

NACALA CORRIDOR RAILWAY LINE: A BLESSING OR CURSE?

THE STORY OF DYNA BINALI – NENO DISTRICT

Human beings desire activities that maximize their happiness and discourage all things that will induce harm. The same is true with development. Countries should aim at improving the living standards of people so that they should live happily. The Nacala corridor railway line project, promised residents living along the railway line money as compensation, as they will be disturbed because of the development project. Things have fallen apart for Dyna Binali who does not know what the future holds for her as the money given to her as compensation was too little compared to the land that she has lost to the railway line project.

A single parent, Dyna Binali is 41 years old and lives in Andrea village of GVH Andrea under Traditional Authority Symon in Neno district. Just like others whose land fell in the railway line alignment, Dyna alleges that she has been duped by Vale Logistics Limited. She explains that as villagers they were told that their land was going to be used in the project and in turn given compensation so that they might relocate.

“They started the project, but the amount of money I was given is unbelievable compared to the land they took from me. I have been under paid” Dyna vehemently lamented.

In Malawi, a lot of people live in rural areas and depend on agriculture as the source of income. These people consider land as their capital of which is becoming scarce with the growing population. This has led Dyna to be more desperate as she does not have any source of income apart from farming.

Dyna explains, *“to make matters worse, I am not educated, thus farming is the only source of money that I have, what are these people thinking about me?”* She paused for a moment as if giving a chance to the listener to answer the question.

Among the many, Dyna feels that she has been duped by Vale because at first they came and promised to pay for the land but the payment made is not satisfactory. As if this is not enough, in the course of railway reconstruction, they took another land that according to Dyna they have not paid for. Dyna has four daughters who according to their culture are supposed to own land for the future.

“Is this development or punishment?” she questioned. She added that if government cared for the people in Neno, it should act immediately because people are heading into deep poverty than they were before the project. The story of Dyna indicates that the relocation process in Neno lacked transparency and accountability to the extent that villagers even got threats to force them out of their land without having a discussion on what they wanted.

“Should the country develop at the expense of people’s livelihoods or should people suffer because of development. What is development if not improving the living standards of people in the society?” Dyna asked.

Dyna pleaded that they would have been given enough money to buy another land otherwise she keeps complaining day and night for the land that she has lost forever. For Dyna, she used her land to cultivate cotton, groundnuts, maize, beans and other crops but now with the problem of land, she is likely to experience food insecurity. The question is, what is going to happen to Dyna in the years to come as she has no land to farm and Vale has not given her enough money so that she can buy another land?