



# An empirical study on impact of displacement on livelihood of traditionally displaced persons in India

Dr. Ankur Pare, Fellow of American Association for Higher Education and Accreditation (AAHEA), USA

**Abstract:** The condition of the internally displaced persons in India due to the ethnic crises deserves a fresh study and the study proposes to understand the livelihood of the internally displaced communities in general and also to evaluate the impact of the displacement on their livelihood systems. It is the study of how the communities responded to the displacement and how they cope with their situation. It is found that in order to overcome the stress and strain on the livelihood, the people in the study area made use of various coping strategies. This helped the people to tide over the difficulties in the short run.

**Keywords:** Displacement, Livelihood, conflicts, etc.

## I. INTRODUCTION:

Persons who have been or are being forced to flee or leave their homes or places of habitual residence are known as displaced persons. Displacement of population is a curse of development in the modern world. Large numbers of original population are being displaced from their homeland to give place to development activities. The displaced persons are forced to leave their land whether they like it or not. Displacements are most frequently caused by various factors like natural calamities, climatic changes and socio-economic factor, cultural and political causes. Presently, inter-ethnic violence has become one of the common factors almost all over the world. Different parts of the world are facing different types of ethnic clashes due to varying political conditions. Racism induces people to flee their original or habited place of settlement within or across the border, thereby creating fear amongst those receiving displaced people. The concern is growing over the issue of displacement throughout the world. Several millions of people in every nook and corner around the globe have been uprooted either by conflict, human rights violation, natural disasters and development projects which forced these uprooted people to take refuge within or across borders.

## II. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM:

The displacement affected the socio-economic condition of the people to a large extent. After the displacement most of the people started coming back and resettling in their original villages, but many could not regain the land and property they once possessed and thus could not attain their earlier lifestyle and living standard. The condition of the internally displaced persons in India due to the ethnic crises deserves a fresh study and the study proposes to understand the livelihood of the internally displaced communities in general and also to evaluate the impact of the displacement on their livelihood systems. It is the study of how the communities responded to the displacement and how they cope with their situation.

## III. LITERATURE REVIEW:

Milton (1997) mentions that ethnic differences are involved in some of the world's most intractable conflicts. They are also experienced as the source of the most satisfying and the most essential aspects of life. The remoteness of the North-East region and its ethnic mix is further complicated by the influx of refugees which creates socio-ethnic tensions, identity crisis and dilution of political power to indigenous people. These factors, with addition of lower economic growth and development, are found to result in serious discontentment, insurgency and demands for secession (Narahari, 2002).

While studying the ethnic identity of the North-East India, Das (1989) wrote that a review of the vast literature on the subject reveals a several dimensions of cultural articulation, ethnic identification and the

urge of cultural revivalism amongst the natives. Verghese (2004) says, "Tribal communities awakening to a new sense of identity, political consciousness, proto-nationalism and ethnic consolidation within larger kinship groups, generally differentiate themselves from the new sovereignties being asserted by an amalgam of race and culture." The Northeast region of India has several unique features that make fertile ground for the ethnic conflict and ethnic separation in contemporary time. It's relative geomorphological isolation from the main land of India, it's racial and cultural dissimilarities with the rest of the population of the country and the relative alienation and deprivation feelings spearhead the problem of ethnicity with different dimensions here (Sonowal, 2002).

#### IV. OBJECTIVES:

The main objectives of the present study are:

- a. To study traditional livelihood systems in India
- b. To study the means livelihood of the displaced communities in India
- c. To examine the impact of displacement on livelihood of displaced persons in India.

#### V. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

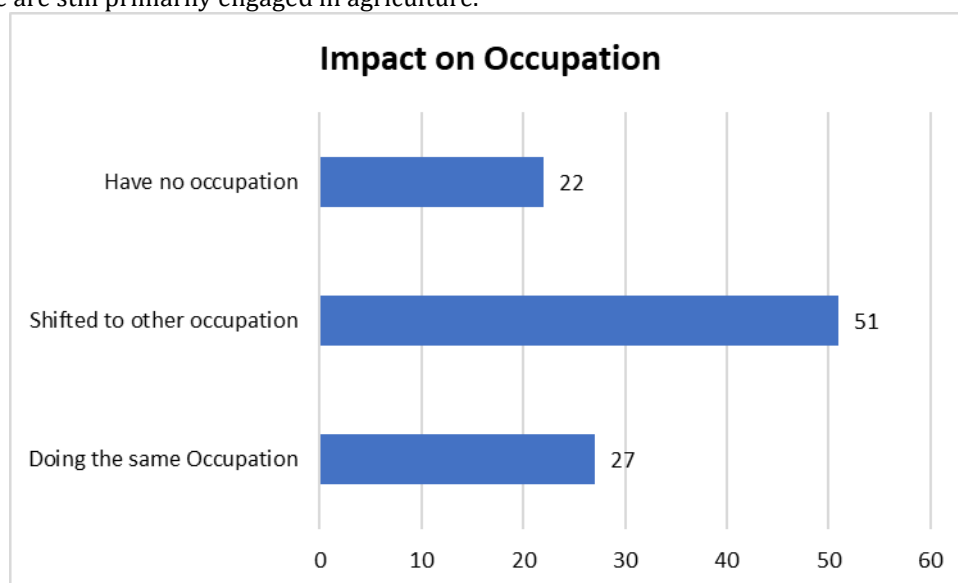
This study attempts to understand the impact of displacement on livelihood of traditional communities in India. The study is descriptive in nature and for this purpose, the primary data is collected through interviews and scheduled questionnaire distributed to traditional communities who were displaced from North eastern states of India. The data on livelihood, education, food, shelter and income is collected from Secondary sources through NGOs reports, published books, journals, etc. The data has been collected from 100 respondents using the convenient sampling technique. A simple statistical technique is applied to calculate their percentage. Maps and charts were prepared to support the relevant data.

#### VI. IMPACT ON LIVELIHOOD:

Livelihood in simple terms can be defined as the means to securing the necessities of life. In other words, it implies and includes all the activities that are undertaken by people to survive. It is very similar to occupation and sometimes used synonymously. However, it is much broader concept. But it can be understood by looking at the occupational structure since they are closely related.

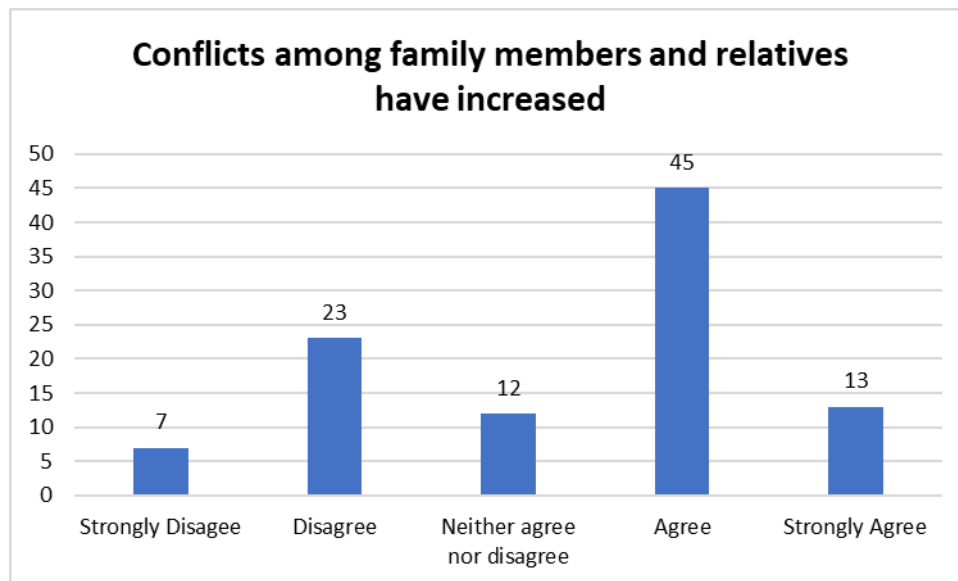
An important distinction must be made here between livelihood and a particular occupation. An occupation refers to a particular economic activity while livelihood is understood as the all the means employed to secure the necessities, i.e., livelihood can consist of many diverse occupations performed in order to survive. In light of such a distinction, a change in occupation may take place if it is not proving to be conducive with the changed conditions.

The traditional livelihood of the people in the study area is agriculture, both settled cultivation and shifting cultivation. A couple of decades after the conflict this has been found to have remained the same, i.e., people are still primarily engaged in agriculture.



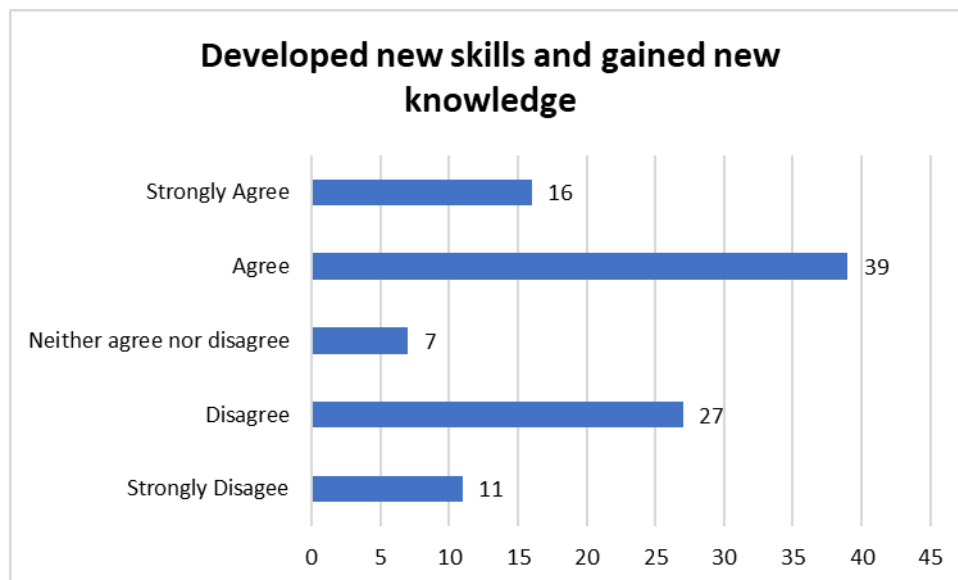
**Fig. 1 Impact on occupation**

Figure 1 represents the impact on earning status of the displaced persons. The major occupation of majority of the persons before displacement was agriculture, however the study shows that the 51% of the respondents have shifted to other occupation due to displacement since majority of them have lost their farm land, only 27% of the respondents are still doing the same occupation which they were doing before displacement and remaining 22% have not found any occupation due to displacement.



**Fig. 2 Conflicts with family members and relatives**

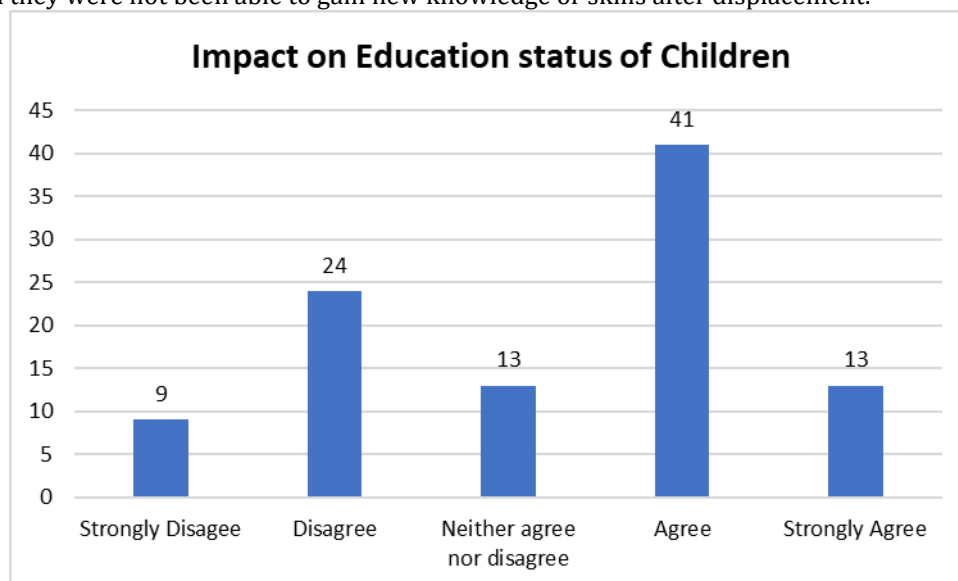
Another impact of displacement is found on the relationship of displaced persons with their family members and relatives, this relationship has been explained with the help of above figure 2. It is found that majority i.e. 45% of the respondents agree that their relationship with their family members and relatives has been affected a lot due to rising conflicts among them, 13% strongly agree to this. However, 12% respondents neither agree nor disagree to this. Whereas, 23% and 7% respondents said there has been no conflict among family members and relatives post displacement.



**Fig. 3 Developed new skills and gain new knowledge**

Since mechanization is not used in the shifting cultivation and is low in the settled cultivation in the study area, manual labour becomes a very important component in the livelihood system. It is this human capital, labour, that is the first to be affected during the conflict. It is found that after displacement, majority i.e. 39% and 11% of the respondents respectively agree and strongly agree that they have learned new skills and knowledge after displacement in order to cope up with the livelihood system of

their family. However, 7% of the respondents, neither agree nor disagree to this. Whereas, 45% (39% and 16%) said they were not been able to gain new knowledge or skills after displacement.



**Fig. 4 Impact on Education status of Children**

Even it is found that the education status of their children has also been affected due to displacement, majority i.e. 41% agree that the education level of their children has been affected due to displacement, which is supported by 13% of respondents who strongly agree to this. 13% of the respondents neither agree nor disagree to this, whereas, 24% disagree to this and say that there is no impact on education status of their children and remaining 9% strongly disagree to this.

#### VII. CONCLUSION:

In order to overcome the stress and strain on the livelihood, the people in the study area made use of various coping strategies. This helped the people to tide over the difficulties in the short run. However, the impact of the conflict was not limited to the short run only. Long term impacts on livelihood especially in terms of the effect on the various capital on which the livelihood system of the people in the study area is highly crucial.

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