

REPORT ON
THE DISPLACEMENT OF TRIBALS
DUE TO
INSTALLATION OF MAJOR IRRIGATION PROJECT
THE CASE STUDY
OF
DHANSIRI IRRIGATION PROJECT
IN THE DARRANG DISTRICT OF ASSAM

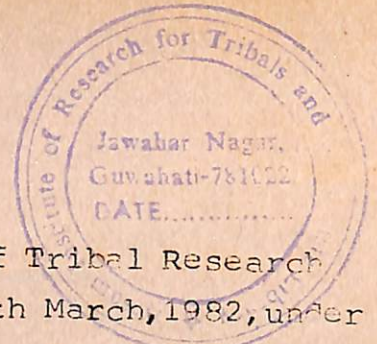


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TRIBAL RESEARCH INSTITUTE, ASSAM
GUWAHATI-781003

P R E F A C E.



In the meeting of the Directors of Tribal Research Institutes held in New Delhi on 25th and 26th March, 1982, under the auspices of the Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India, the question of displacement of tribals due to installation of major Industrial and Irrigational Project had come up for discussion. The Home Ministry officials, the Directors of Tribal Research Institutes as well as other participants viewed with great concern the dimensions of the problems created by such displacement. It was pointed out that in the name of national interest, the interest of the tribal people were sacrificed since the affected tribal families do not get the benefit from such projects in terms of employment and rehabilitation. Instead, they have been driven out from their hearth and home making them nomadic sometimes.

It was, therefore, decided that each Tribal Research Institute should undertake the study of such displacement on top priority basis and a Committee at the national level was formed to co-ordinate the study reports from various states.

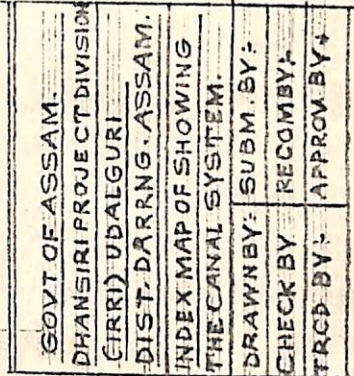
In pursuance of this decision, the present study namely, the displacement of tribals due to installation of Dhansiri Irrigation Project in the present Darrang district has been taken up. The field study was conducted during the later part of 1983 and some data were collected during the first part of 1984 also. This study highlights: (1) the extent of displacement of tribals due to installation of this project, (2) rehabilitation scheme, if any, (3) cash compensation paid, (4) extent of pending cases, (5) the problems faced by the displaced families and (6) lastly attitude of the people towards the project. Our concluding observations and suggestions are incorporated in the last part of the report.

The present field study was conducted by Shri U.K. Baruah, Senior Investigator, under my guidance, Shri M.C. Saikia, Deputy Director, helped me in all possible ways in preparing the final report. This Institute proposes to take up the study of the displacement of tribals due to installation of Jagi Road Paper Mills, in the Nowgong District, next.

Dated Gauhati,
the 30th October, 1984.

B.N. Bordoloi,
Director,
Tribal Research Institute,
Gauhati-3.

$\begin{cases} \text{LATITUDE} = 26^{\circ}-53'-20'75'' \\ \text{LONGITUDE} = 92^{\circ}-7'-12'' \end{cases}$



SCALE-1"=1 MILE.

The river Dhansiri is the biggest river of the subdivision - its source of origin being at the foothills of Arunachal Pradesh. On its way to the downhill, it meets with the river Jampani which has come down from the Bhutan Hills. The locality where the two rivers have criss-crossed each other is known as Bhairabkunda. The headwork of Dhansiri Irrigation (Major) Project is under construction at the conjoint of Dhansiri and Jampani where the borders of Assam, Arunachal Pradesh and Bhutan have met.

The Irrigation project has been designed with six big canals. These are :- (i) Main canal, (ii) Canal B1.M., (iii) Canal S1.B1.M., (iv) Sc.B1.M., (v) Canal C1, and (vi) Canal C2. The first four main canals are 9'75 Km., 7'94 Km., 3'28 Km., and 4'29 Km. in length respect vary, while their breadth runs about to 33 meters (100' approx) in each case. Over and above these, there are several other net-work of small canals which have spread over to many villages within a reading of about 20 km. The total area potential of the project is about 41200 hectares. As has already been mentioned though it was started in 1976 with the scheduled data of completion in 1980, 4th of its headwork is yet to be completed at the time of investigation. Of course, a major part of the main canals and sub-canals have already been completed.

SOCIO-ECONOMIC BACKGROUND OF THE AREA AND ITS POPULATION CONTENT.

Since this Project is geographically located at Udalguri Subdivision our area of investigation is also confined within 23 tribal villages in and around Udalguri town and Rowta Charali centre. Udalguri has been declared to be a subdivision very recently and till this declaration it continued to be only an administrative unit and a trading centre of the northern belt of Darrang district. Agriculture is the mainstay of the population of the subdivision consisting mainly of Boro and Rabha tribes besides segments of Nepalis, Santals, Muslims and members of the backward classes. The 23 villages taken up for investigation come within the range of 300 to 1000 souls in each and they are primarily manned by the members of the Boro-Kachari tribe though

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villages like No. 1 Jhargan Tambari, Moradhansiri, Rowtanathar, etc. contain a mixed population as indicated above.

The occupational pattern of the population under study in the 23 villages is found to be diversified to some extent. There are a few Govt. service holders like Junior Engineers, agricultural demonstrators, secondary and L.P. school teachers, a few self employed businessmen like tea-stall owner, contractors, timber merchants, petty traders, etc.

It may be mentioned here that of the 395 male population of the sample households, 116 individuals (representing 29.37% of the total male population in the sample households) have been found to be directly dependent on agriculture as the primary source of livelihood. The unemployed youths, dependent children housewives, etc. who also depend indirectly on agriculture have not been included in the above category. It needs however to be clarified here that though agricultural occupation is the primary source of livelihood, most of the agricultural families are from marginal or small farming groups. There are other constraints of agricultural occupation in the area. The soil condition of villages like Jamuguri, Sonagaon, etc. are not congenial to agriculture due to their proximity to the foothill tracts, villages like Kathalguri, Kaziamati are also found to be arenaceous lacking moisture retaining capacity as such less arable for agricultural purpose. Therefore the agricultural potentiality of the villages are far from satisfactory. Nevertheless, it has to be followed as a way of life rather than a paying avocation.

The villages under study lack some basic amenities like medical and marketing and though schools for primary education are adequate, for higher education the students have to cover a long distance to reach the nearest high school. In this backdrop let us look more intensely the prevailing literary and educational level of the affected 92 households. Out of the 395 males, 200 males representing 50.63% of the total male population have been found to be without any sense of literacy which implies that only 47.85% can read or write can claim themselves as literate. As regards the 392 females in the affected households 250 souls representing 63.78% have been found to be illiterate leaving 142 females of (36.22%) to be regarded as literate. In other words, the

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combined literacy percentage of the 92 affected households come to 42'04% which testifies that about 58% of the sampled households are exposed to exploitation due to illiteracy and ignorance.

The level of education prevailing in the sampled villages may be known more precisely from the Table given hereunder :-

T A B L E -I

<u>Sl. No.</u>	<u>Class/Category</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Percentage</u>	<u>Female</u>	<u>Percentage</u>	<u>Remarks</u>
1.	Too Minor	44	11'44	52	13'29	
2.	Uneducate	162	41'01	198	50'41	
3.	Read upto L.P	34	8'61	23	5'87	
4.	In L.P. level	43	10'89	49	11'99	
5.	Read upto IV	Nil	Nil	4	1'02	
6.	In class IV level	7	1'77	3	0'77	
7.	Read upto class V	4	1'01	4	1'02	
8.	In class V	11	2'78	12	3'06	
9.	Read upto VI	11	2'78	5	1'28	
10.	In class VI	2	0'51	3	0'77	
11.	Read upto class VII	8	2'03	6	1'53	
12.	In class VII	7	1'77	7	1'79	
13.	Read upto class VII	6	1'52	2	0'51	
14.	In class VIII	6	1'52	7	1'79	
15.	Read upto Class IX	5	1'27	3	0'77	
16.	In class IX	7	1'27	3	0'77	
17.	Read upto class X	6	1'52	3	0'77	
18.	In class X	10	2'53	4	1'92	
19.	H.S.L.C.passed	2	0'51	1	0'26	
20.	Read upto P.U.Class	3	0'76	1	0'26	
21.	In P.U.class	7	1'77	3	0'77	
22.	Read upto degree class.	3	0'76	Nil	Nil	
23.	Studying in degree classes.	7	1'77	1	0'26	
		395	100'30	392	99'96 (same 100%)	

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METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY:

The special Land Acquisition Officer, Udalguri had furnished us a list of 1001 tribal households affected in the acquisition process in all. Out of these 1001 households 92 households scattered over 23 villages in five mouzas of Udalguri subdivision were selected for the purpose of our study on the strict criteria that each of the households had lost more than 2 Bighas of land. Further no other considerations on the basis of ethnicity, religion, etc. were given in selecting the households and only those members of the families were interviewed on whose name acquired the land was recorded. The chosen villages were lying within a radius of 25 Km. from Bhairabkunda where the headwork of the Project is under construction.

For better appreciation, vital pieces of information relating to the Mouza-wise affected tribal households have been shown in the Table No. II.

TABLE .II

Mouza-wise distribution of the affected tribal households.

<u>Mouza</u>	<u>Affected tribal households.</u>	<u>Percentage.</u>	<u>Remarks.</u>
1. Silputa	84	8'39	The percentage has been worked out from the total number of the families affected.
2. Harisinga	70	6'99	
3. Ambagan	318	31'87	
4. Udalguri	252	25'17	
5. Borsilajhar	277	27'67	

The year-wise acquisition of land and the total number of families affected since the inception of the scheme till 1982 may be known from Table No. III.

TABLE -III

<u>Year</u>	<u>No.of affected tribal households.</u>	<u>Amount of land acquired in Pigha Katha and Lessas.</u>	<u>Remarks.</u>
1976	87	106-1-16	The total area comes to 1186-2-13 but the report submitted by the Spl.L.A.O. & Collector says it to be 1186-2-13. 1K=40x10 1B=5Katha=10,000 Sq.ft. 1L=1/20th a katha.
1977	4	4-2-04	
1978	101	116-2-06	
1979	171	231-1-04	
1980	288	333-4-08	
1981	241	259-3-12	
1982	109	134-2-03	
	<u>1001</u>	<u>1183-17-13</u>	

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Out of 1001 Nos. of total affected tribal families studies were conducted in 92 families by the interview method. The total number of population of 92 studied families were 787 (M-395, F-392), the average number of family members being 8'5. Of the 92 families studied, 2 families belonged to Santal group (though they were not S.T. in Assam), 75 families to Boro group and 15 families to Rabha group. Of these, 41 families are christians and the rest are non-christians, i.e. either Hindus or followers traditional religion.

The 92 families that had been selected fro the purpose of our study were found to be distributed in 23 villages shown below:-

TABLE -IV

<u>Sl.No.</u>	<u>Name of the village</u>	<u>Mouza</u>	<u>Remarks.</u>
1.	Angarjuli	Udalguri	
2.	Jamuguri	"	
3.	Champangaon	"	
4.	No. 1 Careibari	"	Most of the villages from Sl.1 to 6 are having Touzi or Sarkari land and they are lying near about Bhairabkunda- towards north of Udalguri town.
5.	Cersong	"	
6.	Sonaigaon	"	
7.	Kalibari	"	
8.	Moradhansiri	"	
9.	Tamulbari	Ambagan	Other villages are lying within a radius of 15 to 18 Km. at the maximum from Udalguri town.
10.	Ambagan	"	
11.	Borigaon	"	
12.	Adlagaon	"	
13.	Baniapara	"	
14.	No.1 Sankhaiti	"	
15.	Fashiagaon I & II	Harisinga-	
16.	Lichinggaon I & II	"	
17.	Jorukhuri I & II	Borsilaghar	
18.	Routapather	"	
19.	No. 1 Jhargoon	"	
20.	No. 2 Jhargoon	"	
21.	Balisiha Habi	"	
22.	Kathalguri	"	
23.	Dangalpor	"	

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LAND HOLDING PATTERN.

In the sample villages of our study, the land holding pattern is found to be of multifarious nature. While the land holdings under periodic patta and also under annual patta are too meagre, there is preponderance of holdings of Touzi or Sarkari land. The villagers of Agrijuli Sonaigaon and M-oradban-siri region are largely dependent on Sarkari land (i.e. Govt. land). The villagers residing on the foothills region are holding large tracts of Touzi land sometimes even upto 50 Bighas while a considerable section of the people depend on char areas or grazing grounds. The sizes of land holdings of different descriptions on the basis of their use i.e. cultivable land or homestead land have been shown in the following table.

T A B L E -V

The table shows the landholdings of 92 families prior to acquisition for irrigation project.

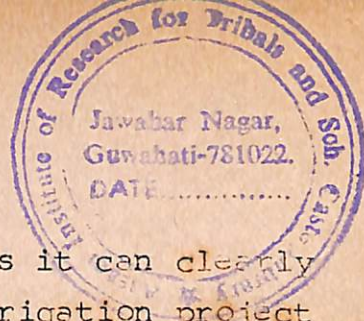
<u>Area in Bighas</u>	<u>No. of families</u>	<u>percentage.</u>
1 to 5 Bighas	26	28'26
5 to 10 Bighas	22	23'92
10 to 15 Bighas	15	16'30
15 to 20 Bighas	9	9'78
20 to 30 Bighas	12	13'04
30 Bighas and above	8	8'70
Total	92	100'00

The following table shows the landholding position of 92 families under the purview of study after the acquisition of land for the irrigation project.

T A B L E -IV

<u>Area of land in Bighas.</u>	<u>No. of families</u>	<u>percentage.</u>
Landless	4	4'35
1 to 5 Bighas	63	68'47
5 to 10 Bighas	16	17'39
10 to 15 Bighas	4	4'35
15 to 20 Bighas	3	3'26
20 to 30 Bighas	1	1'09
30 Bighas and above	1	1'09
Total	92	100'00

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From an analysis of the above two tables it can clearly be seen that the acquisition of land for the irrigation project had rendered four tribal families landless. The families having 1 to 5 Bighas of land had increased to 63 from 26, the percentage increase being 40'21. Similarly families having 5 to 10 Bighas of land had come down to 16 from 22, the percentage of reduction being 6'33. In this way the acquisition of land for the irrigation project had changed the landholding pattern of families under the purview of the study.

It is, therefore, evident that most of the families under the purview of our study are small and marginal farmers and whatever they produce can hardly meet their consumption requirements. Under the circumstances, acquisition of even a Bigha of cultivable land has its repercussion on the family income.

EXTENT OF LAND ACQUISITION AND ITS CONSEQUENCES.

Out of the 92 families studied by us, 7 families have lost homestead lands ranging from 2 to 5 Bighas and only 1 family has lost more than 6 Bighas. In this process of acquisition, one family which has been dependent on Touzi land for his homestead, lost it completely due to eviction. Another family in the village No. 2 Fascia has lost his homestead land with all the structures over it. Similarly another family in Jamguri village has sustained loss of his homestead land.

As to the loss of cultivable land, it is pertinent to note that out of the 92 families, 60 families, have lost land ranging from 2 to 5 Bighas, 30 families from 6 to 10 Bighas and 2 families from 11 to 15 Bighas. In the 2-5 Bigha group, 50 families have reported as having annual patta and in the 11 to 15 Bighas group, 6 families have sustained loss of Touzi as well as patta land both periodic and annual.

Although the acquisition of land was made in the greater interest of the society, its repercussions on individual cultivators sometimes fall in such a way that they are reduced to the status of landless agriculturists. In this context reference specially may be made of Rabiram Boro of Baniapara village under

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under Ambagan Mouza who lost 3 Bighas 4 Kathas and 11 lessas of land leaving only a marginal area of land which having proved insufficient for any practical purposes, sold it out and thus he became landless. The cases of Rubram Boro and Rohen Narzary of village Jamuguri under Udalguri Mouza may also be pointed out here. After acquisition of their cultivable lands, whatever have been left over proved to be useless to them due to raising of high canal banks just in the vicinity of their land resulting in stagnation of water during rainy season and dryness during winter. Such a situation of uselessness of the left over land has also been reported by Sri Prasendra Boro of No.2 Fascia village under Harisinga Mouza.

According to the information supplied by the Gaonburahs of Angrajuli and Jamuguri area, at least 8 families of their area possessing Touzi land were forced to leave their hearth and home and to move out to other places. The names of the head of the families and places of present shifting where known are shown below.

<u>Names of householder</u>	<u>Place of shifting.</u>
1. Mahendra Narzari	Gohpur area of Sonitour district.
2. Lakshi Kanta Basumatary	
3. Kekru Brahma	
4. Lecher Narzari	Not definitely known.
5. Zonga Boro	Sialmari under Sonitpur district.
6. Celeng	Rangapara in Sonitour district.
7. Maharaj Boro	Kachbil in Darrang District.
8. Janushan Narzari	Jonai in Lakhimpur district.

The Gaonburahs referred to above, also informed that the following persons had received compensation for their acquired land but finding no alternative land in the vicinity of their original habitation, had left for Udalguri area of the Darrang district. These persons have been identified as-(1) Ganesh Brahma, (2) Haricharan Brahma and (3) Prafulla Daimari. One Mr. Khama Daimari who did not get any compensation also followed them to Udalguri area. A few persons who became landless consequent upon acquisition

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of their Touzi land for establishment of officers colony of the said Project, have been identified as - (1) Sukar Daimari, (2) Magoon Daimari and (3) Gudiram Daimari.

REHABILITATION SCHEME.

The Dhansiri Irrigation Project, except providing for cash compensation to the affected families for acquisition of their land as per provisions of the land acquisition rules, has not envisaged any scheme for rehabilitation of the displaced families. There has not been any provision also to provide the affected families with suitable alternative plots of land. Thus it appears that the Project Authority does not have any responsibility towards the affected families other than paying cash compensation under the Land Acquisition Rules.

PAYMENT OF CASH COMPENSATION.

Cash compensation is paid in respect of acquisition of patta land only. Since T.B. land is government land, for its acquisition the question of paying cash compensation to the occupant does not arise. Land value, to determine the amount of compensation to be paid, is fixed by the Revenue Department Officials.

A large number of villagers within the sample villages have reported that they have neither received any compensation nor any alternative land in lieu of the land lost due to acquisition. Due to non-receipt of money value (compensation) of the land or alternative lands, they have been subjected to face innumerable economic problems which tend to arise even at a slightest fall of their agricultural output. So the loss of even 3 to 4 Bighas of cultivable land proved to be too much for them. A section of the villagers mostly from Angrajuli, Champagaan, Daugdapor, Kathalguri, Balisiha Habi, No. 2 Jhargaon, No. 1 Jhargaon, Kahibari, Routabathar, etc. have however, received compensation but their number is very much insignificant compared with the number of cultivators not receiving compensation. It has, however, been complained that those who have received compensation, had to struggle for it even for a period ranging from 4 to 6 years. Had they received their compensation just after acquisition they could have arranged alternative land by themselves at

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a lower premium but the prolonged dragging of the cases have undermined the value of money due to constrat price rise of immoveable properties. To them the inordinate delay and settling the acquisition cases was very much painful rather than the acquisition inself. It has also been complanined that no compensation whatsoever has been paid to the occupants of Touzi land, though the touzi lands were cleared and made useable by the concerned families. Land revenue has since been paid annually for the use and occupancy of the land so cleared.

PENDING CASES.

According to the Register of land Acquisition Estimates or Project Division canal No. 1 (1976-82), so far a total sum of Rs. 8,83,643'93 has been paid for land acquisition cases for the Dhansiri Irrigation (major) Project but much more remains to be paid still. There are 343 pending cases upto 31.12.83 for settlement and they are lying in different stages with the Officers like the District Collector (D.C.), Subdivisional Collector (S.D.O.), L.A.O., A.S.O., S.D.Cs and Executive Engineers, etc. The following table will give a clear idea as to the number and reasons for which these cases are pending with different officials.

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TABLE -VII

STATEMENT SHOWING THE PRESENT POSITION OF
PENDING L.A. CASES UNDER DHANSIRI IRRIGATION
PROJECT (MAJOR) UPTO 31.12.83.

	With No. A.S.O.	With Collector	With Civil Court	With S.D.C(s)	With S.D.C.	With S.D.O(s)	With Executive Engineer.	With D.C.	Total Pending	Remarks.
1.	48	43	-	-	-	-	-	-	91	Correction of Records.
2.	1	-	-	-	-	-	90	-	91	For sanction.
3.	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	-	3	For Fund.
4.	-	-	-	-	-	-	33	-	33	For possession.
5.	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	For preparation of L.A. orders.
6.	-	-	-	-	-	-	10	-	10	For fresh proposal.
7.	-	-	-	-	-	-	34	-	34	For valuation statement.
8.	-	-	-	-	-	-	10	-	10	For L.A. orders.
9.	-	10	-	-	-	-	-	-	10	For submission of estimate.
10.	-	-	-	-	-	-	11	-	12	For ceiling certificate.
11.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	15	15	For counter signature.
12.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	For revised proposal.
13.	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	For publication of notification.
14.	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	-	4	For valuation.
15.	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	2	For valuation of Zirat.

Sl. No.	With A.S.O.	With Collector	With Civil court	With S.D.C(s)	With S.D.C.	With S.D.O(s)	With Executive Engineer	With D.C. Pending	Total	Reasons for pending
1.	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
16.	-	-	-	-	4	-	-	-	4	For revelation statement.
17.	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1	For spot verification.
18.	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	2	For change of alignment.
19.	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	2	For taking over possession.
20.	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	For finalisation of appeal petition.
21.	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1	For resurvey.
22.	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1	For fresh proposal for new alignment.
23.	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	For judgement.
24.	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1	For resubmission of valuation statement.
25.	-	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	6	For acquisition order (on process).
26.	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	For modification of alignment.
27.	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1	For correction of I.A. papers.
28.	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	For estimate
49	62	2	1	105	11	98	15	343		

SOME OBSERVATIONS ON THE REPORTED ANOMALY:

It is evident from the above table (Table No. VII) that large number of cases are still pending for settlement. Having talked to the people of the villages receiving compensation, it has come to your notice that everyone is dissatisfied over the rate of compensation paid for acquisition of the land. According to them the amount paid to them is not enough to purchase a similar plot of land elsewhere as the cost of land has gone up tremendously in recent years. The situation has further been aggravated by the time-gap between acquisition and payment of compensation. The loss of crops in the intervening period ranging from 4 to 6 years has subjected them to mental agony crippling their initiative and drive to better cultivation.

Further it has been pointed out by the aggrieved parties that in some areas the Irrigation Authorities have proposed to dig canals by the side of the Moradhansiri and Golondi Minor Irrigation schemes for which sufficient lands were already acquired for the purpose. The new proposal would render some families to lose whatever lands left over and ultimately forced them to displace themselves from their original moorings. In this context the cases of Sri Prafulla Kumar Mushahari and Mrs. Ganeswari Rabha of Balisihabahi may be referred to. Both of them have received Government communication intimating them Govt. decision to acquire their land for the Dhansiri Project although they had already lost substantial amount of their possession for the Moradhansiri and Golondi minor irrigation project.

The practice of instalment payment of the amount of compensation has also been looked down upon as a deterrent to their economic rehabilitation. They desire that whatever amount is decided by the Govt. should be paid in a single instalment so that such an amount could be fruitfully utilised in purchasing an alternative land because amount received in instalments can not be kept reserved for long due to their pressing needs from all quarters. The lack of banking habits together with the increasing propensity to consume whenever some amount comes to hand ultimately tend to negation all mental preparedness for capital formation for a new venture. Therefore, it would be very much helpful, as they say, to do away with the practice of instalment payment of the compensation for greater interest of the tribal society.

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THE EXTENT AND INTENSITY OF DISPLACEMENT.

The term displacement of tribals for the purpose of our study in the context of acquisition of land for the Dhansiri Irrigation Project is to be understood in the sense that a household is deemed to have been displaced if he has incurred a loss of minimum 2 Bighas of land (either cultivable or homestead) and irrespective of the fact that the household affected has actually moved out of the village being deprived of his land or stays or in the village itself ignoring the loss he has sustained. In other words, dispossession of land to the extent of 2 Bighas and the loss incurred without being made up by allotment of suitable alternative land in an adjacent locality will constitute displacement.

In this definition of displacement is adhered to, then the entire 92 households of our survey will come under the purview of displacement necessitated by acquisition of land of any description (periodic ratta land/annual ratta land/Touzi land etc).

According to the information supplied by the Gaobura of Angrajuli and Jamuguri area, at least 8 households of their area possessing Touzi land were forced to leave their hearths and home and moved out to other places. The names of the head of the families and places of present shifting where known are shown below:-

<u>Names of households.</u>	<u>Place of shifting.</u>
1. Mahendra Narzari	Gohpur area of Sonitpur district.
2. Lakshi Kanta Basumatary	
3. Kekru Prahma	
4. Laobar Narzari.	Not definitely known.
5. Zonga Boro	Sialmari under Sonitpur district.
6. Celeng	Rangapara in Sonitpur district.
7. Maharaj Boro	Kachbil in Darrang district.
8. Janushan Narzary	Jonai in Lakhimpur district.

The Gaobura referred to above, also gave information to the fact that the following persons had received compensation for their acquired land but finding no alternative land

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study as to the utility or otherwise of the irrigational net works. Out of the 92 families, 2 families (representing 2.17%) had agreed that the project would eventually eliminate their poverty. One family (1.09%) was found to be hopeful of getting employment opportunity in the project work. Two families (2.17%) expressed their bitterness over this project for dislocating their social and economic equilibrium. According to them the economic utility of a big irrigation project like the present one was negative in as much as this type of projects required large agricultural land for their canal system and the villagers in the vicinity of the headwork extending over 4 Km. were to face deprivation from the irrigated water due to raising of the canal banks to a great height with sufficient depths which would render the local dongs drawn from the Bhutan Hills inactive. The nearby villages in and around Bhairabkunda where the headwork is located, therefore, had no word of appreciation for this project. Five (5.43%) families of this area termed it as blocking the local dongs and damaging their luxuriant crops.

Further 43 families out of the 92 families of our sample (representing 46.74%) had expressed the view that the Project had taken unexpectedly longer time for completion of the work and at the same time caused them economically poorer by snatching away their agricultural holdings without adequate compensation. Another set of 3 families (3.26%) gave no direct opinion as to the advantage or disadvantage brought about by the scheme but 6 families (6.52%) were found to nurture a hope that this scheme would help immensely the draught-prone areas of Udalguri sub-division. Interviewing yet another set of families comprising 10 units (10.87%) we could learn that they were expecting a successful completion of the project works which would eliminate their recurring labour of digging(dongs) to irrigate their agricultural lands. However 2 families (2.17%) expressed apprehension that the canals would cause havoc to the people in rainy season if not scientifically aligned and regularly checked, while 10 families (10.87%) expressed in unequivocal term that the scheme was in no way beneficial to them as no adequate compensation was paid for the land acquired for the purpose. Some 8 families (8.70%) preferred to keep mum till the project is finally executed in all respects.

The above observations of the cross-section of people interviewed may be summarised in the statement that follows:-

1. 2 families (2'17%) - Expected the scheme to eliminate poverty.
2. 1 family (1'09%) - Hoped to generate employment.
3. 6 families (6'52%) - Took it to be a remedy for the draught -prone areas of Udalguri sub-division.
4. 10 families(10'87%) - Expected it to eliminate the annual recurring labour required to construct new and clearup existing 'dongs'.
5. 5 families(5'43%) - Blamed it to have caused blockade of the indigenous dong system.
6. 2 families(2'17') - Wanted to lay aspersion for dis-locating their economy as a whole.
7. 43 families (46'74%) - Opined against the unremunerative compensation given for the acquired land and disrupting the subsistence economy of the tribal society of the locality.
8. 10 families (10'89%) - Expressed the opinion in unequivocal term that the scheme was not advantageous to them at all.
9. 3 families (3'26%) - Preferred to offer no comments on the advantage of disadvantage brought about by the scheme.
10. 2 families (2'17%) - Expressed fear that during rainy season the canals if not scientifically aligned might cause havoc to the nearby villages.
11. 8 families (8'70%) - Preferred to keep mum on a incomplete project.

92 ----- 99'99% or sa-y 100'00

CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS.

When a major irrigation project is installed in a tribal area, the intention of the Irrigation Department and for that matter the Government appears to be a genuine one since the project is installed in the national interest, that is to say, in the interest of the people. The people are expected to get water all the year round for cultivation. In a draught-prone area such a project might be considered to be a boon for the tribal people as the project is expected to help the cultivators to raise crops

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twice or thrice in a year instead of one crop. This may boost up agricultural production and as a result people will have a better footing in the economic front. Betterment in economic conditions is expected to have a favourable impact on savings leading to capital formation. This will ~~xxx~~ again help in the development of the entire area.

But our study in respect of the Dhansiri irrigation project had belied all our hopes. The analysis of our study leads to the following observations.:-

1. Due to installation of the irrigation project altogether 1001 tribal families had lost about 1184 Bighas of cultivable as well as homestead land.
2. The acquisitioned land includes periodic and Annual Patta lands and T.B. lands.
3. As a result of acquisition of land, some families were rendered landless.
4. Whatever land remains after acquisition proves un-economic and in some cases sold to neighbours and the affected family left the area for good.
5. Raising of high canals makes the nearby land uncultivable.
6. Many families have not been paid compensation as their cases are still pending at various stages.
7. No alternative lands have been provided in lieu of acquired lands.
8. Those affected families who had received compensation had to struggle hard for it for a period ranging from 4 to 6 years. One can imagine the troubles they had to face to get what was due to them.
9. As there is a time gap between the acquisition of land and payment of compensation, the value of money diminishes year after year due to constant price rise.
As the prices of immovable properties also go up, the affected families cannot purchase the same area of land lost with the amount of money received as compensation.
10. The affected families are of the opinion that the price fixed by the Revenue Authority for the acquired land is much less than the prevailing market price at the time of acquisition.
11. Cash money received as compensation is rather squandered away as the people do not have the habit of saving with the Banks and post offices. Hence such families become poorer and poorer. Compensation paid in instalment is deterrent to their economic rehabilitation.

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12. At the time of our study 343 acquisition cases were still pending at various stages and on various grounds and there is no certainty how much time it would take to clear the pending cases.
13. Some affected families under the purview of our survey have complained that they did not receive any notice from the Government for immediate requisition of their land.
14. Most of the affected families have considered the project as their enemy and not a friend.
15. The project which was started in 1976 and supposed to be completed by 1980, is yet to be completed. What purposes such a project which requires so much time for completion are beyond the comprehension of the local tribal people and they do not vary much whether the project will ever irrigate their agricultural fields.
16. Out of Rs. 80'00 lakhs earmarked for compensation due to acquisition of land only an amount of Rs. 9,18,830'09 was paid till the end of December, 1983. That is to say, slightly more than 10% of the amount estimated for payment of compensation was paid at the time of our study.

This study is intended to find out the extent and intensity of displacement of tribals from their original moorings due to construction of major irrigation project in tribal areas has shown that the scheme has been welcomed by the tribal cultivators with reservation as against the enthusiasm shown in respect of other minor irrigation projects constructed in the Tribal Sub-plan areas of Darrang district like the Golondi, Moradhansiri, Kalpani, Kulshik, Mangaldoi, etc. This attitude of indifference is seen specially among those who were affected by acquisition process. They raised certain issues like indifference of Government officials in computing compensation for the acquired land, the total lack of seriousness towards arranging substitute lands in lieu of the inadequate compensation, the unilateral decision of the Government in deciding the quantum of compensation, the inordinate delay in disposing of compensation cases, the installment payment of the compensation, the non-cognisance of the rights of land holders of Touzi lands towards granting of any amount to them by Government, etc.etc.

SUGGESTIONS.

On the basis of the findings of our study, we would like to put-forward the following suggestions for consideration of the Competent Authorities and their implementation.

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1. Whenever a major irrigation project or an industry is proposed to be installed in a tribal area, the families that are likely to be affected should be identified first and a full-fledged rehabilitation scheme on the basis of this identification should be incorporated in the Project Report.
1. The present system of paying cash compensation to the displaced tribals should be done away with. Instead, the affected families should be fully rehabilitated as per Project Report by providing alternative lands for hoestead and cultivation constructing dwelling houses and providing other amenities.
3. For this purpose a Local Committee with officials and non-officials should be set-up in the project area to look after the rehabilitation schemes. This Committee should bring to the notice of the Government if it observes any discrepancy in rehabilitation of the affected tribal families.
4. Cash compensation should be paid only when the land acquired is very small and whatever compensation in cash is paid should be paid in one instalment without pending the cases for an unduly longer period. The quantum of cash compensation should have some relationship with the present market value of the land.
5. At present there are no legal provisions to enforce the rehabilitation of displaced tribals due to installation of major Irrigation or Industrial Project. Some legal provisions or rules, therefore, should be framed immediately so that the displaced tribals are not to require to suffer in future.
6. Prior to the establishment of any major industrial and irrigational complexes in tribal areas the view points of the tribals regarding the future projects should be given due weightage.
7. When lands are proposed to be acquired for such public purposes the tribal families that are likely to be displaced should be given prior intimation at least 6 (Six) months ahead.
8. Government should constitute a Machinery to collect detail information of the displaced tribals to examine the individual cases and to suggest suitable measures for their economic rehabilitation.

B.B.

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