
V. Gender Concerns in Income Restoration Planning

A. Introduction

India ranks 103 out of 137 countries in the gender development index, which reveals the reality of the insufficient level of development of women compared to men in the country. The economic condition of women-headed households varies considerably depending upon factors such as marital status, social context of female leadership and decision making, access to facilities and productive resources, income, and composition of the household. These conditions form the basis for defining indicators to assess the vulnerability of such households. Despite this, it is paradoxical that gender concern is missing from most of the theory and practice regarding R&R, despite there being enough empirical evidence to suggest that men and women are differently affected by displacement and the resultant resettlement. Cernea (2000) points out that gender-oriented analysis has revealed that women suffer more severe impacts. Others (for example, Feeney, 1995; Koenig, 1995; Pandey, 1998; Agnihotri, 1996) have also indicated that blatant discrimination against women is present in compensation criteria: for instance, entitlement to R&R assistance for unmarried individuals is set in Orissa at 18 years for men, but 30 years for women.

Moreover, men and women are more likely to experience different risk intensities and reconstruction opportunities because of their different socioeconomic positioning in terms of their respective roles and responsibilities and access to and control over resources.

Hence, in order to capture the gender dimensions of displacement realities and carry out gender-sensitive R&R planning and implementation, the livelihood, risk, and vulnerability analysis needs to be carried out with a gender perspective and its outcomes need to be utilized for preparing the resettlement plan in general and for designing and implementing income restoration activities in particular.

It is expected that in development projects like WTC or TNHP, women are going to experience socioeconomic impacts due to, for example, eviction from public right of way, loss of access to or loss of CPRs, and loss of employment opportunities.

It is important that postproject provisions are mentioned in the resettlement plan, keeping in mind the well-being of the affected women along with women of host communities. Gender issues in the construction phase will mostly concern women workers who will be engaged in highway construction activities. These women workers are expected to come from outside, being engaged by the construction contractors, and will be staying in the construction camps during construction. There may be participation from local women also in construction.

While women constitute almost half of the affected and displaced population in the project areas (both projects), they are neglected from the socioeconomic development point of view. Socioeconomic parameters such as literacy, work force participation rate, general health conditions, etc., reveal that the social status of women was very backward in the project areas and thereby the households headed by women were vulnerable.

B. Survey Findings

A total of 143 women-headed households were found in the two project areas.

1. Demographic Characteristics of Surveyed Women Members

Typical of any rural stretch or small cities in India, illiteracy among women is quite common. As Table 23 shows, the share of illiterate women is as high as 57%. The proportion of married and unmarried is almost equal, and similarly, the number of women below

Table 23: Demographic Characteristics of Women Members

Characteristics	Number of Households	%
Family Type (women-headed households)		
Nuclear	92	64.34
Joint	51	35.66
Extended	0	0.00
Subtotal	143	100.00
Social Stratification		
SC	6	4.20
ST	2	1.40
OBC	82	57.34
General caste	53	37.06
Subtotal	143	100.00
Marital Status (total population of women)		
Married	2,556	50.14
Unmarried	2,529	49.61
Divorced	2	0.04
Separated	0	0.00
Widow	11	0.22
Deserted	0	0.00
Subtotal	5,098	100.00
Age Group (years)		
Less than 14	2,497	48.98
14 to 59	2,489	48.82
More than 59	112	2.20
Subtotal	5,098	100.00
Literacy Level		
Illiterate	2,948	57.83
Informally literate	1,357	26.62
Schooling	433	8.49
Primary	161	3.16
Middle	92	1.80
Secondary	61	1.20
Intermediate	39	0.77
Graduate	7	0.14
Others		0.00
Subtotal	5,098	100.00

OBC = other backward caste, SC = scheduled caste, ST = scheduled tribe, % = percent.
Source: RETA field survey 2004–2005.

the age of 14 years and the number of women in the economically independent age group is also similar. A majority of the affected women are from other backward castes (57%), whereas less than 6% come under the scheduled category.

2. Women's Role in the Household Economy

As can be seen from Table 24, women's participation in economic activities is almost negligible. The percentage of workers among women is just 3%. The majority, of those who are gainfully employed are engaged in agriculture related activities (either as agriculture labor or in cultivation). As expected most of the females activities are restricted to household chores. Over 45% of the women are engaged in household work ranging from collecting potable water, cooking and child rearing to helping male members either in running their petty shops or in the field. Such low percentage of working women may be because a majority of them belong to either higher castes or OBC. Traditional values restricting the movement of women outside the four walls of the house, among the upper caste, is the main reason why a lower number of women are gainfully engaged.

Table 24: Usual Activity of Affected Women

Usual Activity	Total	%
Worker	153	3.00
Nonworker	25	0.49
Household work	2,320	45.51
Student	1,376	26.99
Old/Retired	153	3.00
Non-school-age	663	13.01
School-age child	408	8.00
Total	5,098	100.00

% = percent.

Source: RETA field survey 2004–2005.

3. Time Disposition

This section highlights women's involvement in various activities throughout the day. Particulars like child rearing are difficult to record as women believe that there is no fixed time for rearing children. In joint families (a majority of families here are joint families), children are cared for by elder members of the family and not necessarily the mother. In nuclear families, neighbors at times take care of children. In this area among the respondents the maximum time was spent by the females on household chores like cooking, washing, collection of drinking water, cleaning, cattle rearing, etc. Those who are engaged in labor activities (including service in urban areas) on average spent 6 to 8 hours every day on this. Women who help family members in cultivation on average spent over 4 hours

a day on this. The recorded times for relaxation and entertainment is fairly high because sleeping time of 8 hours is included in this.

Table 25 presents average time spent by responding women in different activities.

During the group discussions, various issues related to household matters were raised i.e., women's importance in financial matters, child's education, child's health care, purchase of assets, marriages and other functions, etc. As Table 26 shows, a majority of women APs said that they do not have any decision-making power at household level. One fifth of the total sample respondents have a say in important matters, including child's education and health. Little over one tenth of the women respondents reportedly have a say in financial matters of the household. However, nearly one fourth reportedly have a say in the purchase of assets and in social functions.

C. Impact of Displacement on Women

Development-induced displacement has significant economic, social, and cultural impacts on the lives of APs. If the changes are adverse, then certain vulnerable sections of society, such as women, children, tribal people, and the poor can be more severely affected. It is the observation in projects faced with displacement in the country that such vulnerable sections are generally unaware of their privileges or even of their rights and entitlements. As observed earlier, women constitute a substantial segment among APs, and hence it is necessary to study the impact of resettlement on their socioeconomic status.

Special attention must be paid to women in the process of R&R. Change caused by relocation does not have equal implications for members of both sexes and may result in greater inconvenience to women. Due to

Table 25: Time Disposition of Women

Activities	Number of Women Respondents	Cumulative Time Spent (hours)	Average Time Spent per Woman (hours)
Cooking	2,689	9,465	3.52
Washing	3,843	7,840	2.04
Collection of drinking water	4,932	9,667	1.96
Cleaning of house	4,878	13,610	2.79
Cattle rearing	1,169	1,800	1.54
Child rearing	1,041	4,435	4.26
Wage earning	21	151	7.17
Household industries	52	272	5.24
Support to cultivation	80	366	4.58
Relaxation and entertainment	5,011	51,463	10.27
Others	987	1,944	1.97

Source: RETA field survey 2004–2005.

Table 26: Decision-Making Power among Women

Activities	Number of Women Respondents	Share of Women Saying Yes (%)	Share of Women Saying No (%)
Financial matters	2,489	9.32	90.68
Child's education	2,311	15.21	84.79
Health care of child	2,007	13.28	86.72
Purchase of assets	1,987	27.15	72.85
Day-to-day activities	2,433	11.69	88.31
Social functions	2,371	29.63	70.37
Others	1,031	15.32	84.68

% = percent.

Source: RETA field survey 2004–2005.

disturbances in the production system and a reduction in assets, such as land and livestock, women may have to face the challenge of running a large household on limited income and resources. This in turn may force women and children to work to supplement their household income. In contrast, changes that may take place due to the development project, especially changes in environment and land labor ratio, may force women to be unemployed and dependent, although they were engaged in activities like agriculture labor, or collection and sale of forest produce. This section looks at women's role in the economy of the household, and their daily routine and social positioning in terms of their say in decision making at the household level. This exercise would be helpful in determining women's role in rehabilitation planning and their empowerment.

D. Participation of Women in the Project

The socioeconomic profiles of the project areas show much lower socioeconomic standing for women. It is important to bring the issue of women's development within the scope of the resettlement plan. For this, conscious efforts should be made toward integrating the issue into the project.

1. Women's Involvement in the Development Process through Employment

The development experience of at least two decades shows that it is necessary to consult women and offer them options in enabling them to make informed choices and decide on their own development.

Participation of women is necessary, specifically in the following areas:

- (i) In the preplanning and planning stages, participation of women could be sought through by involving them in the consultation process. To do this, local implementation agencies of NGOs have an important role to play;
- (ii) Each NGO field team should include at least one woman investigator/facilitator;
- (iii) Compensation for land and assets lost being the same for all affected or displaced families, special care should be taken by the NGOs for women's groups while implementing acquisition and compensation;
- (iv) NHAI should ensure that women are consulted and invited to participate in group-based

activities, to gain access and control over the resource as part of the resettlement plan. Monitoring and evaluation teams should include women;

- (v) NGOs should make sure that women actually take part in issue of identity cards, opening accounts in the bank, and receiving compensation through bank accounts in their name. This will further widen the perspective of participation by women;
- (vi) Under the entitlement framework for both projects as well as in other projects, there are a number of provisions for compensation and assistance toward the losses incurred by the households headed by affected women;
- (vii) The implementing agencies should provide training to upgrading the skills in alternative livelihoods and to assist them until the beneficiaries start production and businesses;
- (viii) For monitoring and evaluation, there should be scope for women's participation. Monitoring of project inputs concerning benefits to women should involve their participation and this will make the process more transparent to them; and
- (ix) Women should be encouraged to evaluate the project outputs from their point of view and their useful suggestions should be noted for taking necessary action for further modifications.

2. Involvement of Women in Construction Activities

The construction works for widening and strengthening the project corridor starts once the R&R activities are over, the right of way/corridor of impact is clear of any encroachment, and land is temporarily acquired for borrow areas and construction camps. The construction contractors will set up their construction camps on identified locations where the labor force required for the construction activities will be provided with temporary residential accommodation and other necessary infrastructure facilities.

The construction labor force will be mostly skilled workers, since a lot of machine work is required in the construction of the highway. In addition, there will be a requirement for unskilled labor where women can certainly contribute. Apart from this, women as family members of the skilled and semiskilled laborers will also stay in the construction camps and will be indirectly

involved during the construction phase. The families of laborers will include their children.

The construction contractors are expected to bring along skilled labor, as local labor available will be used for unskilled activities. The labor force, both migratory and local, will have male and female members.

Foreseeing the involvement of women, both direct and indirect in construction activities, certain measures are required to be taken toward the welfare and well-being of women and children in particular during the construction phase.

E. Recommended Actions

In order to address women issues during project implementation, it is important to involve women members in the NGO's team. The following actions are recommended:

- (i) NGO teams implementing resettlement must include women;
- (ii) Monitoring team(s) should constitute 33% women;
- (iii) Evaluation team(s) should constitute 33% women;
- (iv) Compensation to women should be handled with care and concern considering their non-forward nature of interacting;
- (v) All compensation and assistance should be paid into a joint account in the name of both spouses, except in the case of women-headed households and women wage earners;
- (vi) Preference should be given to local women in construction activities;
- (vii) All the facilities for the welfare of women and children in construction camps should be provided; and
- (viii) Special measures must be taken to prevent abuse of women and child labor in construction camps/activities.