

# THE BURDEN ON WOMEN

Problems after their families had been resettled in four coal-mining projects in Jharkhand, India, interviews with affected women. 2001–2009, qualitative analysis

## Financial

Compensation for the complete loss of land and housing goes to the men in the form of savings accounts and motorbikes. However women in this tribal culture are not used to being dependent on their husbands; it hinders their social relations and lowers their self-esteem.

## Housing

Many families now live in worse conditions than before. Uncertain of their future income, they have not added to, or repaired their houses. Very few have toilets. Lengthy stays with relatives are stressful.

## Common property

It was mainly the women who used community land for grazing, small-scale cropping and to collect water. There has been no compensation for the loss of this land.

## Livestock raising

It is not possible to produce enough meat because there is no land to keep large animals.

## Work

Women can no longer grow crops or go into the forest to gather fruit, flowers, herbs or firewood for family use or to sell. They have no option but to work at home.

## Hygiene

The ponds and springs have been destroyed. Many of the new bathing and washing places are further away and take more time to reach. The loss of woodland makes it harder for almost two-thirds of the women to defecate in private.

## Health

The relocation means that it is further to the hospital. Access to free public health facilities has deteriorated, so half the women now pay to visit private clinics. Between two-thirds and three-quarters of the families have increased their use of traditional healers.

## Trauma

Many women suffered from shock after losing most of their possessions. They suffer from a sense of uncertainty at home and at work. Alcoholism and domestic violence at the hands of men are on the rise. The men used to stay at home and drink small amounts of home brew made by their wives; they now go elsewhere and drink more.

## Paid work

Many of the men work for the mining company, but about one-third do not. Very few of the women have jobs with the company.

## Money management

The men have cash: from the financial compensation and wages from their jobs in the mines. But they do not spend it to support their families. Traditionally, the women are not supposed to work for money.

## Social bonds

The villagers used to maintain close social contacts; they supported each other and had ways to resolve disputes. These traditional mechanisms have broken down.

■ Jharkhand