

DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS AND HUMAN RIGHT PROTECTION: THE CIAL IN KERALA

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Abstract

This paper discusses the issue of human right and development in the context of the displacement and resettlement of the people affected by the development project of the Cochin International Airport Limited in Kerala, India. It points out the violations of the human rights involved in the displacement of the project-affected people and the adverse impact of resettlement on the life of the resettled people. The theoretical concepts that underlie the discussion in the paper are human rights, impoverishment risks and reconstruction, human development, development-induced displacement, and resettlement. The issues involved in displacement and resettlement of the project affected people are multiple displacements, right of the individual versus state in displacement, compensation, housing and health facilities, means of livelihood, social capital and payment of social costs, participation of the displaced people in the planning and implementation of resettlement, and risks to the host population. Finally the paper tries to draw certain implications for social intervention, particularly of social work profession, in the situation of displacement and resettlement of project-affected people.

INTRODUCTION

Development is a term that received great significance and also became a matter of debate in the post-independence history of India. Development

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projects have been viewed with pride as symbol of the gradual process of modernisation and resource intensification, i.e., a paradigm of development glorifying 'progress and modernity' but at the cost of social justice (Baviskar 1995: 19). The draft of the resettlement policy prepared by the Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India in 1994 stated that development induced displacement causes "state induced impoverishment" and "no developmental project can be justified if a section of society is pauperised" (Cernea 1995:256). The basis of land acquisition (according to the Land Acquisition Act 1894 as amended in the year 1984) termed as 'eminent domain' and 'public purpose' gives unquestionable right to the government over land. This means that state's right is preferred to individual's right. There is serious conceptual confusion and vagueness of the provision of 'eminent domain' and 'public purpose.' As a result the provision is often deliberately misinterpreted or misused in order to pursue private rather than public interests to the extent that in reality human rights of individuals are violated. Development projects under the provision of acquiring land for 'public interest' often resort to forced displacement of human beings, and cause de-capitalisation or impoverishment in social capitals, human capitals, human-made capitals and natural capitals (Cernea 2000: 45), which in turn adversely affects certain sections of the society that are in minority or powerless. It is, therefore, necessary to examine the extent to which human right violations take place in such development projects, and resettlement results in impoverishment.

This paper is an attempt to discuss the issue of human right and development in the context of the induced displacement and resettlement of the people affected by the development project of the Cochin International Airport Limited (CIAL) in Kerala, India. It points out the violations of the human rights involved in the displacement of the project-affected people and the adverse impact of resettlement on the life of the resettled people. Human right violation is discussed in relation to the human rights enunciated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted by United Nations General Assembly resolution 217 A (III) of 10 December 1948. The discussion on the adverse impact of resettlement on the displaced is carried out under the theoretical framework of *Impoverishment Risks and Reconstruction*, developed by Michael M. Cernea. The first part of the paper presents the basic concepts used in the paper. The second part deals with the extent of human right violation and pauperisation in the case of the displaced and resettled people affected by the CIAL project. Finally the

paper tries to draw certain implications for social intervention, particularly of social work profession, in the situation of displacement and resettlement of project-affected people.

1. BASIC CONCEPTS

Theoretical concepts that underlie the discussion in the paper are human rights, impoverishment risks and reconstruction, human development, development-induced displacement, and resettlement. A brief description of these concepts is given below.

1.1 Human Rights

The concept of human rights used in this paper refers to the universal human rights, which every person is entitled to, because they are justified by a moral standard that stands above the laws of any individual nation. Human rights are a special sort of inalienable moral entitlement of every human being. They apply to all persons equally, by virtue of their humanity, irrespective of race, nationality, or membership of any particular social group. They specify the minimum conditions for human dignity and a tolerable life.

Human rights are best enunciated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted by United Nations General Assembly resolution 217 A (III) of 10 December 1948 (Wikipedia 2009). They include the right to property (article 17), the right to social security, and economic, social and cultural rights indispensable for one's dignity and free development of personality (article 22), the right to work (article 23), the right to rest and leisure (article 24), the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of oneself and of one's family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care, and necessary social services (article 25), the right to education (article 26), and the right to participate in cultural life of the community (article 27).

1.2 Impoverishment Risks and Reconstruction

The concept of impoverishment risks and reconstruction (IRR) was developed by Michael M. Cernea in response to the need of a new model to describe the pain and panic the project-displaced people undergo, and the methods to prevent them (Cernia 2000:49). Scudder–Colson's model

formulating a theoretical framework for resettlement processes stated how people and socio-cultural systems responded to resettlement. This diachronic model identified four stages of a successful resettlement – recruitment, transition, potential development, and handing over or incorporation – with each stage tracking resettlers' behavioural response patterns to the disruptions and stress caused by relocation (Cernea 1991: 250). In contrast to the Scudder–Colson's model, IRR model does not attempt to identify different stages of relocation, but rather aims to identify the impoverishment risks intrinsic to forced displacement and the processes necessary for reconstructing the livelihoods of the displaced. IRR is a synchronic model capturing simultaneous processes of destitution (risk to impoverishment) and recovery (reconstruction). Sociologically the concept of risk indicates the possibility that a certain course of action will trigger future injurious effects – losses and destruction. The concept of risk is posited as a counter-concept to security. The higher the risks, the lower will be security. Risks are often directly perceptible and also measurable through scientific methods as they are objective reality. The cultural construction of a risk – be it a social risk or a natural risk – could emphasise or de-emphasise (belittle) its seriousness and also ignore it, but this does not change the objective existence of a risk.

The risks faced by the displaced people are varied according to the situations. There is an interconnectedness and pattern in the expression of risks. Risks vary depending upon circumstance, sector and season. The intensity may vary among persons, times, groups and cultures. There will be predominance of certain risks in all displaced communities. Affected people must deal with these risks virtually simultaneously, as patterned situations, not just one at a time. Though the vulnerability differs in groups and communities, forced-displacement situations intrinsically contain a risk pattern (Cernea 1999: 45). Unless specifically addressed by targeted policies, forced displacement can cause impoverishment among the displaced when the following risks are actually realised: risks of landlessness, joblessness, homelessness, marginalization, food insecurity, loss of access to common property resources, increased morbidity and mortality, and social disarticulation. Downing (1996: 40) and Mahapatra (1999: 200) have added three more risks: loss of access to public services, disruption of formal education activities, and loss of civil and human rights. Downing (1996:39) termed them as *new poverty* measured in terms of survivability and human dignity. These risks are linked in three separate ways. First, as causes of impoverishment, they influence one another. Second, the risks and actions

to avoid or address them are linked as well. Third, mitigating the different risks can work synergistically to reconstitute more sustainable future livelihoods by drafting a resettlement action plan with the help and participation of both the displaced and the host population among whom they are resettled (Cernea 2000: 12).

1.3 Human Development

Human development is the right of every human being. The human rights enunciated in the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the other rights provided in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights are meant to ensure human development. It can be drawn from these declarations on various rights of human beings that human development is an inalienable right by virtue of which every human person and all peoples are entitled to participate in, contribute to, and enjoy economic, social, cultural and political development. A human right-based approach to development is a conceptual framework for the process of human development. Essentially, a right-based approach integrates the norms, standards and principles of human rights into the plans, policies and processes of development. The principles underlined here, are equality and equity, accountability, empowerment and participation including the elements of five fold rights (civil, cultural, economic, political and social), non-discrimination and attention to vulnerable groups. It means recognising close relationship between development activities and efforts to promote respect for human rights. Thus, right-based approach brings the promise of more effective, sustainable, rational and genuine development processes. In this way, development has to move from the realm of charity to that of obligation.

1.4 Development-Induced Displacement

Development-induced displacement can be defined as forcing communities and individuals out of their homes, often also their homelands, for the purposes of economic development. Such displacement can be within a city or district, and from one village or neighbourhood to another. It can also involve displacement across long distances and borders, sometimes economically, socially and culturally quite different settings. In broader terms displacement includes move from economic activities and cultural practices without geographical move. The people having (human) development as

their right are forcefully pushed out of their land/residence in the name of (economic) development. The challenge is to decide on whose development at whose cost.

1.5 Resettlement

Resettlement means planned and controlled transfer of people from one area to another. Such operations have been undertaken throughout the developing world in response to a range of causal factors, including population pressure, natural catastrophes, human-made disasters, poverty, unemployment, and agricultural and industrial development activities. Resettlement often consists in simple relocation of people after physical displacement from the original habitat. Resettlement in fact must be *rehabilitation*, which can be defined as grafting a community at a new place and nurturing it to ensure its steady and balanced growth. Basically rehabilitation focuses on achieving sustained development for displaced people.

2. CIAL PROJECT AND AFFECTED PEOPLE

Displacement of people in the context of development projects is a worldwide phenomenon. It is estimated that 10 million people enter the cycle of forced displacement and relocation just in the sectors of dam construction, and urban and transportation development projects throughout the world in a year (Cernea 2000:15). It is estimated that in the past decade 100 million people have been displaced all over the world. It excludes the displacement from forests and reserve parks, mining and thermal power plants, and other comparable situations (Cernea 1999:25).

2.1 Displacement in Kerala

Kerala is a small state in India with a population of 32 million and high population density of 749 per sq. km. as against the national density of 267 per sq. km. Development projects in Kerala adversely affected 552233 persons during the period from 1947 to 2000 (Murickan *et al.* 2003: 75). As per available data, the number of displaced families resettled in Kerala during the same period is 5461. By taking the average family size in Kerala this comes to 28943 persons. It means that only 18.18 per cent of the displaced persons in Kerala benefited from the resettlement undertaken by the projects

(Murickan *et al.* 2003: 75). The number of the displaced people in the state is shooting up, with the advent of new development projects like the Smart City, Vallarpadam Container Tranships, Kinfra in Manjapra, proposed Kannur airport, Vizhinjam harbour, Air India's craft workshop, widening of national highways, and construction of new roads.

The CIAL project was the first airport in India that was constructed with public-private partnership without assistance from international funding agencies. The CIAL is located in the Ernakulam district of Kerala. Before it started functioning in 1999, the CIAL displaced 822 families and 4336 persons (Dhanam 1999). Though the CIAL's implementers have claimed that the displaced people were 'fully compensated and resettled' and the displaced received high rate of compensation for the land acquired and were offered jobs, impoverishment risks in the social and human capital has not been compensated adequately. Multiple ways of human right violation were involved in such displacement as in the case of all development projects world over. Following is the brief account of the issues of human right violation and impoverishment that have taken place in the case of the CIAL project-displaced persons.

2.2 Multiple Displacements

Some of the people affected by the CIAL project experienced multiple displacements as happened in the state of Orissa and other states in India (Verma 2004:100). It is the situation of the same people being displaced by development project more than once. For example, the resettlement colony of the CIAL-displaced in Nayathode has been marked for the Sabari rail project and the people resettled there now face the threat of displacement again. Similarly some of the self-resettled CIAL-displaced people are facing the threat of further displacement as their settlement area is being earmarked for establishing a coast guard force unit near the airport without even notifying it in the government gazette. However, the affected people are resisting the move and have submitted a mass petition to the Chief Minister of the state against the proposal. Similar is the case of the people resettled in Thuravumkara, neighbouring the CIAL. They come under the area that is covered by the proposed construction of the additional runway of the CIAL. If this proposal for the additional runway comes through the people there are bound to face displacement.

Most of the time victims of project-displacement are silenced by invoking the 'public purpose' objective of the project. The victims are often poor and marginalized, and are not empowered to present their problems before the public or the state. It is easy to silence the oppressed and there is hardly anybody to raise their voice against such actions of exploitation and discrimination. On the contrary, speculating on the development scope of the area a few affluent people induce the poor to sell their land in the project area by offering a price seemingly higher than the existing one, but really low in terms of the appreciation caused by the incoming development project, as it happened in the case of the CIAL.

2.3 The Issue of Compensation

The CIAL claims that the project-affected people have been adequately compensated and fully resettled. They were paid compensation for the acquired property, and offered six cents of land and Rs.20000 towards shifting expenses. The amount of compensation, supposed to have been comparable to the existing market value of the land, was decided unilaterally. The displaced have argued that the compensation was below the market price, and inadequate to buy a new plot and construct a new house in the nearby area due to the hike in the land value. The people who constructed new houses and started small scale industries using loans from banks were not compensated adequately. The author has identified two such cases in the six cent colony of Akaparambu. Those who challenged the acquisition of their land in the court were not provided the six cents of land in the resettlement colony. Also, there was undue delay in providing employment to the displaced who challenged the CIAL's land acquisition process in the court. There were also cases of those who resisted displacement being arrested and imprisoned in order to weaken the agitation.

2.4 Poor Housing and Health Facilities

The land allocated for resettlement of the CIAL-displaced was paddy field full of slurry and without transportation and civic amenities. During rainy season houses constructed in the area came under water and septic tank filled with water. Proper drainage facilities were not provided. E. coli bacteria was found in the water and people in the area suffered from health problems especially in the initial stages. One of the challenges here has been to provide adequate health services. There is no health sub-centre in

the area other than that of an *anganwadi*. The situation has been a case of the denial of the resettlers' right to proper housing and health services. The people had to resort to agitation and take to the court the matter of the poor civic amenities before the CIAL authorities were compelled to construct drainages and provide adequate and regular supply of drinking water through pipelines. It means that the CIAL, like many of the development projects in the country, had failed to prepare the resettlement area with adequate infrastructure and civic amenities as required by the policy and guidelines on resettlement.

2.5 Right to Livelihood

As in the case of many of the development projects in the country, compensation given to the displaced of the CIAL was not aimed at ensuring a sustainable livelihood. People were not provided with job opportunities and those who were employed were not provided permanent job with reasonable salary. A few of them were provided job on contract in the cargo division of Air India at the airport on rotation basis. Some of the women oustees were engaged as contract labourers in cleaning and similar works on low daily wage basis. The land acquired for the airport had been used for paddy cultivation with three cropping seasons in a year. Hence the people displaced from the area were agriculture labourers who had not obtained any skills to cope with new job situations and thereby earn a reasonable wage. Unless their right to livelihood is addressed adequately they may succumb to 'created new poverty.'

An important issue involved here is that of 'benefit sharing' with those who have been the victims of development project. The CIAL as a company has been earning profit but has never thought of sharing the benefit with the poor victims of the project or make provisions to improve their earning capacity which may lead to sustainable livelihood. The aim of resettlement undertaken by the CIAL was confined to relocation and rehabilitation to a limited extent, but not sustainable development. The question was of balancing between the oustees' right to livelihood and the profit of the company or project. As Varkey and Raghuram (2002: 22) have rightly observed, land acquisition often results in depriving the set of people's livelihood and quality of life they were used to. The process also harms the fragile cultural fabric, which is shared by the community. The mechanical process of compensation payment and resettlement does not always help them effectively rebuild their lives.

2.6 Provision for Social Capital/Payment of Social Costs

Provision for preservation of culture and traditions of indigenous people and of specific communities should be part of resettlement (Government of India 2007). The displaced should be able to maintain the kinship ties and neighbourhood relations that they have had in the project area. But no effort was taken in the resettlement of the CIAL oustees to provide the social infrastructure, like place for community gathering or auditorium, for maintaining their social relationships and traditions. The welfare concept demands that the state promotes the local culture and integration of the people affected by displacement. The resettlement and rehabilitation policy of the government (Government of India 2007) has laid down guidelines for resettling people in groups or communities, and for promoting social capital like kinship and neighbourhood relationships. But the CIAL has not taken adequate steps to settle the oustees in communities. However, it may be mentioned that there has been community living in the case of the families in the resettlement colony of Kavaraparambu, which has taken place accidentally and not designed by the CIAL, as stated by the oustees themselves.

The involvement of social scientists for social engineering has been absent in CIAL's project and 'piece meal' approach was employed in handling displacement as has been followed in other development projects of Kerala. The issue involved in such cases is who pays for the restoration of the social capital and community reconstruction. The basic questions that emerge here are: who is responsible for reconstruction or rearticulation of the community, what value is assigned to social capital and community's re-articulation, and who is responsible for forced cultural adaptation in the resettlement area in matters such as child rearing and neighbourhood relationships.

2.7 Participation of the Displaced People

The present resettlement and rehabilitation policy acknowledges that displacement is "leading to involuntary displacement of people depriving them of their land, livelihood and shelter, restricting their access to traditional resource base, and uprooting them from their socio-cultural environment.... These have traumatic, psychological and socio-cultural consequences on the affected populations which call for protecting their rights" (Government of India 2007: 113). Acknowledging loss of social capital in displacement the

policy invites participation of the oustees in both displacing people and designing resettlement action plan as better means for regeneration of the social capital. The policy also demands informed consent of the oustees.

Participation of the project-displaced people is an important requirement of their resettlement. The goals of participation are collaborative planning, capacity building at the community level, and ensuring that grassroots level organisations and leaders have a voice in the matter and strategies are tailored to local realities. The principle of discussing with the people and entrusting the responsibility of implementing the rehabilitation and resettlement to the people, as laid down by the rehabilitation and resettlement policy of the government (Government of India 2007), has not been realised in the resettlement action plan of the CIAL. It followed the usual pattern of inviting participation after the plan is drawn and designed, which is not real participation. Real participation means bringing down the decision making process to the lowest level. However, many authors disagree with it and argue that the people at the grassroots do not know the regional, national or international context for meaningful participation. This notion of participation relies more on consent than construction. Consent here means 'buy-in' i.e., consent for legitimisation and not for equality, justice and openness (Cernea 1991: 114).

The CIAL project did not invite wide participation of people for discussing the project details with them. It invited, as commented by several oustees, selected leaders who favoured the project in order to decide the course of action. People who resisted the project or complained about the inadequacy of the compensation or filed cases in the court were cornered by the project authorities who even went to the extent of delaying the compensation that was due to them. The consent obtained by the CIAL in the name of people's participation has been for legitimisation and adaptation of the external plan and not for co-developing the people and area. Buy-in always provides opportunities for malpractices and corruption.

Failure in planning development projects in consultation with and participation of people leads to conflict between the state and citizens. In such situations use of force and violence often takes place during displacement. People are forcefully displaced without their consent and without paying adequate compensation for the land and belongings either traditionally inherited or owned by their labour. Such incidents have happened

in the CIAL project too. Those who opposed the displacement in the CIAL project area were forcefully evicted. Their houses were demolished in their presence. They have been treated as internally displaced people though they were not victims of ethnic conflict or natural calamity. Many of these oustees are still living in rented houses either due to non-availability of land or unaffordable price of land in the market for constructing own house.

2.8 Right of the Individual versus State

There are situations of conflict between the rights of the individual citizen and of the state. If it is a matter of individual's right in the case of displacement and resettlement, then the individual has the right to be informed about the project and its implications. However, often people are not fully informed of the project details and notification. The CIAL has not been different in any way. It too did not accept in its operation of displacement and resettlement that development projects are aimed at development of the people and area and that such projects should be planned and designed in consultation with and participation of people so that the right of the people is not violated in the name of the right of the state.

The CIAL project was not a proposal of the local self-government and people living in the area, but the result of a decision from outside, the state government. Hence displacement or eviction from the land owned by the people was a matter of the conflict between rights of the state and the individual citizens. The ideal means of resolving the conflict is to engage in the participation of affected people. In the absence of people's participation, an option available to the citizen in such a situation is to have recourse to the court of law. Challenging the acquisition of land for a project approved by the state is expensive to the displaced. A few of the oustees of the CIAL have spent the whole of their compensation as legal expenses. For example, a brick kiln owner displaced by the CIAL project had challenged the decision to displace him in the court for which he had to spend not only the whole amount of compensation but also much of his savings. The unilateral decision to implement the project displacing the native people has been a challenge to the individual's right to property and livelihood.

2.9 Risk to Host Population

The CIAL project has had its impact on the people, who have been living around the CIAL but were spared from displacement. One of the

problems faced by them as the impact of the CIAL is water shortage. The land acquired by the CIAL was paddy field that collected water during the rainy season, which percolated to the wells in the area. In the absence of this water collection process, the water level in the wells of the area has gone down. Secondly, there had been regular supply of water by lift irrigation project that has been stopped after the CIAL. Thirdly, one of the rivers has been diverted for benefit of the airport, which has reduced the availability of water to the people of the area.

The development project has brought in a new business class that has pushed up the cost of living in the area surrounding the airport, which has been unaffordable to local residents who are not beneficiaries of the project. The transit nature of many of the immigrants in the area has affected social relationships of the local people in the area. Another impact of the CIAL has been the emergence of the land mafia, people with money who bought the land in the area on large scale paying prices higher than the then existing value and started real estate business in the area. This also created the group of the middlemen (called brokers), who are local people being used by the land mafia in the purchase the land. All these have created risk challenges to the rights of the host population to peaceful living and quality of life in the land where they live.

2.10 Poverty Alleviation or Creation of New Poverty

In developing countries like India, where the state has the responsibility of providing food, cloth and shelter to its citizens, the goal of development projects should not disregard the task of poverty eradication and welfare of the people. When people are displaced forcefully their earning capacity in the new locality gets diminished due to abrupt change of occupation and livelihood means. Studies show that often the displaced people have not improved from their previous income status, but have been reduced to a situation of new poverty (Tharakan 2002: xii). Though development projects are means to improve a country's economy, they also lead to pauperisation or impoverishment of the people. The land acquired by the CIAL was one of the best fertile arable lands in the area. The people who made their living out of cultivation in this area did not get alternate land good enough for making a living out of cultivation. Nor were they offered opportunities for alternate economic pursuits.

3. INTERVENTION IN PROJECT-DISPLACEMENT AND RESETTLEMENT

As can be seen from the above discussion, there are several issues of concern in displacement and resettlement of people as the impact of development projects, such as violation of human rights, loss of social capital and impoverishment risks. This is especially true of developing countries like India. In the context of globalisation and intensive projects of development it is necessary that we take effective steps to prevent and deal with the adverse impacts of development projects. Government, non-government agencies and others such as social work professionals may work together to deal with the situation. Following are some suggestions in this regard.

1. People's participation assured in the Panchayath Raj and other local self-government institutions has to be revitalised in such a way that the principle of 'prior informed consent' is followed instead of the 'buy-in' practice before any development project is implemented. This should happen right from the preliminary step of identification of the project to the completion of the project.
2. Very often the resettlement action plan is drawn by the project authorities without the participation of the beneficiaries or the project-affected people, which results in impoverishment of the project-affected people or agitation and struggles on their part. In order to avoid this situation, as suggested by Cernea (2000:241), a resettlement action plan has to be designed before the commencement of the project in consultation with the expected oustees so that people's participation can be assured.
3. Make the project and resettlement culturally sensitive to the people of both the project and resettlement areas. Design the project in consultation with the local governing bodies of both the project and the resettlement areas. Very often the project implementers are unable to get the support of the local leadership due to the non-cooperation of the local administrative body. This can also cause unwanted delay in the project's completion and thereby decrease in the rate of return. This is another reason why planning and implementation of development projects are done with the involvement of the expected oustees and their leaders.

4. The attitude of the government or the project partners towards the project oustees is often lukewarm and they want to get rid of the oustees at the least cost. They operate on the principle of the economics of compensation rather than the economics of recovery. The economics of compensation looks at displacement as a market problem whereas economics of recovery is aimed at sustainable development of the people ousted. In order to realise the latter, every development project should have the services of social scientists, who can contribute to social capital restoration while drawing the resettlement action plan. Social scientists can assess the social and natural capital of the oustees and ensure inclusion of their reconstruction cost in the total project cost.
5. Social reconstruction involves social engineering of the hiatus occurred in the cultural and social capital caused by the displacement of the people from where they have lived and earned their livelihood. For the culture and traditions of the people are very much associated with the land which is their source of livelihood. It is in this context that the social scientist plays an important role in the resettlement process. The social scientist, after assessing the social capital with people's participation, suggests measures to improve the quality of life of the oustees in the reconstruction process. The costs involved in the proposals of the social scientist must be incorporated into reconstruction cost, which normally is not reckoned in the resettlement action plan as part of an intelligent way to reduce project cost.
6. Make provision for sharing the benefit of the project with the oustees (Cernea 2005: ixx). It is observed in the history of the development projects that the successfully completed projects in the country yield profit but the oustees of the projects do not overcome the vicious circle of poverty or recover to the earlier status of economic and social development (Cernea 1990: 235). The projects may share profit with their shareholders, but do not take adequate steps to improve the quality of life of the oustees for the project. In order to promote the economic development of the victims of displacement a portion of the profit can be allocated for their development in future, possibly by inducting them as partners of the project.
7. The central government in India has formulated, after concerted campaign by social activists, the resettlement and rehabilitation policy

(Government of India 2007). The state governments adopt them for the development projects in their states. Since each project has its specific features the state governments should see that each project develops its own specific plan, under the provisions of the national policy, for the resettlement and rehabilitation of the project-affected in accordance with the needs of the people and area.

8. As a principle, avoid displacement of people in any development project. If that is not possible, mitigate the adverse consequences of displacement to the minimum level by selecting the best alternatives and implementing them without interrupting the 'social geometry'—related to time and place each one is associated with in one's living environment — as suggested by Downing (1996: 36). It may happen that a proposed project is the best for the government to implement, but worst for the people living in the area. When such projects are implemented, select the best course of action using the criterion of minimum adverse impact on the least number of people and maximum benefit to the maximum number of people.
9. Provide a mechanism of grievance redress. The oustees should have opportunities to present their complaints and there should be action plans to deal with them. Generally the agency implementing the project draws a plan of action based on its assessment and seldom reckons the complexities faced by the oustees. To deal with such situations, mechanisms should be made in the resettlement action programme to address effectively the victims' needs, which in turn would ensure the overall success of the project.
10. There should be adequate provisions for the state to intervene in projects that are found unfriendly to people. State intervention should be to ensure that the proposed project and its resettlement plans do not violate the principles of justice, equality and freedom.
11. The resettlement action plan in the context of project-displacement should have provision to create opportunities and infrastructure for social organisation for community reconstruction. That is, resettlement operation should think of promoting community life, and networking and neighbourhood relations among the people being displaced through activities such as fares and festivals promoted at the cost of the project.

Also promotion of social and economic organisations like clubs for the youth and adults, self help groups, and cooperatives to promote livelihood among the displaced people must be components of the resettlement action plan.

12. There should be a monitoring mechanism for smooth and effective implementation of the resettlement action plan. The monitoring mechanism has to be set up with the consensus of the oustees and project implementers under the direction and guidance of the government.
13. Schools of social work, engaged in training professional social workers, can fruitfully intervene in the issue of displacement of project-affected people. First, human right issues related to displacement and resettlement, and approaches to dealing with the problems of the displaced people may be included in the syllabus of social work training course. Second, social work trainees may be provided opportunities to intervene in the displaced or resettled community under the guidance of faculty members and, if not possible, in collaboration with NGOs working in the field such as the National Alliance of People's Movement (known for its leadership in the campaign for the cause of the project-oustees).
14. Social workers and social scientists must be involved in the planning process of development projects in order to make sure that adequate steps are taken to deal with the loss of natural and human-made capitals, especially the forgotten element of social capital in the resettlement process. Their presence in the planning process will serve as liaison between development project management and oustees in order to promote people's participation to attain 'economics of recovery' and to avoid 'new poverty.' They can facilitate the formulation of people friendly comprehensive resettlement and rehabilitation policy for sustainable development.
15. Efforts should be made to encourage and promote scientific studies of project-displacement, problems of the oustees and resettlement process, and publication of the results of such studies so that knowledge about the issues of development projects and their impact on people may be widely disseminated.

Conclusion

Development projects in the country call for systematic implementation, wherein greater importance is given to people as the centre of development. We need to face the challenge posed by the national development priorities on the one hand and the magnitude of people getting displaced from their land of origin (the "root area where one's umbilical cord is buried") on the other. It is human being first and then development (Saul 2006: 187). That means not to stop development projects, but rather to direct projects towards sustainable development of all sections of the society. The implementation of development projects, made possible with people's participation – informed consent and not buy in – by drafting a culturally fit design, will eliminate lopsided development where the social scientists, human right activists and schools of social work have significant roles to play in assisting the nation to become a welfare state.

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