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The Settler and his Wife

Gender and the Politics of Displacement

by

Lyla Mehta[*]

Abstract: This article offers conceptual and political perspectives on gender and development-induced displacement. By drawing on examples from India, China and other parts of the world, it shows how displaced women are often caught in a double bind with male and gender biases negatively affecting their lives and livelihoods. These often perpetuate gender inequality in terms of unequal resource allocation and distribution and also legitimize the silencing of women's interests. Furthermore, biases within state institutions, structures and policies also perpetuate societal inequalities. While in some cases, the social change brought about by displacement can lead to a radical reordering of social relations that challenge earlier gendered norms and restriction, in most cases, resettlement and rehabilitation (R and R) programmes have largely failed to make conscious efforts to minimize the loss and traumas encountered by displacement processes, let alone include equity considerations in their activities. In order to achieve gender justice, it is thus important to resort to emancipatory politics that can push for a greater realization of the rights of displaced people and for prior and informed consent.

"...Unlike the settlers, their wives and children are
not given any specific task or counted as part of
the holdings labour-force..."
(Tunkur Shamsul Bahrin n.d., p. 63.)

Introduction[1]

Displacement due to development characterizes the lives of millions of people across the globe. Globalization with its accompanying acceleration of international capital flows and economic liberalization is likely to increase the number of projects that entail the forced displacement of marginal populations especially in

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[1] Some parts of this paper draw on Mehta and Srinivasan (2000) and Mehta (2009).

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rising powers such as China and India. At the turn of the century, conservative estimates put this number down to about 10 million annually (Cernea 1997)[2]. In the last 30 years China has witnessed tremendous market reforms, leading to urbanization, industrial and rapid economic growth at an average of about 9.8 per cent (Yang 2010). This growth has largely been driven by large-scale infrastructure projects such as the Three Gorges Project on the Yangtze River, which has emerged as both a symbol of China's technological progress but also of the dark sides of growth. Despite its impressive energy generation, it has completely transformed the Yangtze River, submerged 13 cities, 140 towns and 13,000 villages and displaced over a million people (Yang 2010).

Post-colonial development policy and planning has largely followed the utilitarian and Benthamnian logic of "the greatest happiness for the greatest number" (Rayner 2003). This has allowed for millions to be displaced in the interest of the "common good" (Roy 1999). In the 1950s, industrial and infrastructure projects were considered to be the path to development and projects such as large dams generating water and power were supposed to help most of the developing world "catch up with the West" and promote modernity. In India alone since independence in 1947, 21 to 50 million people or oustees have been displaced by large projects such as mines, dams and industrial complexes (Hemadri et al. 2000). Alone, the controversial dams on the Narmada River are set to displace about a million people. Until two decades ago, forced uprooting was considered to be the 'cost' of development due to overarching national interest. Even though China has followed a non-western trajectory concerning development, it has also embraced modernization paradigms. As James Scott (1998) notes, such high modernism and technical progress often leads to hegemonic planning that has excluded diverse perspectives and alternative paths to development as well as the agency of local people.

Thus, not surprisingly, resettlement schemes have led to impoverishment (Cernea various) and immiseration not only due to their top-down style of decision-making and the suppression of the ousted, but also due to the inability of resettlement schemes to rebuild lives and livelihoods. They have also often led to a decline in the standard of living of the displaced (Grabska and Mehta 2008; Scudder 2005). Relocation and resettlement are largely physical and economic initiatives, rehabilitation is more protracted and difficult, as it involves restoring a community's and individual's livelihood, income, dignity, well-being and the capacity to interact in the new environment as an equal (Scudder 2005 and Asif 2000). Thus, proper resettlement and rehabilitation rarely take place. Instead, resettlement planning has been a quasi-social engineering exercise where oustees

[2] Poor data exist on the numbers of persons affected by development-induced displacement throughout the world. Unlike with refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs), there are no institutions or publications dedicated to tracking overall development-induced displacement, either at the global or national levels. Even the World Bank's 10 million a year figure largely focuses on those physically ousted from legally acquired land in order to make way for the planned project. This ignores other indirect forms of displacement (e.g. those living downstream from dam projects whose livelihoods and are usually adversely affected or those affected by natural resource extraction).

are often subject to control from project and health officials and have had little or no say in site selection or questions around land, grazing, water provision and so on (Asif 2000; Fernandes and Thukral 1989; Mehta and Punja 2006). They often lack the ability to participate as equal actors in compensation procedures, in determining solutions to the problems of resettlement, in protecting their human rights and in shaping development processes. Moreover, conventional resettlement planning does not question, per se, the rationale behind resettlement or indeed raise fundamental issues concerning pro-poor development and governance. Instead, as Morvaridi argues, "The bureaucratic system within which displacement is managed and the legislative definitions and practices that it adopts tend to work against local people and deny them rights to protect their economic and social wellbeing" (Morvaridi 2004, p. 720).

In recent years, protest activities on the part of displaced people and public actions have highlighted the painful and disastrous outcomes of past displacement and resettlement experiences and challenged the dominant paradigms concerning development-induced-displacement. India's dynamic Save the Narmada Movement which has engaged in a 25-year struggle against the dams on the Narmada River is a good case in point. In China, Tang Fuzhen immolated herself due to forced displacement in November 2009. Also, *Xinfang* (letter of complaint) is a unique channel in China to seek justice from authorities in China. Protest against land acquisition due to involuntary resettlement is the second highest reason of complaint (Yang 2010). Thus, displacement arising due to 'development' or development-induced-displacement is one of the key areas of contentious politics in rising powers such as China and India. The issues at stake go well beyond the need to provide adequate compensation for land and just resettlement for those who are displaced to make way for development and industrial projects. Instead, the politics of displacement bring wider development paradigms into question, regarding how to balance the pains and gains of infrastructure development and how to address the disproportionate loss borne by the marginalized and the poor, especially by women and children.

This article offers conceptual and political perspectives on gender and development-induced displacement. It shows how displaced women are often caught in a double bind with male and gender biases negatively impacting on displaced women in two ways. One, the wide-spread nature of male biases in most societies help perpetuate gender inequality in terms of unequal resource allocation and distribution and also legitimize the silencing of women's interests. Two, biases within state institutions, structures and policies help perpetuate these societal inequalities. This is the double bind that displaced women often find themselves in. While state policies and programmes could potentially remedy inherent gender biases found in the family and wider society, they have failed to do so in the case of resettlement programmes. Instead, official programmes have mostly exacerbated gender inequalities within displaced communities. Two caveats are in order before I proceed. One, women are not a homogenous entity and there are significant differences amongst women and amongst women and men due to age, class, ethnicity and so on. I also do not want to portray displaced women merely as passive victims of development-induced displacement, state policies and

patriarchal structures in their communities. In some cases, the social impacts of resettlement might lead to more egalitarian gender relations. For example, in a resettlement scheme in Zimbabwe, women tended to be less constrained by past kinship patterns and had better relations with their husbands (Koenig 1995). When resettlement takes place to less remote areas or towns, women may enjoy having more leisure time due to better access to basic services such as water, electricity and so on. Teenage boys and girls may benefit because the social control part of life before resettlement is largely absent with new rules of living and space defined (Grabska 2010). In some cases, social change brought about by displacement can lead to a radical reordering of social relations that challenge earlier gendered norms and restrictions and open up spaces for emancipatory gender politics (Manchanda 2004). Moreover, human beings are capable of tremendous resilience and can adjust to and act upon a wide range of changes. Thus, pains can become gains over a period of time due to people exercising agency in both periods of stress and periods of opportunity, as the wider migration literature indicates. Furthermore, some of the most dynamic resistance against displacement has been led by women[3]. Still, I would argue that resettlement and rehabilitation (R and R) programmes have largely failed to make conscious efforts to minimize the loss and traumas encountered by displacement processes, let alone include equity considerations in their activities. Thus, the gains of women and men upon resettlement have largely been due to their own grit and determination to make the best of their situation and not due to any forward-looking planning by state authorities. Finally, the pains of displacement are by no means only restricted to women. Thus, there is a need to look at the social relations between men and women, the gendered nature of roles and control over resources and how these change through displacement processes.

The article begins by locating gender in displacement debates and highlights how a gender lens helps challenge the logic of displacement. It then goes on to outline prevailing male and gender biases in displacement and resettlement, using examples from my own research in India and other empirical examples[4]. The article then examines how contemporary debates need to move beyond risk to embracing notions of rights and concludes with some thoughts on whether social and gender justice is at all possible in the context of development-induced-displacement.

Locating Gender

Women and children constitute the overwhelming majority of internally displaced people (Banerjee et al. 2005, p. 20). Moreover, female-headed households are high amongst displaced people. Despite the vast documentation on displacement and resettlement processes, national and international debates have remained largely ungendered. Project-affected communities continue to be

[3] For examples in an Indian context, see Mehta (2009a).

[4] Wherever possible I make reference to the Chinese context; however there seems to be a paucity of empirical material on gender and development-induced-displacement in China.

portrayed in a rather homogenous and undifferentiated way in local and state discourses. The massive changes in the division of labour, in negotiations within communities and households, in property rights and in access to and control over resources clearly affect men and women differently, requiring an analysis through the lens of gender. The malaise of gender-blindness is also found in policy related guidelines concerning resettlement, where the settler or oustee is unproblematically assumed to be male as is evident in the quote at the beginning of this article. This often occurs because women and children are not considered to be subjects in their own right due to discriminatory gender practices and biases that are prevalent across many parts of the developing world. Even when women and children are the focus of official policies and interventions, they are often 'naturalized' as passive or 'infantilized' (Manchanda 2004) and not endowed with agency. This is also reflected in official policy debates on resettlement that further reduce women's status to second-class citizens.

Just as policy debates on displacement have been ungendered, so too have academic debates. Beyond the general recognition that women might suffer more than men in the course of the displacement process, there have not been systematic analyses of the gendered dimensions of forced displacement and resettlement processes apart from a few studies (Koenig 1995; Mehta and Srinivasan 2000; Mehta 2009a; Parasuraman 1993; Indra 1999; Colson 1999). But in the standard works on displacement and resettlement, references to gender have a rather add-on character (Cernea 1997; McDowell 1997). Thus, it is important to overcome the past invisibility of gender issues as well as raise awareness of how gender and social justice can be achieved in displacement and resettlement processes. In this context, the debate on displacement and resettlement needs to be located in wider debates of gender, social and power relations, rights, inheritance and socio-historical processes concerning ideology, patriarchal domination, discrimination, and the division of labour.

The gender lens also helps challenge the conventional logic of displacement by presenting alternative notions of accounting, budgeting, loss, resources, and development planning. Feminist analyses have helped to unpack the "taken-for-granted" in conventional social and economic analyses in development processes (Kabeer 1994; Elson 1998; Agarwal 1994). They have raised questions about who benefits and loses from development interventions, and how to unpack aggregate notions of the "common good." They have also offered alternative perspectives on cost benefit analyses, well-being and welfare. As conventional understandings of these issues have largely ignored the differential impacts of development processes on men, women, children, or between rich, poor, powerful and powerless, they also neglect that the beneficiaries of projects have tended to be men. Gender scholars, by contrast, have long been concerned with issues of equity and distribution. Their primary concern has been to understand the root causes of gender gaps in the allocation of the benefits and costs of development, and in the distribution of resources. Gender analysts also point to how the costs of so-called projects are borne differently by women and men and that evaluation needs to be done in a way that goes beyond the monetary loss of land.

A gender perspective also challenges the equation of development with economic growth. Instead, gender analysts have shown that the drive towards growth should not detract from attempts at redistribution to meet the basic requirements of all (Kabeer 1994). Growth or development that proceeds in an unequal way cannot lead to social and economic justice for all women and men. For development to achieve equity goals, it must entail a process of redistribution whereby the costs and benefits are borne equally by men and women; by powerful and powerless groups. Such logic is also common amongst displacement scholars, especially from the 'movementist' rather than the managerialist tradition (Dwvevi 2002), who question the principles that justify displacement, rather than accept it as a necessary evil.

Thus, applying a gender lens to the issue of displacement is also useful in investigating power relations along various axes of difference and how this impacts on the displacement and marginalization of certain groups (e.g. the forced relocation of Tibetan herders in Tibet, Gansu, Qinghai to urban areas).

Male and Planners' Biases in Conceptualizing Displacement and R and R Processes

Resettlement, it is acknowledged, is a traumatic experience for most communities (Cernea 1997; Morse et al. 1992). "Resettlement involves a re-ordering of gender relations across a wide spectrum, but that re-ordering emerges from previous assumptions about gender and the gendered experience of those involved" (Colson 1999, p. 26). Both men and women experience disempowerment due to being uprooted. However, women are often at the receiving end of the transitions visited upon communities, especially in relation to the domestic sphere and the market. Thus, Colson argues: "When people are uprooted because their land is wanted for economic reasons usually associated with visions of national development, their multiple identities tend to disappear: they become ungendered, uprooted, and are dealt with as undifferentiated families or households" (1999, p. 25).

Usually, the project affected person (PAP) is conceived to be a male householder (Mehta and Srinivasan 2000). The male is thus considered to be a breadwinner and the woman a dependent and server. The Indian Land Acquisition Act explicitly states that:

> If the 'person interested' is not available to receive the notice for acquisition then it may be handed over to, or served on, any other adult male member who resides with him. If no 'adult male' is present then the notice may be placed on the outer door of the house or in some conspicuous place in the office of the collector or court house, etc. In other words, if a notice is served on a woman, it is not legal (Thukral 1996, p. 1500).

This blatant neglect of women's citizenship rights in the law finds its way to actual resettlement practices. This partly stems from flawed notions of the family and household. Gender scholars have demonstrated that the household is *not* "a unit of congruent interests" (Agarwal 1994, p. 3) where resources are shared equitably by all its members. Hence, women's needs and interests require a specific priority focus in practice and policy for development to be truly gender-just. But

policy-makers tend to treat the household like a black box, instead of a site of both "conflict and co-operation" (Sen 1990) where diverging interests may exist amongst different household members according to age, gender and so on. There is also the assumption that benefits directed to men will automatically be transferred to all household members. There is a marked lack of recognition of the unequal nature of resource allocation within the household, be it around nutrition, health benefits or schooling, something that feminist scholars have been documenting for years. It is often considered that vesting land rights to women will break up the family (Agarwal 2002). Yet, clinging to the narrative of a unitary household succeeds in perpetuating gender injustice and discrimination and the failure to advocate rights for women (Agarwal 2002). Most national policies have, largely, drawn on a homogenous and undifferentiated notion of the family that lacks an explicit recognition of women's needs, interests and rights and have failed to take on board the concern's of civil society and others who have urged for gender-inclusive clauses and provisions (Mehta 2009a, b). Even the World Bank's latest policy on resettlement and rehabilitation is shockingly gender blind (Clark 2009).

Another set of biases concerns the focus on formal arrangements of tenure and asset ownership for compensation. This can certainly disadvantage members from indigenous communities who are not entitled to compensation because they usually lack formal titles to land. Similarly, the neglect of assets such as river resources and access to CPRs often fails to compensate displaced people for their livelihood base. For the most part, policies and programmes neglect informal and non-encoded rights, assets and institutions. However, women largely have rights and control over resources in customary law or informal arrangements. For example, land rights can be both formal and governed by customary law (Berry 1987). Often women have rights to property, water and land in informal institutional arrangements that might be corroded by the creation of new formal institutions to govern land and water resources. Many newly created institutions might be male-dominated and might not enhance women's bargaining power. This will further erode the, in some cases, minimal rights that women do enjoy within informal institutions, for example, women's control over their income from forest resources (Mehta 2009a, b).

The lack of proper employment and productive activities can also bring about profound changes in social and gender relations. In the resettlement associated with the Manwan Dam in China, due to the loss of livelihoods and unemployment, young villagers were forced to leave their homes and entered into drug trafficking. Those who could not find work outside returned and brought back new habits such as violence, gambling. Women also fell victim to trafficking (Yang 2010). Finally, the planning, implementation and execution of resettlement, despite the rhetoric of participation and bottom-up planning, may not be extended to include women into the planning stages of projects, and that too, in culturally appropriate ways that do not antagonize their menfolk. Gender assumptions in communities also inhibit women from partaking in such activities that are bound to affect their lives in crucial ways. My research in India has shown a marked lack of consultation with women. This lack of consultation with women has led to several unanticipated

consequences for the overall family's well-being and health (e.g. the lack of attention paid to water and fuelwood by the male members who were consulted).

Gendered Experiences of Resettlement in the Kariba and Sardar Sarovar (Narmda) Projects

I now discuss two projects which have been extensively studied. The first is a 40-year study by Colson (1999) of the displacement of the Gwembe Tonga, which reveals significant changes. In 1956, Gwembe Tonga communities were displaced from the Gwembe Valley, in the Middle Zambezi Valley, to make way for the Kariba Dam, which was completed in 1958. Prior to 1956, Gwembe ethics emphasized a relatively egalitarian ideology (Colson 1999). Both women and men participated in social and domestic decision-making. Most women had control over land given to them by kin. Husbands were also expected to allocate land to wives who also worked on their husband's lands. Divorced women kept their own fields and lost allocated land. Men and women had separate granaries. The family used women's granaries for subsistence. Thus, equity was achieved due to men and women having their separate autonomous realms. Colson (1999) however cautions that women's social and economic mobility was restricted before resettlement. Social interaction was limited to the immediate community with little access to the market.

After resettlement in 1956, colonial authority systems recognized only men as chiefs, counsellors and headmen. The nature of gender relations within the community assigned the public sphere to men, which did not question this exclusively male representation of the community in the case of resettlement (Colson 1999). Women were traumatized by the move years after resettlement. They found it hard to accept unfamiliar surroundings, and decades after resettlement women still asked when the dam would be destroyed. Men saw the move as a political defeat because it represented a loss of face and powerlessness. Men tended to vent their frustrations on women and children. Incidence of domestic violence increased. Increased availability of alcohol had an influence on this. The rupture of social kinship structures meant that there were no social buffers to prevent domestic disputes. Women lost their bargaining power with the loss of a social set up to monitor domestic disputes and they also lost their land rights. Males were treated as heads of households (Colson 1999).

Gender assumptions of the colonial administration led to men being given compensation. Women received little in comparison. Thus, women lost out on land rights and property rights. Women's opinions on resettlement varied. Most preferred the old life because of the permanancy of the river, land and kin. Younger women, however, enjoyed the increase in mobility, shops and availability of money and sense of belonging to a national community. Younger women had greater access to education, they saw increased income opportunities: land was no longer the sole means of livelihood. Thus, factors such as age played an important role in women's experience of resettlement. Colson's (1999) remarkable study offers a diachronic perspective with which to analyse the ways in which both men and women lose and benefit as a result of resettlement and the complex nature of social

change. As discussed previously, interventions were not targeted at women. Thus, in many cases, they lost realms of autonomy and control. Their gains, thus, are more of an incidental character than due to any planned form of intervention.

The Sardar Sarovar Project (SSP), described as "one of the most flawed projects" (Cernea 1999) will displace mainly *adivasi* (tribal) communities in the Narmada Valley constituting Tadvis, Vasavas, Bhils and Bhilalas and caste Hindu communities. Gender organization in these communities varies. However, while *adivasi* communities represent a relatively egalitarian gender organization compared with caste Hindu societies (CSS 1997; TISS 1997), none can be said to be entirely free of discrimination towards women. Based on a range of studies, including my own research, here I present the gendered dimensions of displacement and resettlement in the case of SSP.

Women's access to and control over resources have been severely curtailed by resettlement. Women do not have land rights in *adivasi* communities (most *adivasi* communities in the Narmada Valley are classified as 'encroachers' (Morse et al. 1992). However, they had usufructory rights and control over common property resources (Mehta 2009b). Their forest-based work gave them an independent income which was lost upon resettlement. Their role in the forest economy was not recognized. Major or adult daughters, widowed women with land records in the original villages were not compensated. Women's interests are seen as linked to the household and thus only men and major sons are being given land according to the Gujarat Resettlement and Rehabilitation policy. Additionally, loss of forests, river, forest produce, fuel, fodder and common property resources affected women in the resettlement sites. In tribal villages, women were involved in decision-making processes around the household and the farm. The monetized economy, which *adivasi* communities are unfamiliar with, had marginalized women from these spheres of autonomous control on the farm and the household. Many of them were no longer seen as 'productive'.

The fragmentation of the community led to a disruption of social cohesion, impacting women more severely than men. Isolation from kinship structures because of increased transportation costs led to increased insecurity and fear amongst women (Thukral 1996; Mehta 2009a and b). Tensions between the host community and the resettled communities often arising out of sloppy resettlement implementation, have often resulted in violence. For example, in one resettlement site in Maharastra, in the ensuing hostility between the 'host' community and the resettling community a woman was killed in 1992 (TISS 1997). Increased availability of alcohol at sites has led to an erosion of household income and domestic security. Domestic drudgery seems to have decreased in some sites due to availability of hand-pumps, flour mills etc. (Mehta and Punja 2006). However, the women have completely lost the autonomy they had over water collection. The water quality is one of their biggest problems. They do not care for taps near the house where the water supply is irregular. They prefer to have access to clean, free-flowing water, i.e. the river.

In the early years, health seemed to have been severely affected because of changes in cropping patterns and the non-availability of adequate nutrition and water facilities (Mehta 2009a, b; Parasuraman 1993). The sex ratio in some of the

adivasi villages was higher than the Gujarat level (CSS 1997). However, at some sites, infant mortality rates seem to have shot up. Thirty per cent of the children born in the first six years of resettlement in Parveta died. At least five women lost all children in these years (Parasuraman 1993, p. 17). In Malu, I witnessed four babies dying due to lowered immunity in 2000. Perhaps this is why some women from Madhya Pradesh resettled in Gujarat told the Morse Committee that, "none of them would give birth [at resettlement site in Gujarat], but would, if at possible, have their babies at [original village]" (Morse et al. 1992, p. 197).

What do these two cases tell us? With respect to *access and control over resources*, both examples illustrate very clearly the ways in which gender roles are vulnerable to changes that work to the disadvantage of women. The other serious consequence of *gender imbalances* that shows up in these examples is the increase in domestic violence. A community in transition tends to victimize its least powerful constituents, thus violating their fundamental rights to a life of dignity and security. Policies tend to overlook such instances of human rights violation and the potentially harmful situation that can develop in resettlement sites. There are virtually no safeguards for women in such situations, especially when combined with the erosion of social support structures to negotiate on their behalf. The examples also highlight how displacement changes *gender relations*. In the Kariba case, women who had participated equally in decisions involving community and the household were ousted from these positions after resettlement. This can be attributed to gender blindness in the policy, which treated men as the heads of the households and community leaders. In sum, resettlement leads to dramatic changes in access to and control over resources and gender relations.

Gender and the Impoverishment Risks of Displacement

There is now a growing consensus in the literature on R and R that displacement processes lead to a decline in the stand of living of displaced people and also heightened impoverishment (McDowell 1997; Mathur and Marsden 1998; WCD 2000). As the vast literature on displacement has documented, this largely happens because the incomes and livelihoods of the displaced collapse. How does current displacement and resettlement research deal with the problems experienced by vulnerable groups in the course of displacement processes? The Impoverishment Risks and Reconstruction (IRR) model, developed by sociologist Michael Cernea, formerly at the World Bank, is the most ambitious and influential approach in displacement and resettlement research and has also been used in refugee studies. It shows how displacement goes hand in hand with physical, social and economic exclusion, which culminates in a broad range of impoverishment risks. Through the study of countless empirical studies, Cernea identified eight key risks. They are landlessness, joblessness, homelessness, marginalization, increased morbidity, food insecurity, loss of access to common property, and social disarticulation (Cernea 1997, 1998 and 2000). Together these risks constitute the Impoverishment Risks Model. The basic idea is that if these risks are built into the planning process, they can be anticipated in advance and even minimized or mitigated through advance planning. His model is now widely used in resettlement

research and one of its aims is to help operationalize a just planning process around resettlement (Cernea 2000). For Cernea (2000) the risks are of high probability. If unheeded they will become a reality, but if anticipated and counteracted, they can be avoided. The model distinguishes between two phases. The first is the displacement phase when the aforementioned risks can be identified through risk analysis. The second is the resettlement phase where it is possible to mitigate or avoid the risks through targeted action. Thus, he also presents operational tools to mitigate the risks of displacement (Cernea 1997, 1998 and 2000) and the risks are followed by prescriptions. For example, avoid landlessness through land-based resettlement, joblessness through sound employment and so on.

The IRR framework highlights differential impacts and has a brief section in a paper (Cernea 2000) that refers to the differential risks encountered by sub-groups within a community such as the landless and women who encounter specific losses that might not be envisaged by policy-makers and planners and consequently suffer more severe impacts (Mathur 2009). Cernea (2000) acknowledges variances in risks content and intensity for women and other population categories such as the landless, children, indigenous populations and so on (p. 30). He also refers to the specific risks encountered by community sub groups such as craftsmen, artisans and others who might suffer specific losses (p. 26).

The IRR model intends to redress the inequities of forced displacement and achieve resettlement based on the principle of equity. However, I would argue that it does not go far enough in teasing out the dynamics of social differentiation amongst resettled populations, especially with respect to the reconstruction phase. Even this very important work fails to adequately incorporate gender concerns systematically. Firstly, despite the recognition of "differential impacts," most of the analysis is based on assumptions of homogeneity that are apparent in the following sentence: "The model anticipates displacement's major risks, explains the behavioural responses of displaced people, and can guide the reconstruction of displaced people' livelihoods" (Cernea 1997, p. 1570). However, displaced women and men often have diverging and competing interests. Moreover, impoverishment risks impact differently on women and men and different groups will respond differently to risks. Also, the elimination of risks for one group may increase the vulnerability and risks of another group.

Take landlessness. Cernea rightly says that:

> Expropriation of land removes the main foundation upon which people's productive systems, commercial activities, and livelihoods are constructed. This is the principal form of decapitalisation and pauperisation of displaced people […] Unless the land basis of people's productive systems is reconstructed elsewhere, or replaced with steady income-generating employment, landlessness sets in and the affected families become impoverished (1998, p. 1572).

He cites numerous studies where landlessness increases and then incomes drop significantly and therefore advocates land-based re-establishment. This is a very important conclusion given the current tendency in official resettlement programmes to disregard the "land-for-land" principle. In my own research in western India I have seen that even though each project-affected family was officially granted five acres of land, the displaced people interviewed by me felt

that there had been a significant reduction in land assets. In their old homes, they had access to land with titles, so-called wasteland, forest land, deemed as illegally encroached by the state and riverbed land. On average, each family had about 18 acres of land (Mehta 2009b). Access to these diverse land systems was lost which contributed to people's impoverishment, and growing sense of ill-being cannot be captured by the term 'landless.' Thus, merely preventing the risk of landlessness through land-based relocation strategies (Cernea 1997, p. 1578) will not solve the problem of impoverishment. But this is precisely what the project officials claimed to be one of the strengths of the resettlement packages since from their point of view, many so-called landless had been given land. But they failed to understand that this land cannot provide displaced men and women the same nutritional intake, diversity of crops and risk-aversion strategies vis-à-vis drought as the land in the forest villages by the river did.

There is also the need to differentiate between women and men and how they perceive the risks of landlessness. In many indigenous communities women have their own plots of land in the forest, where they grow vegetables and spices. They often make all the cropping decisions and control the use of these crops, often largely for subsistence purposes. This gives them a level of autonomy in the household's production system. In the resettlement village, landlessness may entail insecurity than for men since the policy 'officially' makes men the beneficiaries and robs women of informal rights over land and forest resources. This can also increase the vulnerability of widows, divorced women and female-headed households who are not awarded any land (Mehta 2009b).

Minimizing the risks for some might increase the risks for others. Often, it is just adult sons who are endowed new land. Adult daughters receive nothing, thus increasing their vulnerability in the case of desertion or separation. Even married women face insecurity and risks, hitherto unknown. In the case of the Sardar Sarovar Project, a 35-year-old woman who had remarried feared that she would be denied rights to the land once her ailing husband died. Had the land ownership been independent or even joint, this insecurity would not have existed. Another woman, Rewaben, was widowed after moving to the resettlement village. During the transfer period, she was tricked into signing over her land into the name of her son, who threatened to throw her out of the house. She felt that struggles like this would not have occurred in the submergence villages because the monetary value placed on land was largely absent and because it was common for women to have control, if not own, resources from the forest and some plots of land. Resources were also not perceived to be so scarce. Thus, while adult sons may welcome being considered beneficiaries of the new compensation package, for many women, in particular widows or older women, this may mean greater risk. This calls for the need to unpack who bears more risks and how risk mitigation for some may increase the risks for others.

Another example concerns joblessness. Cernea rightly demonstrates that displacement leads to the loss of wage employment for landless labourers, small business owners and service workers in rural and urban contexts. Unemployment thus ensues after resettlement because displaced people are rarely absorbed in new projects; instead it is largely workers from outside (Cernea 1997). He also

demonstrates that this risk tends to be a long-term phenomenon. Cernea's "no job, give job" formula may not always work when one looks at the range of livelihood options that often available to both men and women in subsistence-based economies. In my research in India (Mehta 2009a, b) I found that women played a central role in the forest-based economy and had an indepdendent source of income from the collection and processing of minor forest produce (e.g. gum, leaves, rope making, honey). The forest was also the generous provider of fuelwood, herbs and medicines. Thus, the range of livelihoods and income was diverse and not all were within the market realm. Moreover, the financial strain is greater due to the increases in expenditures. This cash crunch also contributes to a worsening of power relations within the household. As money has become more and more a symbol of power within the displaced society, it has increasingly been in control of the male members of the household (my research findings, and Dewyer and Bruce 1988). Since it is the men who largely go shopping, they increasingly have control over women's traditional decision-making realms around food and cooking.

This discussion points to the following. One, displaced people who lived in subsistence-oriented societies had a range of livelihood options that cannot be compensated by merely providing 're-employment.' Their livelihoods were instead linked to the land and the resource base that is now absent. 'Joblessness' also cannot capture the way reproductive and productive roles are fused in the household economy. Many of the roles that women play are essential to production, consumption and indeed to the general well-being of the household, but cannot be given a monetary or income value. Thus, many changes that occur are not picked up on by a pure economic analysis. For example, without strong gender analysis it is easy to ignore the importance of the subsistence based economy and women's critical role in it. It is thus necessary for the IRR model to acknowledge more strongly how some livelihoods (especially those of women) have non-material dimensions and how women's roles in production, consumption and reproduction are often ignored in both risk assessment and in the reconstruction phase.

Thus, despite the acknowledgement of "differential impacts" and the variances in risks content and intensity for women, the focus on gender tends to have an add-on character. In other words, it is not enough to have the odd paragraphs or lines that mention women or other vulnerable groups. For the analysis to have dynamism and truly address social and power relations, we need to differentiate between men and women and different social groups throughout, by teasing out both differential impacts and also be being partisan in suggesting remedies in the reconstruction phase. Critical issues such as local definitions of loss, inequities within the local communities, gender biases and power relations must be addressed. Furthermore, other pitfalls arise because the IRR has largely been designed as a planners' tool to guide the resettlement process. As other analysts have argued, it neither explicitly seeks local definitions of loss, ill-being or impoverishment (since these are already pre-defined in the model), nor does it fundamentally critique the processes of 'development' that justify the forced displacement of vulnerable groups (Dwivedi 2002; Morvaridi 2004). My analysis has also hopefully highlighted that risks and losses cannot be reduced to simple variables or causal relationships as put forward

in a positivist model (e.g. land for land; jobs for jobs). For one, jobs for many displaced women depend on the resource base (land) and they were not 'employed' in the true sense of the word. The multi-causal relations between land, livelihoods and identity and their links with overall well-being, thus, cannot be reduced to a model.

Interestingly enough, displaced people have never used this model to articulate their risks, rights and loss. Instead, they have resorted to resistance and protest. The IRR and conventional approaches to displacement and resettlement tend to locate the problem in terms of problem analysis and policy intervention, "allowing the dynamics of displacement and the political resistance to it to be evaded, especially the struggle over rights and in defence of 'place'…" (Morvaridi 2004, p. 737). Thus, the focus on impoverishment risks needs to be complemented by research and policy agendas that explicitly seek to protect and strengthen the rights of displaced people, especially women.

Is Gender Justice Possible in Processes of Forced Displacement and Resettlement?

One could argue that, since forced displacement leads to new social relations and changes in the allocation and distribution of resources, potentially there is the scope for inserting just and equitable patterns of resource allocation amongst women and men. These in turn could help undermine the cultural biases in a society that work against women. In this way, if designed sensitively, R and R programmes could contribute to gender justice, e.g. through investing land and water rights to women and the landless.

The World Bank Operation, Evaluation and Development (OED) department analysed projects in China's Sichuan and Hebei Provinces in the late 1990s and found that China had made some concerted efforts to explicitly seek women's participation at all levels: in the formulation of policy as well as in implementation (OED 1998). Authorities had acknowledged women's substantial roles in family decision-making processes and ensured that they were involved in resettlement planning. A national network of women's unions helped in identifying the needs of all the members of the community. Unlike most other projects in the world where the displaced are not adequately absorbed in the creation of new employment facilities, the workforce in several of the new factories established in the project areas comprised resettled women. This was possible, primarily because the state encouraged 'developmental' resettlement, which emphasized productive base rather than 'passive' compensation, and the fact that the land tenure system is based on collective ownership in China (OED 1998). However, even here, as elsewhere, older women have not been absorbed in the new economic order. Post-resettlement employment has absorbed large numbers of women in factories at equal pay (OED 1998). I have unfortunately not been able to locate more recent academic analyses on gender and displacement in China. However, gauging from recent reports of R and R around the Three Gorges and other projects and the problems encountered by those who express dissent and criticism, I am not sure

how generalisable this example is[5]. In fact, Probe International (2000) argues that both the World Bank and to some extent the World Commission on Dams has tended to portray China as a model of best practice in the area of involuntary resettlement. The Bank has waived its own guidelines in its work on resettlement in China and ignores the restrictive human rights environment. It has failed to use its own guideless to assess resettlement, instead relying on institutes attached to the Chinese government, rather than by critics of the government or NGOs within China (Probe International 2000).

With increasing land 'deals' or grabs on the part of powerful western as well as Indian and Chinese corporations in different parts of Asia, Africa and Latin America, conflicts over displacement are bound to increase, leading to new questions concerning accountability. Chinese dam builders and financiers are also playing a key role on the global hydropower market with a bang and are taking on controversial projects in Burma and Sudan which had before been shunned by the international community and may not always be willing to embrace international guidelines and best practice (Bosshard 2010). There thus remain many unknowns and questions regarding social and gender justice around future large-scale interventions that entail displacement.

If R and R can ever be seen as a "development opportunity" (Mathur and Marsden 1998), and this in itself is questionable, it will need radical reconceptualization. This includes the need to avoid displacement and ensure that it is minimized. When it must take place it is important to include women as full beneficiaries of compensation and as independent or co-owners of land; make provisions for women's livelihoods along with housing and employment; recognize and build on women's informal rights in customary practices; avoid any violation of their rights; include strong gender analysis and gender sensitive data regarding the impacts of displacement; have special provisions to include the full participation of women in decision-making processes around displacement and resettlement and build strong safeguards to facilitate women's access to compensation and any other benefits.

Gender justice can be achieved if there is a conscious effort to move towards emancipatory politics. However, most R and R programmes have ignored both the material and strategic interests of women. They also focus more on the risks of displaced people rather than their rights. But as people's struggles against displacement show, displaced women and men resist forced displacement primarily because their rights to livelihood, information, shelter, participation, dignity, development etc. have been denied. Resistance movements all around the world against forced displacement are pushing for a greater realization of the rights of displaced people and for prior and informed consent. They and concerned academics and practitioners are asking why marginalization and gendered exclusion is permitted in the name of development, instead of allowing for inclusive development and the full citizenship of displaced women and men (where

[5] The website by Probe International which focuses on different aspects of the Three Gorges Dam, includes a lot of commentaries from Chinese scholars, some of them write with pseudonyms, see http://journal.probeinternational.org/three-gorges-probe/[cited January 2011].

their civil and political rights as well as social and economic rights can flourish). It is thus important to rethink both 'development' and gender in the context of displacement debates and to challenge and reject dominant practices around development and displacement. Given that displacement is here to stay, not least due to the growing role of corporations in infrastructure development projects around the world and the desire for emerging powers such as China to achieve more and more economic growth through such projects, these are urgent concerns.

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