IMDT Act termed illegal migration from Bangladesh as akin to and amounting to ‘demographic aggression’. There is little doubt that illegal migration from Bangladesh has aggravated the tenuous inter-ethnic relations in northeast India.

Srikant (2005) is of the opinion that the British sowed the seeds of conflict by bringing the Santals from central India to work in the tea
plantations and by encouraging consciously the migration of lakhs of Bengali Muslim migrants into the plains of Brahmaputra valley. The largest forced displacement movements have occurred in the states of Assam, Manipur, Nagaland, Tripura, Arunachal Pradesh involving at least eight ethnic groups such as Bodos, Kukis, Paites, Nagas, Mizos, Reangs, Bengalis and Chakmas (USCR, January, 2000).

Literature available on the ethnic conflict in north east India and particularly in Assam says that the conflicts which erupted in the Bodoland areas were a part of ethnic cleansing design to make the Bodo dominated areas tribal majority (Hussain, 2004, Bhaumik 2004, Gopal, 2004, Choudhury 2003, Baruah 2003; Choudhury, 2002; SAHRDC 2001; Hussain, 2000, USCR 2000). The idea put forward by the above authors is related with the demand for separate state by the Bodos. But knowingly or unknowingly no literature talks about the in-depth causes, which led to the eruption of such ethnic clash. Furthermore, literature pertaining to Bodo-Santal ethnic conflict always tends to favour the Santals without understanding the in-depth causes of such violent conflict between the two communities.

The idea put forward seems to be true and holds good superficially, especially for those who do not have adequate knowledge about the Bodos and Santals. However, critical analysis of various facts indicate that if this was the reason, that ethnic clashes were meant to make the Bodo dominated
areas tribal majority and create a separate state ~ then a deeper issue was lost sight of; that very few—if any—researchers raised: the issue pertaining to how and why tribals were becoming a minority in the tribal belts and blocks. Just as there is no smoke without a fire, surely the tribals being marginalized in their very homelands was not occurring in a vacuum?

Unfortunately, literature has also not focused on the processes whereby non-tribals have been able to surreptitiously own landed property and become a majority in certain tribal belts and blocks. This study intends to overcome these inadequacies, which a review of literature has thrown up.

Further, it will attempt to improve upon certain studies (Narzary, 2006) that looked at one dimension of the Bodo-Santhal conflict. Narzary dwelt at length on the hidden truth behind ethnic clashes between the Bodos and Santals but this study could not throw first hand information on the issue of the Santal inmates of relief camps due to the risks involved in undertaking fieldwork in trying circumstances. Thus his study was limited to the affected Bodo people. The present study will look to cover the inmates of the Santal relief camps as well Bodo relief camps in the study area to provide an objective and balanced academic assessment of a contentious issue.
References:


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