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# Managing Rehabilitation and Resettlement of the Involuntarily Displaced Population: Lessons from Selected Hydro Projects in India

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## **Introduction**

Despite the vast national and international experiences in, and the existence of several guidelines on, managing involuntarily displaced persons (IDPs), resettlement and rehabilitation (R&R) of displaced populations continue to be a difficult problem. Involuntary displacement not only puts the affected people at serious risk of impoverishment but also reverses the entire poverty reduction efforts. The establishment of dams for irrigation and hydropower are often associated with large-scale displacement of rural communities.<sup>2</sup> In India in particular, public controversies and civil society concerns about IDPs are intenser than in many other developing countries. This is understandable. India is the third largest dam-building country in the world with some 4,290 dams and, possibly, it has the largest number of development-induced IDPs in the world.<sup>3</sup> There are no authentic statistics about the number of IDPs. Estimates based on the number of dams constructed since Independence indicate that as many as 21 to 33 million persons are likely to have been displaced (Fernandes 2000: 277; Mander et al. 1999: 5) These estimates do not include persons displaced by canals, or by the construction of colonies or other infrastructure. Neither do they include those who have been subjected to multiple displacements (Rangachari 2000: 116-117).<sup>4</sup> According to Human Rights Watch, indigenous peoples, known as *Adivasis* or Scheduled Tribes suffer from high rates of displacement. They make up 8% of the total population but constitute 55% of IDPs (Human Rights Watch 2006). Statistics related to the National River Linking Project suggest that around 0.5 million people will be displaced due to peninsular links alone and millions in other river-link areas.

Empirical evidence accumulated over the years has shown that, in most cases, displacement has resulted in deprivations and severe impoverishments. In India, agitations by the civil organizations such the Narmada Bachao Andolan (NBA) and debates relating

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<sup>2</sup>Among the projects involving displacement funded by the World Bank, large dams account for 63% of displacement (WCD 2000: 104).

<sup>3</sup>According to the WCD, India accounts for 9% of the world's share of dams (WCD 2000: 373).

<sup>4</sup>A recent estimate by Fernandez (2008) concludes that between 1947 and 2000 about 60 million people had been displaced or deprived of their livelihoods due to development projects.

to the Sardar-Sarovar Project clearly point to such outcomes. It is argued that rehabilitation and resettlement of people already affected by the project are lagging behind and is deficient in terms of conformity to international policies and standards, and procedures, and to the decisions of India's own Narmada Tribunal, resulting in "considerable hardships and injustice" to many IDPs (Ramasamy Iyer 2006). The Hindu newspaper of 17 April reports that "*A Brief Note on the Assessment of Resettlement and Rehabilitation (R & R) Sites and Submergence of Villages of the Sardar Sarovar Project*" prepared by a group of ministers noted that many of the current R&R practices are not in accordance with the Supreme Court Decisions (The Hindu 2006). Controversies surrounding the Sardar-Sarovar Project are just a case in point. There are many other water resources development sites where similar controversies prevail. Under the National River Linking Project over half a million people are estimated to be displaced in the peninsular links alone. Many of these studies focus on the short-term consequences of forced displacement and denounce their flaws and impoverishing effects. In contrast, relatively little research has been conducted on the longer-term impacts of relocating communities in newly developed relocation sites with potentially better socioeconomic and physical infrastructure, improved access to support services and enhanced opportunities for improving their livelihoods creating benefits in the longer term that compensate for losses incurred in the short term. The present paper examines long-term impacts of relocation of IDPs in selected water resources development projects in India.

### **Scope, Objectives and Hypotheses**

The present study is limited to an assessment of how the socioeconomic status of IDPs has changed over time. The study examines the long-term trajectories of the displaced communities and identifies factors that play a major role in rejuvenating or constraining their livelihoods in the long run. The focus shifts from reporting displacement traumas to understanding impoverishments and predicting trends that would shed light on how impoverishment risks can be preempted and mitigated in the resettlement and rehabilitation programs. As Thayer Scudder (n.d.) points out there is a clear need for more longitudinal studies of resettled communities because the effects of resettlement carry over to one or two generations.

The focus of this paper is limited to assessing the change over time in the living standards of project-affected people (PAP). The key research question addressed is, has the R&R program enabled the majority of PAP to restore and improve their living standards, or are they more impoverished than before? A related question in cases of positive outcomes is how long did the PAP take to improve their living standards? The principal hypotheses tested are:

- a) Adverse short-term impacts of displacement are compensated for by the longer-term benefits generated from enhanced socioeconomic opportunities created in the newly developed relocation sites.
- b) With recent refinements in policies and procedures in resettlement and rehabilitation management, short-term adverse effects can be largely arrested, and some even fully prevented, while others are considerably mitigated, and livelihoods of displaced communities restored faster.

If this can be achieved the “long-term positive effects of R&R” would become medium-term positive effects of large-scale infrastructural projects, thus shortening the time in which the investments can be fully justified in many respects.

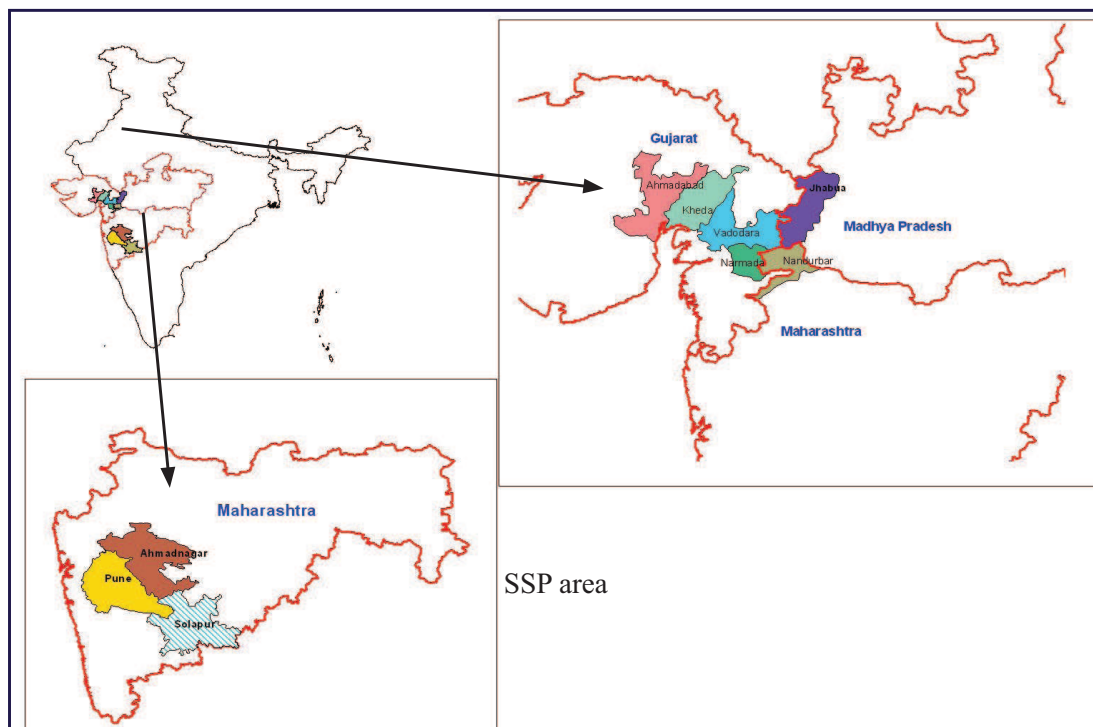
## Data and Method

### *Household Surveys*

The hypotheses are tested with empirical data collected from a sample of relocated households in the Bhima-Ujjaini project in Maharashtra and selected locations in the Sardar-Sarovar Project (SSP) area in Gujarat, Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh (Figure 1).

Construction of the Ujjaini Dam started in 1966 and was completed in 1980. Some 13,500 families from 82 villages in Pune, Solapur and Ahmednagar districts in Maharashtra were displaced and were resettled in 106 relocation sites between 1974 and 1982. This project was selected to study the long-term impact (i.e., > 20 years) on the livelihoods of displaced communities. A sample of 421 families resettled in 20 rehabilitation sites in Solapur and Pune districts was selected for the study.

Figure 1. Location of field sites.



Ujjaini Project – Maharashtra

The SSP is probably the world's most controversial and widely discussed development project. At the current height of 121.92 m, the dam has affected 32,600 families from 300 villages in the states of Gujarat (4,726 families of 91 villages), Madhya Pradesh (24,421 families of 177 villages) and Maharashtra (3,452 families of 32 villages). A sample of 954 displaced households from the three states was selected for the study. The sample consisted of 404 families resettled in 31 rehabilitation sites in Vadodara, Narmada, Kheda and Ahmedabad districts in Gujarat. The Maharashtra sample consisted of 154 households from the Nandurbar district. A sample of 376 households from three districts in Madhya Pradesh (Barwani, Dhar, Khargone) was chosen for the study. The sample was stratified on the basis of households resettled between 0-5 years, and 5-10 years, and more than 10 years after displacement.

In India, planning and implementing programs for resettlement and rehabilitation of families displaced by infrastructural development projects are the responsibility of the state governments. The households from three states benefiting from the SSP were selected with the aim of comparing the impact of affected by the same project (SSP) but are resettled and rehabilitated under the R&R programs of three different states.

### ***Analysis of Litigations and Submissions to the Grievance Redressal Authority***

Litigations filed before the district courts by IDPs were analyzed. A sample of 480 judgments relating to 1,762 litigations filed in the Sholapur District Court, Maharashtra by persons displaced by the Ujjaini Dam project in Maharashtra was analyzed. In addition, summary information on petitions filed by IDPs in the SSP area to the Grievance Redressal Authority (GRA) was also analyzed. The analysis of litigations and petitions to GRC was motivated on the assertion that such information provides a more accurate account of the concerns and difficulties of IDPs than those captured by household questionnaire surveys.

### **Salient Characteristics of Resettled families**

#### ***Bhima-Ujjaini Project***

Eighty two villages from three districts in Maharashtra were affected by the construction of the dam. According to official statistics, some 13,580 families were affected by the project (Center for Social Sciences 1994). The displaced families were resettled in 106 relocation sites. Official records claim that the process of resettlement that commenced in 1974/75 was completed in 1981/82. At the time of displacement, 58% were agricultural households, 30% employed as agricultural laborers and the rest classified as "engaged in services" and "self-employed." Following displacement, the number employed as agricultural laborers has reportedly increased significantly (Center for Social Sciences 1994). Of the surveyed families, 49% belonged to the backward castes—16% belonged to the scheduled castes, 20% to the scheduled tribes and 13% to other backward castes.

#### ***Sardar-Sarovar Project***

There are no precise estimates of the number of people affected by SSP. Early estimates indicated that the SS Dam would affect some 7,000–10,000 families. Estimates that are more

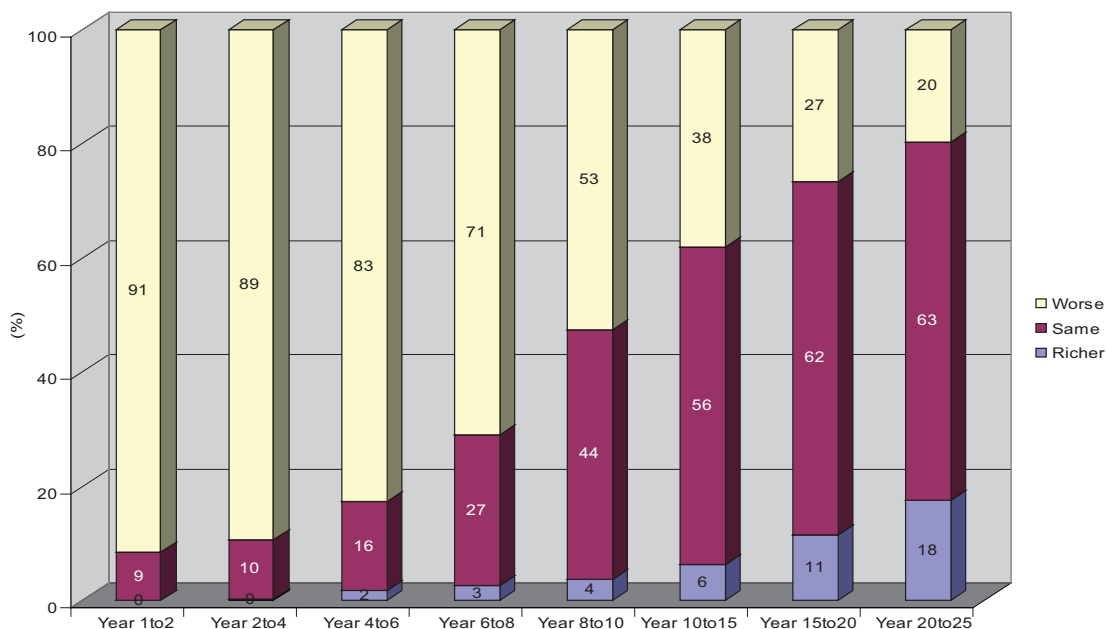
recent claim that about 41,000 families will be affected by the project (Wood 2008). The demography of the families affected is complex. Of the total number of affected families, scheduled castes and scheduled tribes account for a large proportion of the affected families. About 82% of the project-affected people are in Madhya Pradesh (MP), 11% in Gujarat and 7% in Maharashtra. Of these families 97% are tribal people in Gujarat, 100% in Maharashtra and 29% in Madhya Pradesh. The majority of the families are farmers. About 23% of the families in Gujarat and 47% in MP are reported to be landless (IELRC 1995).

## Resettlement Outcomes

Three types of outcomes are analyzed where a) a majority of the resettled families have been able to raise their living standards above the level before moving to the new location, b) project initiatives have enabled households to restore their living standards to at least their original level, and c) relocation had worsened their living standards.

Figure 2 gives perceptions of the displaced families of the change in their living standard before displacement and in their current location. A drop in the family's living standard is expected in the years that immediately follow displacement. However, as Figure 2 illustrates, even after 8-10 after resettlement a majority of the PAPs (53%) claimed that they were worse-off than before displacement. Even after 20 years only 18% of the families considered themselves to be better-off than before displacement, while 63% claimed that there was no improvement in their situation.

Figure 2. Timeline of family circumstances, Bhima-Ujjaini Project.



The inability to restore living standards of the majority of the PAPs at least to their original levels within the first 5 years is a clear indicator of a failed resettlement process. The reasons for such a negative outcome are discussed in later sections.

During the questionnaire survey conducted in the SSP project area PAPs were asked to assess how their family circumstances had changed over time from the year they were displaced to the present. The assessment was made on a scale of +5 to -5 with 0 signifying the living standard at the time of displacement. A rating of +5 indicates a substantial enhancement in the living standard and a rating of -5 a substantial decline. A rating in between these extremes indicates different levels of enhancement or decline in the living standards of the PAPs.

Figures 3a to 3c give PAP's perceptions of changes in family circumstances over time. As Figure 3a demonstrates 59% of the PAPs in Gujarat claimed that they had restored (8%) or enhanced (51%) their standard of living within a period 4-6 years since resettlement. It is also noteworthy that 22% of the Gujarat PAPs claimed to have improved their living standards within the first 2 years. The Gujarat survey results also show that 86% of the PAPs have improved their family circumstances within 10-15 years since displacement from their original villages.

Figure 3a. Timeline of family circumstances, SSP Gujarat.

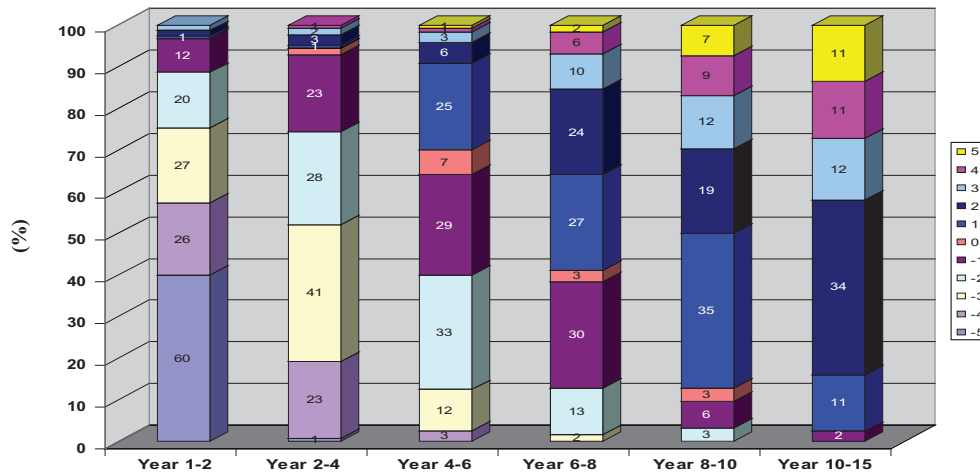


Figure 3b. Timeline of family circumstances, SSP Maharashtra.

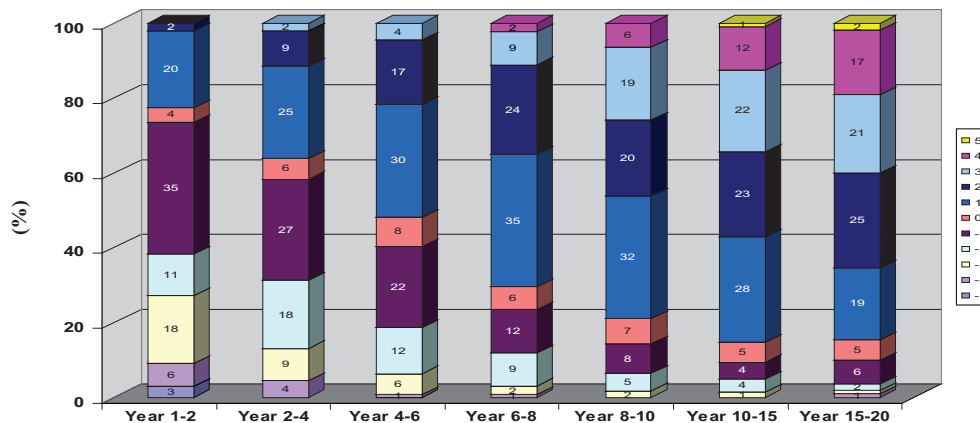
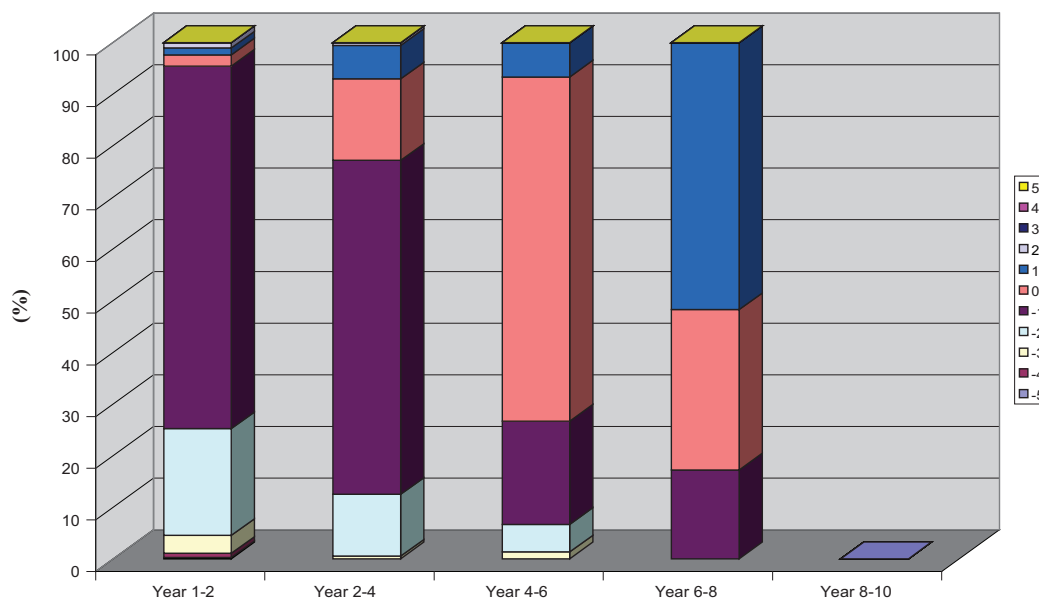




Figure 3c. Timeline of family circumstances, SSP, Madhya Pradesh.



In Maharashtra, 42% of the PAPs claimed that they restored (7%) or enhanced their living standards within 4-6 years since resettlement. By the first 8 years about 75% of them had enjoyed higher standards of living and, by the 15<sup>th</sup> year, nearly all the sampled PAPs claimed they had raised their living standards after displacement. It took 6 years for a majority of the PAPs to restore their living standards to their former standards.

The achievements in MP in terms of restoration of living standards are much lower than in Gujarat and Maharashtra. The R&R program in MP is ongoing. In the latter state the majority of the PAPs surveyed claimed that their homesteads have not been fully developed as yet.

### Why Successes? Why Failures?

The foregoing analysis illustrates that R&R under SSP had more positive outcomes when compared to Bhima-Ujjaini. However, in the latter case, it was the early experience with R&R conducted at a time when there was no national policy on R&R with hardly any NGOs and civil society involvement to safeguard the rights and privileges of the PAPs, especially of the tribal population and other socially backward groups. In the case of SSP, there has been many improvements in R&R procedures and, for the first time, high standards of R&R have been applied to a project in India (IELRC 1998).

For a deeper understanding of the difficulties encountered by the PAPs, an analysis of the litigations filed before the law courts was reviewed. The analysis was limited to the litigations filed by PAPs of the Bhima-Ujjaini project that has a long history of R&R. The sections that follow summarize the results of the analysis.



### *Analysis of Litigation Filed by PAPs of the Bhima-Ujjaini Project<sup>5</sup>*

The study taken up was meant to understand the difficulties of the PAPs due to the Bhima-Ujjaini project in Maharashtra. Altogether, 480 judgments in respect of litigations filed by 1,762 PAPs were analyzed. The litigations almost exclusively related to problems associated with land acquisition for the project.

The first step in the analysis was to ascertain who the petitioners were, i.e., whether they were large landowners or small farmers and their location. Figure 4 shows the distribution of the petitioners by size of land owned. The number of litigations filed by those owning smaller extents of land, i.e., less than 0.25 ha is comparatively fewer than those owning larger extents of land. Most of the petitioners were from the medium-sized group, i.e. those owning 0.6-3 ha.

Figure 4. Distribution of petitioners according to size of land owned (N = 991).

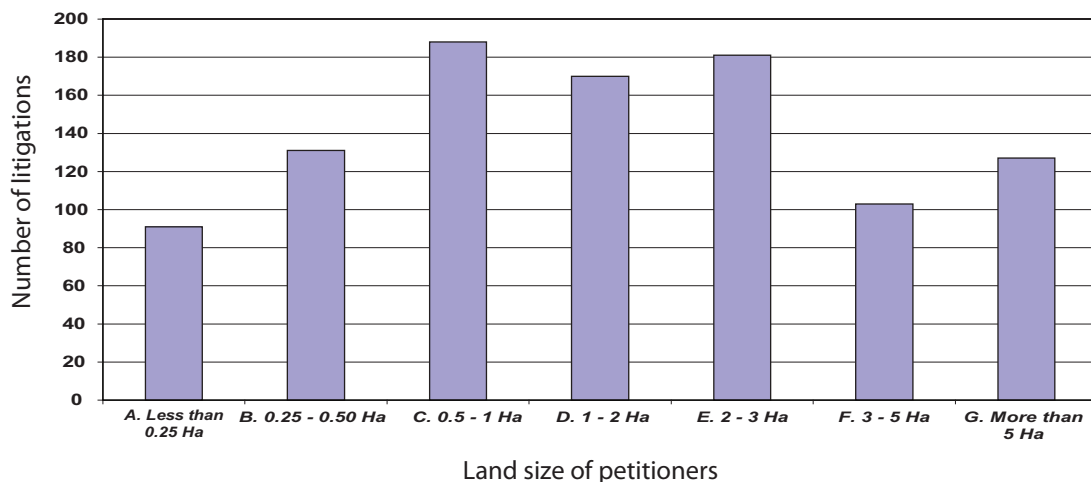
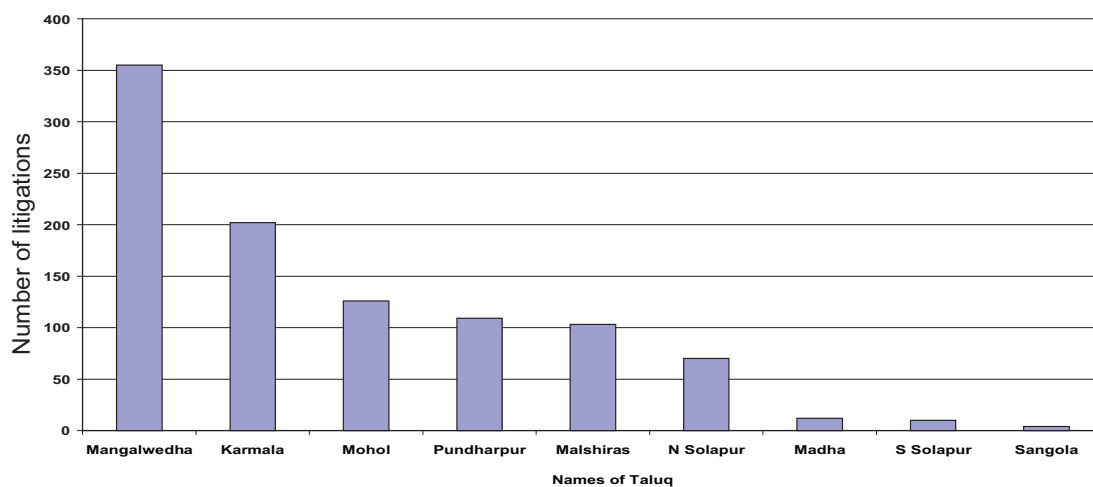


Figure 5 shows that the highest number of litigations were filed from the Mangalwadha taluk (subdivision of a district) followed by Karmala. The reasons for the high number of litigations from these two taluks need to be investigated. Figure 6 presents the nature of the litigations filed by the petitioners.

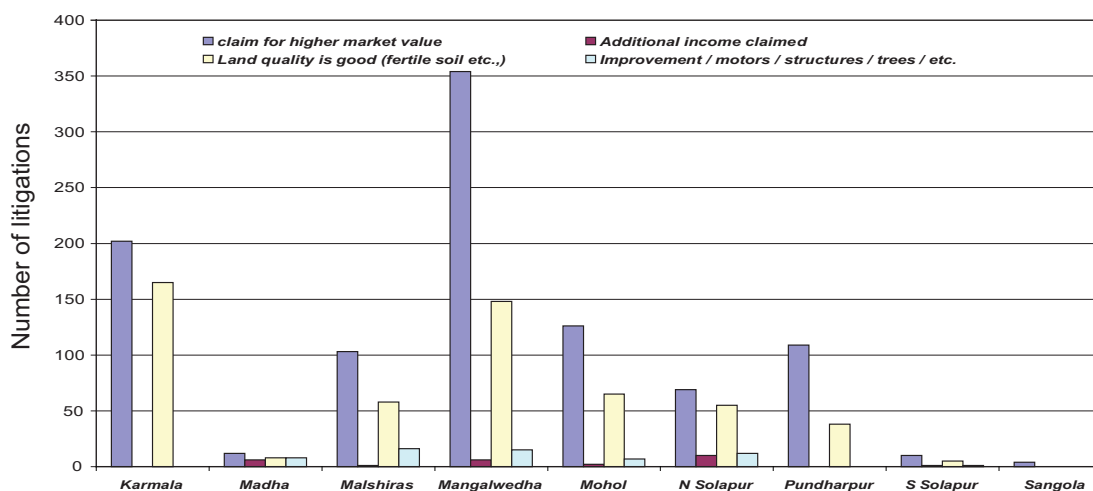
<sup>5</sup>This section was drafted by Professor Madabhushi Sridhar Acharyulu, NALSAR University of Law, Hyderabad.

Figure 5. Distribution of petitioners by taluks.



The majority of the litigations filed are for additional compensation on the ground of the higher market value of the land (figure 6). A second important reason is seeking additional compensation in accordance with the quality of the land.

Figure 6. Nature of the litigations.



## Findings

In most of the cases (over 60%) the courts “partly” allowed the claim. This means the market value fixed by the State Land Acquisition Officer was not proper and the claimant proved the entitlement for additional rate of the market value.

### ***Partly Allowed Claims***

Where the courts partly allowed the claim, a uniform addition of 30% solatium of excess amount was granted, 9% interest on the compensation from the date of taking possession to the date of final payment (which dates were not made available in the decrees and judgments, due to which it is impossible to know how much of money was exactly increased by the courts) and 12 to 15% interest on the excess amount granted by the courts. Besides the above, there was increase in the rate per hectare in some cases, while an additional amount was paid in some other cases.

Though the place and village were the same and the purpose was acquisition for the Ujjaini Canal, there were varying rates paid to farmers. For example, if an amount of Rs 6,000 per hectare was given by Special Land Acquisition Officer (SLAO), the courts enhanced it to either Rs 9,000 or Rs 12,000. There is enormous variations noticeable in the rates that were fixed by the courts.

The judgments, in general, do not clearly state as to what amount had to be paid to the claimant. Thus, the file goes back to the superintending office of the courts to draw up the Decree to serve as a mandate for the State to pay. It requires again the calculation and payment, which leave a lot of scope for deprivation of farmers due to negligence, miscalculation, dishonesty, etc. In some other cases, the judgment did not give the details of the quality of land (best and ordinary), but fixed different rates for different lands. Thus, it is not possible to arrive at the exact rate of increased payment to farmers. The increase is not uniform, while it is sometimes based on rate per acre, some times just an additional amount.

### ***Rejection of Claims***

Where the courts rejected the claims, farmers lost all their rights in addition to delay and the cost of litigation. While winners get 30% enhancement en bloc besides 9% interest and 15% on excess, the losers do not get any thing. The courts justified in each order, the grant of 30% per additional amount as the acquisition was in the nature of 'compulsion.' If that is so, even the losers of claims due to lack of evidence to prove increase in value of their land would have been entitled at least to 30% plus 9% plus 15%, (in all 54%) increase in the compensation paid to them by SLAO, which was totally denied to them. In one case, the petition was rejected with costs, which means, the farmer lost the land, time of litigation for more than 6 years, claim, and 54% interest, and burdened with the liability to pay the cost of litigation to the state. It appears to be a travesty of justice.

### ***Difficulties of Proof***

Another major problem the farmers faced in the courts of law is that they could not prove that the market value was high as per the standards of proof set by the courts in civil claims. It is the duty of the state to fix a reasonable amount to make it just compensation as per the constitution of India, when it acquires private land for public purposes. It is not possible for a poor, uneducated, uninformed and a novice to know the court procedures, to prove the increase in market value. Second, it is impossible to produce documents regarding increase in market value, in the absence of any transfer of property in the vicinity or village. Third, the law requires not only corroboration for oral evidence but documents, which cannot be produced

by a farmer. Because of this, the courts either rejected the claims or partly allowed the claims and only in a few cases was there a total acceptance of claims.

The courts chose to give very elaborate technical and evidentiary reasons to reject the claims fully or partly. The farmers had to lose because of:

- a. Wrongful and arbitrary fixation of low rates by the SLAO.
- b. Lack of evidence of increase in market value.
- c. Lack of sales transactions in the past in the village or the vicinity.
- d. Technical rejection of the total claim.
- e. Lack of understanding of the plight of farmers by the lower judiciary.
- f. Technical rule adherence of the judiciary, depriving the farmers whose claims were rejected while a 54% common increase was allowed to all of those where the claim was partly allowed.

### ***Gross Injustice in Rejected Cases***

In most of the cases rejected by the courts, the farmers were made to pay costs to the government for “bringing unnecessary claims.” It is very unreasonable and not justified at all. Their failure in proving the enhanced value is due to several technical reasons. If one takes the overall conclusion of the cases the farmers’ dissatisfaction was upheld and the fact that they were paid lesser amounts was proved. In such cases, how were the farmers penalized for bringing an action against the state for just compensation?

The major reason for rejecting the claims is the lack of proof of the market value. As there was no sale transaction in a particular area, it was difficult for the poor farmer to produce evidence for the assumed market value. It is such a situation that unless there is a sale, there is no document to establish the value. In the absence of sale the value could not be proved. Though it has its own market value, the simple fact of absence of a transaction deprived several of the farmers of their real worth of the property that was lost. In many cases, the courts did not take into account the loss of future gains, which unfortunately was not claimed by any applicant. The fact that the land was the livelihood was totally neglected by the applicants because of their lack of awareness, and even by their lawyers, may be because of negligence or inefficiency. It is so unfortunate in no case out of 480 that went to the courts, was the issue of land as livelihood either mentioned or discussed. At the end, the courts did not find any material before them to enhance the compensation to adequate levels. Around 252 farmers could not get anything in spite of their struggle in litigation as their cases were not accepted.

In most of the cases where they lost, their poverty made them to lose. Because they could not utilize the land by adding water sources or raising some structures or planting profit-yielding gardens, etc., they could not enhance the value of the land.

The fight in courts of law appears to be very unproductive and the time and money spent on the litigation is comparatively very high in relation to the raise in compensation yielded. In one case it took 23 years just for one step of litigation wherein 13 parties together gained an increase of just Rs 4,873 more than what was given by the SLAO. In another case, one applicant got just Rs 1,508 after 22 years’ long litigation. Most of the cases were rejected

after 10 or 15 years of hearing. While just 23 cases were completed within 1 year, 339 cases were disposed of within 2 to 7 years while 120 cases took more than 8 years for disposal.

When the SLAO fixes the amount of compensation in the beginning itself, the villagers of the Sholapur District would have had no need to come to courts of law for enhancement. It is because of the inefficiency or negligence of SLAO that the farmers were either paid less or driven to courts of law, while they were deprived of their right to just compensation within a reasonable time frame. This fact is well established through the observations of the judicial officers that the compensation fixed by the SALO was inadequate and unreasonable. The inefficiency of SLAO was amply proved as it was only in two out of 480 cases that the courts found the compensation as adequate. Though there were a number of rejections and dismissals they were based on the lack of evidence and not because of the adequacy of compensation fixed by SLAO.

### ***Who Has to Calculate the Just Compensation?***

It is the duty of the state, which compulsorily acquired the land of the farmer to provide just compensation. This is the constitutional principle. Then how can the courts impose the burden on the farmer who has neither education, nor means to know the real value of his land?

There is a lot of difference between a civil case where compensation is demanded for a violation of right, necessitating the claimant to prove what loss he had suffered, and a civil case where land was compulsorily acquired. In the latter case it is the responsibility of the state to calculate and give just compensation; it is not possible for the farmers to prove the exact rate of compensation. The courts also could not help the farmers to get just compensation because of their habitual technical approach resulting in procedural injustice. The courts should have not insisted on cent per cent evidence for establishing claims.

Where the farmers wanted the enhanced value of land to be taken into account, the courts just increased a little amount, because they could not believe the claims as they were not supported by any documents. The courts generally did not look into the point that it was not possible for farmers to prove the value of their land, quality of their land and annual returns with documents.

There are some more aspects that need to be considered with reference to just compensation which is beyond the comprehension of land acquisition law, land acquisition officers, and the courts caught in the cobweb of procedural tangles, which are as follows:

1. The Ujjaini Canal has improved the value of the land, prospects of productivity of land in the vicinity. But some farmers lost their total land while others lost part of their own land. Neither SLAO nor the courts have taken into account the prospective increase in value of land, its productivity while fixing and adjudicating on the rate of the land.
2. While some farmers lost the land for the Ujjaini Canal, other farmers gained as their livelihood was strengthened, economy was improved and market value increased. If they proposed to sell the land after Ujjaini Canal started irrigating their lands, they would have got more than a hundredfold increase in the market value, which factor was never considered regarding farmers who lost the land.

3. There is an enormous increase in the land value with the real estate boom everywhere, which helped those whose land was not acquired while those who lost suffered most.
4. The owners of land were not uprooted and removed totally from the village while the roots of other farmers whose lands got watered were strengthened. There is neither logic nor justification in ruining some farmers by uprooting them and benefiting others based on the sacrifices inflicted on people by the state.
5. The farmers who approached courts for enhancement of compensation for acquiring their entire land were not given alternative land in compensation. They were also not given any house or any other compensation except an arbitrarily fixed amount.
6. The farmers, who lost their land because of the canal, should have been given some land if not equal to what they lost, so that they also could take the benefit of development in the shape of the new irrigation project, in this case Ujjaini Canal.
7. The farmers, who lost their land, were in fact, provided infrastructure to the Ujjaini Canal, and should have become shareholders in the development that resulted from that project. If a piece of land in urban areas is given for development of apartments, the landowner would have got more than the mere cost of the land as per contemporary rates. For example, if a builder constructs 10 apartments in a plot of land of 400 square yards in an urban area, the owner would get four or five flats to his share while the farmers in the rural area would lose much larger tracts of land and to develop the value of the land in the entire region, they would not get anything more than the pittance paid as “compensation.”
8. The farmers were put to unnecessary tension, delay, expense, emotional stress, monetary losses, etc., for no fault of them.
9. There is no integrated approach from the state to provide alternative livelihoods to the farmers whose only source of livelihood, i.e., land, is removed from them.

### ***Enhancement***

Enhancement is made when the claimants produce the deeds of sale of nearby lands acquired, and ascertained as the prevailing value which was in variation with the price fixed by the Special Land Acquisition Officer. The courts found it easy to enhance the compensation only in these cases. The full claim was allowed only in a few cases, while it granted additional compensation, solatium or costs, etc.

The courts also took into notice the value-additions made to the land where it was proved that an irrigating well was present, land was of high quality, or seasonally irrigated as they are considered *bagayat*, *zirayat* class of lands or black soil, etc., which yielded additional amounts. The courts also considered the developments made by the claimants before acquisition while it valued the profit-yielding trees, crops, other woods, electric motor pump sets, sheds and other constructions like rest rooms, etc.

As the complete data are not available regarding the total land the farmers had and the percentage of the land they lost in acquisition, it is not possible to say whether 1,762 farmers lost their total land which meant their means of livelihood.

## Grievances of People Affected by the SSP Project

Table 1 gives the submissions made by PAPs with regard to problems relating to R&R under SSP. Out of the 22,437 submissions 14,824 or 66% relate to land acquisition matters. This suggests that the problems related to land acquisitions as those prevailed under the Bhima-Ujjaini project for some 30 years, as discussed in the previous section, continue to persist even under the recent R&R program such as those under SSP.

Table 1. The submissions made by PAPs with regard to problems relating to R&R under SSP.

(As on 30/06/2007)									
Jurisdiction	Grievances					Redressed grievances		Pending grievances	
	Civic amenities	Land	Others	PAP status	Total	Total	%		
Gujarat	1,123	8,751	759	3,734	14,367	13,319	92.71	1,048	
Maharashtra	239	1,540	122	217	2,118	1,981	93.53	137	
MP	434	4,533	504	481	5,952	5,667	95.21	285	
Total	1,796	14,824	1,385	4,432	22,437	20,967	93.45	1,470	

## Concluding Remarks

Despite several decades of experience, R&R of IDPs continue to be a difficult problem also despite the vast national and international experiences in R&R and the existence of several guidelines on resettlement management. One of the major reasons of apparent failures of R&R is that most studies focus on bad R&R experiences and denounce their flaws and impoverishing effects. The focus is on short-term consequences and immediate impacts. Displacement is a painful process and every effort should be taken to avoid or minimize disrupting people's lives to the maximum extent possible. At the same time, relocating people also provides them with new opportunities which require time. As stated in the judgment handed down by the Supreme Court in the Narmada Bachao Andolan Versus Union of India & Others case on 18 October 2000 "*R&R packages of the States, specially of Gujarat, are such that the living conditions of the oustees will be much better than what they had in their tribal hamlets.*"

As pointed out earlier in this paper, R&R constitute a long-term process that may take several years to restore and enhance the living standards of persons displaced. The essence of good R&R is to minimize relocation stresses and expedite the restoration of disrupted livelihoods. In this context, the results of this study show that R&R under SSP have been at a higher level than most other R&R efforts. The Gujarat experience merits attention as it puts in place unique mechanisms for replacement of agricultural land at market prices and setting up a separate unit for coordinating and managing R&R.

Finally, there is a clear need for longitudinal studies on R&R programs. There should be a stronger commitment to active engagement to preempt impoverishment risks and take remedial measures, rather than passive contemplation in the flaws of R&R programs and their impoverishing effects.



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