

Report on the sample survey in Yeleru Reservoir Project

A sample survey of some of the residents who were displaced due to the Yeleru Project was conducted during the month of March 2001. For this purpose a survey schedule was designed after some field visits and having preliminary discussions with the affected people. There were three different schedules designed namely, the detailed survey format, the rapid-fire survey and the elder's survey. The detailed survey findings are summarised in this section and some of the salient results presented. The other survey results have been mentioned in the appropriate sections in the report.

As the displacement took place close to 10 years ago special care was taken in selecting genuine respondents (i.e., those who resided in the submerged villages or had their land submerged). In most cases the personal records of the respondents were verified and also the help of village elders taken to ensure that the information provided was accurate. Care was also taken to ensure that the responses were true as far as possible, i.e., in most such cases were some of the questions asked pertain to information more than ten years old, the respondents have a tendency not to remember the accurate information. To remove this bias and to ensure that such "information" does not enter the survey, the interviewers were trained beforehand on the methods to use in extracting exact information from the respondents.

The sample chosen for the survey was on a random basis from the villages visited. Representative sampling was dropped, as there was no way of ensuring where we would find the displaced villagers. It appears from the statements of some of the village elders that a large number of villagers have migrated to other parts of the state as the economic opportunities dwindled due to surplus supply and insufficient demand in the local labour market post-displacement.

DEMOGRAPHIC DETAILS OF THE SAMPLE

Family Size:

Table 1 compares the family size in the sample prior to displacement and after displacement. As is evident the family size has reduced. Whereas prior to displacement 25% of the respondents were living in families with more than 8 members, only 15% were still living in such households. This indicates that the displacement possibly played a role in splitting of the joint family structure into a more nuclear structure. The same analysis holds true when one looks at the proportion of families with less than six members; presently nearly 74% of the families are from this category, while prior to displacement there were only 52% families from this category.

When one looks at the total population from these households, we clearly see that there has been out-migration from these families. The total population in the surveyed households was 1240 prior to displacement and post displacement it is 991. Thus a substantial proportion of the people have migrated out from the area after their joint families were split. Thus at some level the social fabric of the area was disrupted due to displacement.

Table 1: Change in Family size

	Past	Present
<=4 persons	23.4%	37.4%
5-6 persons	29.1%	36.3%
7-8 persons	22.3%	11.7%
> 8 persons	25.1%	14.6%
Average family size	7.1	5.8
Population in surveyed households	1240	991

Social Status

The social status (caste) of the sampled respondents was probably indicative of the general population in the area, with 31% from other castes, 35% from backward castes and 23% from the scheduled tribes. The pre displacement scenario would probably have been different as a lot of the landless have migrated closer to the cities, where they have more opportunities for work and hence are not part of the sample.

Table 2: Social Status - caste

	Proportion of sample
Scheduled Caste	7.9%
Scheduled Tribe	23.0%
Backward Caste	34.8%
Other Caste	30.9%
Did not respond	3.4%

Literacy Levels

Table 3: Literacy levels

	Proportion of respondents in that category
Children	44.5%
Women	13.7%
Men	21.1%
Total	26.7%

As can be seen from the above table, the literacy level of the population in the sampled area is abysmally low. Only 44.5% of the children are literate and the female literacy rate is even lower at 13.7%. The overall literacy rate at 26% indicates the backwardness of the area and the relatively low levels of awareness amongst the local population. It would appear that the government has by passed these people in the process of development and even implementation of standard mandatory programmes like literacy are being ignored.

LAND DETAILS OF THE RESPONDENTS

Ownership of land that was lost

Land ownership in the area fell into two categories, those who had own land i.e., land in their name and d-patta land i.e., that which belonged to the government but was given to the respondents to till and enjoy the fruit of, without necessarily transferring the land in their name. Thus the land given to the d-patta landowners was primarily a means of showing livelihood and with an understanding that as long as they lived there they can enjoy the fruits of the land. In cases of displacement it is these villagers who are hurt the most. In the present sample 70% of the respondents had their own land and 8% were landless, while the rest were d-patta holders.

Table 4: Ownership of land

	Proportion of respondents
Own	69.7%
D Patta	22.5%
Landless	7.9%

Extent of land lost by type

About 63% of the respondents mentioned that they lost wetland type of land, followed by upland type of land (39%) and then dryland (31%). Large proportions of the farmers with wetland (47%) were marginal holders of wetland (with less than 2acres). Almost 78% of the wetland farmers had less than 5 acres, compared to 66% of upland and 64% of dryland farmers with similar acreage.

It is evident from Table 5 that a large proportion of the people who lost land were small and marginal farmers. This is probably more a feature of the sample than of the area. As the sample consists of those who have not migrated away from the region after being displaced, it does not include those who have the maximum proclivity to out-migrate i.e.,

the landless (to cities for better livelihoods) and the large land holders (to cities for better living).

Table 5: Extent of land lost by type

	Wetland	Upland	Dryland	Garden
0.1-2 acres	47%	28%	26%	67%
2.1-5 acres	31%	38%	38%	0%
5.1-8 acres	12%	12%	15%	33%
> 8 acres	9%	22%	21%	0%
Proportion of respondents	63%	39%	31%	2%

Status of Compensation

Compensation for most farmers and villagers was in terms of cash for land and house. Though some villagers mentioned that the “government/officials/politicians” at that time had promised that one member of each household would be given a job in the steel plant in Visakhapatnam this never happened and most of the villagers were given cash in return for their land and house. As this acquisition of land by government increased, the land costs in the surrounding villages went up and resulted in the fact that most displaced villagers were not able to buy any alternate land in the area.

Compensation for similar types of land was also quite different depending on the amount of care the villagers took of the officials who had come to measure and assess the value of the land. Villagers report a host of anomalies in this regard as to how some people got their land assessed higher by planting cashew saplings overnight and with the connivance of the officials reported these as full grown cashew and got it valued much higher. The same kind of discrepancy also gets reflected in the survey as some villagers have got compensated to the tune of only Rs. 4000 per acre of wetland and some others have gotten upto Rs. 100000 per acre of wetland. Similar discrepancies were noted in the other land types also.

On an average the villagers expected Rs. 29800 per acre of wetland but got only Rs. 13116 on an average per acre. It was mainly the wetland farmers who felt cheated, as the value they obtained for their land was much lower than what they expected. However in terms of proportion of shortfall from expected to obtained the dryland farmers felt most cheated as they got only around 28% of what they expected and the garden farmers (only 2% of the sample) who got only 18% of what they expected. The upland farmers and wetland farmers got 56% and 44% respectively of what they expected to obtain.

Table 6: Status of compensation for land lost

Land type	Average		
	Obtained	Expected	Shortfall
Wetland	Rs. 13116	Rs. 29800	Rs. 20099
Upland	Rs. 4980	Rs. 8902	Rs. 5835
Dryland	Rs. 4942	Rs. 17213	Rs. 12394
Garden	Rs. 1875	Rs. 10625	Rs. 8750

Note: The shortfall has been computed at the individual level and then averaged and is not the direct difference between expected and obtained

Type of property lost

Around 905 of the sample surveyed had lost their house in the displacement process. Of these 41% lost a palm leaf roofed house (thataku house), 26% a middhi house (house with false ceiling), 20% a tiled house. This again indicates that the sample is primarily composed of the middle class to poorer section of the villages, who were not able to migrate to other places as their dependence on land was much higher and their access to higher compensations was quite low. This is as opposed to the rich of the village who during the compensation process had higher access to the officials and hence got compensation that was more appropriate and allowed them to shift base to the city. Around 10% of the villagers interviewed also lost an animal shelter, which was an integral part of their household.

Table 7: Type of property lost

	Proportion of respondents
Daba (slab building)	1.7%
Tiled	19.7%
Middhi	25.8%
Thataku	41.6%
Hut	0.0%
Animal shelter	9.6%
No loss of house	11.2%

Compensation for property (house)

As in the case of land compensation the compensation obtained for house by most respondents fell far short of what they were expecting. In the case of tiled houses the shortfall was to the order of more than Rs. 100000 per house. The percentage shortfall in “middhi” houses was 73% while that for “thataku” house was closer to 50%. In case of animal shelter the compensation obtained was only 28% of what was expected.

Table 8: Compensation for House

<i>All figures in Rs.</i>	Average		
	Obtained	Expected	Shortfall
Daba (slab building)	121667	300000	220000
Tiled	48400	158409	107636
Middhi	11417	41621	28803
Thataku	12162	27796	16784
Hut	-	-	-
Animal shelter	4871	17250	13693

COMPENSATION GRIEVANCE REDRESSAL – PILLAR TO POST

Means for redress of compensation grievances

The fact that most of the respondents were unhappy with the compensation they received is evident from the previous sections. Given this situation the options available for any villagers are to either go to court, to officials, to politicians or to middleman in the hope that justice will be done to them. The lack of information and lack of transparency in the process of rehabilitation and resettlement became breeding ground for middleman, who exploited the naïve nature of the villagers and promised them compensation if they (the villagers) were ready to spend money. Similar was the situation with lawyers, who flourished and are still flourishing by promising villagers that they will get additional compensation.

A more transparent approach to the process of resettlement would not have allowed such “fly-by-night” operators (both lawyers and middleman) to flourish. Most of the respondents had tried multiple channels in the hope of getting a more just compensation. 40% of them had gone to court (which benefits the lawyers more than anyone else) and are still running around the courts. 36% of the respondents went to middleman in the hope of solving their problems.

Table 9: Means of compensation grievance redressal

	Proportion of respondents
Court	40.4%
Middleman	35.4%
Officials	15.7%
Politicians	9.0%

Amount spent on getting redressal

The saddest part of the situation of the villagers is evident in the fact that almost all of them had spent large sums of money to get redressal. A more transparent process, which highlights the options available to the villagers, would not allowed this to happen. This responsibility lies with the government, as they are only ones who can effectively provide information and fill in the gap of information which the middlemen and lawyers were exploiting.

On an average each respondent spent Rs. 32000 for getting redressal. Part of this is due to their personal greed to obtain more money, but part of this is also due to the lack of information, which the government could have provided.

Table 10: Amount spent on grievance redressal

	Proportion of respondents
< Rs. 2000	11%
Rs. 2001-Rs. 5000	11%
Rs. 5001-Rs. 10000	20%
Rs. 10001-Rs. 20000	19%
Rs. 20001-Rs. 50000	18%
> Rs. 50000	11%
no response	11%
Average amount spent	Rs. 31,916
Minimum	Rs. 500
Maximum	Rs. 350,000

CURRENT STATUS

Mode of Migration

58% of the respondents said that they had moved into housing areas earmarked and shown by the government, while 34% occupied the land and housing on their own. This indicates the lack of proper planning by the government and the inadequate infrastructure provided by the government for resettling the villagers. A large number of villagers came and resettled into the areas surrounding Yeleswaram town. This was partly due to the reason that the houses and land shown by the government was not suitable for living in i.e., regular water logging during the rain seasons.

Resettlement is a very tricky issue and it is necessary that the government deal with it very carefully. Transparency is critical in this issue to ensure that the government is not seen to be favoring any particular individual or community. As housing in most traditional villages is caste delineated (each caste living in a separate area), such considerations should be paid attention to while resettling the villages. To take on a secular attitude without adequate awareness programmes is not useful for anyone in the long run.

Table 11: Mode of migration

	Proportion of respondents
Government	58%
Self Occupied	34%
No response	7%

Income sources

Most of the submerged villages were dependent on agriculture for their livelihood and income. Being primarily agriculturists, a large proportion continued to earn their livelihood through that source. Amongst the respondents, 91% were dependent on

agriculture for income (either as labour or owner) prior to displacement and even post displacement around 84% continued to depend on agriculture for income, though the nature of work they did in agriculture changed i.e., from owners they became labour.

21% of the villagers were also drawing their income from other sources like cattle rearing etc. prior to the displacement. Post displacement this proportion fell to 9% as the new place of residence did not allow for such type of income generation. Around 10% of the villagers did not have any regular source of income.

Table 12: Sources of Income

	Previous	Present
Agriculture	91%	84%
Business		2%
Employment		1%
Other sources	21%	9%

Agriculture as a source of Income

As seen in the previous section around a majority of the villagers depend on agriculture as a source of income. The extent of income they derived from agriculture prior to displacement and after displacement has undergone a sea of change. Around 38% of the villagers who derived income from agriculture previously derive no income from it now. More than 40% of the respondents used to derive more than Rs. 20000 per year prior to displacement while only 8% do so now.

At the other end 37% were deriving less than Rs. 10000 income per year prior to displacement, while close to 50% do so now. Considering the inflation in the ensuing time these villagers have literally been driven to poverty. The average income form agriculture for each household prior to displacement was nearly Rs. 34000 per year. This income has come down to Rs. 11000 per year. As there was no land was available (or what was

available was high priced) for purchasing immediately after displacement the income from agriculture shrunk. The agriculture community was ill equipped to handle the new situation where there was hardly any land available for cultivation. These communities were not suitably helped to undertake other trades and means of income generation. Thus the displacement has driven most of them into poverty. It would appear that cash for land is a very unsustainable option for most of these communities.

Table 13: Income from Agriculture

	Previous	Present
< Rs. 5000	12%	25%
Rs. 5001- Rs. 10000	25%	22%
Rs. 10001- Rs.20000	20%	8%
Rs. 20001-Rs. 50000	29%	7%
> Rs. 50001	14%	1%
No Income		38%
Average Income	Rs. 34,012	Rs. 10,895

The nature of income generation from agriculture has also changed, with most of the landowners being reduced to working as labour in the present agriculture farms. Prior to displacement 55% of the villagers were landowners and only 6% after displacement. While 19% were working as farm labour previously, 50% do so now. This indicates that the quality of life dropped drastically for a substantial proportion of the land owning class. The opportunities for the farm labour also changed as now the market was flush with labour and the demand remained the same (or even fell as the agriculture lands were submerged). This is reflected on the wage rates being earned, which are very close to minimum wages in a fairly well to do district like East Godavari.

Table 14: Type of Agricultural occupation

	Previous	Present
Own	55%	6%
Lease	3%	15%
Share	1%	1%
Labour	19%	50%
not specified	22%	28%

Income from other sources

The number of people who earned income from other sources also fell down sharply, with 58% of those who previously earned income from other sources reporting that they did not earn anything from it now. The average income previously was Rs. 7500 and it fell to Rs. 6500. Of those with other sources of income 24% were earning more than Rs. 10000 per year previously and only 11% presently. This sharp decline in income from other sources must have affected the marginal farmers most, as they would supplement their meagre agricultural income with income from raising animals. The present living conditions do not allow them to obtain any income from this source.

Table 15: Income from other sources

	Previous	Present
< Rs. 2000	26%	16%
Rs. 2001-Rs. 5000	45%	5%
Rs. 5001-Rs. 10000	5%	11%
> Rs. 10001	24%	11%
no income		58%
Average Income	Rs. 7,532	Rs. 6,569

The source of other income also changed due to the changed economic situation as explained in the previous sections. While 44% of the villagers who reported income from other sources were earning this income from raising animals and cattle, only 21% were doing so now.

Table 16: Sources of other income

	Previous	Present
Quarry labour		3%
Rickshaw puller		3%
Cattle	44%	21%
Not specified	56%	15%
No income		59%

Purpose of the project

When the Yeleru reservoir project was originally proposed as a flood mitigation project, later changed to irrigation project and finally to one for industrial development. More specifically to provide water for the Visakhapatnam Steel plant. Some villager's report that they were promised jobs in the steel factory if they accept the rehabilitation project. As can be well understood by now, these were mere "carrots" to displace the people and the discontent at being let down was most evident in the query on purpose of the project. Almost all the villagers felt that the project was meant for development of other areas and forcibly making their area backward.

Though flood control, irrigation were mentioned by some of the officials and politicians frequenting the area, the people have come to realise the bitter reality. Almost all of them felt that the project was not meant for flood control and irrigation. 55% quoted industrial development as the main reason for the project and 94% the development of the other regions.

Table 17: Purpose of the project

	Yes	No
Flood Control		100%
Irrigation	1%	99%
Industrial Development	55%	45%
Local Development	1%	99%
Development of other regions	94%	6%