



# ASECA CHANNEL

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## Editorial

Development and creation of infrastructure is not separable. Development emanates from the fact that new and modern infrastructures are being built and electricity is made available to all the new and existing consumers and installations. Any project with sizable investment would require land, water, power, basic communication and transportation infrastructure, manpower, basic raw material and above all capital to put in place all the inputs for the desired output. Wherever some major developmental projects are envisaged, it requires necessary resources and inputs like land, water and other basic inputs as above. The land acquisition process has been a contentious issue. It is observed that people without any interest in the projects are showing extra interest than the people who are being affected by such projects. It is pertinent to cite one of the many examples that once a local level leader of a party was leading a group of protesters who were carrying dangerous implements like daggers, bows and arrows whereas the same project was the flagship project of the same party at the Centre which he was representing. This example is highlighted to explain the extent of miscommunication and misinformation to the others. Later on it was corrected by the same person and it shows that there is some kind of political influence for which the land acquisition process is becoming so difficult and cumbersome. It is required to essentially protect the tribals' interest and at the same time there should be vigil to see that whether they are being misled. It is the duty of everyone to help the tribals understand the process and implications involved in the land acquisition process. The education part is absent and all other misinformation are being spread

with extra care. The pattern and style of tribals' resistance is almost similar. Some people have actually created a group of people with proper training to show resistance whenever a new project is being announced. To demonstrate the authenticity of this claim one can experiment by announcing a just non-existent project. It will be seen that some groups will start opposing that project. This indicates a reality that whenever something new is being proposed, trained people in this country are available to oppose the same. It is naturally expected that people oppose something when they know about the nuances and affects of that project. From the experience of land acquisition in the States of Odisha, Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand, it is seen that in all the places tribal people are being used to stage a protest. The word 'used' is to highlight that none of the people in that group might be knowing about the provisions of the land acquisition compensation, rehabilitation and resettlement packages, Corporate Social Responsibility plan. It is stated here as these provisions are also not known fully to the very highly educated persons. This shows that all the oppositions are being staged without knowing, without understanding the processes, provisions and procedures. It has become absolutely necessary to find out such people who are instigating the gullible people and leading a group which can be termed no less than working against the interest of the country.

It is not that difficult for the State to find out the people who are behind such programmes and what is the intension. It is not understood, how State is yet to find out such elements when it is having vast and effective network of intelligence and apparatus. If some information is not

reaching the place where it should have been, then State must take corrective measures.

Some of the most frequently asked questions by the tribals are:

1. Why government is taking our land when there are vast tracts of government land including forests. Why projects cannot be set up in the forest land.
2. When we are mostly illiterate, what security government is giving us for our continuity and survival as a group.
3. Whether there will be job guarantee for the project are oustees in the project.
4. We have been cheated in the past and what is the guarantee that this time also we will not be cheated.
5. Whether government will give the amount it is promising. This has come due to rise in the compensation for the private land due to new land act 2013.
6. We are all farmers and basically draw our sustenance from the land whatever we have from our forefathers. How we will survive when our land is being taken by the government for the project.
7. Whether our culture will be preserved under the influence of urbanization and industrialization.
8. If there is adequate safeguard, facility and remuneration why government representatives at the local level are not sharing with such information.

The reality is that majority of the tribal people are not surviving due to their land holding but due to various people oriented subsidy programme of various State governments. The problems are persisting and continuing. There is absence of any

Non Government Organization (NGO) who teach and disseminate information to the people about the project, its benefits at micro as well as macro level. But one can find there are many NGOs who are giving training people regarding various provisions of Human rights, how to confuse the administration, how to paint excessive repressive measures of the administration and also how to use women force in defaming the people from administration. One cannot believe, how women are being used in such demonstration. Men with all cowardice under their command remain in the background, even behind the women and incite them to virtually wage war against the police force. It should be understood that police force has been created for ensuring law and order situation and they are required whenever there is a disturbance. They should not always be blamed for the human rights abuse given the context that there is not human like approach and behavior by the people who are expecting the same from the force. It should not be the unbridled right of any person to cross the basic human rights as both sides are entitled to the same. When one side is ready enough to lynch the other, how it can be expected from the other party to remain silent and inactive. So provision of human rights should be applicable to both the parties i.e. force as well as who are opposing. Violence from any party should not be tolerated as it is going to create Frankenstein like situation that would be very difficult in the future to sort out.

A common but startling similarity is being seen in all such demonstration that is people who have come to only disturb the consultation process are fully in a drunken state. Why this common feature is seen everywhere? This points to a pertinent reality that somebody is exploiting this particular weakness of the tribals. When people are under the influence of liquor, what kind of consultation process can be expected? Time has come, government should enact a legislation to debar such persons from participating the consultation process who are under the influence of liquor as is being done in the case of driving as well as not allowing public and public servant to

consume liquor in public and create trouble in the public place. How people can be allowed to participate in such a serious and complex issues when he or she him/her self is out of control. Government must think in this line otherwise, it is also becoming a party for this kind of exploitation of the tribals.

This is an attempt to highlight one issue that is it is always forgotten that the tribals whose land are at stake are not the only losers due to lawlessness and mob mentality of some people but the tribal government officials including the tribal people in the police force. The sacrifice may be upto the supreme sacrifice. From the project affected side as well as the administration side tribals are the losers. It is a matter of great importance that there are tribal officials now in the revenue department who could safeguard the interest of the tribals and it is not proper to say that tribals are susceptible to exploitation by non-tribals. But irony is that there is little or no interaction between the government tribal officials and the common people so that there could be a process of confidence building measure to give them assurance that there are systems and procedures in place which could safeguard their interest in all respects and whatever legal process and assurances are there are adequate to look after them in the present and in the future also. The existence of the communication process as they belong to the same group, should become a reality and to achieve this there has to be constant interaction and approach from administration side to win their heart and consent. The interested groups for their own survival and sustenance are exploiting this lack of inter-mingling process in the society. The simple people are being misguided and are being instigated to wage war against the State without any proper knowledge, understanding. In the process the instigators are in a better position to bargain for their own interest or are using this opportunity to establish themselves as the guardians or leaders at the cost of others.

In the name of tribals' protection there seems to be a long term strategy of a section not belonging to the tribals to keep tribals outside the development process. There is no reason to believe that the tribals will continue to be exploited after so many years of independence as people from their community are holding sensitive as well as important posts in the government apparatus. The guidance and dissemination of information should flow relentlessly so that people will be adequately educated about the provisions and benefits out of the programmes, policies of State as well as Central government.

Let us analyze the outcome of a demonstration. When one side is being attacked without any provocation, other side cannot be a silent spectator as it has also the same rights to protect its life and property. It has become a regular feature to criticize the government apparatus or the police regarding the excesses in action. It is now required to understand how a same person is expected to behave in a sane manner when he is being attacked by the protesters. The police personnel should not be criticized all the time. It is a common scene now a days everywhere to break the barricade. Just imagine, if the police force remains silent then, people will break the barricade and enter the arena and there will only be one result that is the property of the country will be damaged, destroyed and there could be the possibility to harm the person at the receiving end which could go upto lynching of the person by the mob. So there has to be police action and perhaps this is the realization from time immemorial why the police or the administration have been given the authority and power to control the mob, protest, demonstration for restoring law and order. One has to be present to experience the action and counter action of the protester and the police. Any kind of violence during the demonstration should end. There are many methods to express dissatisfaction and explore avenues to send the message to the people at the helm of affairs. There are exemplary

pronouncements by the various Hon'ble Courts on the Bandhs and violence during protest march and demonstration. There is a need to fix responsibility for the damages done to the public property and the life of the people and it should not be only one sided. Considering the access of the common people to the arms and ammunition, it will not be proper to accuse the police only on the use of arms and weapons. In the name of the common people, the organized groups are now equipped with sophisticated and modern arms and equipments. The morale of the lower level police force is in the ebb as they are the people who bear all the brunt.

On scrutiny of Rehabilitation and Resettlement Policy of various States and the recently enacted Land Acquisition Act, 2013, one can find ample safeguards and provisions for the affected people. But one is not sure whether, people know about the provisions of such benefits. It is easily demonstrated that there are adequate provisions for the people for their welfare and apart from the present stipulation, State can prescribe and implement additional safeguards and provisions for the wellbeing and welfare of the people and locality. The compensation package can be negotiated and it is the normal process of consultation and dialogue that could bring necessary fortune to the people specially who are marginalized and weak.

Time has come to understand and identify the people who are imparting training specially to the weaker section of the society to wage war against the State and to protest vehemently not to allow

implementation of various developmental schemes. It is pertinent here to mention that in Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) also discussions are held on the exploitation and evacuation of the tribal people but not on the provisions of the land act and also of rehabilitation and resettlement packages. There has to be proper explanation and comparison to arrive at a decision, but that academic discourse is missing and in that place only verdicts are being pronounced based on one sided understanding and analysis.

Tribals cannot be left to be exploited by the system but at the same time also they should not be debarred from the developmental process and the benefits accrued out of such participation. If only resistance and protest to any project is allowed in the tribal dominated areas, all the developments will take place in places other than such pockets. Development will take place in the country and it will be a truth that it will happen in the places other than the tribal areas. Nobody has time and energy to convince the people who are not participating and discussing and all the projects would be diverted to some other places with no or less disturbance. And the State will definitely exploit the natural resources whether there is a protest or not. So on both the counts, the tribals are the losers and some persons with vested interests with a long-term strategy to keep the tribals weak and unorganized are orchestrating this. It is no less than a conspiracy against the tribals and the earlier it is understood by them would be beneficial and better for them.

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