CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION: WAY OUT
The Big Dam issue has become very controversial because of its very obvious social and ecological effects. Displacement of a large number of people has become a major human rights issue. At least 185 lakh persons have been displaced during the last five decades of planned development and at least 60 percent of them have not been resettled. The pre requisite of large river valley projects seems to be a heavy toll of dense forests and the best food growing lands. These have been the material bases for survival of a large number of people especially the tribals. In the context of overused land resources, land for land basis of compensation for million of oustees seems to be highly difficult. On the other hand the cash compensation provided to the tribals does not seem to be much effective because of their lack of exposure to the monetary economy.

In sharing the benefits from development also the poor lag behind the rich. The rich are quick to seize opportunities. Which open up with the inauguration of development projects. The new jobs go to those who have the requisite skills, but the poor happens to be mostly unskilled. Even if unskilled jobs come their way in industry, it is not easy to make transition to an occupation different from what they had traditionally been pursuing back in their villages. The ecologists criticise the model of development on the ground that the dominant ideology of development has been concerned only with the use of national resources for commodity production and capital accumulation. It ignores the large number of people whose needs are not satisfied through the market mechanism.
Those who argue that present form of development is designed to provide exclusive opportunities for any particular group are putting forth an extreme viewpoint. The purpose of development is to promote wider national interests for the benefits of all. The benefits from development project accrue to the society at large. However, as discussed in the I and III Chapter of this Thesis it is now widely acknowledged that the key problems with projects requiring resettlement is that costs are unequally shared. These people who bear the trauma of being displaced in most cases donated seem to have a share in the benefits of the development project.

The solution is to strike a balance between the two. We have to search for alternatives both in the type of rehabilitation and the nature of projects to be undertaken. Just as fewer dams need to be constructed along with other projects that exploit our natural resources. Our dependence on these may have to be reduced drastically. Similarly emphasis should be given to find alternatives for water management. In this context performance of Indian Planning has been a total failure. Minor irrigation promotion should be emphasised which promote rural capital formation and small dams which displace fewer people.

Along with this, emphasis should be given to the utilisation of ground water, drip irrigation and lift irrigation etc. Proper socio-economic and technical survey should be undertaken before construction of a project to make sure that it will be economically viable in the long run. The ideal solution would be to treat water as a community resource and go to village level planning. The solution to water problems should be situation and location specific.
However, as said before all the big dam constructions cannot be stopped. So when displacement has to take place the insistence should be on a viable rehabilitation schemes preceding the project and not one which succeeds it. Informal economy of the tribals should be taken into account where most of the projects are coming up.

We have to take proper steps to ensure fair and first rehabilitation. Simultaneously our effort should also be to reduce the number of these projects to a considerable extent and displace the least number of people. A whole new movement has developed against the destructive pattern of development, consisting of a wide assortment of social activists, intellectuals, environmental and human rights groups with increasing grass root support.

The rehabilitation scheme have to be such that they ensure that benefits reach the weaker sections. Similarly there is great need to have a national rehabilitation policy. Legislation is necessary to provide entitlements, to the impoverished among displaced and democratic accountability of officials should be restored. The concerned people should be consulted and their active participation should be encouraged while phasing the whole process.

With land resources becoming scarce land for land principle of compensation has become very difficult. It is necessary to equip these people with alternative skills and education in order to enable them take up alternative means of livelihood.
A Gross National Product (GNP) based pattern of development hides inequalities and does not reveal the type of injustice done to a section of people in the name of national development which may benefit a few powerful groups.

This approach has to be questioned and the very nature of development projects, have to be analysed in a more creative way before displacement is considered inevitable as the planners seems to do.

However the solution does not lie on putting an end to all form of development projects based on modern science and technology and going back to primitive mode of natural resource management and having self sufficient communities. Such an ideology will bring more poverty deterioration in life conditions of the people.

Our research for an alternative development paradigm should be based on resource prudence and satisfying the basic needs. It should be people oriented and not GNP based.