

Displacement in Singrauli Region: Entitlements and Rehabilitation

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Loss of livelihood and displacement has become a recurring feature for the people of Singrauli, on the border of Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh, due to the construction of dams and power and mining projects over the last five decades. These communities are again in the process of being displaced with private players setting up five super thermal power and three mining projects in the area. This time, however, the project-affected people seem to be in an advantageous position with project managements competing to offer them better rehabilitation and resettlement packages. This is a change brought about by the sustained struggle of oustees and civil society groups all over the country for a better deal.

This paper offers a brief overview of the issues related to over five decades of displacement in the Singrauli region (on the border of Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh) caused due to the Gobind Sagar Reservoir and the Rihand Dam (in the 1960s) and later the setting up (in the 1980s) of mega thermal power projects by the NTPC (formerly the National Thermal Power Corporation) and coal mining projects by the Northern Coalfields Ltd (NCL). It then goes on to a critical evaluation of the issues related to entitlements towards compensation for loss of lands/homesteads and rehabilitation due to the setting up of new mega power and mining projects started since 2006 by the private sector. It briefly looks at the issues of resettlements and rehabilitation of project-affected persons/people (PAPS) across the country and focuses on three phases of displacement and its consequences in Singrauli.

The “involuntary displacement” of people due to acquisition of their lands or homesteads for industrial, mining, irrigation and infrastructure projects all across the country is a major issue. In fact, it has sparked off widespread agitations across the country. The Sardar Sarovar Project, the Silent Valley Power Project (in Kerala), the Mangalore Thermal Power Project (Cogentrix), the Dabhol Power Project, the Maha Mumbai Special Economic Zone (MMSEZ), the Nandigram SEZ Project, the Singur Tata Motors Project and the Utkal Alumina Project are only a few among many which resulted in direct confrontation between the respective state governments and project implementing agencies on one side, and the people and their civil society groups, on the other. Some of the above-mentioned projects could not take shape due to stiff opposition from the people. Under the present neoliberal market-driven paradigm of development, hundreds of industrial, mining, irrigation or infrastructure projects are being proposed and memoranda of understanding (MOUs) are being signed by central or state governments which, if and when they materialise, may change the landscape of urban/rural India. For instance, as many as 341 SEZs to be set up in the public and private sector across the country have been approved by the central government. If these projects take shape, they would require lands to the order of 1.49 lakh hectares (*India Today* 2007). There are over 100 MOUs signed by various organisations in mostly the backward states like Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh and Orissa where mineral deposits and government lands are available in plenty.

According to Fernandes (2007), since independence as many as 60 million persons have been displaced, of whom a large majority have not been properly rehabilitated as yet. According to Reddy (1994:19), seven government-based industrial projects (the

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Bhilai, Bokaro, Rourkela and Visakhapatnam steel plants; Hindustan Aeronautics; Heavy Engineering Corporation; and National Aluminium Company) acquired 1,23,409.54 acres of lands, affecting 41,652 families. About 33,647 jobs were provided by these public sector projects to the affected families. The Upper Krishna Irrigation Project (the reservoir and two major dams) displaced about 3,00,000 people (Parasuraman 1999:167). The controversial Sardar Sarovar Project has affected 297 villages, with at least 1,63,500 people getting displaced (*ibid*: 179). According to another estimate (quoted in Kothari, 1996: 1476-85), based on a comprehensive study of 110 projects, of the 16.94 lakh people displaced by these projects, almost 50% (8.14 lakhs) are tribals.

'Public Purpose'

The growing agitation by civil society groups against land acquisition for various projects now mainly questions the privilege of the State to acquire lands or properties of people under the Land Acquisition Act, 1894, in the name of "public cause". They also question the "public purpose" of many projects, proposed or executed by the private sector or even by the public sector. In fact, the sanctioned *sezs* have become the main target of civil society's anger against the wisdom of the government in "delivering" the public cause. The affected people, who are accustomed to traditional ways of earning their livelihoods (cultivating their agricultural lands) are left high and dry as also those who depend on such lands through customary rights, like share-croppers, agricultural labourers, artisans, and so on. Extensive literature has emerged over the years on the hardships of the displaced persons and inadequacy of resettlement and rehabilitation (R&R) efforts on the part of the implementing agencies or concerned governments (see for instance: Cernia 1988 and 2000; Srinivasan 1988; Fernandes 1989; Reddy 1994; Parasuraman 1999; Jain and Bala 2006; and World Commission on Dams 2000). In addition to the above major studies or edited volumes, several reports have emerged, focusing on various aspects of R&R, like guidelines to manage and plan relocation, indices of distress due to displacement, and sourcebooks (see World Bank 1993; Davidson et al 1993; Asian Development Bank 2006; and World Bank Discussion Papers No 152, 15993). Several articles also highlight the issues of R&R, reviewing state or national policies and questioning specific projects or the paradigm of development which induce involuntary displacement and adversely affect natural environment (see EPW 1996; Chris de Wet 2001; Sharma 2003) and reviews of the National R&R Policy (Sahaee 2003; Iyer 2007; and Vaswani et al 1990).

(1) This extensive literature on the issues related to involuntary displacement, its adverse consequences for the affected people, and possible approaches to mitigate their impact brings out a few salient points: The earlier phase of displacement (till the 1970s) was marked by meagre compensations towards the losses and minimal understanding of resettlement and rehabilitation of the affected people. However, people surrendered their lands and homesteads under the notion that a few have to suffer for the general public cause.

(2) Among the affected people, a large number belonged to the scheduled tribes and other marginalised groups, mainly due to

the fact that several heavy industry, mining and irrigation projects were located in (or close to) forest areas. Thus, those already marginalised became further vulnerable due to the loss of sources of their livelihoods.

(3) The resentment against large (and repeated) displacements first emerged in Singrauli area where thousands of families were displaced, and several of them repeatedly, due to the Gobind Sagar Reservoir and Rihand Dam, and the super thermal power projects and coal mining in the region. Unfortunately, much of this seems to be forgotten today (see "Cost of Development: The Effect of Big Gigantic Projects in Singrauli", Jan Lok Hit Samiti, Singrauli, undated). With the execution of the Upper Krishna Irrigation Project and the Sardar Sarovar Project by the government resulting in large-scale displacement of thousands of families, civil society groups, academics and the affected people openly opposed such large projects. They have also challenged the sovereign right, under the Land Acquisition Act, 1894, of the State to displace people for so-called "development". With the opening up of the Indian economy to global forces of development, international funding from sources like the World Bank and Asian Development Bank was made available. This added to the pace of industrial and infrastructure projects and funding organisations began compelling the central government, state governments and private sector organisations to realise the need for adequate (market-based) compensation for acquired lands/homestead of the affected people, and for implementing various R&R programmes for mitigating the adverse impact of such displacement. These international funding organisations, also prepared their own policies and guidelines (manuals, resource books, etc) on R&R. Several state governments though had their own land acquisition and R&R policies which were augmented or revised to ensure a better deal for the affected people. Some mega projects like the NTPC or Mumbai Urban Transport Project (MUTP) prepared their own policies for the purpose. The central government also prepared its R&R policy in 2007, which is quite comprehensive.

(4) In spite of all these efforts R&R implementation across projects remains a failure. This is because rehabilitation of the affected persons is not an easy task. It needs sustained efforts and a participatory approach. The displaced people also insist on a "regular" job at the project but are often disappointed. Moreover, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) do not come forward to rehabilitate and resettle the displaced because they have reservations against such "anti-people" projects. They are more into advocacy and agitations against mega-projects appropriating people's sustainable sources of livelihood. The end-losers of such a state of affairs are the PAPS.

(5) There are issues of "legal" entitlements to the appropriated lands/homestead, more so in forest regions. People may have customary rights but not formal land/house records. For example, those who have encroached on government lands for a meagre sustenance for decades, without legal entitlements. Such customary rights within forest areas further complicate the situation. Similarly, sharecroppers may be tilling the lands but the land entitlement may be with the absentee landlords. All such cases adversely affect entitlements of the land oustees and possible benefits

under the R&R. Though R&R policies have mostly extended benefits to such affected persons, declaring them as “affected” and therefore entitled for various benefits, it is a tedious process. The “indirectly affected” like agricultural labourers, artisans, fishermen and users of “common property resources” also need rehabilitation since indirectly they too lose their sources of sustenance.

When one talks of “involuntary” displacement caused due to setting up of mega projects and the traumatic impact on the affected people, the Singrauli region perhaps stands out in its intensity of land/homestead acquisitions and displacement spread over five decades. Singrauli is difficult to approach by road/railway and perhaps this is one of the factors responsible for many civil society groups not taking up the cause of the affected people. However, among the few civil society groups from Delhi that did support the displaced persons here, the leading one was the Lokayan, led by the late Smithu Kothari. It formed an activist group in Singrauli, known as the Singrauli Jan Lok Hit Samiti, which mainly drew the attention of policymakers, NGOs, academics and even the World Bank to the plight of people here.

The experiences of the displaced persons are discussed in three phases: the setting up of the Gobind Sagar Reservoir and Rihand Dam by displacing people from 146 villages. The setting up of mega thermal power projects and nine coal mines meant acquiring lands of 20,504 title holders (several of them facing the second time displacement) and the third phase of land acquisition started after 2006 with five more super thermal power projects, all in the private sector, in the process of being set up. This may result in further displacement and land acquisition of some 10,000 families in the region.

Early Phase

The displacement for the Gobind Reservoir and Rihand Dam started suddenly in 1960 (without adequate notice). This resulted in immense problems for the affected villagers. However, the population in the region was not very high and the government owned large tracts of deforested lands there. Accordingly, each displaced family was allotted five acres of land. However, almost 20% of the displaced families, a majority of them tribals, left the region, and their whereabouts remain unknown (Jan Lok Hit Samiti report; Kothari 1988). In the absence of a rehabilitation policy, people accepted the meagre amount of compensation which was not adequate even to construct a new house. Over 60% of these displaced families settled close to the reservoir site (mainly towards the northern stretch), only to be displaced again during the setting up of the super thermal power projects by the NTPC.

According to Hardikar (un-dated), over 2,00,000 people have been displaced due to the dam/reservoir, mining and thermal power projects in Singrauli. He quotes Dana Clark, a US attorney with the Centre for International Law who has closely monitored developments in Singrauli, especially the role of the World Bank. “...The story of the suffering of the villagers in Singrauli is shocking and should lead to a comprehensive review of people whose lives have been destroyed in the name of development” (ibid). In contrast, in recent years (in the last 10 years or so) due to spirited protests by the affected people and civil society groups like the

Narmada Bachao Andolan and the National Alliance for Peoples Movement (NAPM), the situation has changed considerably and no project, whether in the public or private sector, can escape its responsibilities towards the affected people. Also, the comprehensive national policy on R&R and several other policies protect the rights of the displaced people.

1 Second Phase of Development and Displacement

The abundance of water in the Gobind Sagar Reservoir and a long stretch of open coal fields – spread over 200 kms – were favourable for setting up super thermal power projects in the region. It turned out to be a curse, however, for the people who had not even recovered from the earlier shock of losing lands and homesteads to the dam/reservoir project. The NTPC proposed several super thermal power projects in the area and initiated the process, in the early 1980s, for setting up the Singrauli Super Thermal Power Project (SSTPP), to be followed by the Vindhya-chal Super Thermal Power Project (VSTPP) and the Rihand Super Thermal Power Project (RSTPP). Also, the Uttar Pradesh State Electricity Board (UPSEB) set up its own plant at Anpara (part of Singrauli area). These projects, in turn, initiated the coal mining projects in nine open coal mines, owned by the NCL.

In the next decade, 20,504 landowners lost their lands, and 4,563 families were displaced (many of them losing their lands as well) from their homesteads. Several were facing displacement for the second time. The first author of this paper was associated with a World Bank-appointed group, the GHK/MRM International, in preparing a comprehensive R&R plan for the oustees under the above projects, along with a development plan for the Singrauli region (then under the Singrauli Area Development Authority (SADA)). The detailed break-up of families/landowners affected under the thermal power and mining projects is given in (Table 1).

Table 1: Distribution of Land Oustees and Displaced Families in Singrauli Region by Project (during 1980s)

Project	No of Land Oustees ¹	No of Affected Families ²	No of Families Allotted Plots in the Resettlement Colonies	No of Families Still Requiring Plots in the Resettlement Colonies
NCL	6,175	3,244	1,031 (32%)	2,213 (68%)
NTPC	10,160	3,947	2,790 (71%)	1,157 (29%)
UPSEB	1,536	1,152	752 (65%)	400 (35%)
MGR (Merry-Go-Round Rail Track for Coal)	2,633	161*	0	0
Total	20,504	8,504	4,563 (55%)	3,770* (45%)

It does not include data on displacement caused due to the setting up of Anpara Power Project of the UPSEB.

1 Families which lost all or part of their lands.

2 Families which lost their houses.

* 161 families displaced by MGR Projects have been excluded since they do not have resettlement benefit.

Source: GHK/MRM International 1994.

Though the World Bank insisted on proper R&R for the NTPC project-affected people and the coal mining projects provided at least one job per affected family (due to the extensive labour-oriented mining work), the people organised themselves under the banner of the Jan Lok Hit Samiti and protested against the projects.

The Samiti’s report says:

On February 5, 1988, in a massive expression of collective protest, over 15,000 people – mostly tribals – marched through the streets and roads of Singrauli...They were protesting against the continuing

trauma and insecurity that repeated displacement had created for them and their families over the last three decades. Tens of thousands in this area have been forcibly uprooted from their sources of sustenance and livelihood. For many of them, this has happened more than once. This is the other side of Singrauli. Of people moved about like counters on a chequer board, of families uprooted and destroyed, of acres of forest wantonly denuded. It is the people's side, and is thus illustrative of the inhuman price they are made to pay for what, these days, poses as progress.

The observations (ibid) continue:

Singrauli, in the country today, this name, more than any other, represents large-scale energy development. Characteristically, it is increasingly being referred to as the 'energy' capital of India. Nearly a dozen super thermal power plants, a labyrinth of huge coal mines, dozens of smoke spewing industries and a whole new synthetic township are in various stages of completion. Inaugurating the Rihand Dam which was to herald all this 'development' in 1964, Nehru Promised the Singrauli would become the 'Switzerland of India'.

Today, that incongruous promise lives grossly distorted in a continually unfolding story of unprecedented suffering, misfortune and environmental damage. Yes, the power plants are being built, the coal seams exploited, the urban areas spread, but even to an uninitiated observer Singrauli looks more like the devastated zone in Tarkovsky's film *The Stalker* or like a scene out of the lower circles of Dante's *Inferno*. And, typically, "prestigious" national and international organisations like NTPC and the World Bank are primarily responsible for this continuing record of deliberate neglect and apathy.

Following this, the World Bank put pressure on the NTPC to chalk out a more comprehensive and pragmatic "rehabilitation action plan" for the affected people. It also commissioned the above stated study (by the GHK/MRM) for preparing a detailed development plan not only for the affected people but for the region as a whole (then under the jurisdiction of SADA), including eight towns and over 100 villages. The idea was that only a two-pronged strategy of developing the region and the affected people would make it a sustainable approach. The above study brought out the status of jobs (regular or contractual) offered by various projects (by 1993) to the PAPS (Table 2).

Table 2: Details of Employment Opportunities Provided to Land Oustees

Project	Total Number of Land Oustees	Permanent Employment	Contract Labour	Shops Allotted	Total Employment
NCL	6,175	3,360	*	*	3,360
SSTPP	1,457	400	527	29	947
VSTPP	7,014	244	658	21	923
RSTPP	1,689	125	350	22	497
UPSEB (Anpara)	1,307	233	300	7	540
UPSEB (Obra)	229	161	*	*	161
MGR	2,633	**	**	**	-
Total	13,865	4,523	1,831	74	6,428
		(34)	(13)	(1)	(48)

* No provision to offer contract labour jobs or allot shops to oustees.

** Invariably these oustees are not entitled to jobs due to loss of a small amount of land.

Figures in parentheses indicate percentages.

Source: GHK/MRM Study (1994).

As evident from the data, only the coal mines, the SSTPP and the Anpara Super Thermal Power Project of the UPSEB performed better in offering total employment to the affected people. However, as far as offering regular jobs was concerned, their record was poor (the NCL was an exception). Thus, out of some 11,500

oustees under all the mega power projects, only about 1,050 got regular jobs in those projects. Repeatedly, the PAPS represented their case to the World Bank, and the above quoted study was one of the several efforts on the part of World Bank to improve the lot of the land oustees. The idea of developing the whole region, along with the PAPS, did not take off due to the lack of cooperation by the Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh state governments. A few programmes were finally initiated by the respective power project's managements for the oustees, like offering loans, giving labour contracts to cooperatives of the oustees, providing opportunities for skill upgradation and environmental improvement in resettlement colonies. However, all these fell short of creating a sustainable source of livelihood for a majority of the PAPS.

The syndrome of "regular jobs in the project and nothing less" gripped the PAPS in Singrauli area, as elsewhere. That is, those PAPS who did not get regular jobs in these projects continued agitating for years. The hope of a regular job in these projects prevented them from searching for other means of livelihood.

2 The Scenario Changes

For the people of Singrauli, there seems to be no end to the displacement they can suffer. In fact, the third phase of setting up of mega thermal power and coal mining projects emerged post 2006. Table 3 (p 66) presents basic information on these new proposed or under-execution projects.

The data shows the proposed addition of over 13,000 MW thermal power generation through the private sector companies in coming years. This is in addition to the execution of the second phase power generation projects, at the existing sites, by the NTPC. The new thermal power projects would require over 10,000 acres of private or government lands (the lands to be acquired for the Chitrangi Power Pvt Ltd are yet to be notified), and would affect over 4,000 families in Singrauli district. These new thermal power projects would require dedicated coal mines in the area, for which the process of notification of land/homestead acquisition has yet to start. The mining sites will be mostly in the forest areas which are inhabited mainly by tribal families who may have been staying at the mining sites for decades, with or without formal titles to their properties. The issue of displacement is bound to be a complex one in such circumstances. Thus, the Singrauli region is once again likely to be the battlefield between the land oustees and the projects to be undertaken there.

Empowered Bargaining

In this "third" phase of displacement in the region, a significant change is visible. The affected people are no longer "taken for granted" either by the projects' managements or the government. On the contrary, their entitlements and R&R have become crucial not only for mitigating the adverse impact of these projects on their lives, but also for the very success of these projects. This is made possible through sustained agitation, across the country, by civil society groups and the affected people. Those business groups who ignore this changing environment are, in fact, struggling to see their projects take shape. The overall impact of such movements is that the central and state governments have come

out with comprehensive R&R policies for mitigating the ill effects of such displacements. Several business groups in the private sector are, in fact, offering generous compensation (and rehabilitation) packages to the oustees, so that the implementation of their projects can proceed smoothly. Despite this however they are not sure of achieving their objectives. The MMSEZ mega project of the Reliance group of industries in the Navi Mumbai area of Maharashtra is a case in point. It requires around 10,000 ha of land. It has offered a generous package of Rs 6 to 8 lakh to PAPS as compensation for per acre of their lands. Reliance is unable to acquire the lands because of agitation by the affected people and civil society groups against the project. Such is the new environment that is emerging against the paradigm of development which imposes it on people against their wishes and the certainty of sustaining livelihoods.

Gone are the days when meagre compensations were paid, say Rs 150 for a “pucca” well or Rs 5 for a guava tree (as we were told) in the Singrauli area. In the 1990s itself the NTPC and the NCL were finding it extremely difficult to acquire lands for the

enjoying customary rights also come in for special mention. Overall, it is a progressive R&R policy, though it does create issues of entitlements which will be discussed later in this paper.

Generous Packages: The newly emerging super thermal power projects by the private sector in MP have also drawn up reasonably good R&R packages. We make this statement while acknowledging that even good rates as compensation for farming lands offer no guarantee to land oustees that they will be able to convert the R&R benefits into productive assets for sustainability of their families. For that, special rehabilitation programmes (like social entrepreneurship) need to be launched through adequate support from an effective NGO. Another viable option could be “land for land” if it is within manageable distance and of good quality. In the absence of a proper rehabilitation – which has been the case with a majority of the projects/programmes – it is possible that the oustee may use the money on non-gainful activities and face an uncertain future. Within these constraints, the packages being offered by the above projects are highlighted here.

Table 3: Recent Mega Power/Mining Projects in Singrauli Region and Possible Displacement of Families

Name of the Project	Nature of Project	Quantum of Land Acquired (Government Land + Private Land)	Number of Displaced Families (or To Be Displaced)
Sasan Ultra Mega Power Project (Reliance ADAG)	4,000 MW thermal power plant	3,883 acre	1,079
Mahan Super Thermal Power Project (ESSAR Global)	2,000 MW thermal power plant	1,822 acre	916
Jaypee Power Ventures Ltd Nigri (Jaypee Group)	1,320 MW thermal power plant	855 acre	138
Chitrangi Power Pvt Ltd (Reliance ADAG)	4,000 MW thermal power plant	NA	Survey under process
Mahan Aluminium and Captive Thermal Power Plant (Hindalco)	900 MW 3.59 lakh tonne/annum production	3,517 acre	1,617
Madhya Pradesh Jaypee Minerals (Jaypee Group)	Mining	305 acre	36
Amelia Coal Blocks (Sainik Mines)	Mining	NA	NA
Mahan Coal Ltd (Essar and Hindalco)	Mining	NA	NA

* The projects are at different stages of Land Acquisition. The number of displaced families (homestead/land oustees) mentioned in the table is tentative, and at various stages of displacement. Source: www.singrauli.dist.org

“merry-go-round” (rail track for carrying coal to plants). The affected PAPS insisted on market based compensation for lands and a regular job in the project. One can imagine the prevailing situation today in Singrauli where the new thermal power projects are virtually competing with each other to “win the heart” of the PAPS by offering them generous R&R packages.

Favourable R&R Policy in Madhya Pradesh

As stated earlier, the R&R policies of central and state governments are quite forward looking. A case in point is the R&R policy of Madhya Pradesh (see R&R Policy of MP State 2002). It gives due emphasis not only to those affected by the projects set up in rural areas but also in urban areas and special emphasis to the affected scheduled castes/scheduled tribes (sc/st) and vulnerable groups. Also, for those displaced from their homestead (irrespective of whether they have lost agricultural lands or not), it recommends large size plots in the resettlement colonies (with all the necessary infrastructure) to be given to all adult male members. It also provides incentives for rehabilitation of those who are indirectly affected and special emphasis to the rehabilitation of families affected under the irrigation projects (dams and reservoirs). It recommends that those whose lands are submerged due to the irrigation projects should get plots which are half the size of that they have lost and in the “command” areas of irrigation. Project-affected tribals (and other families) living in forest areas and

A general package towards compensations (for lands or homestead) by the power projects is being offered which has several benefits for the affected families (see Annexure, p 68). This package is especially devised by the Sasan Power Project, but is emerging as a “model” to be followed by other projects with minor variations here and there. The highlights of the package are: compensation for farming lands at about Rs 1,80,000 per acre (irrigated); a one time rehabilitation grant which also includes the land difference amount under Section 4 of the year of notification, and the land rate declared under Section 11 of the land acquisition award year; the solatium (30% as per legal norms), interest (12%) on land and other immovable assets, a spacious plot/house (90 × 60 sq ft) in the resettlement, with necessary infrastructure, and a “rehabilitation action plan” (RAP) for upgrading/restoring living conditions of the affected families.

Interestingly, the Mahan Super Thermal Power Project, being set up by Essar Global, has signed an R&R package (with the district magistrate and rehabilitation officer) for the affected people under the project. It has offered current market rates for the acquired lands, and spacious plots for every adult in each affected family. More significantly, it has offered “unemployment allowance” to all the displaced persons (between 18 and 50 years of age) who are not being given jobs in the Mahan Power Plant. This unemployment allowance of Rs 4,000 a month shall be paid till the project succeeds in offering a regular job to the person or until

he/she attains the age of 58 years, whichever is earlier. The first author of this paper has been associated with several R&R projects across the country but has not come across such a generous offer to the PAPS. Why are the other super thermal power projects like the Reliance ADAG not offering similar rehabilitation packages? Their answer is that their agreements with the state governments (or central government as the case may be) require them to supply produced power at a low price. Therefore, such a generous “unemployment allowance” may not be viable for keeping the project in production.

‘Who Is Displaced?’

The second author of this paper has, for the last one year, been working extensively in the area, as a part of his association with the R&R work of the Sasan Power Project. While interacting with the “displaced” persons under this and other projects under implementation in the area, government officials and project-functionaries, the issues that came up are highlighted below:

Definition of ‘Displaced Person’: As per the Policy of MP State, any person residing in the area is “displaced” whose land is getting submerged permanently or temporarily by an irrigation project or being acquired for other industrial/infrastructure projects. The person is expected normally residing in the area at least one year prior to the Section 4 notification of the Land Acquisition Act 1894, and earning his livelihood by doing some business or tilling his land for at least three years prior to Section 4 notification (MP R&R 2002).

The policy is not clear on the entitlements guaranteed under R&R for a “displaced” family, “affected” as a homestead and land oustee (a family losing homestead as well as the land) or the land oustee (a family losing only the land but not the homestead). It is critical to understand the case of land tenure vis-à-vis the magnitude of impact of land acquisition on the people. The displaced person should be classified into the following (A, B, and C) categories of people:

(A) Those who have formal legal rights to the land (with record of rights), including the customary and traditional rights recognised under the law.

(B) Those who do not have formal legal rights to the land at the time the census of PAPS begins, but have a claim to such land or assets; provided such claims are recognised under the law or are recognised through a process identified in the resettlement plan.

(C) Those who have no recognisable legal rights or claim to the land that they have been occupying.

The beneficiaries’ list should be prepared in accordance with the revenue records. It is important to note the name under “Kafiat-12” of the *Khasra* records to gather information about the *Kaashthkaar* and also the *Gardwari* records prepared by the *patwari* to know the cropping pattern, quality of land – irrigated/unirrigated, etc. This information can help in understanding the actual economic loss to the farming communities under the land acquisition process.

Evaluation of Entitlements Should Be Participatory: It has been observed that at the time of Section 4 notification, there is

sudden influx of encroachers, squatters, etc, to claim the benefits of R&R. Since land acquisition is a complicated process and valuation of assets is a vital and complex issue, a “land verification team” with representation of all the stakeholders (government, the project management, the area representatives and PAPS) should be constituted for smooth verification of entitlements. The *patwari* is primarily responsible for the valuation of assets – both movable as well as immovable – through the process of *sthal panchnama*. To make the process democratic and participatory in the true sense, it is critical to actively involve the concerned stakeholders in the process for a larger political and social acceptance, and avoid of corrupt practices.

A survey team with multi-stakeholder representation should be constituted to verify the genuinely affected persons. The person must produce documents like proof of name in the voter list three years prior to the Section 4 notification, ration card of the project-village, residence with cooking stove, spouse enrolment in an *aanganwadi* or a school, job card, proof of being a pension holder, etc. The indigenous families in the project notified area should be surveyed separately on a case to case basis. It has been observed that most of the tribal families lack these records even though they are genuine residents of the area. Special care should be taken in identifying such families so that they receive all the R&R benefits. The “homestead” should not be seen as a parameter of “affectedness”, because the relation of livelihood is with the land. For a land oustee, the loss of 100% or 75% of the agricultural land means that the rest of the agricultural field also becomes economically unviable, and he is even worse off than a homestead oustee. The land oustees must be considered for R&R benefits. Thus, landownership and the severity of impact should be a determining factor of eligibility for rehabilitation.

Conclusions

This paper, based mainly on the field experiences of the authors, focuses on the unabated and recurring displacement of thousands of families in the Singrauli area spread over five decades.

The affected people (hundreds of them repeatedly), due to the acquisition of their lands and/or homestead in the past suffered untold miseries due to lack of adequate R&R programmes, and conflicts between various projects and the people. In fact, a major agitation by people against “involuntary” displacement due to the mega industrial/infrastructure projects took place in the Singrauli region. Such agitations have now culminated in a civil society movement all across the country due to such mega projects emerging all over India, more so under the present paradigm of market driven economy. This has brought distinct awareness among the people against such projects where the sovereign right of the State to acquire properties of people for setting up such projects in “public interest” is being challenged by people and civil society groups.

The earlier two phases of displacement in the Singrauli region tell a story of misery and hardships, including the disruption of sources of sustenance for a majority of the affected people. Those few families (around 4,523 against the total displaced families of

about 14,000) who got regular jobs, in the 1980s and 1990s, in the mega thermal power and mining projects, were lucky ones against the above majority who suffered for decades due to losing their lands, the main sources of their sustenance.

The recent displacement of some 4,600 families who are in process of losing their lands or homestead for the thermal power projects – to be joined by those families to be affected under the new coal mining projects – comes under a changing environment. One where the affected people are “empowered” through fairly comprehensive R&R policies (like that of Madhya Pradesh), and protests by civil society groups resulting in better

bargaining for sources of livelihood. Favourable packages (towards land compensation and R&R) are being offered by industrial groups so that their projects do not fizzle out, as is happening in several cases in other parts of the country. However, the R&R policy of Madhya Pradesh raises certain contentious issues about “entitlements” and the very definition of “displaced” person/people under various projects. The experience of “involuntary” displacement in the Singrauli region in the last five decades or so and its consequences for the affected people bring out relevant lessons for future projects and for the rights of the affected peoples.

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Annexure: Office of the Collector, District Singrauli (MP)

(Translated from Hindi)
 SNo/Land Aq/o8 Singrauli,
 Dated 09.08.2008

General Notice

Subject: Facilities/Grants To Be Provided to the Displaced Persons

General public is informed that the families displaced due to Sasan Power Project will be provided the following grants and facilities according to Model Rehabilitation policy 2002 of Madhya Pradesh government.

1 Rehabilitation Grant and Balance of Compensation

(i) **Payment of Balance 20% Amount of Section 17/9:** Those plot numbers, on which Section 17 was imposed, 20% of amount will be given after hearing under Section 9 on vacation of land.

(ii) **Section 4 and Difference of Present Rate of Land:** The difference in cost of land at the

time of Section 4 and released by collector's office during the year 2008-09 will be given as rehabilitation grant. This amount will be due after giving the possession of the land.

The rate per hectare village-wise is as follows, as per collector's office

Village	Rate at the Time of Section 4 Year 2006-07 (Rs)		Present Rate Year 2009-09 (Rs)	
	Irrigated	Non-Irrigated	Irrigated	Non-Irrigated
Sidhdhi khurd	450500	300000	650000	450000
Sidhdhi kala	357000	250000	650000	450000
Harhawa	492000	332000	650000	450000
Tiyara	450500	300000	650000	450000
Jaanjhitola	450500	300000	650000	420000

(iii) **Rehabilitation Grant:** Following rehabilitation grant will be given to the displaced family through appropriate instalments during one year.

A Land less agriculture labour family	15000/-
B SC/ST landowners or any other family	15000/-
C Small and marginalised farmers' families	15000/-
D Other landowner or non-landowner (half of A)	7500/-

2 Free Plot/House Allotment

A displaced family will be given a plot and a pucca house built on 60' x 90' (5,400 sq ft) in the rehabilitation village “Surya Bihar” Majholi, free of cost, according to the definition given in the Rehabilitation Policy. In case of not taking the house, in lieu the grant of Rs 75,000 (Rs Seventyfive thousand) and in case of not taking the plot, Rs 20,000 (Rs Twenty thousand) will be given. Each adult son/daughter/legally divorced daughters (except other married daughters) and adult brothers, who have become adult on the date of releasing notification under Section 4 of the land acquisition, will be treated as a separate family.

3 Free Transport Arrangement and Transport Expenditure

Every displaced family will be given Rs 1,000/- (Rs One thousand) to carry their household items to rehabilitation village or anywhere else. Besides, free transports will be provided to carry the goods up to 25 KM, by Shasan Power Ltd.

4 Old Age Pension

Every displaced man or woman, whose age is 60 years or more at present, will be given Rs 1,000/- (Rs One thousand) per month. This pension is in addition to the government pension.

5 Free Education and Education Stipend

There is a provision of free education up to class 10th for the children of displaced families in Surya Vihar Majholi. The students of the displaced families will get uniform, study material, along with stipend per month.

Class	Stipend to Boys (Rs)	Stipend to Girls (Rs)
1-5	150	200
6-8	200	250
9-10	250	300

This school will be run by Saraswati Shishu Mandir or equivalent institute. There is a provision of 28 classrooms, Aanganwadi, library, teachers' rooms, office, store, kitchen, etc. This school will be equipped with necessary furniture.

6 Free Medical Facility

Hospital facility in Surya Vihar will be equivalent to community health centre with the provision of labour room, pathology lab, emergency medical chamber, OPD treatment room, dressing room, medicine store, record room and waste site, drinking water, toilet, etc. There is a special arrangement for the treatment of children and women.

7 Facilities Proposed in Resettlement Village (Colony)

- School up to class 10th (fully equipped)
- Panchayat/community building (hall, office, library, store)
- Primary health centre
- Market
- Playground
- Drinking water facilities
- Fair price shop of ration
- Provision of religious place
- Aanganwadi
- Roads, street lights, etc.

8 Employment

(i) **Employment:** At least one member of each displacement will be given preference in obtaining job as per qualification in the project, according to the Model Rehabilitation Policy 2002. Preference to be given to landless displaced persons as unskilled workers in the construction. Displaced persons should register their names with the project representatives. Sarpanch of concerned village panchayat will also cooperate in the task.

(ii) **Setting Up of Labour Contract Committees:** This will comprise 100% displaced families. These members will be given preference in the construction or any other work by the project. These committees will be registered by the district labour office. Unskilled jobs

of the project will be done through these committees.

(iii) **Colony of the Project and Allotment of the Shops in Rehabilitation Village:** There is a provision of 10% reservation for the displaced persons in colony of the project. Priority of the allotment will be as follows:

- Self-help group of women
- Handicapped
- SC
- ST
- Other Backward Classes
- General classes

The above-mentioned reservation will be for the shops of mainly milk, bread, laundry, vegetables, etc. The shops in the rehabilitation village will be allotted 100% to the displaced people. The order of priority for the allotment will be as above.

9 Employment-oriented Training

(i) **Free Industrial Training:** At least one adult person of a displaced family will given free industrial training. List of qualified boys and girls will be made from each village and they will be trained, from time to time.

(ii) **Self-employment:** Necessary training will be arranged for this purpose. The district administration will arrange loans from the bank for the displaced people, women, men, youth, etc, of all ages to set up their own business.

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