

Development-Induced Displacement and Rehabilitation: A Review of Concepts, Policies, and Outcomes

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Abstract: Any effort to build a dam has goals that it hopes to accomplish once it is finished. Numerous investigations have revealed that the initiatives launched failed to meet their claimed goals in terms of flood mitigation, electricity production, and job creation. According to literature, dam projects invariably result in the eviction of people, and policymakers pay no attention to investigating alternative project sites that might result in eviction on a smaller scale. Additionally, rehabilitation sites are not researched beforehand, so it is frequently not even a consideration to select a rehabilitation site that could restore the standards of living that the evicted people enjoyed in their native lands.

I. Introduction

To start with, a research problem is the first step in conducting research. To understand the research question, it is very important to search and understand the information already available on the topic and the extent to which the topic has been investigated. As a corollary to perusal of available literature comes putting each work in a sensible order in terms of what it is offering to the available body of knowledge on the subject. It makes it possible to explain how every subsequent work has built on previous work and expanded the horizons of knowledge in a particular field. A major advantage of doing the review is that it highlights the research gaps which exist in a particular field of study. One major concern which always plagues research efforts is the duplication of research endeavors. Literature review helps in avoiding this problem. Among other advantages, reviewing existing literature helps in highlighting the available methods to do research in a particular field of study. One another aspect is that literature review helps a researcher in explaining the prior research done in a different light and presents points which lack in its applicability in different settings. It also equips a researcher with insights which can be presented as a critique to existing theoretical models which are used to explain the research problem in question.

1.1 hydroelectricity Projects: Impacts on Livelihoods

Hydroelectricity generation has been touted as low carbon emitting source of energy, which is why hydroelectricity projects have been initiated worldwide by many national governments. Hydroelectric projects are often seen as vital contributors to national development, especially in the context of meeting rising energy demands and promoting renewable energy sources. Large-scale infrastructure projects such as hydroelectric dams are often celebrated as symbols of national progress. They promise not only power generation and water storage but also employment opportunities, irrigation potential, and regional development. However, many research papers have shown how these large projects negatively impact the livelihood status of the project affected families (Cernea, 1997; Scudder, 2005; Cernea and Maldonado, 2018).

The displacement resulting from large scale infrastructure and development projects often entails profound socio-economic consequences, necessitating carefully formulated and effectively implemented rehabilitation policies. In the context of hydroelectric development, the impact of displacement is multidimensional. It affects housing conditions, access to cultivable land, income-generating opportunities, education, and overall quality of life. The dislocation often leads to a downward shift in the socio-economic status of affected households, particularly when compensation mechanisms are inadequate or poorly implemented (Downing, 2002; Terminski, 2013). Moreover, relocation sites may lack basic infrastructure and livelihood opportunities, making recovery and adaptation more difficult.

Development-induced displacement is widely recognized as a process that extends beyond physical relocation, often leading to disruptions in income sources, social networks, access to resources, and economic security. Affected individuals become affected by the land acquisition process in three ways: initially through displacement, then through relocation, and finally through rehabilitation. The effectiveness of this process largely determines whether displaced households are able to restore their livelihoods and achieve socio-economic stability.

Existing literature highlights that displacement frequently results in impoverishment risks such as loss of land, employment, housing, and access to common property resources. The findings by Cernea (1996) emphasizes that unless adequately addressed through effective rehabilitation measures, displaced households face heightened vulnerability and socio-economic marginalization. Studies on dam-induced displacement in India have similarly documented declines in income, occupational instability, and increased dependence on informal employment, particularly among agriculturally dependent and resource-poor households (Kesa, 2024).

In addition to this, livelihood-based approaches further deepen the understanding of displacement impacts. Ian Scoones (2009) argues that societies depend on a mix of natural, human, social and physical resources to sustain themselves, and any development intervention alters this resource base. For example, hydroelectric dams disrupt ecological systems such as fisheries by obstructing migration routes, altering sediment transport and affecting water quality (Arantus et al., 2019). Such ecological disruptions directly translate into livelihood losses for communities dependent on natural resources. The socio-economic consequences of displacement are therefore not limited to economic losses alone but extend to environmental, social and institutional dimensions. In many cases, compensation policies are intended to offset losses but fail to address the broader challenges associated with livelihood restoration, social integration and access to basic amenities.

1.2 Performance of Various Displacement Causing Developmental Projects

Nayak (2010) evaluated the performance of Hirakud dam against the objectives which were laid out in the feasibility report of the project. He found that the project could not sufficiently achieve even a single objective mentioned in its feasibility report. Further, he found that there were some native resettlement sites which were not explored and the project resulted in negative outcomes for oustees. In another study about Hirakud dam Dansana (2021) analyzed the promises which were made in state rehabilitation policy 1946 to people displaced by Hirakud dam and actual delivery of the promises. Dansana finds that proprietary rights of land were not granted to resettlers, monetary compensation paid was too low from market prices and people were traumatized from being relegated to landless people from landowners. This resulted in their lack of confidence in undertaking entrepreneurial activities. Moreover, there were instances of conflicts between resettlers and native people of the land (Jojo, 2020).

On flood moderation and upstream and downstream effects Hazarika (2020) and Asthana (2012) presented findings of empirical studies conducted in two villages of Assam and Arunachal Pradesh where people were displaced by lower Subhansiri hydroelectric project. The effect of concerned project has been analyzed in terms of flood moderation and upstream and downstream effects and it was found that the project had not done very well in these respects. The study found that the benefits that accrued out of dam construction were enjoyed unevenly by different communities. Thakkar (2018) highlighted effectiveness of dams in the area of flood control in context of Kerala floods in 2018. He showed that if basic norms in management of large dams are not followed properly, dams can exacerbate the floods downstream. By differentiating floods in case of rivers on which there are no dams and rivers on which there are dams, the author highlights how dam building on a river changes the nature of floods and its consequences in downstream river.

On rehabilitation, compensatory afforestation and rehabilitation policy Jones (1970) found in case of Bargi dam located in Madhya Pradesh that the project was not able to accomplish its desired outcomes it was supposed to accomplish in its feasibility report. The displacees were removed from their lands brutally by the police and once relocated the yester rich farmers were forced to work as agricultural laborers or they had to turn to other unskilled professions like riksha pullers in nearby towns. EPW engage (2019) reports that the resettlement plans are seldom implemented in full. Policy absence or policy ineffectiveness plays a role here. It means that most of the times there exists no policy governing the process of rehabilitation and if the policy exists the supervisory mechanisms for the effective implementation of rehabilitation policy are absent. It has been found that as a rule laws are in place for their protection or if present the interpretation is done in such a way that displacement is in the interest of larger national good (Rao, 2018). Ideally a good resettlement policy is one which restores lost livelihood, prevent impoverishment and if not increase than stabilize the living standards of resettled population (World Bank, 1996).

The evidence from these studies suggests a persistent gap between projected benefits and actual outcomes of development projects. This gap is often attributed to inadequate planning, lack of participation of affected communities, and weak monitoring mechanisms.

1.3. Livelihood Assessment of the People Displaced by the Dam Project

1.3.A. Impact on Vulnerable Section of Society

Livelihood assessment is central to understanding the long-term impacts of displacement, as it reflects the ability of affected populations to adapt and sustain themselves in new environments. Thukral (1996) finds that policies of rehabilitation and resettlement are defined and worked in such ways that they leave out women for compensation purposes due to the fact that women generally do not hold titles to land in families. Some of the

household chores like collecting firewood, collecting water for household drinking needs falls invariably on women. However, loss of forests and water resources adds strain to women's role in households. Other important aspect is sanitation. In many cases, the houses provided do not have toilets so women face the embarrassing situation to go out for sanitation purposes. Usually in native places, women used to go out to forests for sanitation purposes.

On employment front, most of the times women had to make way for men in jobs where employment opportunities were already less. Household crafts that women used to make earlier now became unfeasible due to absence of raw material for the products. Displacement also affects the nutritional status of women negatively due to decrease in household incomes in most of the cases. It is also found that the cases of alcoholism, domestic violence also increase after resettlement.

Downing (2002) suggests that development induced displacement and resettlement poses a great threat to even those societies and communities who were sustaining themselves through generations. Displacement causes the predisplacement poor families to become even poorer after displacement. He challenges some orthodox beliefs in the field of study. For example, he finds that it becomes increasingly difficult for companies and project owners to shift to a labor which is comparatively less skilled as the time goes on. So, as a result, in majority of the cases people get unemployed who are resettled instead of getting employed. Among the people who suffer from displacement, children and women are the most vulnerable. Women suffer consequences like lack of economic opportunities at resettlement sites and they get less time to focus on their personal growth etc. Children among many other things get curtailed years of school education and enter the labor force prematurely. Indigenous people like SCs and STs are other people who get marginalized. He finds that the major problem behind people not getting rehabilitated after resettlement is because various risks which the societies are likely to face do not get properly assessed before the project begins.

Asthana (2012) presents the case of Tehri dam. The women in Old Tehri which was submerged by building of Tehri dam enjoyed largely non monetized economy whereby they used to cultivate as much as 12 types of crops, used to get herbs, house building materials and minor forest produce from forests, and used to sell village crafts on nearby highway to supplement household income. In times of crises, other families used to help the family in distress to tide over the difficulties. Water in resettled new Tehri Township comes sporadically in taps and there is water scarcity. Land given as compensation has no facility of irrigation. So at resettlement site, crop diversity enjoyed earlier is not possible and consequently nutrition levels have gone down. Forest produce is not available so supplementary income is gone also. Previous non monetized economy has given way to monetized economy and ladies are now exposed to market risks. Men in new rehabilitation sites go to plains to find employment so managing households has become difficult for women (Hakim, 2003).

EPW Engage, (2019) emphasizes that modern development entails people's displacement as a major consequence without exploring the alternatives. Mostly the people who are displaced are tribals and downtrodden sections of the society who lack capacity to oppose such displacement and have developed land-based production and consumption systems for generations. The reason is their over dependence on common pool resources and forests etc. Tribals have a way of life and rural economy based on natural resources. Biswaranjan (2005) reports in his study five villages in Thalchar district of Orissa that displacement of tribals led to a complete change in occupational structure of tribals in terms of skills required for new occupations, resulting in impoverishment for most of them. These vulnerabilities are often compounded by limited participation of marginalized groups in decision-making processes, further weakening their ability to influence rehabilitation outcomes.

1.3.B. Impact on Socio Economic Status of People

Garkapati (2002) presents survey data on various parameters regarding rehabilitated and native people affected by Sardar Sarovar project on river Narmada. She highlights various changes that were affected in rehabilitated populations' socio-economic life like changes in community customs and amenities available to them at their native's lands. She finds that for the majority of instances things have taken turn towards negative side in context of standard of living of people.

Bhagwat (2016) collected data on various socio-economic parameters from a 10 per cent sample population which was displaced and rehabilitated. The study finds that out of 21 villages surveyed, only few villages showed high level of development on a composite development index which was based on different developmental parameters. The villages which had access to good irrigation facilities, continued to practice agriculture. However the villages, where these facilities were unavailable, people migrated to nearby industrial hubs and were able to improve their standard of living. This establishes how important facilities like irrigation and nonfarm employment are to sustain the continuous rehabilitation of resettlers.

Asthana (2012) and Hazarika (2020) presents an account of few rights enjoyed by the people of two villages of Assam and Arunachal who are displaced by lower Subhansiri hydroelectric project. The rights include right to property, right to plan and manage common property resources, right to development policy making decisions, right to fair and just compensation, right to equal wages for equal work, right to employment etc. among

other rights. Failure to reinstate these rights after resettlement gave rise to protests and movements against the projects. Moreover, the study finds that the benefits that accrue out of dam construction are enjoyed unevenly by different communities. Cultural capital generated by generations is lost in years. Development induced resettlement more often than not exacerbates historical inequities and create new inequities too. Access to markets is another concern where by largely non monetized production and consumption based economic systems move to monetized systems and increases the vulnerabilities of resettled people based on market system.

Iyer (1989) mentions that the availability of irrigation to erstwhile unirrigated lands also tends to increase the prices of land so it becomes difficult for oustees to purchase land in command area which increases the inequality between farmers. Occupation structure of people also changes, for example, in Gujrat and Rajasthan nomadic people turned to more settled lifestyle after their lands were provided with the facility of irrigation and became agriculturists.

Mahapatra and Mahapatra (2003) found in case of Ramail river project in Orissa that most of the land at the resettlement site was unsuitable for agriculture and irrigation facilities were almost nonexistent. The occupation changed for some laborers from coal miners to industrial laborers. New jobs for shopkeepers have been created. Common property resources like rivers, forest and grazing sites have been lost. Some new common assets have been created like community halls. The education facilities at new resettlement site include new middle English school. The new villages are not recognized as revenue villages so the villagers are not able to take advantage of various government schemes. Caste system in new localities is maintained, which causes increase in vulnerabilities of poor sections. Modern clinics have taken place of earlier Kaviraj of villages. The educational opportunities at the new sites were valued more and this helped to reduce the marginalization of the community.

Reddy (2003) surveys old and new approaches for rehabilitation and resettlement of slum dwellers, squatters, and other displacees due to development of urban infrastructure. The author highlights few basic features that the new policies for rehabilitation of displacees have taken care off. Some notable features are, advance planning, social assessment, baseline socioeconomic surveys, preparation of resettlement and rehabilitation action plans, policy and legal framework, changes in methods of compensation, evaluation (shifted from market value to replacement value), participation and consultation, integration of resettlement and rehabilitation costs into overall project costs. It is found in new resettlement and rehabilitation policies that all these factors are being taken care off and the results are reflecting themselves in the improved ways of life of displacees.

Nayek (2000) presents the case of Kisan tribe of Orissa state of India. He finds that these people were removed from their native lands as a result of displacement caused by a hydroelectric project built on Sankh River. They were not given prior notice about displacement and were removed with force. Food supply shortage, water scarcity, lack of transport facility from old place to new place, almost nonexistent houses were some of the primary problems faced by the displacees. Widespread corruption in resettlement was prevalent. Many developmental activities were shown on paper only. Many displacees had to give bribes to officials to get whatsoever little compensation offered. The displacees had to pay land tax on submerged land even years after acquisition in order to get ownership rights over compensated lands. It was found that people who got land in compensation were better off comparatively and people who were paid in cash spent it mostly on unproductive things. In many cases, many people sold the employment certificates to other people. The people who continued to have these certificates found it difficult to get skilled employment in the project. Excess supply of labor in resettlement land pushed the wages down. Low wages caused high proportion of out of pocket expenses in case of health emergencies. The researcher suggests that the instrument to shield the displacees from adverse impact of capitalist system is to institute some social security nets for them which can respond in case of economic stress. The complaints in regard to new land like sand casting, waterlogging were filed but to no avail. Many kisans were double displaced due to some other developmental activity. The decline in socio-economic status is frequently uneven, with some households adapting better than others depending on access to resources, skills and institutional support.

1.3.C. Impact on Entrepreneurial Activity, Migration and Adaptation Strategies to Cope with Negative Impacts of Displacement

Abutte (2003) presents the case of Belles Valley region in Ethiopia. The Belles Valley region was selected to host the famine affected people from Northern Ethiopia and South Ethiopia. The objective of this resettlement was to achieve surplus food grains production through applying more labor and capital in agriculture of this valley. The first painful experience that occurred after resettlement was the conflict with host communities for resources that resulted in loss of life on both the sides that is hosts and resettlers. Adaptation to new dietary habits and new environment made the resettlers vulnerable to various diseases. Entrepreneurial activities and trade, market exchanges of handicrafts emerged as the adaptive strategies by the resettlers. Stabilization after resettlement and revival of economic activities has caused social rearticulation which means actors like village elders are taking their usual roles of settling the disputes between people. Religious practices which were halted immediately after resettlement have now started to emerge again. Various types of village associations are also emerging. Labor

relations that existed in village communities prior to displacement have also started to take its place in new village resettlements. On the whole, the key elements like restarting of household economy individual initiatives innovations etc. have led to social rearticulation which was disabled after displacement.

Walter Fernandes (2003) argues that psychological marginalization is the least studied phenomenon among many facets of marginalization which occur as a result of displacement among many. When the poor people who are just sustaining themselves hands to mouth are displaced and put into more formal, social systems, after rehabilitation lose their self-confidence which results in lack of risk taking ability. To overcome marginalization, the author lists some benefits which the displacees should definitely have as a matter of right. For example, the right of assistance in rehabilitation, compensation for intangibles (compensation should be based on replacement value and not on market value) like psychological marginalization, jobs in the displacing projects, displaced and project affected persons as shareholders and share in product.

Sheilah Meikle and Zhu Youxuan (2003) argues that as an economy transition from a centralized economy to an economy based on market forces, the prior sole responsibility to rehabilitate the displaced population somehow gets divided for good. In new economic system, displacees can take initiatives on their own about various activities and enterprises. This opens up new opportunities for them. However, some assistance and guidance remain critical even in new economic system from the side of government. If displacees are left on their own in a market-based system with one time compensation, it impoverishes the displacees most of the times. The resettlement officials who carry out the compensation programs need to recalibrate their skills to match the emerging needs of the displacees. A study on Ghana's Bui project highlights that long-term livelihood restoration requires inclusion of host communities and vulnerable groups in rehabilitation policies (Owusu et al., 2023).

In India's federal governance system, land acquisition and rehabilitation are governed by both central and state policies. While the national framework provides guidelines, the implementation largely depends on state-level institutions. This creates a complex governance structure where coordination, administrative efficiency and institutional capacity play a crucial role in determining rehabilitation outcomes. Weak coordination, administrative delays and lack of accountability often result in ineffective rehabilitation processes (Saxena, 2008)

1.3.D. Mode of Compensation and Resulting Repercussions and Rehabilitation

Akça et al. (2013) state that the land submerged as a result of building of Atatürk dam was compensated in monetary terms only. It was found that compensation paid was less than market price. On the other hand, due to bidding for land at the resettlement area, the prices of land went up. The new farm size of farmers both the large and small was small comparatively. The big farmers continued to pursue agriculture, but the small farmers changed their occupations. The expectations of farmers changed also. Now the small farmers did not intend to put their next generation into farming. However, large farmers did not have any reluctance of this short. On the whole, the resettlement resulted in increased disparity between large and small farmers. However, other facilities like education, health improved because of GDP growth and government interventions. There were also demand for money management advisories from the government by the displacees.

Kibreab (2003) asserts that reconstruction and revival of common property resources is one of the critical features of rehabilitation of oustees. This is important from the point of view of equality, social justice, environment, cohesion, sustainability of social cohesion, community organization, and so on. More often than not, most affected people who suffer from loss of common property resources are tribals and scheduled castes who are unable to make their voices heard at the highest echelons of power. This results in increase in inequality among displaced society. People who are dependent on common property resources loose on both accounts. One they do not possess land ownership titles so they don't get compensation and second in case of land compensation they do not get land in compensation. Displacement and resettlement dismantle the institutions which used to regulate it in native places. Saving these institutions is necessary to sustain and maintain the common property resources even if they are reestablished at the resettlement sites. The author lists certain measures which are necessary if the common property resources are to be preserved at the rehabilitation sites. These are presented in following figure:

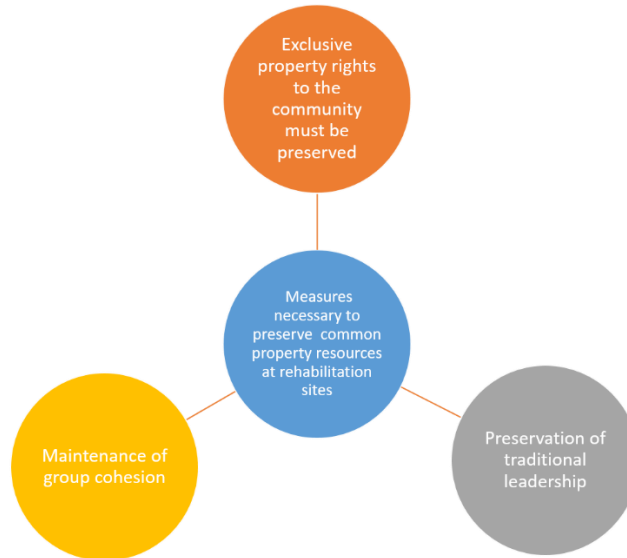


Figure 2.1 Measures necessary to preserve common property resources

1. Exclusive property rights to the community must be preserved
2. Preservation of traditional leadership
3. Maintenance of group cohesion

Mejia (2000) in the case study of Oleros people of Argentina and Paraguay has listed the various risks suffered by these people as a result of building of Yacyreta River. Among the various lessons learnt, the author asserts that the people who depend on common property resources are most difficult to rehabilitate with the same standard of living. If the authorities want to rehabilitate the people with the same economic activity elsewhere it requires longer planning, larger financial resources and longer monitoring to see the viability on a sustainable basis. Continuous delays in project completion and scheduled acquisition of land disturb the expectations and plans of resettlement of displacees and this opens up a plethora of alternative scenarios before them which more often than not make them worse off than before.

II. Conclusion

Any effort to build a dam has goals that it hopes to accomplish once it is finished. Numerous investigations have revealed that the initiatives launched failed to meet their claimed goals in terms of flood mitigation, electricity production, and job creation. According to literature, dam projects invariably result in the eviction of people, and policymakers pay no attention to investigating alternative project sites that might result in eviction on a smaller scale. Additionally, rehabilitation sites are not researched beforehand, so it is frequently not even a consideration to select a rehabilitation site that could restore the standards of living that the evicted people enjoyed in their native lands. When land is acquired, the government's first option is monetary compensation, which is frequently less than the land's market value. Compensation is given based on market value rather than replacement value. Furthermore, the displaced people spend their compensation on extravagant or unnecessary expenses because they lack any financial management advice. On the other hand, a number of other studies contend that the trauma brought on by forcible relocation results in a lack of self-assurance among displaced people and a consequent lack of initiative in entrepreneurship. Conflicts between the host communities and the recently arrived displaced people represent the other component.

Studies have shown that not everyone gains equally from dam construction projects, despite having given their all for the cause. It does so because hiring unskilled displaced workers for positions that call for professional experience and abilities becomes highly challenging for businesses. The occupational structure of the displaced persons changes as a result, and they start working in jobs that pay less and demand fewer abilities. Rich farmers who were previously displaced become poorer as a result, and this widens the gap between those who lose out and those who benefit from dam developments.

Studies on the rehabilitation front indicate that, most of the time, the rehabilitation process is pursued haphazardly and that no well-planned strategies are devised prior to carrying out displacement. The rehabilitation staff is found to be underqualified, and the process itself is plagued by pervasive corruption, which only serves to worsen the situation of those who have been displaced.

The fact that rehabilitation policies and plans frequently exclude women, children, and senior citizens from the planning process is another facet of rehabilitation policies and plans. This causes a rise in domestic

violence against women, an increase in the problem of alcoholism, and fewer school years for kids. Physically and psychologically, morbidities affect women more frequently.

Numerous studies have indicated that because of altered surroundings, the dietary and crop diversity that people enjoyed before being displaced is not attainable in rehabilitation locations. Due to their excessive reliance on resources from common property and the fact that they lack representation at the highest levels of authority, SCs and STs are particularly more susceptible at newer sites.

Studies also suggest that communities that were based on non-monetary economic systems in pre-displacement sites now face an economic system that is primarily based on monetary systems, increasing the likelihood that they will be exploited and decrease their ability to deal with challenging circumstances. Further displaced individuals who are rehabilitated under a different government frequently find themselves at a disadvantage and may not be able to receive the benefits they were accustomed to in their home states. One notable example of this occurrence is the OBC reservation, wherein an OBC caste in a native land may not be on the OBC state list at rehabilitation state, making it possible that people will not be able to receive the benefits of the reservation that they were accustomed to receiving in their native settings.

Most of the studies recommend specific actions before beginning the process of displacement or rehabilitation should be taken to make rehabilitation more effective. The processes include things like in-depth planning, social assessments, and baseline economic surveys, modifications to compensation methods, policy changes, and legal framework, among others. Additionally, rehabilitation programs that appear to be effective in raising or maintaining peoples' living standards share similar characteristics. For instance, the resettlers' own adaptation methods of entrepreneurship and artisan market exchanges helped to improve their lot. Studies have also recommended that in order to better prepare resettlers for employment with high pay rates, rehabilitation authorities should also endeavor to offer vocational and technical training to them.

In order to reduce resettlers' out-of-pocket expenses, the rehabilitative authorities should prioritize the supply of amenities, especially in the area of health services since it has been seen in numerous rehabilitation cases that resettlers experienced a variety of health problems after beginning to live in entirely unfamiliar surroundings. Various studies have also claimed that the employment permits that project implementers give to the displaced people are not used properly and are instead sold to non-displaced people in exchange for meagre sums of money. Other tools, such as social safety nets, are necessary to protect displaced people from adverse unforeseen circumstances. Most of the time, compensation for intangibles and resources from common property is not provided, which must be taken into consideration when giving compensation.

The literature clearly suggests that development-induced displacement should not be viewed merely as a technical or administrative issue but as a complex socio-economic process requiring a holistic and inclusive approach. The success of development projects must therefore be evaluated not only in terms of infrastructure creation but also in terms of their ability to ensure equitable and sustainable outcomes for affected populations.

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