

CRBIP
Can ADB Hear the Cries of the Affectees
by
Farhana Wagha, ActionAid Pakistan, April 2002

The project started in 1978 and is to be completed by the end of 2002. Since 1978, a lot of things have been changed regarding compensation, resettlement and even the response to people's grievances. Stage 1 and stage 2 of this project were completed earlier and the stage three is on.

There had been no information and consultation system for respective communities in this project. With the beginning of stage three of this project the communities in this area started to realize the losses they were going to suffer, but it took the communities (marginalized and inexperienced of fighting for their rights) a lot of time to organize themselves and come up with a common charter of demands. The formation of a committee of affectees finally took place by the end of year 2000. Some civil society organizations supported the process of organization and mobilization of affectees and remained actively involved in reviewing the project. It was in February 2001 that the affectees' committee, supported by DAMAAN Development Organization and SUNGI Development Foundation, came up with a formal and detailed charter of demands. Later, many other NGOs/ INGOs joined the campaign as well as more community groups raised their voices.

Key highlights of the CRBI project are:

- The project has three stages in two different Provinces. Stage 1 and 2 (both completed till 1994) are located in North West Frontier Province (NWFP) while the stage 3 (started in 1995 and to be completed in August 2002) is located in Punjab Province. Hence the first two stages will be handed over to NWFP while the third one will be handed over to Punjab. Till the completion of the project these are being run by WAPDA (water and power development authority)
- The main donor of the project is ADB.
- The affectees' campaign mainly focuses on the ongoing stage 3, where we find mainly two groups in communities-Beneficiaries and affectees. Though, most interestingly, the communities called beneficiaries by the project implementing agencies are not ready to consider themselves beneficiaries, as they too are suffering a lot due to the project's unwanted interventions.
- Since 1978 there had been lot many changes in the rates of land, in the beds of rowd kowhees (natural hill torrents) and several other factors, while the project implementers are working on the project, compensations, resettlements etc. according to the older survey (1978) and plans.
- The project implementers very wrongly consider the project area to be barren and feel that any kind of disturbance/ damage to the environment / ecology by the project would be ok, as there is actually nothing to be harmed.

Adverse impacts of the project/ concerns of the affectee communities

- Powerful state laws governing the land acquisition, resettlement and compensation issues are major cause of suffering to people
- No information and consultation process was followed. Affectees of the project remained totally unaware of the project related plans and activities and their own legal rights in this

respect (this project being first one of this nature in the area). In majority of cases people's property was acquired without any official notice and or information about the compensation.

- People are apprehensive about the recording of their losses of the assets like trees, crops and buildings etc.
- Affectees are not satisfied with the measurement of their losses, whether it's made correctly or not. Also they are not sure if they would be compensated for their livelihood disruptions or not.
- Misuse of laws by the government, like in case of handling the complaints by affectees is also very disappointing for people of the area.
- The project has ruined thousands of acres of land, environment of this area, and has caused soil erosion and abundance of dust causing serious health problems. The fast water in drains causing more erosion will adversely affect the habitat of the riverine area.
- The long term potential of water logging and salinity are significant hazards to environment.
- Project design is such that it causes flooding in the non-command area of the canal. In this area many villages were identified for resettlement and to save the costs of resettlement some other were suggested to have embankments around their villages. These embankment are designed too poorly and cause suffocation and health hazards for the people living in those walled villages (shaped like well), where walls are higher than the roofs of houses and too close to the houses of communities having no outlets for rain water.
- Severe mobility problem caused by the project has affected the day-to-day life of people very badly, restricting their free mobility and several trades/ activities. E.g. on a canal water distributary one has to walk for approximately 6 KM to reach a place that used to be fifteen steps away from his/ her home.
- Involuntary resettlement is executed as a component of the overall project. Non-availability of funds for the payment of compensation seems to be a persistent problem often resulting in implementation delays.

ADB and The affectees

- ❑ ADB approved the project's stage 3 for funding in December 1991 for US \$ 185 million, which is about 64% of the total cost of this stage.
- ❑ The Government of Germany (KFW) also loaned US \$ 40 million by April 1999.
- ❑ In July 1999 ADB approved a transfer of US \$ 33.5 million from another ADB funded project NDP (National Drainage Sector Project) to meet the cost overruns of CRBIP. Later, as the cost overrun estimates were reduced, a surplus of \$ 5.1 million was redirected to NDP.
- ❑ Total loan for the CRBIP now is US \$ 207.9 million.
- ❑ During the third quarter of year 2000, an independent survey report of the project was launched. Thousands of civil society organizations (CSOs i.e. NGOs and CBOs) of Pakistan passed the resolution and asked ADB and other implementing agencies to address the issues rose in the report.
- ❑ In February 2001 Mr. Akira Seiki, the director of Agriculture and forestry division visited the project area, where the affectee communities and CSOs shared their concerns with him.
- ❑ In year 2001 DAMAAN development organization presented the concerns and demands of the affectees to several NGOs and ADB staff. SUNGI development foundation also represented the affectees of CRBIP in the Annual General meeting of ADB held in Honolulu.

- ❑ All this process and a separate meeting with Mr. Akira Seiki resulted into the process of ADB internal review of the project. The draft report of this review confirms the concerns of affectees.
- ❑ This process was supposed to be followed by the internal review of social, environmental and technical impacts of the project, but was deferred due to the event of 11 September 2001.
- ❑ Electronic (e-mail/ fax) communication continued between the affectees' representatives, NGOs, Government of Pakistan and ADB.
- ❑ Finally in March 2002, after continuous efforts and pressure building by communities, ADB consultants facilitated a stakeholders' dialogue in D I K (Dera Ismail Khan- a city closest to the areas of affectees). Key stakeholders' groups included:
 - Affectees of the project – both from command and non-command areas
 - Project implementing organizations
 - Civil Society organizations
 - Provincial and other government organizations
 - Financing organizations/ donors
- ❑ After the dialogue and specially on receiving the report of the process from ADB consultants, the affectees and the CSOs have indicated a complete dissatisfaction on the overall process and the outcomes presented by ADB.
- ❑ Communities at this stage (specially after the dialogue) are very much disappointed and aggrieved on poor response by the project implementers and Donors towards their sufferings.