

14. Sustainable and Possible Solutions to Resettlement and Rehabilitation Issues

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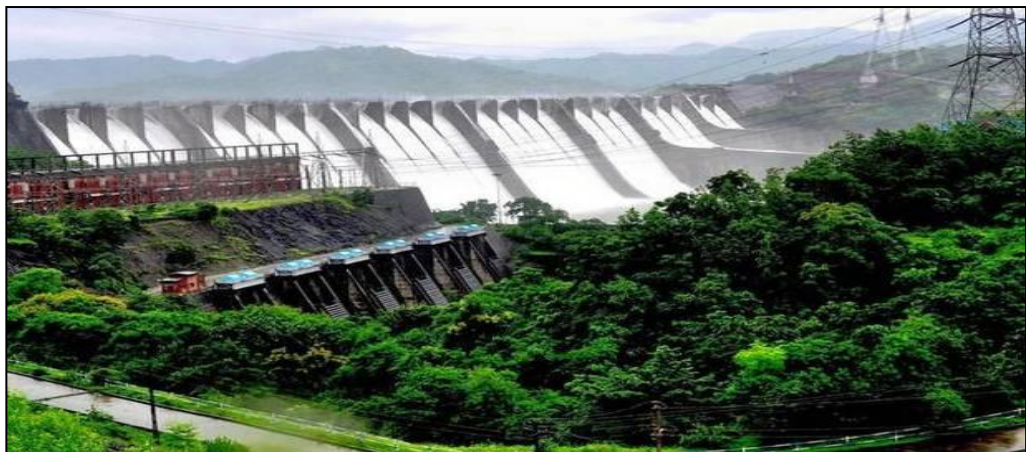


Figure 14.1: Developmental Projects Like Dam Construction

“The land is the only thing in the world, worth working for, worth fighting for, worth dying for, because it's the only thing that lasts”

-Gerald O'Hara

Abstract:

People are displaced in India mostly as a result of circumstances such as development projects, the establishment of conservation zones, and natural catastrophes. Developmental projects are being designed to help society. Major projects like as dams, mines, motorways, or the announcement of a National Park affect the lives of the people who reside there and may necessitate their relocation to another location. None of us wants to leave the house where we grew up. People being uprooted is a significant issue. It restricts their ability to rely on their traditional natural resource base and produces significant psychological stress. Tribal people, in particular, who live in close proximity to their natural resources, are unable to adapt to a new way of life in a new location. As a result, no large project that has the potential to relocate people can be undertaken without the approval of the local population. This essay critically examined rehabilitation and resettlement challenges in India, as well as potential remedies.

Keywords:

Rehabilitation, resettlement, displacement, development, social aspect, disaster.

14.1 Introduction:

Following its independence in 1947, India embarked on a growth path that led in the construction of numerous developmental projects¹⁻⁵. Development-induced displacement is unavoidable. However, the consequences of development project building are multifaceted and severe, forcing bigger populations to leave their homes.

The resettling of displaced persons has become a national concern. The growing trauma of displaced individuals may be seen in practically every corner of the world. According to a 2013 report by the Government of India, 60 million people were displaced by developmental projects between 1947 and 2016 (Fig. 1), with the Scheduled Tribes of the country bearing the brunt of the burden.

Previously, the Land Acquisition Act, 1984, a colonial Act, governed land acquisition in India. Land acquisition in India is the process by which the government acquires private land for developmental purposes such as industrialization, infrastructural facilities, or urbanization, and compensates affected landowners as well as deals with their rehabilitation and resettlement⁶⁻⁹. The land is not just an essential economic resource but also a source of subsistence for many people; it is also central to communal identity, history, and culture.

When a land is acquired, the individual loses not just the land, but also his or her livelihood. Many development projects that necessitate displacement have economic, social, and environmental consequences for displaced individuals.¹⁰⁻¹²

Displacement due to Dam construction: India has the most development projects in the world. According to the India Social Institute, there are currently 25 million people displaced as a result of development initiatives. The Central Water Commission reports that 3000 dams have been built since 1947, with another 1,000 under development. According to the Indian Institute of Public Administration, a considerable number of individuals have been relocated thus far.

Development projects disproportionately affect the weakest sectors of Indian society, especially those from scheduled castes and tribal communities, and threaten them with further impoverishment as a result of loss of livelihood, land, and social structure. The Sardar Sarovar dam and irrigation project on the Narmada River is one of India's best-known and most contentious examples of development-induced displacement. This project would displace up to 5 lakh people and have a negative impact on the livelihoods of thousands of indigenous people. Due to large-scale displacement of local people from their ancestral land and loss of their customary profession, the Big River Valley projects have one of the most devastating socioeconomic repercussions. India is one of the world's leaders in large dam development, with more than 20 million people believed to have been directly or indirectly affected by these dams over the last 50 years.

Displacement due to Mining: Mining is another development activity that leads local people to be displaced. Thousands of hectares of land are covered in mining operations, and indigenous people are displaced. People must be relocated in and around mining zones due to the danger of accidents or ground sinking. Mining consumes many hectares of land. As a result, tens of thousands of people must be evacuated. Because of subsurface fires, the Jharna coal fields caused a nuisance for local communities. It proved difficult to identify an alternative place for the relocation of 3 lakh people. A large sum of money was spent to put out the fire. The issue is still present. More than 30 million people in India have been displaced as a result of development projects, with mining sectors accounting for approximately 12% of the total. 60% of those impacted by mining projects are aboriginal. In our country, 1.8 lakh hectares of forest land are being diverted for mining.

14.2 Reasons for Displacement of People:

The following are the numerous causes of human displacement:

- **Natural calamities** such as earthquakes, cyclones, tsunamis, volcanic eruptions, extended droughts, floods, hurricanes, and so on.
- **Man-made disasters** such as industrial accidents (e.g., the Bhopal gas tragedy in India), nuclear mishaps (e.g., the Chernobyl nuclear disaster in Russia), oil spills (e.g., the Exxon Valdez oil spill), toxic pollution of sites, and so on.
- Seeking improved employment opportunities.
- Developmental projects such as dam construction, irrigation reservoir construction, and so on.
- **Infrastructural projects** including transportation activities like flyovers, bridges, roads, highways, canals, etc.
- **Energy related project** like power plants, oil exploration, mining activities etc.

- **Agricultural projects associated to animal conservation, such as national parks, sanctuaries, and biosphere reserves.**

14.3 Some Concerns Concerning Resettlement:

Every year, more than a lakh people are relocated worldwide for a variety of causes, according to the World Bank. Some of the challenges that people who are being resettled confront include:

- **No support:** Displacement mainly hits tribal and rural people who usually do not aware any political authorities.
- **Less compensation:** The compensation for the land lost is often not paid, is delayed or even if paid, is too less.
- **Loss of livelihood:** Displacement is not a simple occurrence in the life of those who have been displaced. They must abandon their ancestral lands and woodlands, on which they rely for a living. Many of them lack the necessary abilities to pursue another pastime or employment. Typically, the new land offered to them is of poor quality and unsuitable for farming.
- **Lack of facilities:** Basic infrastructure and utilities are not supplied when people are resettled in a new region. Temporary camps are frequently transformed into permanent settlements. People must also deal with the issue of relocation or resettlement.
- **Increase in stress:** Resettlement upsets people's entire lives. They are unable to handle the shocks of emptiness and meaninglessness that have been produced in their lives. Payment of compensation to the family frequently results in bitter family feuds, which causes stress. Marriages of young people have become more difficult as a result of the loss of property and prestige, as people from outlying communities are unwilling to marry their daughters on time.
- **Increase in health problems:** People's health suffers as a result of a lack of nourishment caused by the loss of agricultural and forest-based livelihoods. People are accustomed to using traditional home treatments. However, due to development initiatives, herbal cures and plants are destroyed.
- **Loss of identity:** Tribal life is center on community. The tribal people are simple people with their own way of existence. Displacement affects their livelihood, culture, and spiritual being. The greatest loss in the process is the loss of individual identity and the loss of connection between people and the environment. The aboriginal people are unfamiliar with market trends, commodity pricing, and government regulations. As a result, shopkeepers take advantage of them. When they asked for a four-meter fabric piece, the merchant would measure it from all four sides. They were charged the price of a four-meter cloth despite the fact that it was just one meter long.

14.4 Relocation and Rehabilitation:

People are compelled to leave their homes as a result of both natural and man-made disasters. Natural calamities such as earthquakes, cyclones, and tsunamis evict thousands of people and sometimes force them to relocate and resettle in new locations. Similarly, development initiatives such as the construction of roads, dams, canals, and flyovers force people to leave their houses. Because of radioactive material leakage in Japan, millions of

people were compelled to flee for their safety. Thus, resettlement refers to the process of relocating to a new location. The term "rehabilitation" refers to the process of returning to one's previous status. Displacement is a process in which people lose land, other assets, or access to resources as a result of development efforts. This could result in bodily dislocation, loss of income, or other negative consequences. Resettlement or rehabilitation is the process of assisting persons who have been adversely affected in their efforts to improve, or at least recover, their incomes and living standards.

The National Rehabilitation and Resettlement Policy has the following goals:

- To minimize displacement and, to the greatest extent practicable, to encourage non-displacing or least-displacing alternatives;
- To ensure a sufficient rehabilitation package and the prompt implementation of the rehabilitation process with the active participation of affected families;
- To guarantee that special care is taken to protect the rights of society's weaker parts, particularly members of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, and to impose obligations on the state to treat them with concern and sensitivity;
- To improve the level of living for affected households by making deliberate efforts to offer sustainable income;
- Integrating rehabilitative considerations into development planning and execution
- To create a peaceful relationship between the required body and affected families through mutual cooperation if relocation is due to land acquisition.

A. Planning Is Required for Resettlement: The Resettlement Action Plan has three main components: a policy statement; a list or matrix indicating eligibility for compensation and other rights or kinds of support; an evaluation of the amount and scope of resettlement based on a survey of persons affected by the project a strategy for execution outlining responsibilities for all forms of support and assessing the organizational capabilities of concerned agencies; a resettlement schedule that is coordinated with the project.

14.5 Conclusion:

Authorities frequently confuse resettlement and rehabilitation, failing to recognize the distinction between the two. Resettlement is the physical relocation process, whereas Rehabilitation is the lengthy process of restoring people's physical and economic livelihoods, assets, cultural and social connections, and psychological acceptance of the changing circumstances. A socio-cultural survey must be rigorously completed in all ongoing development projects to ensure proper relocation. Better infrastructural facilities, such as roads, power, drinking water, and deep bore wells, ponds, schools, medical center and so on, must be supplied after full discussion and active participation of displaced families. This contributes to the preservation of friendly relations between displaced persons and the government.

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