Population Displacement and Rehabilitation Strategy

Population Displacement

- **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.
- People are **forced** to move out of their land due to both **natural** and **manmade** disasters.
- Development projects frequently necessitate **population displacement**, often leading to **resettlement** challenges and the need for effective **rehabilitation strategies**. These strategies should **prioritize** the social and **economic** well-being of **displaced populations**.

Reasons for Displacement of People

The various causes for displacement of people are as follows:

- **Natural disasters** like earthquake, cyclones, tsunamis, volcanic eruptions, prolonged drought 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, pipelines etc.
- **Agricultural projects**
- Projects related with the **conservation of wildlife** like national parks, sanctuaries and biosphere reserves.

Types of Displacement

- "Primary" or "direct" displacement
  - people are moved from their **traditional** lands to make way for a development project or when people move towards a project to meet a **new labor demand**.
  - usually **predictable** and can therefore be mitigated through planning. Projects like dams, highways, and mining operations can displace communities when their land is acquired for these projects.
- "Secondary" or "indirect" displacement
  - result of **environmental**, **geographical** and **socio-political** consequences of the development project that take place over time and distance from the initial project.
  - **less predictable** and difficult to control. Example of secondary displacement is if a community is forced to move because of **pollution** of their **water supply** by a mining project.

Displacement Events

- Three Gorges Dam in China – A hydroelectric dam on China's Yangtze River constructed between 1994 and 2006, which displaced over 1.4 million people.
- Sardar Sarovar Dam in India – The largest dam in the Narmada Valley Project, which displaced over 40,000 people..
- Ahafo Mine in Ghana – An open-pit mine which displaced approximately 10,000 people in 2005 and 2006. Most of the displaced were subsistence farmers.
- Kuno Wildlife Sanctuary in India – Between 1999 and 2003, 24 villages were displaced to reintroduce the Asiatic Lion to the area. Resettlement and enforcement of forest boundaries disrupted social and economic ties between the displaced and the host community.
- Pacific Park/Atlantic Yards in the US – A mixed-use development in New York City that began construction on 2010, involving eminent domain, the destruction of 12 buildings, and several lawsuits.

Risks

Displacement can lead to:

- Landlessness
- Joblessness
- Homelessness
- Marginalization
- Food insecurity
- Increased morbidity and mortality
- Loss of access to common property
- Social Disarticulation

Effects

- **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.
- **Meager compensation**: The compensation for the land lost is often not paid, it 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**: 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.

Effects

- **Increase in stress**: Resettlement disrupt the entire life of the people. They are unable to bear the shocks of emptiness and purposelessness created in their 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, lead to the general decline in the health of the people.
- **Loss of identity:** The tribals are simple people who have a lifestyle of their own. Displacement has a negative impact on their livelihood, culture and spiritual existence.

Resettlement and Rehabilitation

- Rehabilitation means **restoration** to the former state.
- Resettlement or rehabilitation is a process by which adversely affected are assisted in their efforts to **improve**, or at least to **restore**, their **incomes** and **living standards**.
- **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.
- Resettlement Action Plan (**RAP**) is required which is planned and implemented on the basis of **social**, **economic**, and **cultural** background of the displaced persons.

Rehabilitation Strategy

- Removal of **poverty**.
- Displaced people should get an appropriate share in the **fruits** of the development.
- Displaced people should be given **employment** opportunities.
- Should be in the **neighborhood** of their own environment.
- 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.

Rehabilitation Strategy

- The elderly people of the village should be involved in the **decision making**.
- Providing **mental health services** and **social support** to help individuals and communities cope with the **trauma** of displacement.
- Continuously **monitoring** the resettlement process and evaluating its effectiveness to **identify challenges** and make necessary adjustments.

Resettlement Action Plan (RAP)

Resettlement Action Plan, consists of several basic features:

- statement of **policy principles**;
- list or matrix indicating eligibility for **compensation** and other entitlements or forms of assistance;
- review of the **extent** and **scope** of resettlement, based upon a **census/survey** of those affected by the project;
- implementation plan establishing responsibility for delivery of all forms of assistance, and evaluating the **organizational capacity** of involved agencies;
- 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.

Rehabilitation Programme

The following aspects should be kept in mind for planning resettlement and rehabilitation programmes:

- Programmes should be planned by collecting data, classification by social groups, etc.
- Programmes should be implemented carefully after new farm land and other general amenities are readied.
- Displaced persons should be provided with new farm land in place of cash compensation for land acquired so that they can rebuild their social and economic systems.
- Displaced persons should not be undermined in any way.
- Tribal population should be given attention and their special conditions recognized.
- The wishes and aspirations of the host population in the relocated sites should be recognized.
- Organizational structure should be provided for consistent execution.
- The provisions of resettlement should be fully audited in a project.

Rehabilitation Programme

- Displaced people should be allotted optimum land in new site so as to maintain previous economic standards.
- House Sites should be provided at the new site with suitable facilities.
- In addition to payment of cash compensation for the acquired property, a lump sum amount should be provided to meet incidental expenses.
- At relocation sites, civic amenities such as roads, water, electricity, etc. should be arranged.
- Provision should be made for vocational training to landless laborers.
- Loans and advances could be given to the displaced persons for housing, purchasing of agricultural implements, and inputs such as seeds and fertilizers.

Operational Procedures

Resettlement Programme should be split into several phases:

- sample survey of communities
- information campaign and meetings with families
- census of people
- enclosing planning data
- site selection for settling displaced persons
- action plan for resettlement
- land acquisition
- participation of affected population
- payment of compensation and grant for restitution
- construction of new settlement
- community and agricultural development.