

## **Affectees' Position on land acquisition and compensation**

### **The extent of land damage and the compensation due**

According to WAPDA and Asian Development Bank, Chashma Right Bank Irrigation Project (CRBIP) has acquired 19503 acres of land for the main canal, its water regime and flood carrier channels (FCCs), whereas 22 villages face displacement due to project-induced flooding on west-side. However, the total extent of land-loss and, hence, the compensation demanded by the affectees is far greater, which includes:

- i. the land destroyed due to deep burrow excavations,
- ii. 25,000 acres of land that will get submerged in the project induced flooding on the west-side of the canal,
- iii. almost equal land will be lost in flooding due to distribution canals and FCCs which are abandoned abruptly into the population and productive lands,

Similarly, if we consider the high silt deposit on the west of main canal and subsequent shifting of floods further west in the future, the extent of land loss and displacement becomes even greater.

### **Affectees' position on cash compensation**

Lands can not be substituted with cash for various reasons. First, that land is an abode to diverse ecological resource and provides a comprehensive livelihood in terms of food, fodder, fuel and medicine. Second, people take land as a shared property, which they inherit, from their ancestors and pass on to their next generations. Third, that along with the land people passes on their socio-political rights, their life style, their knowledge, traditions and culture. Thus depriving people of their lands leads to depriving them, and their future generations, of their livelihood as well as socio-political rights.

The cash compensation for acquired lands does not account, at all, for the extent of damage done to people's livelihood. It would push the affectees to end up with less land than before, less work opportunities, lower incomes, inferior housing and less access to the resources of the commons such as pastures, fuel-wood etc.

Even if the compensation rates are increased, it will not help the affectees, most of which are small landholders and tenants. For example, if WAPDA awards Rs.1, 00,000 per acre, the next day market rate would jump to Rs.1, 50,000 plus, and even higher due to the euphoric forecasts of canal irrigation.

The affectees, therefore, demand 'land for land' compensation for all the lands whether acquired or damaged. The following facts support their demands:

- i. these lands were all productive lands, already under cultivation whether by various irrigation systems,
- ii. most of the land-losers are small land holders and tenants who gain subsistence from these lands,
- iii. Most of these tenants were cultivating these lands for the last 6-7 generations and have no other livelihood source. These tenants shall be considered as agriculturist in the compensation process,
- iv. Almost every household in the project area keeps some livestock and, therefore, spares some of their lands for livestock to roam in and graze on. The acquired and damaged lands thus include pastures.
- v. Such a huge land loss would soon result in acute shortage of fuel wood.
- vi. It deprived people of the commons – the lands not exclusively occupied by them but to which they have traditionally had access for their subsistence; these commons provide them with fuel wood, construction wood, wild food, fodder for livestock and input for local medicine.

### **How cash compensation affects women**

Resettlement and compensation measures are **gender biased**.

- Of course, women are never consulted on rehabilitation, compensation or choice of resettlement site.
- When compensation takes place, the cash goes to the family head, which is seldom a woman. Women loose even their ancestral title over land.

### **Therefore, Land for land & Livelihood for Livelihood**

Instead of cash compensation, WAPDA and ADB shall provide lands:

- of quality and legal status at least equal to that of the lands previously occupied by them,
- Suitable to provide for their present needs and future development.
- Women shall also be consulted on resettlement and compensation.

### **Reserved Lands (Rakhokh)**

There is plenty of Reserved State Land, locally called Rakhokh (sing. Rakh) under provincial and federal title, of which significant portion falls in Chashma Canal's command area. These lands can serve no "national purpose" better than compensating affectees livelihood.

### **Reserved Lands (RL) in Chashma Right Bank Canal Area (Stage-III)**

<b>Name of Rakh (RL)</b>	<b>Total Area</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>In / Out of Canal Command Area (CCA)</b>
Rakh Tarimenn	55602 kanals	½ Federal Govt., ½ DC (Dy. Commissioner), Punjab Govt.	All in canal command area.
Rakh Rind	8183 kanals	Federal Government	Almost in canal command

			area
Rakh DC, Kot Qaisrani	51766 kanals	Govt. of Punjab (DC)	10-15 % in canal command area
Rakh Thatha	-----	Federal Government	some under canal command
Rakh Fateh Khan	4242 kanals	Punjab Govt. (DC)	All in canal command area.

**Argument:**

- i. These were common lands exclusively in use and control of local communities. The project communities still use these lands as pastures and a source of fuel wood.
- ii. Communities' rights over these lands were so authentic that even the British government, during its settlements, had to regard and respect these rights. Gazetteer of D I Khan District (1883-84) on page-189 states, "most of the southern *rakh* lands were clearly the property of the village communities, and it was impossible to ignore their claims".
- iii. There are many instances that these rakhs (state lands) were allotted to government/military officials. For example Rakh Dera Fateh Khan was granted away to retired officers in British times. While *Rakh* More Jhangi is granted away to big land holders in recent times.
- iv. Sooner or latter these rakhs (state lands) would be sold, allotted or leased to outsiders and private companies for corporate forming or other business activities. This can spark ethnic violence in the area in the longer run.

