

Resettlement and Rehabilitation of the Project Affected Persons; Case Studies

Resettlement and Rehabilitation

People are forced to move out of their land due to both natural and manmade disasters. Natural disasters like earthquakes, cyclones, tsunami etc. render thousands of people homeless and sometime even force them to move and resettle in other areas. Similarly, developmental projects like construction of roads, dams, canals and flyovers displace people from their homes. Leakage of nuclear material in Japan resulted in millions of people being forced to leave the area for their safety. Thus, resettlement refers to the process of settling again in a new area. Rehabilitation means restoration to the former state.

Involuntary Resettlement refers to two distinct but related processes. Displacement is a process by which development projects cause people to lose land or other assets, or access to resources. This may result in physical dislocation, loss of income, or other adverse impacts. Resettlement or rehabilitation is a process by which those adversely affected are assisted in their efforts to improve, or at least to restore, their incomes and living standards.

In most cases, involuntary resettlement is triggered by land acquisition through eminent domain or other powers of the state. In some instances, people may lose the right to use resources without losing possession of them. Such involuntary loss of access to resources may also be considered involuntary resettlement. A Land Acquisition Assessment, examining present ownership, occupancy and use of land identified for project purposes (including public land) is the most reliable method for determining the extent and scope of resettlement.

Reasons for displacement of people

The various causes for displacement of people are as follows:

- **Natural disasters** like earthquake, cyclones, tsunamis, volcanic eruptions, prolonged droughts conditions, floods, hurricanes etc.

- **Man made disasters** like industrial accidents (e.g. Bhopal gas tragedy), nuclear accidents (Chernobyl; Japan), oil spills (Exxon Valdez oil spill), toxic contamination of sites etc.
- In search of **better employment** opportunities.
- **Developmental projects** like Construction of dams, irrigation canals, reservoirs, etc.
- **Infrastructural projects** including transportation activities like flyovers, bridges, roads, highways, canals, etc.
- **Energy related project** like power plants, oil exploration, mining activities, Pipe lines like HBJ pipeline etc.
- **Agricultural projects**
- Projects related with the **conservation of wildlife** like national parks, sanctuaries and biosphere reserves.

Some of the issues regarding Resettlement

As per the World Bank, more than lakh people are displaced worldwide for a variety of reasons every year. Some of the issues faced by the people being resettled are:

- ❖ **Little or no support:** Displacement mainly hits tribal and rural people who usually do not figure in the priority list of any political authorities or parties. This may lead people to take things in their own hands, for example the Maoists that are to be seen in a number of Indian states today.
- ❖ **Meagre compensation:** The compensation for the land lost is often not paid, is delayed or even if paid, is too small both in monetary terms and social changes forced on them by these mega developmental projects.
- ❖ **Loss of livelihood:** Displacement is not a simple incident in the lives of the displaced people. They have to leave their ancestral land and forests on which they depend for their livelihood. Many of them have no skills to take up another activity or pick up any other occupation. Usually, the new land that is offered to them is of poor quality and the refugees are unable to make a living.
- ❖ **Lack of facilities:** When people are resettled in a new area, basic infrastructure and amenities are not provided in that area. Very often, temporary camps become permanent settlements. It is also a major problem of displacement or resettlement that people have to face.

- ❖ **Increase in stress:** Resettlement disrupts the entire life of the people. They are unable to bear the shocks of emptiness and purposelessness created in their life. Payment of compensation to the head of the family often leads to bitter quarrels over sharing of compensation amount within the family, leading to stress and even withering of family life. Moreover, land ownership has a certain prestige attached to it which cannot be compensated for even after providing the new land. With the loss of property and prestige, marriages of young people also become difficult as people from outside villages are not willing to marry their daughters to the refugees.
- ❖ **Increase in health problems:** Lack of nutrition due to the loss of agriculture and forest based livelihood, leads to the general decline in the health of the people. People are used to traditional home remedies. But the herbal remedies and plants get submerged/destroyed due to the developmental projects.
- ❖ **Secondary displacement:** Occupational groups residing outside the submergence area but depending on the area for the livelihood also experience unemployment. Village artisans, petty traders, labourers, etc, lose their living.
- ❖ **Loss of identity:** Tribal life is community based. The tribals are simple people who have a lifestyle of their own. Displacement has a negative impact on their livelihood, culture and spiritual existence in the following ways:
 - a) Break up of families and communities are the important social issues of displacement. The women suffer the most as they are deprived even a little compensation.
 - b) Inter-community marriages, cultural functions, folk songs and dances do not take place among the displaced people. When they are resettled, it is generally individual based resettlement, which ignores communal character.
 - c) Resettlement increases the poverty of the tribal due to the loss of land, livelihood, food insecurity, jobs, skills etc.
 - d) Loss of identity of individuals and the loss of connection between the people and the environment is the greatest loss in the process. The indigenous knowledge that they have regarding the wildlife and the herbal plants are lost.
 - e) The land acquisition laws do not pay attention to the idea of communal ownership of property which increases stress within the family.

The tribal people are not familiar with the market trends, prices of commodities and policies. As such, they are exploited and get alienated in the modern era. For example, people from Nepal who came newly to the city of Gangtok were exploited by shopkeepers. Earlier, when they demanded four meters cloth piece, the shopkeeper would measure the same from all the four sides of the piece. Actually it was only one meter in length but they were charged the price of four meter cloth.

All persons losing assets or use of resources as a direct result of a Bank-supported project are considered 'Project Affected People' entitled to compensation and/or other forms of assistance. This includes people losing land they have held under customary or traditional rights, people utilizing common property resources, squatters residing on public lands, and encroachers deprived of established access to resources, as well as those with formally recognized property rights. It also includes tenants, artisans, and wage earners whose livelihoods or living standards would be adversely affected as a direct result of the project. It does not include persons opportunistically invading a site after disclosure of project plans for the purpose of obtaining assistance.

Planning is required for resettlement

If it is determined that a project will involve involuntary resettlement, the World Bank requires preparation and implementation of a plan to improve, or at least to restore, incomes and living standards of those affected. However, planning requirements vary according to the extent and severity of impacts. If resettlement involves preparation of new residential sites, requires some of those affected to shift to alternative forms of livelihood, or otherwise affects more than 200 people, a full Resettlement Action Plan (RAP) is required. Otherwise, a simplified plan is acceptable for projects with relatively minor impacts.

Resettlement Action Plan, consists of several basic features: a statement of policy principles; a list or matrix indicating eligibility for compensation and other entitlements or forms of assistance; a review of the extent and scope of resettlement, based upon a census/survey of those affected by the project; an implementation plan establishing responsibility for delivery of all forms of assistance, and evaluating the organizational capacity of involved agencies; a resettlement timetable coordinated with the project

timetable, assuring (among other things) that compensation and relocation are completed before initiation of civil works; and discussion of opportunities afforded those affected to participate in design and implementation of resettlement, including grievance procedures.

Because of the complexities inherent in resettlement processes, it is best to begin resettlement planning as early as practicable. In most projects, a draft RAP is submitted to the Bank for legal and technical review during project pre-appraisal, and Bank approval of a RAP is normally a condition of project appraisal. In some projects with multiple subcomponents, or projects for which final designs cannot be known by appraisal, the World Bank and international lending organisations requires submission of an acceptable policy framework establishing entitlements and organizational responsibilities by appraisal. Approval of a supplemental RAP based upon final designs and census/survey is then typically a condition of initiating civil works.

Objectives of rehabilitation

The following objectives of rehabilitation should be kept in mind before the people are given an alternative site for living:

- Tribal people should be allowed to live along the lines of their own patterns and others should avoid imposing anything on them.
- They should be provided means to develop their own traditional art and culture in every way.
- Villagers should be given the option of shifting out with others to enable them to live a community based life.
- Removal of poverty should be one of the objectives of rehabilitation.
- The people displaced should get an appropriate share in the fruits of the development. I should say that it is really a good move by ISC to share its profits among the active contributors.
- The displaced people should be given employment opportunities.
- Resettlement should be in the neighbourhood of their own environment.
- If resettlement is not possible in the neighbour area, priority should be given to the development of the irrigation facilities and supply of basic inputs for

agriculture, drinking water, wells, grazing ground for the cattle, schools for the children, primary healthcare units and other amenities.

- Villagers should be taken into confidence at every stage of implementation of the displacement and they should be educated, through public meetings, discussion about the legalities of the Land Acquisition act and other rehabilitation provisions.
- The elderly people of the village should be involved in the decision making.

Some cases of resettlement and rehabilitation

India has the largest number of development projects in the world and, quite possibly, the largest number of development-induced displaced persons in the world as well. The India Social Institute estimated there were currently 21.3 million persons displaced because of development projects; of this number 16.4 million were displaced by dams. According to the Central Water Commission, 3,300 dams had been built since 1947 and another 1,000 are under construction. The Indian Institute of Public Administration estimates that the average number of persons displaced by a large dam is 44,182.73. Development projects disproportionately affect the poorest segments of Indian society, including those belonging to scheduled castes and tribal groups, and threaten them with even greater impoverishment because of a loss of livelihood, land, assets and social structure. Among the best known and most controversial cases of development-induced displacement in India is that of the Sardar Sarovar dam and irrigation complex on the Narmada River. Although the Indian government had been studying development of the Narmada River basin for several decades since independence, full-scale construction of the Sardar Sarovar Dam did not begin until 1987, overseen by the Narmada Control Authority (NCA) and funded initially by the World Bank.

INDIA Government claims that the Sardar Sarovar Project would irrigate 1.8 million hectares of drought-prone areas in Gujarat and 75,000 hectares in Rajasthan as well as provide domestic water to 2.4 million people. However, the project was met with criticisms from the local communities that the benefits were exaggerated and that the project would displace as many as 320,000 people and affect the livelihoods of thousands more. Following several years of non-violent protests led by the Narmada Bachao

Andolan (Save the Narmada Movement), in 1991, the World Bank established an independent review committee, chaired by the former head of the UN Development Program, Bradford Morse. In June 1992, the Morse Commission released its report, concluding that “the Sardar Sarovar Projects as they stand are flawed, that resettlement and rehabilitation of all those displaced by the Projects is not possible under prevailing circumstances, and that the environmental impacts of the Projects have not been properly considered or adequately addressed.

Displacement due to other dams: India has been constructing dams and other hydel projects. In the last 50 years, 20 million people have been affected by the construction of such projects. Water Resources projects are planned and implemented by the respective State Governments. Further, the concerned State Government and Project Authorities make assessment of number of people/families displaced due to such projects and formulate and implement project-wise Rehabilitation and Resettlement (R&R) Plans. To facilitate this process, Union Government has issued National Rehabilitation and Resettlement Policy 2007 (NRRP-2007) and “Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act, 2013” for smooth implementation of R&R action plan in respect of Project Affected Families. However, Compensation for project affected people are decided by the project authorities as per existing R&R policy of Centre/State whichever is more beneficial. As per information available with the Central Water Commission (CWC), project-wise list of number of displaced persons due to irrigation projects in West Bengal are as follows–

1. Kangsabati Reservoir – 15000 people
2. Subarnarekha Barrage – 18265 people
3. Teesta Barrage – 2946 people and
4. Teesta Low Dam Stage-IV- 41 people.

Besides, the Hirakud dam displaced about 20000 people living in about 250 villages. The Bhakra Nangal dam was constructed around 1950's and displaced a number of people. Some of them have not been rehabilitated even today.

The **Kangsabati Project**, also often referred to as the Kangsabati Irrigation Project and The Kangsabati Reservoir Project, is a project started in the Indian state of West Bengal in 1956 as part of the Indian Second Five-year Plan to provide water to

3,484.77 km² of land in the districts of Paschim Medinipur, Purba Medinipur, Bankura, and Hooghly. It involves irrigation land using water from the Kangsabati River, as well as the Shilaboti and the Bhoirobbanki rivers.

As part of the Project, a 38 m high and 10,098 m long dam was constructed at Khatra. An anicut dam built on the Kangsabati River near Midnapore in 1872 was also added to the operations of the project.

Displacement due to mining: Due to possibility of the accidents or sinking of the land, people have to be displaced in and around mining areas. Mining takes up several hectares of land. As a result, thousands of people have to be evacuated. Jharia coal fields posed a problem to the local residents due to underground fires. Some 3 lakh people were to be shifted and it became a problem to find an alternative site. A huge amount of money to the tune of Rs. 115 crores was spent to put out the fire. The problem still persists. In India, more than 25 million people have been displaced due to development projects and about 12% are due to mining industries. Among affected 70% are tribals in Industrial / Mining Projects. 1.64 lakh hectare forest land is being diverted for mining in our country.

Mining project at the world's second-largest coal block, Deocha-Pachami, Birbhum, in West Bengal, will be taken up only after environmental concerns are sorted and displaced families resettled. The project cautiously, taking care of every aspect from resettlement to the environment. There are about 395 families (40 per cent tribal) in Deocha-Pachami under the block Dewanganj-Harinsingha block in the south-western and western fringe of the district. Taking into account Dewanganj, the resettlement would be for another 389 families (total of 784 families). The coal block would require investments to the tune of Rs 12,000-15,000 crore over a period of time, and has the potential to generate nearly one lakh employment opportunities. The state will be required to acquire about 9,000 acres out of the project area of 11,222.50 acres. Vested land is estimated to be around 2,000 acres, the officials said. Five per cent of the project area is forest land needing forest clearance. This is a big project that can supply coal for the next 100 years and the block has an estimated coal reserve of 2.1 billion tones.