CHAPTER 8
SUMMARY AND POLICY RECOMMENDATION

The present study was conducted among the oustees of Pong Dam, in Ghamroor village, District- Kangra, Himachal Pradesh. This study has been conducted on the second generation of the oustees as the dam was built in 1974. The process of land acquisition for the construction of dam started in 1960s, due to which people were evacuated and displaced. Thus, this study has been carried out after more than 40 years of displacement. The researcher has attempted to study the socio-economic status of PAPs in the post displacement scenario. Besides examining the impact and the effect of displacement on the different socio-economic variables in particular and lives of people in general, the people’s notion of development and its associated processes (like displacement and compensation along with resettlement in the framework of social justice) have also been explored.

This study has been conducted using interpretive theoretical paradigm, which focuses on the emic point of view; the people’s perspective; how they view the development process and its outcomes; their internal feelings and perception about compensation and its related effects. An ethnographic fieldwork was conducted in Ghamroor Village, where the oustees had come back and started living in their houses which were acquired for the project purpose but it has not been used by the Dam authority. Some of the oustees of the Ghamroor village have also shifted to the nearby villages like Barnali and Ghati and finally settled there. This was a typical case to study as this village Ghamroor is very near to the dam and the dam had been built in the region of Ghamroor itself. The name of Pong also has been derived from the Ghamroor village. The people of this village were the first to be displaced and were resettled in Ganganagar district of Rajasthan.

Case study has been used as a method of study which gave the reflective account of the people. Besides this, techniques such as in-depth interview, genealogy, observation, oral history and narratives have been used. Further, interview schedule has also been administered and its responses have been analyzed statistically.
The empirical study covered the four aspects, i.e. it included the study of the history of the dam and its chronology; the study of the geography and topography of the Himachal Pradesh; the selection of the study participants, i.e. there were two categories, one who were found and the other who had moved out; so the study of the people who moved out and could not be found, was conducted with the help of those who were found and the opinions, attitudes and experiences of the people were quantitatively analyzed using various statistical test to have some kind of predictive value in the study.

For this study, purposive sampling was used and the study was conducted among 20 households. These households included those people who are the original inhabitants of Ghamroor village and they are still living there. The study participants were mainly the heads of the household as they were the eldest and could recall all the incidents of displacement and provide relevant information. However, the family members were also interviewed and their genealogy was taken to get the details of the family.

8.1. Summary

The socio-economic status of the PAPs has been examined by taking various socio-economic parameters. Among the 20 households that were studied, it was found that a majority (80%) of the heads of the households were male, while only 20% were female. An equal number of households (i.e. 50%) were from Upper Castes (Rajput & Brahmin) and Harijan and others included pottery maker, carpenter, barber and scheduled caste respectively. With regard to the education of the head of the households, it was seen that the majority, i.e. 90% were educated till 10th standard or below, while only 10% were educated up to 11th standard or above. With respect to occupation, most of the heads of the household were self-employed, i.e. 45%, some of them were in service, i.e. 30% and the remaining were farmers, i.e. 25%. However, a majority of them, i.e. 75% contributed in the household income, while 25% were not making any contribution.

Mean age of the heads of the households was seen to be relatively high, i.e. 60.85 (SD ± 10.24) which ranged from 40 to 80 years. Mean of the Family Size was 5.90 (SD ± 02.75), which ranged from 3 to 13. Mean Annual income of the households was found to be 1,77,250 (SD ± 49297), which ranged from 1,20,000 to 3,00,000.
As far as the impact of displacement is concerned, 60% of them reported that there were no betterment in living after displacement but 40% have felt that the betterment in living to some extent. According to 75% of them, their household income were affected after displacement, while the rest have not reported any effect. Half of them (i.e. 50%) have moved to self-built house after displacement and remaining half had moved to other i.e. lived with their relatives or moved to nearby village.

Mean of the size of landholdings before displacement was found to be 199.55 (SD ± 246.14), which ranged from as low as 1(one) kanal to as higher as 800 kanal. With respect to the size of the landholdings after displacement, Mean was reported 38.80 (SD ± 50.47), which ranged from 0 kanal to 200 kanal. In case of livestocks before displacement, Mean was 3.95 (SD ± 2.91) and it ranged from 0 to 10. However, Mean of livestocks after displacement was 1.10 (SD ± 1.11) and it ranged from 0 to 5. With respect to grain output before displacement, Mean was found to be 16.75 (+16.81), which ranged from 0.10 to 50 quintal. However, Mean of grain output after displacement was 4.10 (SD ±5.55) and it ranged from 0 to 20 quintal.

As discussed in the study, Mann-Whitney test was used in which it was found that Significant relationship between Caste and Livestock before displacement was seen where \( p = .02 \) and \( Z \) value was -2.21 as it was found to be relatively higher among the Upper Castes compared to Harijan and Others (Mean Rank score of 13.40 vs 7.60). Highly significant relationship was seen between Caste and Livestocks after displacement, where \( p = .01 \) and \( Z \) value was -2.34 as it was seen to be comparatively higher among the Upper Castes compared to Harijan and Others (Mean Rank score of 13.30 vs 7.70). With respect to the Caste and the Grain Output before the displacement, highly significant relationship (\( p = .01 \) and \( Z = -2.51 \)) was present as it was seen that the Mean Rank (13.80) of the Upper Castes were comparatively higher than of the Mean Rank (7.20) of Harijan and Others, which indicates that the Grain Outputs before displacement were higher in Upper castes as compared to the Harijan and Others.

However, with regard to the Grain Output after displacement, no significant relationship (\( p = .25 \) and \( Z = -1.12 \)) was seen, in other words, there was no significant difference in
terms of the Grain Output after displacement between the Upper Castes and Harijan and Others.

Significant relationship was found between landholdings before displacement and Caste, where $p = .02$ and $Z = -2.32$, as it was seen that the landholdings before displacement was relatively higher among the Upper Castes as compared to the lower caste (Mean Rank Score of 13.55 vs 7.45). However, with respect to the landholdings after displacement, no significant relationship ($p = .20$ and $Z = -1.26$) was found, which means that there were no significant difference in landholdings after displacement between the Upper Castes and Harijan and Others.

From the study, very highly significant relationship was found between livestocks before and livestocks after displacement, where $p = .00$ and $Z$ value was -3.809 as it was found that the livestocks before displacement was relatively higher than livestocks after displacement (Mean Rank Score of 27.40 vs 13.60). Besides this, significant relationship ($p = .02$ and $Z = -2.289$) was reported between grain output before displacement and grain output after displacement, as the Mean Rank (24.70) of the grain output before displacement was comparatively higher than the Mean Rank (16.30) of grain output after displacement. With regard to the landholdings before displacement and landholdings after displacement also, significant relationship was present, where $p = .02$ and $Z = -2.282$ as Mean Rank (24.70) of landholdings before displacement was comparatively higher than the Mean Rank (16.30) of landholdings after displacement.

When the findings were analyzed using Chi-Square and Fischer’s Exact test, it was found that highly significant relationship was found between caste and benefit of the project where $p = .03$, as 50% of harijan and other castes including pottery maker, carpenter, barber, black smith and scheduled caste said that they have not been benefited from the project while remaining 50% reported that they have been benefited from the project. In case of upper castes, 100% had said that they have not been benefited from the project.

However no significant relationship was reported between caste and contributed to the family income where $p$ value was 1.0. Moreover, if we see, 80% of the upper castes contributes to the family income while 20% do not contribute; whereas 70% of harijan
and other castes contribute to the family income and 30% do not contribute. Significant relationship \((p = .05)\) was reported between caste and attitude towards the project as 60% of harijan and other castes reported that the project was necessary for them while 40% of them says that it was not necessary. With respect to the upper castes, it was found that 90% of them reported that the project was not necessary while 10% said that it was necessary. There was no significant relationship between caste and relocation after displacement where \(p = .17\), as 70% of the upper castes relocated to self-built house and 30% of them relocated to other places i.e. shed or with their relatives. With respect to harijan and others, 30% of them relocated to self-built house while 70% of them relocated to others i.e. shed or with their relatives.

The relationship between caste and received help immediately after displacement was found significant, where \(p\) value was .03 as 50% of harijan and other castes reported that they received help immediately after displacement from the government and remaining 50% of them received help immediately after displacement from other (relatives and family members). In case of upper castes, everyone (100%) said that they received help immediately from others i.e. relatives and from their own family members.

The relationship between caste and resettlement difficulty after displacement was found significant \((p = .01)\) as 40% of the harijan and other caste faced resettlement difficulty of land while 60% of them had resettlement difficulty of job. In case of upper caste, it was found that all of them i.e.100% registered resettlement difficulty of land.

Significant relationship was found between caste and impact on family income, where \(p = .03\) as 50% of harijan and other castes reported no impact on family income, while remaining 50% said that there were no impact on family income. In case of upper castes, 100 % reported that there were impact on family income. No significant \((p = .30)\) relationship was found between caste and employed in project activity as 40% of harijan and other castes reported that they were employed in project activity and 60% of them said that they were not employed in project activity. On the other hand, only 10% of the upper castes was employed in project activity while 90% of them were not employed in project activity. The relationship between caste and receiving of
compensation was not significant \( (p = .30) \) as 60% of the upper castes reported that they received the compensation; while 40% of them said that they did not receive the compensation. Further, 90% of harijan and other castes received the compensation and remaining 10% reported that they did not receive the compensation. The relationship between caste and compensation justified was found significant, where \( p = .03 \) as 50% of harijan and other castes registered that the compensation was not justified while remaining 50% found it justified. In case of upper castes, all of them reported that the compensation was not justified. The relationship between caste and betterment in living was found not significant \( (p = .17) \) as 20% of the upper castes said that there are betterment in living, while 80% reported that there are no betterment in living. Similarly 60% of the harijan and other castes said that there are betterment in living whereas 40% of them said that there are no betterment in living.

Besides these quantitative results, which have been used primarily to operationalise the study soci-economic variables, the researcher has used case study along with other anthropological tools and techniques as discussed above. The case study illustrated that in this process of displacement, most of the oustees especially belonging to the upper castes i.e. Brahmin and Rajput have lost most of their agricultural land and as a result their socio-economic condition has gone down drastically. Culturally they were not accustomed to the work of cultivation as they used to hire the services of the Harijan and other lower castes mainly scheduled caste. But after displacement, when they were left with nothing only the compensation money and the allotted land i.e. *murabba* in Rajasthan; they had to cultivate locally called the work of *casting* on their own. They found it difficult to do such agricultural work. Moreover, there was no provision of any basic facilities in the resettlement site. They had been given *kaccha* house with no roof and there were no properly built colonies. The houses had no roof and they were adjacent to each other; their privacy was not taken care of which made it difficult for women to stay. Further, they were not provided drinking water and no irrigation facilities. Basic facilities like schools and hospital were not provided. They had to cover long distances for buying anything of daily use and the roads were not even proper. They had to drink water from the pond; after their protest they were given some drums of drinking water. They had to give tax i.e. *malia or gardawari* to local patwari for their
land. Besides this, the hostility of the local population was troublesome. The local people of Rajasthan used to cut the harvest of the oustees and sometimes used to plunder them. This web of problems compelled the oustees to come back and settle in their own village or nearby in Himachal Pradesh. Some of them reported in the case study that the resettlement site was culturally and climatically totally different from them. The land which was allotted to them was not at all fertile but it was sand or desert type which could not withstand water for longer duration. Therefore, initially they found it difficult to grow something on that land. The upper castes oustees did not buy much of land there in Rajasthan. They had left with little compensation money as most of it was spent on travelling and resettling them; so they bought little land to survive and after sometime they came back. They gave their land in Rajasthan on lease to the locals for cultivation and used to go once in a year to collect the harvest money. In case of Harijan and other lower castes, most of them had very little agricultural landholdings prior to displacement. They used to earn their livelihood by working on the land of upper castes and doing some other work like tailoring, barber, carpenter, blacksmith, dariyayi who used to work in dariya i.e. pond. After displacement, everyone was allotted murabba of 125 kanal but as these people got very less compensation for their little land; they could not buy much of the land in Rajasthan. The land which was allotted to the oustees in Rajasthan was for rupees 17,500, which they had to pay in 20 installments. The oustees of Harijan and other lower castes bought very little land but as they were used to the agricultural work since before, they had no problem in cultivation. Gradually with their hard work, they were able to earn good enough money to buy some more land and their economic status improved. Moreover, the oustees were given option to work at the dam site for construction work. The Harijan and the other lower castes did not hesitate to do the labour work, so they got the source of earning. Initially they were hired on contract basis but at present they have been employed permanently. Some of them are also getting pension from BBMB after retirement. In my case study, oustees said that some of the lower castes people were able to settle there in Rajasthan and some of them came back.

In terms of annual grain output is concerned, due to considerable decrease in their agricultural land holding their grain production also reduced drastically. Further the
number of livestocks also reduced by large number as their grazing land were acquired for the project for which the oustees were not given any compensation and they were not provided with any grazing land in resettlement site. Moreover, their annual household income reduced drastically so they were not in a position to raise them. It has also been reported that at first especially the residents of Ghamroor village were allotted land in Nirwana village in tehsil-Anupgarh, district-Ganganagar of Rajasthan but later on those who could not claim earlier, later on they were allotted land in Nachana in Jaisalmer district in Rajasthan, which was quite far from their native place so they hesitated to resettle there and at the end settled in nearby villages like Barnali and Ghati.

But when the entire process of displacement is viewed in the framework of social justice, most of the oustees reported that they were given very less compensation (as described in case studies of the oustees as well as the interview with the project officials and the description of the Session Court Case) and not as per the market value. They made a protest and approached the court. It has been discussed in the finding chapter that the villagers went to the Session Court in case of Ravinder Singh vs Land Acquisition Collector; the Court gave decision in their favour for enhanced compensation in the year 2008. Besides this, they were also given interest rate along with compulsory acquisition charges. But the oustees got the compensation as per the market rate after more than 40 years. This delayed compensation has taken way everything from them. The oustees reported that during this resettlement process, their lives have been ruined and they have become impoverished and economically deprived. The government has denied them the right to develop by not giving them their due compensation timely and leaving them without any developmental opportunities. People said that “if we would have got the right compensation amount at that time then we could have developed a lot; since our ancestors were not aware and illiterate, the government manipulated them and cheated them”.

Even out of 16352 families, only 10,500 have been allotted land and rest are still waiting for their chance (as reported by the project officials). Thus, here only merely 50% of the oustees were given compensation of land and rest of them has been given only monetary compensation. There has been no compensation for the loss of livelihood or loss of earning.
The case study along with statistical finding illustrated that the project authority did not consult them before project implementation. Their viewpoint was not taken. The oustees said that only the survey was conducted and through this survey only, they came to know that the government is planning to construct a dam in their region. The people after this were in great dilemma and shock as well that what will happen to them in this process of displacement. The people were not willing to be resettled but they were evacuated forcefully. The project authority never attempted to involve the villagers in planning their resettlement. The planning was not aimed at resettlement with development but it was merely physical relocation. All of them reported that the resettlement was unplanned in nature.

The resettlement alternatives could have been much effective if everything including the nature of land, houses or other infrastructural facilities to be given to the oustees; would have been planned in consultation with the people giving space to the people’s preferences. The oustees whose land was being acquired and who were uprooted from their native place were simply treated as a means of achieving development goals as these people were having no place or priority in their development agenda. This objectification of the oustees had denied them the natural justice. Therefore, in this entire process of resettlement, the government has ignored the people’s voices and their aspirations, which ultimately resulted in their impoverishment and at the end instead of establishing faith, the government and its agenda of development have lost its meaning and faith among the people. There has been complete denial of social justice in the case of Pong dam oustees. They had not been given any developmental opportunities except compensation and even the compensation was not justified at that time when they were displaced. They had not been involved in the resettlement process, their choices and preferences had not been valued, rather they had been evacuated forcibly and thrown in to an altogether alien environment which was socially and culturally completely different from them. Facing hostility from the local population and in absence of any sustainable livelihood, they were forced to come back. This whole process has made them socially and economically worse off than before as reported by the oustees.

In a nutshell, this research was primarily conducted to study a dam situation hitherto not studied. As contrast to the “big situations” or “large projects”, the Pong Dam did
not capture the attention of media and politicians. There was no people’s activism, i.e.
the protests were not loud. Relatively speaking, Himachal Pradesh is a peaceful area.
Moreover, not much has been reported and written about Pong Dam.

However, as this study points out that all dam situations need to be studied and
documented irrespective of their gravity. Here the situations in Pong Dam were equally
grave. The displacement took place at a large scale and there was complete social
disharmony. The oustees felt tremendously and overwhelmingly about their miseries and
decided to stay back in Himachal Pradesh instead of resettling themselves in Rajasthan.

Further, this study was guided by the interpretive perspective and was informed by the
humanism; which speaks about the genuine concern of the people despite being anti
development in approach. The researcher does not favour the discourse of “going back
to the rural world”, i.e. not supporting the cause of development. The arguments raised
in this study hold conformity with the developmental discourse. The development is
important and unless we develop, we will not be able to feed the increasing masses of
people. But the process of the development and the way it is being carried out needs to
be critically evaluated and examined. The zeal of development should not undermine
the existence of the people, i.e. one should not become the slave of the development. If
we look in this perspective, the development can’t be seen in isolation with resources
used by the people, which are siphoned off.

The basic principle which we draw from here is that “we draw things from nature but
things can’t go back to nature. Here one can take the example of the steel which is made
out of the ores and ores are extracted from the minerals but this process can not be
reversed like the steel can not be converted in to ores and ores can not be converted
back in to minerals. The destruction which has been done is done for ever. Thus, the
soul idea is that nature keeps on growing and this idea also lies at the root of climatic
change. Every development activity has a cost on nature and it effects the entire world.
Therefore, we have to develop ourselves looking at both humane and environmental
aspects (which includes not just minerals and ores but the other variables also like bio-
diversity). In this context, the issues of social justice becomes important, which has
been elaborated in this study.
8.2. Policy Recommendation

The discourse on development induced displacement has always shown the discrepancy between policy goals and policy means. There is inherent conflict in the government agenda of inclusive growth with the principle of promoting equity. In the post-colonial regime, the government is still following the divisive policy of furthering one section of society at the cost of the other. As one puts this in the form of ‘developers’ who comprise elected and unelected policy makers, and their normative cohorts, including experts within and outside the governments, media persons and related opinion makers and a diffuse range of those who primarily and variously stand to benefit from development interventions and the projects and the ‘developees’, which signify all those people displaced and adversely affected, by development interventions and projects (Baxi, 2008).

The idea of development is very narrowly defined in order to facilitate the state-sponsored model of development and the state having the entire control over the means and ends of development. In the Indian Constitution, development simply means amelioration of the plight of the constitutional have-nots or worst-off Indian people. Therefore, the Indian Constitution authorizes only those conceptions and practices of development that disproportionately benefits the worst-off developed people (Baxi, 2008). The government in the interest of so called nation building and the commitment to integrate the national economy with world economic order has followed a development pattern which has caused more displacement than imagination.

The legal framework has been designed to facilitate this model of development. The government has retained the ‘Land Acquisition Act of 1894, which is an expression of the doctrine of eminent domain, which empowers the state to take private land for public purpose. This appropriation converted into acquisition, and the coercive nature of the taking over is toned down by compensating persons with interest in the land (Ramanathan, 2008). The involuntary displacement caused by the development projects ignores the importance of social justice enshrined in the preamble of our constitution which speaks of “we, the people of India making a solemn resolve to constitute India into a, “sovereign, democratic republic” securing for all its citizens justice, liberty, and fraternity. The concept of justice in the preamble is indeed very wide, defined or
elaborated as social, economic and political again giving precedence to social and economic over political justice. The directive principles of state policy enshrined in Articles 39(b) & (c) are also neglected Vis a Vis some fundamental rights as guaranteed under Article 19 (1-C), the right to reside and settle in any part of the territory and the right to live with dignity guaranteed under Article- 21 are also violated. Right to equality and equal protection also gets compromised due to unequal distribution of benefits and sharing in the development projects. In context of displacement, the issue of human rights and social justice remains at stake. The phenomenon of social justice is indeed very wide encompassing all ethical and moral issues revolving around people’s life. When people are displaced from their original habitat, losing their livelihood, they should not be treated as less than citizens and human beings by state but rather they should be given full socio-economic opportunity to develop. It is the government’s obligation to fulfill the individual right to live with dignity and provide them with source of livelihood. If the government cannot accomplish all these needed responsibilities, then it has no moral right to displace people in the name of development projects. For successfully carrying out its task of resettlement and rehabilitation, there is a need to reform resettlement by building institutional and financial capacity as its indispensable components (Cernea, 2008). Institutional capacity refers to policy, early planning, people’s participation, education, and technical training, and reforming legislation, including India’s LAA (Vasudha Dhagamwar, 1989), and the financial capacity means the material resources needed to carry out responsibly the unavoidable displacements without worsening people’s income and livelihoods and treating resettlement as an opportunity for development (Cernea, 2008).

Here, with the Pong dam oustees also, the government did not pay any attention to the issue of development but merely confined itself to merely physically relocating the people. The people’s voices had not been heard and they had not been involved in resettlement planning. Lack of people’s participation and ill framed resettlement planning had led the oustees to become further impoverished leaving the few. The oustees have not been given any developmental opportunities rather they have been left on the mercy of God. The basic infrastructural facilities of schools, hospitals, drinking water and irrigation facilities had not been provided. There had been serious flaws at the
planning level and also at the level of implementation. Compensation had been employed as an instrument but it lacked the developmental component rather the compensation was undervalued and people protested against it.

One inherent flaw in the resettlement of the PAPs is the under compensation and over all under financing of reconstruction i.e. the inadequacy in the compensation as an instrument. The compensation has been treated universally as a single tool of handling both expropriation and resettlement. However, the studies have documented its failure in most of the cases. “In real life, however compensation reveals itself to be both impotent and misleading: it is unable to perform the restorative miracles with which it is officially and rhetorically credited (Cernea, 2008). Compensation being financially insufficient is further calculated incorrectly due to corrupt practices. As Mathur (2006: 72) puts it: ‘Poor people don’t get in their hands the full amount of compensation for their properties, meant to aid them in getting back on their feet. Rampant corruption hits the poorest the hardest. Government agencies are not known for integrity in seeing that the rightful claimants get their due amounts promptly’.

“To continue a financing pattern based on compensation alone means largely to continue financing with the certainty of repeated failure and further impoverishment (Cernea, 2008). Therefore, to mobilize additional financing becomes indispensable for carrying out resettlement. Investment financing for successful R&R requires both reform in the compensation practices and adequate financial investment in the reconstruction of resettlers’ economic and material income basis.

Benefit-sharing mechanisms have been documented as one of the important alternative financial instrument to achieve the above goal. The upfront budget allocation for compensation and political will to enact legislation in support of financing resettlement can only accomplish this arduous task of R&R (Cernea, 2008). Cernea draws on the theory of economic rent and describes recent international experiences in both developing and developed countries such as China, Columbia, Brazil, Canada, Norway and Japan. In different countries, there have been different types of benefit sharing practices dependent on the specific project and the innovative solution, which the country preferred like revenue sharing through royalties; development funds; equity
sharing; taxes levied on project-created new business and then redistributed locally; and preferential rates and fees.

It has been a sincere attempt on the part of these countries for choosing the option of benefit sharing as an instrument for strengthening the financial foundation of resettlement and going beyond the compensation making resettlement as a new opportunity of development. Therefore, the Indian government should also learn from these local and international experiences and try to use it for development of the displaced people, so that people’s livelihood can be improved not only restored by mere compensation and the development projects in the country can go on without much opposition.

Here, one comes to realize the significance of development in the context of resettlement and rehabilitation of negatively affected people: in terms of the real freedoms which the people possess and can exercise, the manner in which they have given space to pursue their objectives or aspirations, in a sense expansion of human capability which can be broadly recognized as the central feature of the process of development.

Implementation of the National Policy of Resettlement and Rehabilitation of Project Affected People (later renamed NPRR) drafted by the Ministry of Rural Development (MRD) varied greatly by state. “No uniform and comprehensive national policy existed until 1997” (Saxena, 2006 p. 100). There were fresh attempts in 1985, 1993, and 1994 to create a new NPRR, possibly under pressure from the World Bank which in 1980 was the first development institution to create a structured and specific policy for R & R created by “social scientists, and grounded in social science research” (Fernandes & Paranjpye, 2004, p. 6). The World Bank had been heavily criticized by Michael Cernea, senior advisor to the World Bank before this point for not creating an R & R program requirement for displaced persons from its investment projects (Fernandes & Paranjpye, 2004, p. 6). “Our study found that impoverishment and brutal violation of basic human rights happen most frequently in programmes that are not subject to agreements on policy guidelines and to professional outside review, supervision and evaluation,” (Fernandes & Paranjpye, 2004, p. 6)
Recently, A National Policy on Resettlement and Rehabilitation for Project Affected Families was formulated in 2004, which came into force with effect from February, 2004. However, experiences highlighted that there are many issues addressed by the policy which need to be reviewed. There should be careful quantification of the costs and benefits that will accrue to society at large, of the desirability and justifiability of each project; the adverse impact on affected families-economic, environmental, social and cultural-must be assessed in participatory and transparent manner. A national rehabilitation and resettlement framework thus needs to apply to all projects where involuntary displacement takes place.

In view of this, the National Rehabilitation and Resettlement Policy, 2007 had been formulated on these lines to replace the National Policy on Resettlement and Rehabilitation for Project Affected Families, 2003. The new policy had been notified in the Official Gazette and has become operative with effect from the 31st October, 2007. Since the inception of the Land Acquisition Act, 1894 for the first time a legislation namely, the Rehabilitation and Resettlement Bill, 2007 has been developed on the lines of the provisions of the new policy, so as to give a statutory backing to them and provide for Social Impact Assessment, making of scheme and plans well defined Rehabilitation and Resettlement benefits for the affected families but somehow this bill tabled in parliament could not be passed due to lack of political will on the part of our political leaders.

This bill has included the clause of social impact assessment in case of project leading to displacement of large populations. This will be through a participatory, informed and transparent process involving all Stake-holders, including the affected persons will be necessary before these are acted upon. The rehabilitation process would also augment income levels and enrich quality of life of the displaced persons, covering rebuilding sociocultural relationships, capacity building and provision of public health and community services, Adequate safeguards have been proposed for protecting rights of vulnerable sections of the displaced persons.

The researcher holds conformity with the provisions and clause added or included in the 2007 rehabilitation bill and proposes that the resettlement and rehabilitation approach
should always include the affected people in resettlement planning giving people’s participation in the whole process a priority. Further, the planning should include the developmental aspects besides compensation. Compensation should be used as an instrument of development. There should be creation of developmental opportunities by generating sources of livelihood, building of institutional and financial capacity as discussed above. One should not forget the social reality of the affected people. The government has taken a very good step forward in this sense by including the Social Impact Assessment, which should examine the social reality by conducting an ethnographic study of the affected population. The structure of society embedded in their historical and cultural moorings should be examined and kept in mind while planning the resettlement so that the government can rebuild the socio-cultural relationship. The hierarchy of society in terms of caste or different economic groups should be given importance while planning resettlement. At the end, it can be surmised that the development project can only do justice if the people are involved from the beginning to end; in planning and practice, in benefit sharing. Respecting the people’s choices and preferences and treating resettlement as an opportunity of development will certainly make it successful.