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CHAPTER 5

FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND POLICY SUGGESTIONS

Following an elaborate debate and analysis in the preceding chapters on the issues that address to the R&R policy for the oustees of the Narmada Project, the present chapter seeks to focus on some of the important findings and conclusions with a view to suggesting policy measures for further improvement in the system of implementation of the R&R policy.

5.1 FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

In the preceding chapters the R&R policy and its implementations are analyzed for the simple reason that they form the most significant facets of overall policy process. They involve roles played by a number of government and non-governmental agencies and participators-actors. The present research contains discussion and analysis on the conceptual structure of the state, R&R policy and administration. Besides, the focus of discussion has also been on politics, policy and analysis.
The displacement of people resulting from a major river valley project is a phenomenon in both developed and developing countries. In the past, no definite policy for R&R was attempted. There were certain project specific programmes, however, for implementation of decisions on a temporary basis. For instance, in case of land acquired, due compensation was given under the Provisions of Land Acquisition Act (PLAA), 1894 to project affected families. This payment, usually in cash did not result in satisfactory improvements in terms of R&R of displaced families.

Realizing the difficulties of displaced persons, the requirement of relief and rehabilitation of PAFs in the case of SSP was considered by the Narmada Water Disputes Tribunal (NWDT). The decision and final award of the Tribunal was declared in 1979. It contains detailed guidelines in regard to acquisition of land and properties, provision for land, house plots and civic amenities in view of effective R&R of affected families. The R&R policy, thus, emerged and developed alongside the Sardar Sarovar Project specifically to take care of the problems that arose from time to time.

In 1988, when the project got the first clearance from the planning commission from the investment angle, it was estimated that about 12180 families would be affected in three states. Based on these numbers, the State Governments independently prepared their proposals to outline their action plans. They also announced their R&R policy based on the Tribunal's
Award. According to the action plan, the Narmada Control Authority submitted rehabilitation master plan to the Ministry of Environment and Forests, Government of India along with its letter dated 3/4-5-1989. Out of the total population, which is affected by the submergence, a large majority number are tribal people. Hence, due attention was paid by the State Governments to liberalize their policies to protect the socio-economic-cultural milieu and to extend the R&R benefits to these people to restore them to normal living conditions.

The master plan deals with socio-economic-cultural milieu of PAFs, the legal framework, R&R policy and procedures, implementation machinery, organization for R&R, monitoring and evaluation, empowerment of women and youth. Special care is taken for vulnerable groups, plans for R&R etc. The master plan includes village-wise and category-wise list of PAFs and their preference in R&R whether to settle in home state or in Gujarat.

The construction of Sardar Sarovar multipurpose irrigation project has caused submergence of many villages of Gujarat and of adjoining states. Like any other multi-purpose irrigation project, the oustees of the Narmada project lost their lands, employment and places of residence. They, however, are granted due compensation for their losses and the government makes efforts to rehabilitate them at better sites.
Recent years witness the emergence of anti-dam movement the world wide. It is currently epitomized by an extra-ordinarily intensive campaign launched against the SSP. Controversies over large dams relate to a variety of issues: displacement, safety, and environmental damage are chief among others. The benefits are more often than not glossed over. But the decision-makers, engineers and administrators responsible have also come to be seen as evil, as anti-people. The dispute has been getting so emotionally charged that it makes it difficult, and sometimes even impossible to render reasoned and rational thinking over the issues of high sensitivity.

Any activity requiring land acquisition in settled areas entails displacement of populations. This is a genuine hardship that needs to be more than recompensed in material and emotional or psychological terms. The SSP represents and remains an early experience of learning.

In building large dams huge costs are involved in terms of human, ecological and financial investments. But these can be more than compensated. Those affected by the SSP, directly or indirectly, are now being offered fabulous R&R packages which have seen steady improvement and more rigorous implementation over time. There is little doubt that their living conditions will in due course be distinctly better/well-enhanced/well-improved in relation to the living standards of oustees and the opportunities they enjoyed earlier. This fact has to be taken as positive end of the efforts,
despite certain hard facts, confused cases and problematic situations that arise in early phases. They are in fact amenable to correction.

As far as the policy is concerned, a number of studies and reports on Indian administration reveal that the administration in India is in a state of flux and that the responsiveness and sensitivity of administrative agencies and officials to the needs and expectations of citizens is found to be on the decline. It is said that a policy made in India is not bad, yet it is unable to render due results. The reason remains ineffective policy implementation. Policy implementation is one of the most critical parts of the overall public policy process. Human rights of every individual and community remains supremely important, yet the right to life of oustees cannot be ignored.

Current controversies over environment (number of large projects of water resources developments in particular are put to a jolt) have tended to question the nation's present development path. Development has to be sustainable. But whether the sustainability with rapidly growing numbers living on the margin of subsistence is possible without adequate development is a moot point. This poses a real challenge to a public endeavour.

No great endeavour is worth without challenges, trials and tribulations. Prudence and care are always necessary. If it is properly
managed, these new projects may be blessing to generations to come. In this light, the SSP may be seen as vital life support system for a resurgent Indian and millenary gifts to the nation.

It is mentioned in earlier chapters that a liberal R&R policy emerged at the SSP and that a better R&R has taken place. But this may be taken as an isolated case like an oasis. An oasis cannot sustain itself for long in the midst of a desert. Hence, it has to be supported by a national level consensus and an equally liberal national policy.

The problem of R&R at the SSP cannot be reviewed in terms of violation of human rights. Although, R&R at the SSP is much better, because there is a neat and clear R&R policy laid down. In the absence of a national policy, the R&R policy at the SSP has evolved gradually over a period of two decades. It occurred in response to pressures that emerged from different sides at different times. This sort of gradual evolution has shaped the most liberal policy of R&R in the Third World. Further, it has also given rise to some very sensitive and polemic issues. Let us see two examples: (1) Those farmers whose land was required prior to 1979 were not given partly sums as cough compensation which they squandered leaving them high and dry right near Kevadia Colony. (2) Since Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh do not provide land to major sons, they often resettle in Gujarat, whereas their parent would prefer staying in their
own states. With problems such as these, the early oustees are at disadvantage. The R&R policy cause many families to be separated, create stresses and tensions. With trial and error method, we at last learnt that these experiences should be properly utilize in shaping a national policy on R&R. In fact, a proper network has to be evolved in its implementation.

The recent phase of liberalization of our economic policy and the consequent restructuring results in: (1) the acquisition of more and more agricultural land for industrial purpose; (2) modernization, rationalization, and restructuring rendering many workers either casual or jobless. Both the sections of society, farmers and labourers, therefore, require R&R. We in fact need a comprehensive R&R policy to cater to problems that acquire the national level span and international concerns.

The most traumatic aspect of any water resources development project is displacement in cases of land going under submergence or that acquired for other purposes. The displaced need to be treated with due compensation and also with generosity. Hence, it is not just resettlement that counts. Rehabilitation becomes a concept of much deeper meaning. When it takes place, those deprived have to be reinstated as better off than they were previously at the end of exercise. Like certain other projects in India, the SSP has suffered with inexcusable delay. This has prolonged the agony of those facing or liable to face displacement. The very uncertainty
adds to the emotional burden they have to pull on with. When one learns about the probable for knowledge of submergence, it inevitably results in a slow down of normal developmental activities and the maintenance of facilities at a place. When the project is delayed, hardships increase even more. The delay also leads to the condition that land is acquired at one time, yet the affected families get compensation at different times. It may also be delayed and the waiting is more troublesome. In this sense, rehabilitation is rather more psychological concept than a material one. Promptness and certainty acquire significance of supreme value in its context.

The Sardar Sarovar Punarvasvat Agency (SSPA) has adopted a strategic policy very recently. The primary objective is to speed up the rehabilitation work of the PAFs affected by the SSP. It also aims at strengthening the operational efficiency of the SSPA. According to it, the SSPA has been reorganized in three separate divisions namely, planning resettlement and rehabilitation. Each division is headed by a senior level officer of the rank of additional or joint commissioner. He is vested with full power to deal with matters arising in the respective division. The Government of Gujarat (GOG) has appointed three senior IAS officers to head the above-mentioned divisions. They are functioning as a part of the SSPA. The strength of the staff at the SSPA has been considerably augmented by an addition of ten deputy commissioners, eight assistant
commissioners, eleven Mamlatdars and forty three extension officers appointed at the three divisions.

These efforts are culminated into positive results. The most obvious result is that it has brought the Government machineries and PAFs much closer. Since accountability is no more attached the implementation of the rehabilitation measures the procedure to deal with grievances of the PAFs are simplified. Consequently, more and more grievances of the PAFs are given due consideration. Not only that, majority of them have been resolved. A fulledged computer cell is functioning at the SSPA to facilitate records of their grievances lodged by PAFs and the grievances redressal etc. They are stored in different computer files. This helps to bring transparency in the working. The rehabilitation work is made open to scrutiny and the progress of rehabilitation can be monitored periodically.

Much controversy has arisen in respect to the progress of this project. The role of a political executive in India in policy implementation can be somewhat understood if one looks at the structure for the execution of the policies of the government. The ultimate responsibility of the implementation of a specific policy lies with the concerned political executive. He has total control over personnel and agencies engaged in policy implementation. Moreover, being a political representative, a political executive enjoys privilege to have direct excess to the channel of
getting feedback from a target group with regards to implementation of any given policy.

The process of policy formation is crucial as well as of critical importance to governmental success. Through its implementation a bridge is formed whereby aims and objectives of the policy reach to the needy in form of government activities. Number of government organizations and non-government organizations are involved in implementation of the policy. They get the cooperation of many other actors. Yet, administrators play the major role.

The SSP is a mega project. On completion it is expected to render lot of dividend and bounties especially to the people of Gujarat. The state has also witnessed drought. Once the project is completed, it will provide irrigation to 18 lakh hectares of agricultural land with it, the whole of agriculture in Gujarat will be revolutionarized. It will also provide drinking water to homes in far fetched places like Kuchch and Saurashtra. It will as well generate hydro-power. It will be shared among the participating states of Gujarat, Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh.

The SSP has faced great challenges to deal with issues of rehabilitation. In this light, an attempt has been made to work out a few
observations and policy suggestions. It is expected that they will help to improve the R&R design and planning.

5.2 OBSERVATIONS AND POLICY SUGGESTIONS

In a broader sense, the resettlement involves physical work, while the rehabilitation moves are on economic and social axes. It is a huge process taken up by the SSPA. It involved several NGOs and voluntary agencies to undertake the task on expected grounds. Their efforts have showing positive results. Almost all new sites are adopted by NGOs to carry for various developmental programmes. In view of these programmes, the observations may be drawn as follows:

5.2.1 Resettlement Sites and Infrastructure

1. According to the investigator’s report on her visits to various new sites in different villages of Dabhoi Taluka, such as Vadaj-1, Vadaj-2, Golagamdi, Shinor Road-1, Shinor Road-2, Dharmpuri, Mangrol, Karnet and Kukad, Nada Road and Sathod, primary school, children park, kindergartens are already constructed in host villages and resettlement sites are located near them.
Each state in India needs development. Hence, resettlement is the main issue of high significance for them. Each state has adopted piecemeal approach to R&R policy in lieu of a national resettlement policy. Hence, there is an urgent need to form a national policy with which the R&R efforts put in by different states would acquire a degree of uniformity. There may be a variation depending upon the culture, socio-economic conditions or geographic situation. However, uniformity has to be stipulated to some minimum possible level.

2. Every newly settled village is linked with a main road. Approach roads at the new sites are satisfactory. Tree plantations is also provided in new sites (viz. see photograph 3.2).

3. However, according to the NWDT Awards and World Bank's checklist, the government is expected to provide certain amenities, like Panchayat Ghar, dispensary and school. They have been named by NWDT as specific recommendations. The SSPA accepted such recommendations and made arrangements to fulfill them. It is reported that after resettling in a new habitat, some families felt that they made a mistake in selecting a site. They wanted to go another site. Sometime people felt comfortable only after three or four years stay at a new habitat.
4. There is very little land available for cattle to graze. Every person told about this and complained.

5. In some village, such things has missed like trees, water bodies, street network and climate.

5.2.2 **Drinking Water**

It is observed that drinking water facilities are provided at new habitats by laying pipelines and installing hand pumps. In new resettled villages, the drinking water situation is satisfactory. According to the official information, drinking water, wells or hand pumps are provided in the following resettlement areas in Dabhoi Taluka, like Vadaj-1, Vadaj-2, Golagamdi, Shinor Road-1, Shinor Road-2, Dharmpuri, Mangrol, Karnet and Kukad, Nada Road and Sathod (See Photograph 3.3).

5.2.3 **Land for Agriculture**

It is found that during the R&R process, oustees are allowed to cultivate land at both old and new places. It was a transitional phase in which one would find a husband at a new place and a wife at an old place, or the father at a new place and a son at an old place. The SSP understood the problem. It took a sympathetic stand. The agency helped the people to
visit the sites alternatively. It has been successful to involve the people in a vital decision of selecting a land for residence and also for cultivation. It is good that every family is getting land for agriculture at a newhabitate. However, it is also a fact that every one can not do agriculture especially those who engaged in other trade. Because agriculture managerial skill, knowledge and finance to operate.

5.2.4 Self-Employment and Developmental Programmes

It is observed that handful of the oustees are unhappy with the employment situations. Particularly those who are incapable to do agriculture on a piece of land given to them, find it difficult to manage their livelihood. As a result, there grows restlessness among such people. Recently NGOs are closely associated with introducing a few programmes in new villages with a view to developing the productive resources of the oustees. Training course for security guard, driving truck or car was introduced in Dabhoi Taluka. It aroused good response in the sense that most of the trainees were absorbed in jobs. In this manner, number of NGOs are actively participating in day to day implementation of R&R programme at various sites.

Apart from this developmental programmes, NGOs are involved in giving them employment. They organize various training courses in
manufacturing fruit jam, jelly, tomato catch-up, pickles etc. and also in tailoring and handicraft work. Especially women are trained in such vocations. Such efforts create good opportunities for self-employment. In addition to training programmes, NGOs also extend support to trainees to arrange finance through loans and to avail subsidies offered through government schemes. If such steps by the government ensure that adequate water facilities for oustees in Dabhoi Taluka villages like Vadaj-1, Vadaj-2, Golagamdi, Shinor Road-1, Shinor Road-2, Dharmpuri, Mangrol, Karnet and Kukad, Nada Road and Sathod.

All these programmes are designed to help people to develop and make them self-reliant in economic matters. The NGOs have been putting their best efforts to make it successful.

5.2.5 Social Welfare

When a family is busy reorganizing their living and earning to restore a condition of self-reliance, the youths may stay idle doing nothing during a day. There is a risk involved in their going astray and spoiling their character through drug addiction, alcohol, bad habits and vices. In this light, various youth activities are organized to involve youth in constructive works. Through counselling, they are persuaded to get rid of addiction and vices and put their energy in useful tasks. Such efforts have given out
positive results. Youth are prevented from diverting to vices. They try to cultivate good character and moral and support their parents and families in the efforts of rehabilitation.

5.2.6 **Life Style of the People**

The most important thing is the life style of the people. It is observed that the oustees are mainly farmers and cultivators on land. A careful implementation of the R&R has shown marked improvement in their condition. Most of the oustees own houses. They engage them in farming activities with modern technology and equipments. It is also observed that whenever people built house on their own, it is their self-help for themselves. They set their environment in a better way than that in core houses. The reason is they understand their needs in better way and put efforts in right direction. The logic here is not physical needs like that in resettlement. It is a question on taking care of psychological needs and emotional expectations of people hurt by the very fact of displacement. Hence, it has to be dealt with due delicacy and care. It is found to one's satisfaction that the government, the SSPA and NGOs put in sincere efforts in this psychologists and other sensible persons.
5.2.7 Housing Plots

Most of the oustees settled in new villages are happy with their new houses. Some of the oustees were, however, dissatisfied with the housing plots they received. Interim housing arrangements are related to the housing problem (See the Photograph 3.4).

5.2.8 Fuelwood

The oustees did not face the problem of fuelwood in their old villages as they were in close vicinity of forests regions. Now at new sites, they are bit worried about it. Particularly in the non-tribal villages, most of the complained about the storage of fuelwood in the new villages. They said that they had to spent a lot of time in fetching firewood from the forests nearing their old villages, as the new villages do not fall in the forest cover. They feel that they are worse off in a matter of fuelwood.

Although women form a large segment of the displaced, they receive very little or no attention from both the authorities and the displaced males in the population. The women are responsible to collect food, fuelwood and water and taking cattle for grazing. Now when they have shifted to a new site, they will have to learn things again and adjust to the new ecology. This can be very stressful to them.
5.2.9 **Relations With Government Officers**

Most of the people did not find any change in the attitude of government servants towards them. Government officers involved in developmental administration are reported to be negligent and in attentive to oustees. They are supposed to behave with them as friends and guides. According to the Tribal Development policy of the Government of India, administrators in tribal areas need to identify with people. There has to have due understanding in a relationship between the oustees and government officers. But most oustees reportedly have worse experiences from them. Many of them complained that government officers hardly ever visited them. This situation needs to be changed. It is observed that, there is lack of mutual understanding between the oustees and government officers, because of the lack of education of the oustees. So education is much important for them and the awareness of education is necessary for them.

5.2.10 **Integration with the Host Community**

Most of the R&R sites are quite close to villages that happen to be host villages both geographically and socio-culturally. The host people are expected to receive oustees cordially with little difference or biases prevail between them. The oustees need to be assimilated in a village by them to form a congenial and healthy human community. But it is a regretting fact
that few disputes prevail among them to cause tension to the host community as well as to the incoming people. This makes the issue of rehabilitation much more delicate and complicated.

It is also observed at some places that the oustees are accommodated in common village amenities like school, well, road, grazing land etc. Service castes and artisans of the host villages also provide employment to them. In fact, at their submerged villages, they did not do jobs or barber, carpentry, blacksmith and cobbler. Now the resettled people have become part of the rural economy.

It is also found that initially hesitation was noticed among local people to allow PAFs to participate in Panchayats. But gradually, their political participation has made its way through and there emerged a new leadership among PAFs.

Interactions in social spheres is allowed to take place between the host and oustees. It has increased over a period of time. Various factors are responsible to develop close social relations among these two sections and difference are slowly erased. In this, the distance between the new sites and the host villages plays an important factor. Most of the people have day-to-day working relationships. They visit each other in times of sickness, death, marriage and religious occasions.
But some cases are reported in which host villages view the new entrants and settlers as threat. They resent to share with them the available facilities and resources. Hence, the government with the help of committed NGOs should make efforts to explain the situation to the people of the host village and persuade them to help the oustees resettle among them. At some places like like Vadaj-1, Vadaj-2, Golagamdi, Shinor Road-1, Shinor Road-2, Dharpuri, Mangrol, Karnet and Kukad, Nada Road and Sathod, some displaced people have bitter experience with their hosts. It has reportedly resulted into their harassment and isolation from the village community. So it is necessary that the new entrants are integrated with the host people in a village for inter-communal harmony, peace and mutual trust among them.

5.2.11 Legal Flaw

It is again important to note that the gender bias affects the R&R policy adversely. In a tribal community, a few women have property or land in their name. The law considers an adult male as legal head of the family. The NWDT defines a family to include the husband, the wife, minor children and other persons dependent on the head of the family. There is no provision in law to consider a woman the head of the family in cases like a parent single women family like a widow or a divorcee with minor children. The award stipulates that every major son will be treated as a separate family. But a major daughter is not counted to be a separate family. Such
flaws in law may cause discrepancy in delivered benefits to PAFs that may result into dissatisfaction on the part and unjustful efforts on the part of the government.

5.2.12 State Government on the R&R

Each state in India needs development in terms of economic, socio-psychological and cultural sense. In lieu of a national R&R policy, each state has shown piecemeal approach to the R&R policy as and when the need compels them. Such an approach generates short-sighted, tentatively workable solutions to the problems that arise locally. These solutions lack consistency, sincere involvement and long-term vision and hence fail to provide any guidance for a national level problem. This may be the reason that the Sardar Sarovar Project has become so complexed and complicated, resulting in delay in completion, distribution of benefits to of the people and boosting the national economy.

Based on the observations drawn from their study and listed as above, a few suggestions for policy consumption have been worked out to help improve and enhance the effectiveness of the R&R policy and its implementations:
1. First of all, proper climatic considerations must be given to priority while preparing the site plan. The considerations include (a) wind directions (b) it is good to have sunlight in the morning but afternoon is too hot and (c) it would be good if the southwest side is blank and the like they should be worked under the guidance of an expert architect.

2. Most important things is to understand the life style of people. It is observed that whenever rural people build house, they self help for themselves. They set their environment better than core houses. Because historically they understand their needs better. They design their houses with a particular concept of utility, space and behaviour.

3. Most of the tribals prefer outdoor living, may it be sleeping, cooking, cleaning grains etc. In several houses, people have shifted the kitchen outside at the back. It is due to the smoke generated by the fireplace, and the shortage of proper place inside. They need to be helped in their planning and adjustment to the new site.

4. NGOs have taken up training work for the functionaries involved in implementing R&R, but there is a need for full-fledged training institute to impart R&R skills to all concerned.
5. Resettled women in the villages learnt the skills to prepare dry fruits, making jam and jelly, painting, canning and knitting etc. But there is no provision for marketing these products in urban areas. Hence, a proper arrangement should be made to reach their product in the market and sell them. Whatever profit is generated out of it should reach back to them. Backward and forward linkages of their such economic activities must be provided to them as they lack in this market experience. It should be seen that they are protected against all forms of market exploitation.

6. Cattle is an integral part of tribal life. They prefer to keep them in their houses at night and they would sleep outside. This fact requires rethinking to improve the design of their dwellings vide R&R policy.

5.3 TO SUM UP

Generally R&R policies are conceived and shaped by governments. Most often they are taken as knee-jerk reactions to the dissatisfaction of people. In the absence of a comprehensive national policy, there is a pattern of governments offering too little and too late until they are forced to do so. It makes future concessions by the time it is too late. Such conditions are bound to go on, when there is lack of public pressure and when the affected population is too backward and weak to protective. Secondly, unless outside
groups or agencies operate with sufficient concern and political wisdom, government may continue to get away with offering very little to the deprived. Consequently, our efforts have to be exclusively or otherwise built up on exerting pressures on the GOG agencies. If a proper policy is evolved, it will eliminate the necessity of building up pressures on GOG agencies engaged in R&R.

There is a need to study and document the problems of newly settled people. A post occupancy evaluation of the newly settled people will be utmost appropriate. The social scientists, architects, planners and administrators have done very little work so far to evaluate the R&R schemes. Hence, their active involvement and participation should be called for to update the schemes to render better benefits to the needy. Now when the SSP is being implemented, lessons and experiences of the resettlement planning will be of great value in the future.
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