

INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF LAW
MANAGEMENT & HUMANITIES
[ISSN 2581-5369]

Volume 8 | Issue 2

2025

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The Human Cost of Progress: Analyzing the Paradox of Development and the Plight of Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups

JASKEERAT SINGH¹ AND JAHNAVI CHOUBEY²

ABSTRACT

Development-induced displacement (DID) involves the forcible relocation of populations due to extensive mining, industrial, and infrastructure projects aimed at advancing economic development. It has surfaced as a grave challenge in India, inordinately affecting the Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs), whose sense of self and well-being are inextricably linked to their ancestral lands and the vibrant tapestry of their culture. Both historical and contemporary ramifications of development policies have often marginalized PVTGs, underscoring the human cost of systemic failures. The consequences of displacement—economic impoverishment, community disintegration, and loss of cultural identity—are examined through specific case studies, such as that of the Narmada Dam Project and Vedanta mining in Niyamgiri Hills. The paper evaluates the legal frameworks governing displacement, particularly the Land Acquisition Act of 1894, the Forest Rights Act of 2006, and the Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act of 2013, identifying issues such as inadequate compensation, ineffective rehabilitation measures, and the absence of culturally sensitive measures. Judicial rulings such as the Narmada Bachao Andolan v. Union of India and N.D. Jayal v. Union of India reveals recurring failures in addressing displacement and ensuring justice for vulnerable groups. The research uses a qualitative methodology to synthesize insights from secondary sources like government bodies, non-governmental organizations reports, and institutions like the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC). It highlights the lack of comprehensive data on PVTGs and the inefficiency in institutional mechanisms, uncovering systematic flaws in policy frameworks. In furtherance, recommendations on adopting sustainable practices, strengthening legal safeguards to protect the PVTGs, including PVTGs in policy formulation, and decision-making processes to safeguard their rights and expressions are made. The findings emphasize the necessity of a development paradigm that balances economic progress with cultural preservation and social equity. It calls for a more inclusive approach that prioritizes the dignity, cultural autonomy, and well-being of PVTGs while fostering sustainable and equitable growth.

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Keywords: *Development-Induced Displacement, Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs), Systematic failures, Rehabilitation and Resettlement, Sustainable Development.*

I. INTRODUCTION

The Development is often viewed as a yardstick of modern societies and a manifestation of progress and economic development. However, its pursuit often comes at a heavy cost, especially to the marginalized and vulnerable. Of these, the PVTGs in India represent those whose very lives and cultural identities are threatened in the name of development.³ PVTGs are characterized by unique cultural traditions, distinct ways of living, and an affinity towards their traditional territory; however, these communities face extinction risk more than ever with massive initiatives like mining, dam construction, and industrialization intruding upon their land. This contradiction of development, where economic achievement often supersedes social equity and cultural conservation, mirrors the struggles faced by Indigenous populations worldwide, from the Amazon to the territories of Aboriginal peoples in Australia.⁴ As in other parts of the world, displacement of PVTGs in India is a matter of losing access to land and, in doing so, putting at risk their cultural heritage and traditional knowledge systems, creating serious ethical questions related to the impacts of such development.

Development-induced displacement in India has caused marginalization, emotional suffering, and economic distress that makes the process of integrating PVTGs into mainstream society much more difficult.⁵ Judicial interventions, as seen in cases like *Narmada Bachao Andolan v. Union of India*⁶ and *N.D. Jayal v. Union of India*⁷ has brought to the fore the continuing failure to protect the rights of these marginalized communities, but solutions remain elusive.

This paper explores the nexus between development and displacement, focusing on PVTGs.⁸ It presents feasible strategies for an inclusive development model that brings together social justice, cultural preservation, and economic growth by raising systemic issues and ethical dilemmas.

³ Negi, D. P., & Azeez, E. P. A. (2019). Impacts of Development Induced Displacement on the Tribal Communities of India: An Integrative Review. *Asia-Pacific Social Science Review*, Vol. 22(2), 50-62, <https://www.dlsu.edu.ph/wp-content/uploads/pdf/research/journals/apssr/2022-June-vol22-2/5-negi.pdf>.

⁴ Mohanty, B. (2005). Displacement and Rehabilitation of Tribals. *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 40(13), 1318-1320, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/4416394>.

⁵ Jaysawal, N., & Saha, S. (2018). Impact of Displacement on Livelihood: A Case Study of Odisha. *Community Development Journal*, Vol. 53(1), 136–154, <https://doi.org/10.1093/cdj/bsw026>.

⁶ *Narmada Bachao Andolan v. Union of India*, (2000) 10 SCC 664 (India).

⁷ *N.D. Jayal v. Union of India*, (2004) 9 SCC 362 (India).

⁸ Babar, A. V. (2015). Analytical Study of the Impact of Globalization on Tribal Communities in India with Reference To Economic Justice, All Inclusive Growth and Social Transformation. *Journal of Poverty*, 21, 31-39JPID-Vol.21 2016.pdf.

II. LAW AS A TOOL FOR DISPLACEMENT: FRAMEWORK AND POLICY CONCERNS

Land acquisition and resource-use laws in India have had a contradictory history of operation. Apparently, these were enacted for the good of the people, but in practice, they have been tools to displace communities, pushing economic interests above the rights of marginalized populations. The colonial-era Land Acquisition Act of 1894 allows land to be acquired on the pretext of "public purpose" and has become a widespread form of displacement. The Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation, and Resettlement Act of 2013 aimed to deal with this problem by providing for some guidelines for just compensation and rehabilitation. The Act had clauses to protect the rights of people as it required people's consent before displacing them for development purposes and allowed people to participate in the process.⁹ However, amendments later compromised these safeguards when they removed compulsory public hearings and reduced the judicial redress available to landowners, reducing the security of tenure for marginalized communities.¹⁰

Neoliberal development has resulted in increased forced evictions of rural people, particularly in the appropriation of fertile agricultural land for SEZs and other projects. Such acquisitions mostly fail to rehabilitate and offer alternative livelihoods, leaving behind agricultural laborers with no survival means. Although these initiatives are hailed as catalysts for the expansion of the national economy, the communities they uproot are marginalized, as the majority of the benefits go to corporate organizations and metropolitan elites.

The Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006, and the Forest Conservation Act, 1980, restrict the diversion of forest land for non-forest purposes¹¹ and require central government approval to change the status of reserved forests. The Panchayats (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act of 1996 further consolidates powers at the Scheduled Areas to acquire or develop scheduled area land only with the prior permission of Gram Sabha. However, the implementation often fails because state governments dilute the powers of Gram Sabha under Article 243G of the Constitution. This is even though in the case of *Orissa Mining Corporation v Ministry of Environment and Forests*¹², the Supreme Court has recognized the role of Gram Sabha and its ultimate power to decide upon land

⁹ The Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation, and Resettlement Act, 2013, § 4(1).

¹⁰ Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation, and Resettlement (Amendment) Ordinance, 2015, § 4 (Jan. 7, 2015).

¹¹ The Forest Conservation Act, 1980, § 4(4).

¹² *Orissa Mining Corporation Ltd. v. Ministry of Environment & Forests*, 6 S.C.R. 881 (2013) (per K.S. Panicker Radhakrishnan J., concurring) (India).

acquisition for any development project. The Fifth¹³ and Sixth¹⁴ Schedules give governors the right to protect tribal lands and stop them from being transferred to non-tribals, but these powers are rarely used. As a result, governance structures fail to safeguard tribal people, and they frequently lose their land and experience widespread relocation. In the same vein, the Dileep Singh Bhuria Committee's¹⁵ recommendations—which included giving communities a 50% share in industrial projects in Scheduled Areas and prohibiting the transfer of agricultural land for non-agricultural uses—have been disregarded.

III. IMPACT OF DEVELOPMENT INDUCED DISPLACEMENT

Development-induced displacement goes hand in hand with large-scale impoverishment and marginalization that affects the affected people's social, economic, and cultural well-being. Impoverishment takes place when persons lose their livelihood resources without satisfactory rehabilitation measures; their economic status declines drastically. Marginalization goes beyond economics and enters the psychological and cultural realms. Tribal communities encounter unique challenges since their common pool resources (CPRs), frequently classified as state property, are taken without payment and labelled as “encroachers.”¹⁶ This legal system exclusively acknowledges individual landowners, ignoring communal ownership.¹⁷ Hence, caste, class, and tribal imbalances are exacerbated as non-owning dependents, who are often from underprivileged castes, lose their livelihoods without any other options.

In tribal communities, their position in society depends directly on the extent of their management of CPRs. When the resources are lost, women are confined to domestic activities, deprived of economic and rehabilitative gains, and placed in low-wage, unskilled employment. This dynamic fuels patriarchal attitudes that confine women to only household labour.¹⁸ In order to support their family, impacted families are also forced to make use of their immediate resources, such as their children, who are pulled out of school and forced into child labour. For instance, 56% of the relocated families in Assam and 49% of the families in West Bengal prevented their children from attending school, so converting them into child labour. These children, who should represent the promise of the future, are instead tragically utilized as

¹³ INDIA CONST. sched. 5, pt. B, ¶ 4(1).

¹⁴ INDIA CONST. sched. 6, ¶ 1.

¹⁵ Dileep Singh Bhuria Committee, Report of the Committee on the Panchayati Raj Institutions for Scheduled Areas (Extension of the Provisions of the Constitution to the Scheduled Areas) Page 1 (1995).

¹⁶ Walter Fernandes, *In the Name of Development: A Study of Displaced People in Gujarat* 98-99 (Orient Blackswan Pvt. Ltd., 2001).

¹⁷ Usha Ramanathan, *The Land Acquisition Act 1894: Displacement and State Power*, Economic and Political Weekly 28, 28-29 (2008).

¹⁸ Geeta Menon, *The Impact of Migration on the Work and Tribal Women's Status*, Women and Seasonal Labour Migration 105, 105 (1995).

resources for immediate survival.¹⁹ Deprivation causes communities to change how they manage their natural resources. The current generation is expected to use these resources responsibly in order to meet their own requirements and to protect them for future generations. However, the sustainable behaviour of these communities shifts when they experience poverty. Since they have no other means of support, they start using renewable resources, such as cutting down trees for lumber or fuel²⁰, to ensure their immediate survival. A vicious cycle is created by this environmental degradation: resource depletion results in increased poverty, which in turn leads to additional environmental damage.

IV. REHABILITATION AND RESETTLEMENT

(A) Rehabilitation and Resettlement Policy, 2007

The National Policy on Rehabilitation and Resettlement (R&R) 2007 was introduced with the objective of mitigating displacement problems due to development projects. The policy was designed to solve the problems associated with displacement brought on by development projects. Two important elements led to the creation of this policy: the government's battle with delays in land acquisition, litigation, and project implementation and the situation of displaced people who suffered much due to losing their land, means of subsistence, and community. Although the program tried to strike a balance between these issues, it seems to have given land acquisition issues more importance than alleviating the pain of displaced people.

A key policy clause requires a Social Impact Assessment (SIA) for projects that cause more than a certain number of persons to be displaced. The project's effects on community and public assets, infrastructure, and properties are assessed in this evaluation. An independent multidisciplinary group must assess it, and the project can only move forward following SIA clearance and compliance with its requirements. The policy also contains measures to prevent the misuse of land that has been purchased, such as the requirement that land obtained for public use cannot be utilized for other purposes and that it be returned to the government if it is not used for more than five years. This provision reduces undue land acquisitions because most such acquisitions are usually used for flashy corporate projects or undertakings.

The policy, despite its merits, faces a number of limitations. It does not successfully minimize displacement, which is a goal that should ideally be incorporated into the project conceptualization phase by taking downsizing initiatives or alternative technologies into consideration. The presence of uncertain terms like "if available" and "as far as possible" in the

¹⁹ Walter Fernandes, *Sixty Years of Development-Induced Displacement in India: Scale, Impacts and the Search for Alternatives*, 97-98.

²⁰ Niraja Kumara Caturvedi, *Man, Forest and the State in Middle India* 18-19 (Serials Publications, 2004).

resettlement regulations has also made it easy for the project managers to avoid accountability towards proper rehabilitation. Such inconsistencies render the policy weak in safeguarding fundamental rights like land-for-land compensation or employment opportunities for the displaced persons. The policy lays down the grievances redressal mechanism: a National Monitoring Committee, an Ombudsman, Project/District R&R Committees, and a National Rehabilitation Commission. Yet, these do not have the power to stop project construction or withdraw funds in case of poor rehabilitation measures or their failure to take timely measures. It also does not guarantee the involvement of the displaced people, particularly the displaced people, particularly the tribal communities, in any decision-making process on projects that have an impact on their lives. The international principle of Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC), which gives the affected communities a decisive voice, is not applicable to the R&R policy.

(B) Right to Rehabilitation and Resettlement

Rehabilitation and resettlement rights for people displaced by development projects are not legally protected in India. Here, it sharply contrasts with the power of the state to acquire land compulsorily. The obligation to rehabilitate displaced people is derived from preceding frameworks, the National Rehabilitation Policy of 2007, and particular project-related policies implemented by organizations like thermal firms or coal businesses. The right to live with dignity is guaranteed under Article 21²¹ of the Constitution, and courts have been instrumental in recognizing and defending the rights of those who have been displaced by development. Individuals are deprived of this right when they are displaced from their habitat and means of subsistence, and as the scope of Article 21 expanded, judicial interventions in R&R cases became increasingly common.

In *Karjan Jalashay v. State of Gujarat*²², the Supreme Court permitted the purchase of land for a dam project, but with restrictions that guaranteed the displaced received compensation for their lost land, relocation expenses, and rehabilitation prior to being displaced. Despite at the time, there were no pertinent laws or international standards, this was a judicial recognition of R&R rights. In a similar vein, the court in *Narmada Bachao Andolan v. Union of India*²³ had to decide between the national interest in constructing the Narmada Dam and the fundamental rights of displaced tribal groups. The court found that these rights are susceptible to reasonable constraints, even though it acknowledged that displacement breaches the rights to shelter and

²¹ INDIA CONST. art. 21.

²² *Karjan Jalashay v. State of Gujarat*, (1986) Supp SCC 350 (India).

²³ *Narmada Bachao Andolan v. Union of India*, (2000) 10 SCC 664 (India).

dwelling under Articles 21 and 19²⁴. It underlined that providing displaced people with improved facilities and living conditions does not violate their human rights. However, the court identified the state's shortcomings in rehabilitation and gave time-bound orders to remedy them. The court emphasized the idea of sustainable development in *Karnataka Industrial Areas Development Board v. C. Kenchhappa*²⁵, requiring environmental clearance prior to project site acquisition. It recommended evaluating the social and cultural effects on displaced groups similarly. Even while the courts have recognized R&R rights, there is still criticism, especially regarding insufficient or delayed rehabilitation initiatives. For instance, the Supreme Court's decision not to halt the construction of the Narmada Dam until rehabilitation progress reports were received has drawn criticism from environmentalists. Such rulings highlight the discrepancy between the lack of legally binding regulations for pre-displacement rehabilitation and the court's recognition of R&R rights.

V. ROLE OF JUDICIARY

The judicial approach towards development-induced displacement has been erratic, often guided by political factors and neoliberal standards. The Andhra Pradesh High Court affirmed the Fifth Schedule of the Constitution in *Samatha v. State of Andhra Pradesh*²⁶, which forbids the transfer of tribal property to commercial firms or non-tribals and requires 20% of mining net revenues to be used for community benefit. Nonetheless, the Central Government sought to weaken this ruling by suggesting changes to the Fifth Schedule. On the other side, in *Ram Chand v. Union of India*²⁷, the Supreme Court upheld the eminent domain theory, which permits the government to take private property for public use without the owner's permission, frequently leading to hardship and displacement. This change was especially noticeable in *BALCO Employees Union v. Union of India*²⁸, where the Court avoided examining economic policy and restricted the use of Samatha. Later rulings widened the definition of "public purpose," allowing private organizations and SEZs to acquire land. Nevertheless, the Supreme Court gave the *Niyamgiri* ruling²⁹ new life by acknowledging the Gram Sabha's jurisdiction under the Forest Rights Act to make decisions regarding mining operations that impact community and cultural rights. The Land Acquisition Act of 1894 was repealed in 2013 due to this historic ruling and popular opposition.

²⁴ INDIA CONST. art. 19.

²⁵ *Karnataka Industrial Areas Development Board v. C. Kenchhappa and others*, (2006) 6 SCC 371 (India).

²⁶ *Samatha v. State of Andhra Pradesh*, 1997 (8) SCC 191 (India).

²⁷ *Ram Chand v. Union of India*, (1994) 1 SCC 44 (India).

²⁸ *BALCO Employees Union v. Union of India*, (2002) AIR SC 350 (India).

²⁹ *Id.* at 4.

VI. CASE STUDY

The Narmada Dam Project is an important part of India's growth strategy, and it's the paradox of progress where massive development projects are very costly in terms of human population and environment. The project is a system of dams, and the largest dam is the Sardar Sarovar Dam, which lies at the heart of the Narmada River. While it delivers irrigation to millions of hectares of land, a drinking water source for those drought-affected areas, and hydropower, the project caused significant displacement-the tribal populations living in the affected area, as well as in the Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs) consisting of Bhil, Tadvi, Koli, among others.

(A) History and Scale of Displacement

The Sardar Sarovar Dam has caused the displacement of around 200,000 people, a majority of whom are tribal communities. For PVTGs whose livelihood and identity are strongly linked to their ancestral lands, displacement is not just a migration but actually breaks their relationship with their spiritual and social worlds as well. Forests, rivers, and farmland are more than mere economic assets for these groups; they are fundamental to their cultural traditions and perspectives.

(B) Economic and Social Impacts

Displacement results in immediate economic distress. Many PVTG families, who earlier could support themselves by farming, fishing, and all kinds of forest activities, have been left as landless labourers. Generally speaking, compensation packages often fail to reflect the worth corresponding to their lost lands or cultural connections. Sometimes, for instance, monetary compensation comes in the guise of land set far from one's original house, which will not be conducive to farming purposes or lacks one's access to the forest upon which they exist.

The aforementioned economic hurdles are further compounded by social fragmentation. PVTG groups generally consist of tight-knit social communities with intricate kinship links and network systems of mutual support. Displacement uproots such relations, forcing families to settle in dispersed urban or semiurban locations where family members find it difficult to adapt to new lifestyles. Weak community bonds have increased psychiatric issues such as depression and anxiety, while social exclusion into their new society has worsened the condition further.

(C) Environmental and Cultural Impacts

The flooding has also submerged huge stretches of forests and agricultural lands; this makes it impossible for the PVTGs to access some essential natural resources, thus deep cultural

disruption, along with the resultant economic loss. The submergence of sacred groves, burial grounds, and other places of importance and spirituality contributed towards the degradation of cultural identity. Traditional ecological wisdom passed down through generations and closely tied to the local ecosystem is at risk of disappearing as younger generations become disconnected from their heritage.

(D) Systemic Failures and Legal Inadequacies

Laws indeed exist, such as the Forest Rights Act of 2006, guaranteeing rights for tribal communities on forests, and the Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act of 2013. The implementation of these acts, however, has varied. How the judiciary intervened, as a rule, in *Narmada Bachao Andolan v. Union of India* exemplified how legal remedies are far from providing a solution to affected communities. Although the Supreme Court recognized the importance of rehabilitation, it prioritized the greater national agenda of development over the rights of those displaced.

(E) A Unique Perspective: Cultural Redundancy and Adaptive Marginalization

One aspect often overlooked in discussions about the Narmada Dam project is the concept of cultural redundancy- the belief that traditional tribal customs are anachronistic and irrelevant in modern society. This bias reduces the inherent value of PVTG cultures and changes the way rehabilitation policies are framed. It is common to find assimilation tactics that try to integrate communities into the mainstream rather than their unique cultural identity. For instance, vocational training schemes provided to internally displaced PVTGs focus predominantly on skills believed to be relevant in the cities, such as construction or work in a factory, and not their traditional skills, indigenous knowledge of nature, or techniques for sustainable agriculture. The end result is a condition that may best be described as adaptive marginalization: the tendency of PVTGs to adapt to frames that challenge their indigeneity. The perception of cultural decline and disconnection is amplified through the reduced capacity to shape developmental paths, forcing PVTGs into a fragmented understanding of identity.

Thus, the rehabilitation policy needs to change—driven by the importance of retaining cultural expression while recognizing Indigenous knowledge systems as assets rather than eventual hindrances on the way to progress. The following policy recommendations should be implemented to counteract the adverse effects of development-induced displacement:

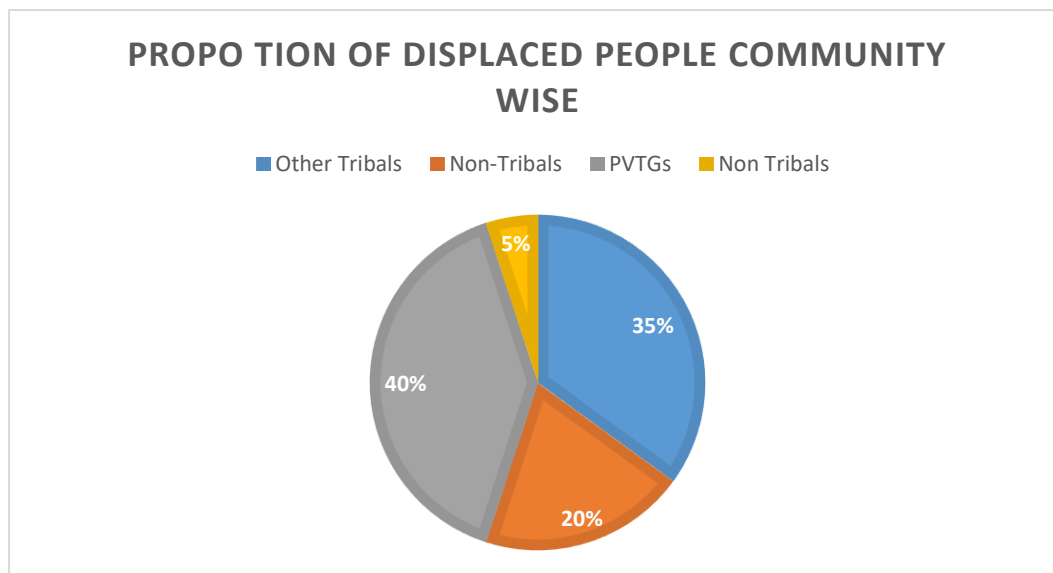
- 1. Culturally-Informed Rehabilitation:** Efforts towards rehabilitation must be dovetailed with steps to develop cultural and spiritual icons that protect PVTG identities.
- 2. Inclusive Decision-Making:** The planning process should begin and end with the

involvement of PVTGs at each stage from inception to implementation of the development program.

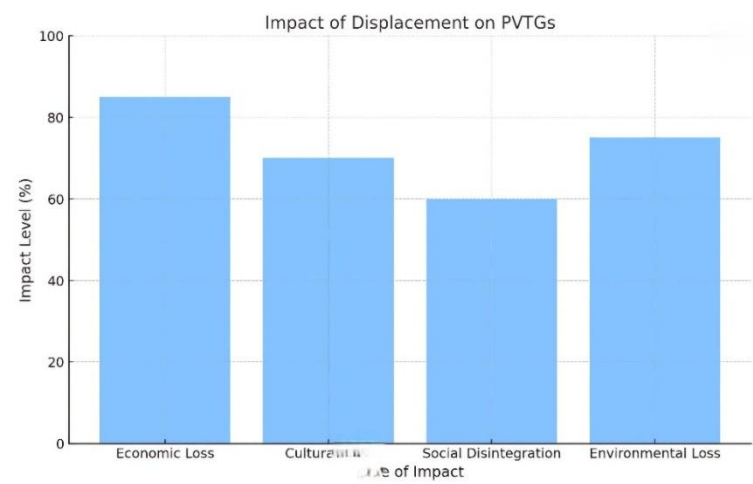
3. Preservation and Innovation of skills: training activities must be oriented to enhance traditional skills while developing contemporary techniques for promoting sustainable livelihoods.

4. Land for Land compensation: displaced people must be paid appropriate monetary and, in lieu of land elsewhere, land having comparable ecological and cultural value with an equivalent locality within easy commuting distance to their displaced original communities.

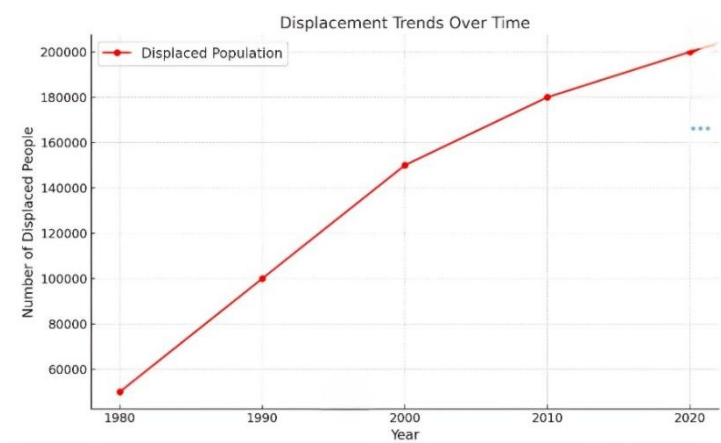
Whereas Narmada Dam epitomizes the dreams of Indian development, the undercurrent of PVTGs bears a stark manifestation of the strong currents of entrenched inequalities that development thrusts forth, uprooting not just physically but socially and culturally the same. It highlights that the condition of adaptive marginalization and cultural redundancy requires more comprehensive developmental approaches with an appreciation for PVTGs as assets in sustainable life and with proper respect to cultural independence. The development approach can integrate a cultural preservation module to avoid being a path from which growth could cost dearly for its poorest, but at least it can be seen taking place by bringing the concerned citizens into decision-making processes and developing them.



The pie chart of the displacements further presents the displacement data, whereby the percentage distribution indicates a reasonable number of the affected PVTGs.



Further, the intensity of impacts with bar charts elucidates where economic losses, cultural degradations, social breakdowns, and environmental damage occurred in terms of intensity among PVTGs.



The line graph shows the increasing number of displaced people over the decades, indicating the growing scale of displacement due to development projects like the Narmada Dam.

Levels of Displacement During the Project

PHASE	ESTIMATED DISPLACED POPULATION	PROPORTION OF PVTGs DISPLACED	AREA SUBMERGED (sq. km)
Before the Project	50000	60	0
During the Project	150000	45	350
After the Project	200000	40	500

VII. RECOMMENDATIONS

PVTGs are integral to India's cultural and social life. Their identity is deeply linked with ancestral lands and environments³⁰, which face unprecedented challenges due to the rapid pace of infrastructure expansion, industrialization, and resource extraction.³¹ Persistent issues such as displacement, loss of cultural identity, and economic marginalization raise questions about the human cost of progress.

The rights of the tribal communities are safeguarded through legal frameworks and policies, though in most cases, these are weak or ineffectively implemented. Their particular vulnerabilities require solutions that are innovative and sensitive to the local context, balancing preserving their cultures with national development goals.³² These recommendations aim to fill gaps in governance, legal frameworks, and economic integration and create a balanced paradigm where the nation's progress does not come at the expense of its most vulnerable communities.³³ The proposed strategies seek to harmonize growth with equity and inclusion.³⁴

(A) Community Development Councils Led by PVTGs

The community development councils led by representatives from PVTGs would ensure that their perspectives are central in forming policies and overseeing initiatives that affect their communities.³⁵ Endowed with support from experts and policymakers, these councils foster culturally aware decision-making and enable PVTGs to lead their development journeys.

(B) Compulsory Cultural Impact Assessments (CIAs)

In implementing Cultural Impact Assessments (CIAs) and Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs), the intangible aspects of PVTG life are preserved. CIAs help assess disruptions to traditions, ceremonies, and social structures to ensure that development endeavours honour and maintain cultural identities.³⁶

(C) Community-driven conservation and Revenue-Distribution Models

PVTGs should be able to manage the natural resources in their areas through community-led conservation efforts. Revenue-sharing frameworks from ecotourism and sustainable resource

³⁰ AGARWAL, H. I. M. A. N. S. H. U. of PVTG5 in India.

³¹ Muniraju, S. B., & Thakur, M. R. (2018). Development deficits of particularly vulnerable tribal groups (PVTGs) and way forward. *Tribal Development Policy in India*.

³² Patel, P. K., & Mitra, R. P. (2023). Prevalence of Chronic Food Insecurity, Policies, and Redressal Patterns among the PVTGs: A Case Study of Sahariya Tribe from India.

³³ *Id.*

³⁴ Hebbar, R. (2021). PARTICULARLY VULNERABLE TRIBAL GROUPS IN SOUTH INDIA. *India International Centre Quarterly*, 48(3/4), 309-320.

³⁵ S.N Tripathy, *Self Help Groups for Financial Inclusion of Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups in Odisha*, 9 *Journal of Poverty* 19-29 (2022).

³⁶ <https://www.uijharkhand.edu.in/assets/pdf/2023/Thesis-Innocent-Soren.pdf> (accessed on 1st January, 2025).

management can bring economic benefits while conserving biodiversity.³⁷ Training programs that develop traditions with modern practices can further strengthen them for stewardship.

(D) Digital Preservation and Inclusion of Indigenous Knowledge

Digitization of the PVTG languages, art, folklore, and medicinal practices can be stored in digital archives to preserve the cultural heritage of the PVTGs. Including this indigenous knowledge in mainstream education and environmental practices enriches the nation's intellectual and ecological assets while fostering mutual respect.³⁸

(E) Legal Reforms for Empowerment and Restorative Justice

The legal frameworks need to be adapted to provide more autonomy to PVTGs over their ancestral lands and resources. Restorative justice mechanisms, including reparations for historical displacements and systemic inequalities, can rebuild trust and redress past wrongs.³⁹

(F) Sustainable Development Zones (SDZs)⁴⁰

SDZs for only PVTGs is an area where experiments can be conducted toward inclusive growth. The zone will adopt the idea of green infrastructure, renewable energy solutions, and agroforestry practices so that both environmentally wise and culturally conscious development is possible.

(G) Innovation and Entrepreneurship Centres for PVTG

Innovation centres created especially for PVTGs can support businesses like sustainable forestry, organic farming, and eco-friendly crafts that are in line with their cultural beliefs. Microfinance, skill-building programs, mentorship, and preferential market access should all be made available through these centres.⁴¹

(H) Mobile Governance Teams

Developing mobile governance teams to deliver essential services like healthcare, education, and legal aid directly to remote PVTG settlements can close accessibility gaps and ensure their inclusion in national initiatives.⁴²

(I) Culture-specific educational and skill training for the PVTGs

³⁷ Bhatia, V., Giri, P. P., & Taywade, M. (2020). Effect of Structured Training Programme on Knowledge of Stakeholders Working for Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (Pvtgs) in Twelve Tribal Districts of an Eastern State of India.

³⁸ Hebbar, R. (2021). PARTICULARLY VULNERABLE TRIBAL GROUPS IN SOUTH INDIA. *India International Centre Quarterly*, 48(3/4), 309-320.

³⁹ *Id.*

⁴⁰ Prof. V Subramanyam, *Social Exclusion and Vulnerability of Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups in Andhra Pradesh: Future Strategic Plan of Action for Its Inclusive Growth and Development*, 1 We the People DSNLU Journal of Social Sciences 158-185 (2023).

⁴¹ Sikha Deka et al., *Impact Assessment of Tribal Sub Plan (TSP) Project on Socio-Economic Status of Tribal of Tinsukia District, Assam, India*, 8 International Journal of Current Microbiology and Applied Sciences 1670-1678 (2019).

⁴² *Id.*

The gap between modern education and indigenous practices can be closed by tailoring educational programs to PVTG customs and knowledge systems. Programs for skill development should emphasize sustainable livelihoods so that PVTGs can thrive financially without sacrificing their cultural heritage.

(J) International Representation and Advocacy

Encourage representatives of PVTG to participate in worldwide sustainable development seminars. This platform might amplify their concerns and encourage cooperation on international plans to defend indigenous rights.

Such practices enacted by the state ensure that PVTGs are equal participants in nation-building, wherein cultural sensitivity, social equity, and ecological efficiency will become aspects of a well-balanced approach to progress that works for everybody.

VIII. CONCLUSION

Development is necessary for economic advancement, but it shouldn't come at the cost of social justice and cultural autonomy for Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs). This paper has highlighted the paradox of development-induced displacement wherein progress for some is made at a very great cost for others. The economic, social, and cultural upheavals and displacements that PVTGs have experienced are all indicative of a larger institutional failure to strike a balance between the rights and dignity of the most vulnerable community and national ambition. The shortcomings in the existing legal frameworks, such as the inefficiency of the Land Acquisition Act and the uneven implementation of the Forest Rights Act require a paradigm shift. Present-day rehabilitation initiatives frequently put financial results ahead of people's welfare, leaving displaced populations permanently marginalized. In addition to leaving these people in poverty, the loss of ancestral lands, places of worship, and traditional customs also diminishes the ecological and cultural resources of the country. This study underlines the need to ensure participatory governance, cultural preservation, and sustainable practices in the development process. A comprehensive approach would encompass land-for-land compensation programs that respect the ecological and cultural value of PVTG lands, culturally appropriate rehabilitation programs, and mechanisms that empower PVTGs to design policies that will impact their lives. These measures also ought to recognize the inherent values of the indigenous knowledge systems by making an interface with broader frameworks of society rather than assimilating or marginalizing them. The real development of the nation lies in including the most vulnerable section to develop further, not just as beneficiaries but as the architects of development. An inclusive model of

development will allow India to prove that advancement does not have to come at the price of justice and equity. Protection of the cultural identity and social fabric of PVTGs would not only fulfill the moral commitment but also constitute a road toward a more vibrant, diversified, and sustainable future. India can create a development path that balances advancement with justice and inclusivity by giving priority to the participation, dignity, and legacy of PVTGs. This would guarantee that no group is left behind in its quest for development.
