Chapter 7

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS
It is a well-established fact that we can’t live without development in the wake of the challenges coming from both orthogenetic and heterogenetic sources. Time and again, it is proved that any development project essentially requires certain fundamental elements as raw material and a large patch of land is one of that. Now, because of continuous modernization activities and population explosion, barren land is scarcely available. In the absence of castrate land, planners have started looking towards small hamlets and surrounding agricultural lands, existing in the remote corners of the country. As a result, last few decades have observed large scale forced displacement of poor and mostly illiterate masses from their native places. Ejection out of the place of inhabitance is itself a painful experience and in the absence of watertight policy, advanced planning and inexperienced administration; the situation has further worsened. Result was breakdown of social and economic structure, landlessness and joblessness; cultural degeneration, ebbing values and beliefs; and most importantly attachment to the locale and psychological fear of leaving the place of ancestors.

This drew the attention of the Government as well as the World Bank due to its involvement with several important projects as a donor agency. Both national and international NGOs shared the apprehensions on the issue with their counterparts. Doubts were raised whether the process of development is going in the right direction? Whether it would lead to sustainable development of the region? In this backdrop, several enigmatic questions were pinning down to the mind, whose answers were essential to retrieve. Keeping in mind these mind boggling questions, present research work accomplished. As we headway with the main findings of the research work, we would raise those fundamental questions, which was taken into consideration at the time of survey.

Before delving deep into the findings, it is essential to clarify that present research work deals at micro level concerning impact of displacement in totality. On macro level, there may be both positive and negative implications of development. But current work emphasizes only on development-induced displacement and its effect on ecology and environment.
Background of the Singrauli Region

The region known as India's energy capital is perfect example of simultaneous existence of backwardness and modernity. In the past, Singrauli was an isolated little known and economically backward rural area with very less population, living in small and scattered settlements. After independence, the region started drawing attention of the planners basically for its large coal deposits, which could be utilized for generation of power for urban-industrial development. In conformity with the national goal, after the construction of the Govind Ballabh Pant Sagar in the 60s, number of thermal power plants came up and the coalmines rapidly raised their production to meet the growing demands of these plants. The establishment of HINDALCO and Renu Sagar power plant in early 60s and development of coalmines in the next two decades followed this. This succeeded the execution of the thermal power plants, viz., Obra, Singrauli, Anpara, Vindhyachal and Rihand. By latter 80s, Singrauli region became one of the most important power generating centers in the country feeding the urban-industrialized centers of north, central and western India and thus emerged as an area of strategic importance for the whole country. Meanwhile the landscape of the core area changed drastically. It became characterized by large open-cast mines with a retinue of rail-lines of MGRs, super thermal power plants and other heavy industries around Rihand reservoir, project townships, rehabilitation colonies as well as squatter settlements and also much of waste lands in between.

But development also brought several problems into sharp focus. Establishment of all these projects has caused large-scale displacement of people from their habitat and traditional occupations. Problems were in the form of lack of urban infrastructure for the non-project population, growing disparity in economic status between the locals and the new migrants; development of slums and squatter settlements close to the project townships. A large section of the local population was left out of the process of development and also received several reverse impact on the environment. Another distinguishing feature of displacement in the region is repeated relocation i.e. multiple displacement. In the absence of prior planning and location of several projects in small radius of 15 kms, people are forced to displace more than once.

The demographic characteristics of the region reflect the lower sex ratio, low literacy and high presence of SCs/STs population indicating the backwardness. The
proportion of men to women in urban Singrauli area is around 7 to 8 women to 10 men at present time. Population wise, 12.5% residents are of low Hindu castes and 15% members of Tribes. It may be estimated that 30% of the population consists of person who more or less correspond to the definitions of specific poor low status groups on the MP side of the lake and with the figure of 50% on the other side. Overall, the members of these groups number nearly 40%, out of which 20% are tribal.

**Background of the Communities Displaced and the Sample Undertaken**

The projects under consideration viz. VSTPP and RhSTPP are having resettlement colonies. VSTPP is having resettlement colonies in the form of Navjivan Vihar, scattered in 4 sectors. Whereas RhSTPP have Bijpur, Dodhar and a third upcoming colony called Sirsotti. As per NTPC records, a total of 6178 acres of land was acquired by VSTPP affecting 20 villages comprising 2515 families. For RhSTPP 3202 acres of land has been acquired affecting 6 villages and 1322 families.

250 head of the household were interviewed with the use of sampling method. Random Sampling was used to collect data from 125-affected head of the household from each of the project's resettlement colonies and surrounding areas. It was intended to ascertain first hand idea about the existential condition, caste configuration, occupation pattern, social and economic background of the residents and also the changes brought about among them during the years. Out of 250 head of the household interviewed, 228 (91.2%) were male and 22 (8.8%) were female. To secure proportionate data, it was tried to draw sample from all the resettlement colonies and PAPs living in the nearby villages. Displacement of sample population began in 1980 and continued till 1999. Out of 250 head of the household selected for interview, 140 (56%) are totally illiterate and only 44% are literate. Here it is worth mentioning that national average literacy rate stands at 52%, and the literacy rate of the sample population is far below national level. On the basis of caste, the sample is divided into 28 (11.2%) Brahmins, 12 (4.8%) Rajputs, 15 (6%) Teli, 27 (10.8%) Gaderia, 57 (22.8%) SCs, 34 (13.6%) STs and 18 (7.2%) Muslims. Out of the total sample, 150 (60%) were victims of multiple displacement. After eviction, most of the land oustees preferred to settle down at NTPC resettlement colony and its number stands for 206 (82.4%). When clarified about the present and past occupation, 178
(71.2%) families accepted their past occupation as agriculture. This has reduced down to just 27 (10.8%) at present times. Today, maximum frequency of respondents work as labor which is 115 (46%). This shows that the occupational patterns of the region has changed drastically and taken a shift from agricultural based to labor intensive works.

On the question of inter-religious interaction, only 60 (24%) confirmed communal participation and rest of others denied it. This is due to the fact that non-Hindus have very low percentage of existence in the region in the form of Muslims. PAPs are gradually becoming acquainted with modern entertainment means. 88 (35.2%) radio, 65 (26%) TV, 83 (33.2%) Cinema are the responses received from the families as source of entertainment. This highlights the modernized aspects of entertainment. Whereas, traditional aspects such as Mela, 170 (68%) and family, 229 (91.6%) still exist as major source of entertainment among the semi-urban population. Overall, the region indicates change with resilience and the simultaneous existence of tradition and modernity so far as the question of entertainment is concerned. In the newly resettlement colony, maximum families have Katcha houses, 140 (56%). 54 (21.6%) families manage to live in semi-pucca houses. Coupled with this, 26 (10.4%) families have ill-built Jhopri as their roof-top. Only 28 (11.2%) families have Pucca houses, which shows the dismal condition of the residence. 217 (86.8%) respondents felt the condition of present house is not better than the previous one existing in the villages. 25 (10%) accepted the condition of the present house as better than the previous one and 8 (3.2%) families maintained status quo and adhered to the option, 'remains same'.

As per household assets, overall only two items namely cot and bicycle were possessed by more than 50% of the households. Rest of other assets was in very low proportion with the oustees. This again represents the poor condition of the household. If the condition of the house is not good, one can't expect good quality of assets lying inside. Real assets have drastically reduced in the territory after displacement. Before displacement, there was only 1 person as without land or house. After displacement, it has gone up to 17, which is a remarkable growth and points out the problem of landlessness. Displacement has thoroughly destroyed the prime assets of the residents. As a consequence, most of the people have become landless and possess only ill built houses.
On the opinion regarding availability of various community infrastructure facilities in the resettlement colonies compared to that of the villages prior to resettlement, general remark showed negative trend. Most of the PAPs have asserted that community infrastructure facilities available in the resettlement colonies are not sufficient and it is lesser than what they had earlier in the villages. Respondents gave a good indication of family and society standing vides their monthly expenditure of the household. Most of the families restricted their monthly family expenditure within the range of Rs.500 on most of the household items. Only food item showed a remarkable increase in disbursement and stood in greater proportion in the range of Rs.2000. This was due to the loss of agricultural land, which turned the families of the region from unit of production to unit of consumption. Some important aspects which filtered out of the study suggest that people have become aware about the importance of education and that is why apart from 54 persons who are not paying any amount for this, rest of others are contributing a handsome amount. Secondly, use of liquor and tobacco has increased in the region. As the data indicates, except 40 PAPs who are not paying single penny for intoxicants, rest of others is providing good attention to this aspect.

**Details of Family Members**

At present 1321 members are staying in the houses of those heads of the households selected for interview. Gender wise 605 is male and 716 female. In comparison, before displacement these families had 1342 members dividing into 694 male and 648 female. So, numerically...there is not much difference in family distribution and average family composition in both the resettlement colonies seems to be just more than 5 per family. Age-wise maximum concentration of the population lies in the category of 'below 20'. This is 784 (58.42%) before displacement and 783 (59.27%) after and highlighted plenty of younger generation population staying in the region. Literacy-wise, it is evident that, earlier it was just 20%, which have shoot up to present 45%. Though it is still far below the national average literacy level, but despite this, it is a remarkable figure if we evaluate it with the previous level. In areas of marital status of family members, rate of marriage has decreased after inception of the project, which may be due to the inculcation of modern values and ideas. Distributing the same data of marital status on the basis of age and gender, we get
alarming figures. Before displacement figures indicate that there was violation of marriage code set-up by the Government of India. Out of total 649 persons in the age group of ‘below 18’, 217 male and 74 female are married. In comparison, present displacement figure suggests that lots of changes have taken place since then. In the category of ‘below 18’, only 20 persons were found married splitting into 4 male and 16 female. This figure shows a sharp reduction of under age marriage in the locality. This can be said as a remarkable achievement of the area after displacement and can be a product of industrialization and urbanization, which altered the orthodox mentality of the residents.

Regarding training and skills conferred to the PAPs, data indicates that before displacement only 4 persons received those benefits in comparison to 18 at present. Whereas 1338 family members before displacement and 1303 at present haven’t received any training or skill from NTPC in order to regain their lost livelihood. In the aftermath of loss of agricultural land and traditional source of occupation, most of the family members are unemployed and underemployed. They are more or less untrained and unskilled to engage in any work other than agriculture. Due to this, the rate of unemployment has shoot up from 46.34% before displacement to present status of 54.5%.

Agricultural activities of the region have reduced to the minimal, from 20.04% to surprising level of just 1.51% at present. Though the occupation of the family members has changed drastically in the region, but their proportional monthly income has not changed much.

It is evident by now that Singrauli region is extremely backward and so the inhabitants of the place are boorish. They had not much political affiliation earlier and are not motivated for this at present times also. As per the figure, only 1 person had association to the Panchayat before displacement in comparison to 3 at present.

Facilities provided in the RCs and Surrounding Areas

Main objective of the section was to ascertain various facilities such as education, medical, sanitation, drinking water, communication, banking, electricity etc. available in the region. On educational front, there were several schools found available in the region to cater the needs of primary and junior high level children. But in case of the private schools, the fee structure was too high to be shouldered by
the poor PAPs. Other government run schools was lacking infrastructure and teacher’s facilities. As the data show, Inter College, Degree College, Adult Education Center and Library Facilities available in the locality gives a very dismal picture. Health facilities are not much different from education. NTPC hospitals are not affordable to the poor residents, even though they provide some discount to the PAPs. Oustees blamed, they are seldom admitted to these hospitals, even if they are allowed, the charges are very high. Other hospitals and dispensaries run by government agencies also do not have very good reputation either. Often Doctors are not found when required and medicines don’t remain available in the hospital. Thus, overall the health situation of the area is in a very poor condition, which results in chronic disease, distress and death.

Sanitation and water facilities are also not adequate. Most of the houses don’t have tap water facility. In the absence of Tanks and Ponds in the resettlement colonies, at times nearby Nallah caters the need of some of the residents. Due to lack of proper maintenance, Hand Pumps and Public Toilets are not much under operation. Market facilities are limited to daily uses in both the resettlement colonies. In case of miscellaneous shopping, PAPs generally go to the nearby towns in the absence of whole sale market and marketing co-operatives. Banks are not available in the premises of the resettlement colonies as the PAPs are poor and don’t require such big money transaction. There is only one Gramin Bank available in Navjivan Vihar doing sluggish business and Rihand, on the other hand, don’t have any. The scare of poor and illiterate masses to go to Bank in case of need leads them into the trap of moneylenders, who are having more presence in the area and doing brisk business. There are no Post Offices in the resettlement colonies of Rihand and Vindhyachal. Telegraph office is of no use in the locality and thus no telegraph office is available. This shows poor quality of communication facilities available over there. Due to industrialization and consequent urbanization, convenience facilities showed a remarkable improvement in the region as road and rail transport is within easy reach of the residents.

As per NTPC records, approximately 75% houses of Vindhyachal resettlement colonies and 50% of Rihand are electrified. Streetlights are available in only 50% of the former and 30% of the latter colonies. But this figure doesn’t match with the existing situation. Due to high rate of electricity charge, PAPs could not able to pay the amount and generally remain in dark. Streetlights are also not much operational in
dearth of maintenance. Electricity is available for just 8 to 10 hours daily. It is ironical that those who are electricity providers for the country don’t have that facility for themselves. The nearby NTPC township and plants keep dazzling all the time and the resettlement colonies in the vicinity remain in dusk breeding feeling of alienation and psychological animosity towards the project authorities.

Social Structure

We investigated the affect of involuntary resettlement on aspects like family, caste and community. Coupled with this, crumbling of social fabric, well-patterned social organization, life sustaining informal social network of mutual help etc. In the background of these enigmatic questions, we kicked off present section to ascertain answers to these queries. Displacement has tear apart the social fabric of Singrauli region and destroyed the very platform on which the social aspects rest for stability. Before the inception of the project to the locality, the boorish people were living amidst peace and tranquility. The egalitarian community had full honor to the family values and the poor were far away from dexterous and cunning culture of the cities. But the sudden invasion of this homogenous civilization by an alien selfish culture has totally shaken the community. Those who were earlier living in affluence culture and fraternity had fallen prey to scarcity, chaos and turmoil. Availability of scarce resources and the acute competition between the poor villagers gave birth to treachery and jealousy, which smashed the social culture of the society.

Family dispute started with the reason of sharing of rehabilitation benefits received from NTPC. 33.2% familiés admitted that they are observing family dispute of some kind or other between son as well as father and other close affinal relatives such as uncle, mother, brother etc. Family dispute and quarrel resulted into the breakdown of the affinal ties, conflict of interest, shattering hopes and desires and ultimately crumbling of the families. In cases, the person who received the compensation and other benefits left rest of the family members high and dry. Sometimes the son deserted even their old parents on the verge to beg or die. The new economic system created by displacement and subsequent compensation payment breed another level of stratification within the economically backward families and communities, which were considered equal earlier.
Those who received high compensation and jobs from NTPC and subsequently abandoned the rest of the family members naturally became dusts in the eye for others. Now, since the person is part of NTPC because of the job, becomes eligible for all facilities and benefits, which creates a natural difference between him and rest of other family members, who didn't enjoy same benefits. This divided the families and created frustration, jealousy and animosity within them and stratified the family on economic and social level. Though industrialization has widened the inter-caste interaction and dining among the oustees but a bitter animosity has developed between them due to NTPC policy of 'divide and rule' and also because of the dominance of upper caste people at the time of receiving compensation. These so-called upper caste people because of their dominance and literary advantage grabbed creamy jobs, plots, and other resources. This act of vandalism further reduced the lower caste and downtrodden 'hand to mouth' and at the brink of the society, which aggravated the caste conflict in the region.

Due to industrialization, urbanization and policies adopted by NTPC and Government, economically deprived section of the population became strengthened. They have become more prone to economic advantages and as a result became accessible to education, employment and justice, which enlightened them of their rights and duties. Coming out of the shackles of the zamindari system, the poor started challenging the 'reign of terror' and exploitation; and strengthened the class conflict.

Agricultural mode of production got destroyed due to invasion of outsiders and the tiny plot measuring 60'x40' was not sufficient to accommodate big joint families under the same roof. Now it was hard to feed big families by a single bread earner. As a consequence, joint family structure fractured down and paved the way for nuclear families. Due to crumbling of joint families as safety valve mechanism, individual got exposed to difficulties and evils and in cases fell victim of illicit behavior.

In agrarian society, women were the pillars of strength for the house as well as the men folks. But in the new economic system, due to acquisition of agricultural land and destruction of the village set-up, women had no work to do and became idle and dependent. Even if some dared to work, that was not in their area of specialization, but in the labor-intensive jobs attached with the townships and the plant. Dowry system has also taken a steep expansion and resulted in the sharp decline of the status
conferred to the women. As a result birth of a girl child was heeded as curse to the family.

Aged and children, considered as the most vulnerable section of the society, also received pain and suffrage. Wrath of displacement pour venom to their freedom. Some of the elders could not adjust to urban atmosphere of the resettlement colonies, as it was pinching on their freedom and fell ill. Some of them died due to scare of going to new places. Others had deep-rooted attachment to their ancestral place and properties. The problems of the elders ranged from health, accommodation, poverty, and unemployment to food scarcity. Some of them even had to beg for survival. Children considered as the future of a nation, got spoiled by the turmoil in the environment and became used to liquor, tobacco, gambling, stealing and cheating. MTV culture has taken a deep penetration to their mind and to imitate that borrowed culture, children were ready to do anything. The dazzling and prosperous lifestyle of the project people also distracted the young and the virgin mind of the kids and has a repercussion on their behavior. To imitate that alien culture they were ready to adopt any foul method. Major problems affecting younger generation of the region were education, health, accommodation, playground, poverty, unemployment, drug, and liquor etc.

Turmoil and upheaval brought about in the region have destroyed family values and consequently the prestige and honor attached with the senior citizens and family members. This urbanized culture of selfishness has completely thrown away the village bonding and natal ties. 36.4% families admitted generation gap in their families i.e. the elders are not properly honored and obeyed in the family. As discussed earlier, whole region experienced deterioration of social and cultural values and as a consequence the family rituals attached with birth, death, marriage and other occasion of 'rites-de-passage' have also received a severe blow. People have no time, money and patience to celebrate these occasions of social importance in the usual manner as was done earlier. Only 4.8% families felt very strongly attached with the family rituals. This is an alarming proportion and indicating that grass-root Indian culture is slowly loosing its authenticity and enduring nature.
Economic Condition

We attempted to find out the nature of economic changes and its impact on the livelihood of the affected persons. Inquiry was done whether PAPs feel crushed due to loss of agricultural land, what is their present mode of occupation, do they feel comfortable in the new economic system etc. Economically the region paid the price of development. Due to acquisition of agricultural land and dwelling, poor villagers were thrown on the verge of 'hand to mouth'. PAPs, in lieu of the lost land and livelihood received small patch of land measuring 60'x40' in the resettlement colony and meager money as compensation, not sufficient to restore the lost livelihood. Very few dominant land oustees managed to get permanent employment and contract jobs in the project but that was concentrated mostly to the higher castes and landlords. Some money for construction of houses in the resettlement colonies was provided to the oustees from NTPC through local government, which was not adequate enough to construct dwelling. Due to severe economic crisis, the money received by the poor was spent in some other urgent social and economic needs of the time. Those who didn’t had any social and economic obligations, could not able to retain the money and lost it in gambling, liquor, drugs and prostitution. In other narratives, clever cheated the poor and snatched the money from them. The ill-built houses constructed in the resettlement colonies verify the lack of cash used for this purpose.

Due to breakdown of agricultural as main source of livelihood, the oustees are now engaged in several activities such as own agricultural activities, work on other’s land, contract labor, outside village, NTPC, shop and business etc. As per the data, residents have come out of the clutches of agricultural activities and work in diversified areas. There were cases in which old and aged were begging for livelihood. To get contract jobs in the project, the victims had to pay some commissions to the contractors. As a result, 44.8% respondents felt problem with the remuneration structure. Due to loss of sustainable livelihood, people were trapped in to debt burden. 27.2% families accepted that they have borrowed from various sources. Regarding the purpose of loan, they attributed reasons for marriage, house construction, illness, education, business and agriculture.

Overall, the comparison of monthly income before displacement to the present day standing after displacement does not specify many changes in the economic status of the residents. Before displacement, maximum concentration of population was in
the monthly income range of Rs.1 to Rs.3000. Slight expansion of income in the light of inflation between 1984 to 2002 doesn’t specify any significant improvement. In fact, the buying capacity of the money has decreased significantly between approximately 20 years of time after displacement. Coupled with, in agronomy agricultural and forest products, milk, fodder and most importantly CPRs are generally hidden income remained unaccounted in the total family earnings, which swept away in the new economy. Thus, a close observation does not confirm the improved economic status of the inhabitants of the Singrauli region rather it has gone down significantly.

Domestic cattle are the backbone of the agricultural economy and fulfill basic needs of farmers such as milk, fuel, fodder, agriculture and transportation. The status after displacement marks a sharp decline. Useful animals such as buffalo, oxen and cow don’t show much presence in the region.

Psychological Condition

What was the mental condition of the PAPs, do they want to move from the place of inhabitance? Had they been feeling attached to their ancestral properties and religious symbols, what was their feeling during relocation, whether they felt scared? These are the most pertinent questions attached with the PAPs, which draws attention in the section. The unending tale of plight and suffering of the people of the Singrauli region and their psychological stature on specific instances are assessed in the following passages.

Most of the residents had fear of relocation and it was more traumatic for the old and aged persons, who had spent maximal span of his/her life in the familiar village set-up. People were traumatized due to forced relocation. They were quite uncertain about their future in the absence of dwelling and sustainable livelihood. The time when PAPs were getting displaced from the place of inhabitance, they demonstrated blend of reactions. Some had ire and fury, others were under anxiety, fear and trauma. There were few who showed happiness and others who preferred to remain calm and neutral. There were various reasons behind their feeling. Problem of social identity has become fundamental for people. They felt their existence is threatened which can’t find way in a new collective identity, at a strange place. As per the data, 56.4% respondents felt scared and 38% nervous at the time of relocation.
PAPs were not able to forget their old inhabitance. So, consciously or unconsciously, the loss of house and dwelling left a deep-rooted psychological impact on their mind. Response received from families unconditionally confirmed the point, as 96.8% felt attached to old house. On the question of feeling secure at new relocation site, villagers vehemently criticized and rejected the set-up of the resettlement colonies and said it didn’t suit to their rural mentality and pattern of living. 84.4% felt unsecured and showed their dismay and antipathy towards the resettlement colonies and the new relocation site and said, lack of friendly neighborhood are always missed over here. This is not matching with their design of activity, forget about the feeling of security. They can’t expect help and support even in their wildest dream from their neighbors, which is creating continuos feeling of insecurity in their mind.

Coupled with, loss of traditional gods, monuments and idols had deep-rooted impact on the minds of the residents and were scared that if they don’t worship these religious entities, it would bring wrath on them. They had fondest memories attached with the traditional ancestral sites of religious and cultural significance. 211 respondents out of 250 interviewed, confirmed living under scare of wrath of god. Their problems aggravated further when they felt socially alienated in the new resettlement colony. They had to face strong opposition from the host communities, which made their life more miserable. The host considered the migrant competitors for the scare resources available in the area and had conflictive attitude towards them. Thus, PAPs were on the fringe of the social and economic base. The psychology governing the urban culture was not suiting to their mentality, resulting in frustration, agony, anguish and alienation as a whole. Due to loss of home, hearth and sustainable livelihood, the oustees became completely dependent on NTPC for plots in resettlement colonies, adequate compensation for the lost property and also permanent and contract jobs in the project.

PAPs had seen such big money, received as compensation, for the first time in their life and divulged in luxurious lifestyle. In the absence of sustainable employment and source of livelihood, residents developed dependency syndrome on NTPC. In case of shortage of money, they started demonstrating against NTPC for more resources. NTPC, to construct and run the project peacefully, tried to appease some of the oustees by giving more money and resources. Same behavior filtered down to the younger generation. Even those who were not born at the time of displacement started looking towards NTPC. The logic behind their demand was that,
since NTPC destroyed them completely, so now it is their responsibility to take care of their generations to come. Dependency syndrome and inheritance question were the two most burning problems existing against the NTPC authorities and continuously shaking the peaceful atmosphere of the Singrauli region.

The episode of resettlement and rehabilitation became a nightmare for the women residents. The region experienced total degeneration of social and cultural values and introduced evils like alcoholism, gambling and prostitution. Women being the softest target faced a brunt of it and their miseries ranged from eve teasing to rape. Nowadays, they fear coming out of their houses in the dark, due to fright of the hooligans present in the surrounding areas.

Cultural Impact

Prime objective here was to ascertain cultural impact experienced by the residents. Kind of changes brought about in their behavior, values, beliefs, customs, tradition, and lifestyle, dressing pattern, eating habit and so on so forth. Sudden invasion of the completely closed society portrayed ‘cultural shock’ to the residents. Not able to withstand and behold their tradition and culture, they swept away with the forceful current of alien and attractive civilization. Arrival of outside values and economic parameters completely affected the self-dependent and self-sufficient community. The broke, tried to imitate the lifestyle of the rich and made them as their ‘Reference Group’. PAPs started running after the bright light of the cities, luxurious items, borrowed culture and dressing pattern. But lack of money, resources and ability to follow the culture of the project authorities was coming into the way of these landless, homeless and destitute people. Not able to imitate resulted in the breeding of frustration and deep-rooted instinct to follow the path of cheating, burglary, stealing, drinking, gambling etc. There was no respect for elders left in the community and the brothers were fighting for the share of property. Desertion of parents, quarrel, separation, break down of the families were quite common. Youngsters were trying to follow ‘MTV’ and ‘Star TV’ culture. Their dressing pattern, style of life, behavior and way of talking perceived a drastic change. As a whole the region experienced social and cultural degeneration and the concepts like values, ethics, moral etc. were all forced to the back and instead greed, temptation and hunger, breach of trust etc. were
having reasonable ground for foreplay in the selfish society that emerged in the aftermath.

Loss of cultural heritage, sites and monuments were like injury of pride for the poor. The place, house, monuments, idols, sites, rivers, ponds, totems, symbols etc. all play an important role in associating man with the nature. So the loss of these small but precious things meant a lot for the poor for which they still lament after 20 years.

Dressing pattern improved with the induction of modern values and TV culture. 56.8% families admitted that their dressing pattern has modernized during years after the inception of the project. Due to changing parameters of life and with the introduction of modern urbanized values, people don’t have time to observe the religious rituals with the same intensity. 82.8% families accepted that there are large-scale changes in observation of religious rituals and attributed it into the development of science and technology. PAPs have no time, patience and most importantly money and other resources to celebrate the festivals and other occasions of ‘rites-de-passage’ with same intensity and vigor. Related to this, calendric rituals attached with crops have also deteriorated. Those living in the resettlement colonies could hardly understand the meaning of these concepts due to industrialization of their activities. They are no longer living in the agronomic world and in these atmosphere agricultural activities and harvesting occasion have no meaning in their life.

Though in the industrialized and urbanized atmosphere, inter-caste interaction increased and caste rivalries have decreased. But inter-caste marriage still remains a distant dream, which symbolizes with the rest of India.

Policy Awareness, Mental Preparedness and the Problems Encountered

After acknowledging deep-rooted negative impact of displacement on the social, economic and cultural facets of life of the displaced possess, we wish to inquire into their rehabilitation problems especially regarding acquisition of land? Had they been aware of Land Acquisition Act of India and its proceedings and, the kind of problems faced in the absence of literacy, wisdom and consequently reasoning ability? Role of government machinery and the atrocities and discrimination faced by the oustees in the absence of knowledge was also ascertained.

The information received explains that the victims living in the Singrauli region didn’t know in advance about their future fate. Their vision was blurred in the
absence of knowledge and wisdom. Mental preparedness for the problem was nil and they were completely dependent on others especially the project authorities who were the masters of their destiny. Neither NGOs nor Government organizations gave a helping hand to these oustees at times of deep distress, and the residents had no one to help except god, who in all probable too seems to be angry with the PAPs at that time.

Without information and comprehension of the problems, they could not anticipated further difficulties. Same thing happened with the residents of Singrauli as 81.2% respondents showed unawareness about R&R policy. PAPs were not able to decipher the meaning attached to the posters adhered at the walls of the streets, concerning acquisition of land. By the time they could realize the gravity of the situation it was too late. In the absence of necessary information, the oustees were mentally unprepared for the relocation and on account of forced movement; most of the families lost their valuables and other utensils. The whole process of forced relocation to the settlement of a new place was full of pain and sorrow. In the absence of knowledge about NTPC policy and Land Acquisition Act of India, the suffering of PAPs continues till date. Oustees felt cheated and mistreated in the absence of concrete guidelines and also because of the discriminatory attitude of the authorities.

Their problem began with the Section-4 notification, which was served in the beginning of the 80s and continues even today, as NTPC requires more land for their upcoming expansions. Section-4 notification halted all government and private activities as well as sale and purchase of property in the region. In the absence of guideline, the whole process of relocation was ad hoc and short term. In Vindhyachal, no initial socio-economic survey was done before displacement and the oustees were forcibly thrown out of their dwellings and the agricultural lands without any prior compensation payment. The plight of the residents of Rihand is also not different than this. Even if, compensation was paid, there was no fixed criterion and for the same kind of land and dwelling lost, varying compensation was paid. It was depending on the loser’s social and economic status, strength to oppose the acquisition and the ability to raise voice against government machinery. So in cases, single family managed to grab multiple plots on the name of various family members whereas, others could not receive even a single plot. In case of compensation package, it took years for the oustees to secure the same as in most of the cases the process fell under dispute due to some reason or other. To rectify the problems pertaining to disputes, PAPs run for years to the NTPC and Tehsil office and in cases had to pay handsome
money as bribery for the modification of small aberrations in the documents. This happened in most of the cases as the rural people perform most of the sale and purchase verbally in the presence of witness among the kith and kin. As a result PAPs had no Patta in their hand to claim their land as their own. Even the valuation of land was far below the prevailing market prices in the region due to lacunae in the policy governing the evaluation of rate of agricultural land. Those who were cultivating on forestland had no patta and so didn’t receive any compensation. Out of the whole process, most severely affected were those dependent on the village economic structure for livelihood such as carpenter, weaver, barber, priest, landless laborers etc. as they were completely thrown out of business.

At the time of shifting, Government machinery promised all necessary assistance to the PAPs in terms of transportation, food, medical facilities etc. But to the dismay of the victims, government personnel present at the site were much busy with the work of destruction, to make sure that the whole process of relocation takes place right on time. Kith and kin of the victims were passing through the same traumatic experience and there was no one to help. Consequently, the insolvent villagers found themselves all alone in their quest for survival. Resettlement colony was barren and was not conducive for residence because of the presence of snakes, scorpions, lizards and other poisonous insects. Sanitation facilities were redundant. Potable water was not available in the absence of tanks, ponds and wells and the residents had to depend on nearby ‘Nallah’ in most of the cases. Their problems aggravated further in the absence of toilet facilities and drainage. Due to all this, health problem shoot up in the region and in the absence of adequate medical facilities, many died.

Relocation was not the end of the trauma in the lives of the victims rather it started a new phase of agony, anguishes and frustration. It was very difficult for the villagers to adjust and accommodate in the congested atmosphere of the resettlement colonies. Tiny plots measuring 60’x40’ was not sufficient to accommodate big joint families and their livestock. In the absence of cattle space, grazing land, community space, orchards and open space, life became more miserable. Electricity was not available in most of the houses. Due to loss of agricultural land, as sustainable source of income and livelihood, the residents were in acute condition of landlessness and joblessness. Few elders and aged could not able to adjust in new atmosphere, either migrated to some other place or died remaining over there.
Whole scourge of resettlement and rehabilitation invited buckets of criticism for NTPC and other government agencies involved in the process of acquisition and relocation. There were cases of favoritism and support to the relatives and dominant members of the society. Information regarding acquisition was selectively leaked in advance by the officials to their relatives living in the surroundings and they in turn purchased big patches of land before Section-4 notification was served. Most of the jobs, contracts, training facilities, shops, licenses, development funds and choicest plots are grabbed by these outsiders acted as aggrieved parties by cleverly purchasing the lands at low prices. Shops at good locations were allotted to those willing to pay handsome money to the authorities. Those who didn’t fulfill the expectations of the officials could not get the plots and even if they received, it was situated at remote places not commercially viable. Working in contract jobs of the project required furnishing commission to the contractors, otherwise the jobs were allotted to the outsiders.

Due to the process of acquisition of agricultural and forestland, the ecological balance of the region is greatly destroyed. Big jungles, trees, forest products, wild animals, livestock, grazing land, flora and fauna, varying climate, ponds, lakes etc. all decayed. Deforestation has directly affected the tribal population dependent on forest products for livelihood. Ash dykes, continuously vomiting polluting and hazardous elements to the environment posed a health hazard. Adding fuel in the fire, the Rihand Sagar Lake has been found positive for ‘mercury’, a hazardous element for health. Both these problems aggravated the health hazards in the region.

Rehabilitation and resettlement has been dealt till now by engineers and managers, in a haphazard, ad hoc and mechanical form. They were callous and indifferent towards the problems of the oustees. Under the pressure from World Bank and world community, NTPC inducted Sociologists into the R&R team with the aim to bridge the gap between NTPC management and the victims of the project. But the untrained and powerless Sociologists, on the other hand, were used as spy to ascertain necessary information and agent to get the land vacated from the clutches of the residents. As a result of all this, 78.8% families felt mistreated by NTPC management.

The policy of World Bank and NTPC envisages participation of the stakeholders in the decisions, which is going to affect them at large. Keeping this perspective in mind and to establish friendly atmosphere, VDAC and PIC was set up by NTPC. But that remained only on paper and could not yield any positive result.
Villagers have never been consulted before, during and after displacement. Rather than dialogue, the whole process was based on monologue. Keep apart the participatory approach; the episode of relocation was forceful and poised with victimization of the sufferer.

**Rehabilitation Package**

We attempted to find out the gap between the promised rehabilitation package and actual delivery i.e. to ascertain the discrepancies between people's expectations and actual release of compensation. Huge gap was noticed between the information about entitlement of rehabilitation package and the actual delivery. Innumerable promises made by NTPC officials to the oustees during resettlement. As per R&R policy of NTPC, there were provision of ‘land for land’, permanent jobs, contracts and other necessary training and skills so that the oustees could at least regain its lost livelihood, if not able to improve that. But the reality was too harsh. Some of the PAPs got lured with the oasis promises made by the authorities and readily vacated the land. Those not willing to surrender easily and amiably were forcibly thrown out of their places. Initially NTPC denied permanent employment due to technical nature of the job, latter land for land option was also not found feasible. Compensation for agricultural land was too meager to fetch them land or business. Plot received in the resettlement colony was too small to accommodate big joint families.

Most of the petty landholders and middle income families, after pauperization slipped in to the job of labor with the contractors, which was the most viable and feasible option in front of the poor at the time. At this juncture of misery, when the PAPs found themselves on the crossroad, very few could able to get help. As per survey, 83.2% respondents could not get help from any one encompassing neighbor, friends, relatives, NTPC, NGOs or any other. Assistance provided by NGOs and local bodies was also dismal. 92.4% families didn’t receive any kind of assistance from these organizations. In this atmosphere, 94.4% respondents considered the cooperation of NGOs as not satisfactory.

In this ire and frustration, 95.2% families projected NTPC policy as hostile and destructive. Victims knew that the World Bank financed the monstrous project standing on the graveyard of their home and land, they considered them also equally responsible. 90.4% interviewees considered that World Bank has brought about
problems, unemployment and destruction in the region. To the question, if NTPC asks for remaining part of land and house, what will you do? In response, 45.6% voted for the option 'don't give' whereas, 52% families went one step ahead by saying they will 'throw them out'. Lastly, victims still have bundles of expectations from NTPC and World Bank even if considerable time has lapsed since displacement. PAPs showed all round expectation ranging from welfare, economic to infrastructure facilities.

**Policy, Planning and Administration**

Main hypothesis in this part was to evaluate the efforts done by Government, NGOs and other donor agencies to deal with the problem. To throw light on the policy of R&R and also Land Acquisition Act of India. To evaluate the opinion of the oustees towards the whole issue. Despite R&R being the burning problem of the day, there is no national policy. In the absence of national policy, the whole episode is receiving raw deal. Though, there are efforts from Government and NGOs to formulate a watertight policy, but due to dearth of will power and keenness, it is still in the draft stage. The callous and indifferent attitude of the government becomes evident in the fact that draft national policy is still under discussion since 1989 under the nodal body of Ministry of Rural Area and Employment. Some states and autonomous organizations have formulated their specific R&R policy under the pressure from donor agencies. But in the absence of national policy, ad hoc and part time measures are being adopted, which is treating similar cases with different procedure, breeding the ground for discrimination.

World Bank was the first international organization, who took to the matter seriously and made it mandatory to the borrower to adopt measures to tackle with the problems of R&R. This is the pioneering effort of the Bank that people and NGOs have become sensitized about the problem.

NTPC being the largest borrower from World Bank also felt pressure and bowed down to the demands of World Bank. In 1991, it came out with a formal policy, which was revised in 1993. This was further revised time to time and NTPC updated its policy of R&R as per the prevailing situation and demand of the hour. A closer view demystify that due to lack of vision and changing parameters of NTPC policy, lots of problems and discriminations are faced by the PAPs. NTPC still
considers R&R as ornamental and ad hoc activity. In this background, NTPC still works with engineers and managers as nodal persons to interact with the PAPs. R&R being socially sensitive area require human touch in the form of sociological and anthropological experts, which NTPC don’t want to recognize. They inducted untrained Sociologist with the aim to attain human touch, but it could not yield positive results. At present, both the resettlement colonies lack participatory approach in the absence of functional PIC and VDAC. There is no one to hear the problems of the victims. Despite NTPC’s latest effort to come out with IMP package, there are large-scale dis-satisfactions among the Stage-1 people, who blame NTPC being opportunist and adept divide and rule policy.

The Land Acquisition Act of 1894 and its revision of 1984 are in archaic form. Essentially, it was formulated to suit the needs of the colonial British’s and as such had not given much scope of maneuvering for the victims. It still exists in the same form where PAPs couldn’t do any thing except show protest by writing objection application to the collector. Objection letter to the Collector should be filed within 30 days of the notification alleging that the acquisition is not in the national interest. The whole procedure of land acquisition is so complicated and time consuming that it is beyond the understanding level of the indigent PAPs living in the remote corners of the society. NGOs present in the region does not show much presence in the form of development activity.

Due to all these factors, there was large-scale dis-satisfaction among the victims towards the role of the NGOs, World Bank, NTPC and also Land Acquisition Act of India.

Time has come. Now government should and must think seriously towards the vicious problem and chalk out concrete National R&R Policy. Land Acquisition Act also need modification so that it could be more people friendly. We are part of a democratic world, where we can’t live in monologue but should start worshipping the theory of dialogue. In the absence of these, poor and innocent masses will continue feeling pressure and pay the price for national development goals.