

# Resettlement Induced Secondary Poverty in Developing Countries

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## Abstract

Most developing countries in their quest to improve upon the standard of living of their people design and implement huge development projects (construction of dams, urban renewal and development; and natural resource extraction); these projects are characterized by the use of land and other related resources; this inevitably leads to the displacement and further resettlement of landowners and other land users. The lives of these displaced persons are disrupted as their productive lands, homes, businesses and social lives are impacted adversely.

Large numbers of people are often affected by development projects especially in developing countries, and in most developed and developing countries, resettlement and compensation is the common policy implored to deal with not just development induced displacement but also post disaster development and planning. However, very few of the projects that pursued resettlement as a policy to deal with displacement and associated poverty have succeeded in promoting and sustaining the economic and social lives of resettled people; thus large numbers of those displaced and resettled are left poor or worse off than they were prior to displacement. These efforts have failed to a large extent because these initiatives aimed at safeguarding environmental, social and human rights are usually at the macro level and hardly translated to the grass root level. Most developing countries in their transition stage of development will continually embark on such projects to improve their economies hence a need to examine the adverse effects of these projects so that mitigating measures can be applied appropriately and people become project benefactors instead of victims.

Using data from some selected development projects in some developing countries; this paper explores the concept of secondary poverty caused by displacement and resettlement; by assessing the impact of these projects on the lives of the displaced. Review of these projects suggest that displacement and resettlement in most cases causes severe poverty among displaced persons and groups. This paper therefore concludes by proposing the eight Displacement and Resettlement Risks and Rehabilitation Model by Michael Cernea as a strategy to overcome poverty induced by resettlement; and assessing the few situations in which the reconstructive measures were implemented to improve upon the socio-economic lives of displaced persons.

**Key Words:** Poverty; Resettlement; Development; Displacement

## 1. Background

Strive by nations to achieve economic and national growth has led to the design and implementation of large development projects. Some of these projects include the construction of roads to facilitate the movement of goods and services, building of clinics and hospitals to cater for the health needs of people, the construction of hydropower dam to boost water quality, power generation and sustain human life, construction of schools and colleges to promote education to impact knowledge etc. These developmental projects are inevitable and necessary if a nation desires to achieve national and economic growth in order to improve upon the standard of living and developmental needs of the people.

These developmental projects cannot, however, be implemented in vacuum, that is, resources both human and natural are needed for implementation to take place. Most often land is the most tangible natural resource needed; it plays an important role in the development of a nation and without it development cannot be done. As noted by Simpson (1976), land is the source of all material wealth from which we get everything of value; be it food, clothing, shelter, fuel, precious stones or metal; we live on land and from land and to land our bodies or ashes are committed after death; Thus the availability, use and distribution of land is key to our very existence as humans.

In many cases, there is no fallow or empty land as these are used for agriculture crop and animal rearing, forest and natural reserves or housing and infrastructures. As noted by Cernea (2004) development projects require already occupied land and thus involve varying degrees of forced resettlement; for some of these projects to be implemented, the occupants of these lands are forcibly dispossessed with or without compensation from their lands. The means through which people are dispossessed may vary from country to country just as land laws, tenure and registration, property rights and ownership differ for different countries. In the case of Ghana, the standard process for acquiring land compulsorily has been undermined because sometimes little or no compensation is given to landowners (Larbi, 2008; Kyei-Dompreh, 2012). However, irrespective of whichever method implored to acquire land, measures should be put in place to restore the lives of the displaced people; because a large number of these people are often rural folks who depend on the land directly for survival.

Due to these vast number of people often affected by development projects (especially in developing countries), donor agencies and governments regularly make concerted efforts to ensure that affected communities can become project development beneficiaries rather than victims (Alizadeh, 1994 in Badri et.al, 2006); and though some of these concerns have led to regional, national and local initiatives, instruments and laws regarding the planning, designing, implementation of development projects to safeguard environmental, social and human rights, most displaced persons are plunked further into severe poverty than they were experiencing because these initiatives are usually at the macro level and its effects are hardly felt at the micro or bottom grass root level.

In most developed and developing countries, resettlement and compensation for example is the common policy implored to deal with not just development induced displacement but also post disaster development and planning (Hall, 1994; Tamakloe, 1994; in Badri et.al, 2006). According to Cernea (1994) in a review of lessons learnt from World Bank projects in Africa however, very few of projects that pursued resettlement as a policy to deal with displacement and associated poverty have succeeded in promoting and sustaining the economic and social lives of resettled people; thus large numbers of those displaced and resettled are left poor or worse off than they were prior to displacement.

According to the World Bank (1994), much attention has been received by involuntary resettlement caused by large development projects because of the large numbers of people that are affected by these projects especially in developing countries; Pankhurst & Pigué (2009) however noted that, compared to refugees who cross international borders forced resettlers receive less attention or visibility, less support and have not been studied extensively; what has also received less attention are the struggles of most displaced persons after resettlement. As most people who are affected are usually poor rural people living in developing countries, their plight or poverty situation is further worsened with displacement and further resettlement. Cernea (2002) notes that many development projects intended to alleviate poverty end up increasing poverty by displacing large numbers of people without re-establishing them viably, despite the use of compensation payments for assets lost.

This study therefore seeks to investigate secondary poverty as a result of involuntary resettlement caused by development projects (Development Induced Displacement and Resettlement) in developing countries. In addition, the present study also utilizes the eight Displacement and Resettlement Risks and Rehabilitation Model by Michael Cernea to address the issue.

## **2. Development Induced Displacement and Resettlement (DIDR)**

Forced Resettlement according to Forced Migration Online (FMO, 2010) may be grouped into three headings. These are disaster induced, conflict induced and development induced displacement and further resettlement.

Involuntary Displacement and Resettlement (IDR) usually refers to the forceful removal of people from one area to another; which can be caused by both natural and unnatural circumstances. Natural disasters such as flooding, drought, earthquake and other disasters that are not as a result of human's effort have forcefully removed people from their natural homes and habitats to other areas. The aftermath of these disasters can be devastating if not dealt with properly. Unnatural situations such as wars, development projects, fear of intimidation and other reasons related directly to human effort have also led to forceful removal of people and property from one area to another.

Development Induced Displacement and Resettlement (DIDR) therefore is the physical displacement and relocation of people as a result of large scale development projects such as dam's construction and construction

of mines (Robinson, 2003). Development Induced Displacement and Resettlement are profound more in some areas than others. For example, most of the involuntary displacement and resettlement that takes place in most Asia countries are as a result of development activities whilst most in Africa are as a result of social and political instability in the sub-region. The National Research Center for Resettlement in China has estimated that over 45 million people were displaced by development projects in that country between 1950 and 2000 (Fuggle and Smith, 2000). Meanwhile, in Africa, World Bank (WB) involvement in 35 projects have resulted in the displacement and involuntary relocation of about 250,000 people which is small compared to the number of people affected by wars, ethnic strife and ecological catastrophes (Cernea, 1997).

The risks, however, associated with Involuntary Resettlement (IR) as a result of natural disasters and unnatural circumstances (including wars and political instability as well as those caused by development projects) are the same. For example, in both scenarios, people face the risks of homelessness, landlessness, loss of livelihood, social disintegration, and loss of cultural sites amongst others. In a case study of the 1990 earthquake in Manjil in Iran by Badri et al. (2006), the authors found out that even though resettlement was pursued extensively as a policy to overcome the problems posed by the earthquake, many of the relocated families still faced socio-economic difficulties with regards to employment, income among other social issues. These issues most often also affect those displaced by development projects as some lose their source of livelihood and social networks along with their land creating further impoverishment.

Development Induced Displacement and Resettlement (DIDR) on the other hand however allows for more proactive, comprehensive and systematic planning by governments and or private sector support (Gibson, 1993 and Mahaparta, 1999 in Badri et al. 2006); which might lead to a significant improvement in the socioeconomic lives of the Affected Persons ((AP(s)) and the general development of the country, thus the key to success here is proper planning and implementation of the project. Development Induced Displacement and Resettlement (DIDR) is also a by-product of development projects such as dam construction, urban development projects; and not the main objective of developers (Cernea, 1994). Development Induced Displacement and Resettlement (DIDR), unlike those associated with natural disasters, also provides Affected Persons more opportunities to be part of the decision-making process and mitigate or minimize the negative economic and social impacts the projects might have on them (World Bank, 1998; Cernea, 1997).

Development projects inducing displacements and resettlements have been categorized into three main groups: Dams: The debate over the benefits and costs of dam construction has gone on for several decades now and has led to the development of many international instruments to minimize and mitigate if possible the adverse effects of dams. Dams and its related systems though are constructed to satisfy the developmental needs of a people also come with adverse vast impacts on the economic, psychological and social life of people and the environment. This has been the concern for many governments, civil groups, organizations and individuals. China's large-scale economic projects in the last 50 years have caused 40 million involuntary migrants, mostly due to the dams and transportation infrastructure located in rural areas (Chen, 2006) with dams alone accounting for almost 15 million involuntary migrants (Shi & Chen, 2000). A study conducted by Qing, Shi and Yang (2002) on the Xiaolangdi dam Project in China at the Yellow River also revealed that although the project was very essential to the socioeconomic development of those in the middle and along the river basin areas, it was also very strenuous as it affected and displaced a vast number of people consisting mainly of rural settlers who had to be resettled in other areas.

Examples can also be cited about the Akosombo Dam in Ghana which also led to the displacement of about 80,000 people; flooding 3.5 percent of the nation's land; the reduction in river flow also led to the spread of schistosomiasis in the downstream section of the dam (Tamakloe, 1994). According to Kalitsi (2003), forty five years after the relocation, persons affected by this project are unsatisfied with the resettlement process and package; they feel urban communities and industries have benefited from the project leaving local communities with host of health problems and inadequate compensation (Mettle, 2011). In the recent related Bui Dam project in Ghana also, the success of the project have been marred by adverse effects including infertility of land, low farm yields, poor housing, and total ban on fishing in the Black Volta without alternative fishing grounds (Mettle, 2011). Furthermore, the construction of the Aswan dam in Egypt also affected more than 10,000 persons; the Narmada dam in India displaced 70,000; the Kaptai dam in Bangladesh also displaced 90,000 persons, the three Gorges dam and Danjiakou dams in China also displaced 1.3million and 382,000 persons, respectively (Scudder, 2005).

**Urban Renewal and Development:** This refers to urban upgrading projects such as slum clearance; construction of physical infrastructure such as schools and clinics to cater for the educational needs and health needs of the ever increasing population in urban areas. In addition, the construction and widening of roads and highways to ensure the easy transport of goods and services from one area to another and or ease traffic on roads. All these projects may require the expropriation of lands that people occupy. Thus, people will have to be displaced and relocated.

**Natural Resource Extraction:** This refers to the mining of natural resources such as gold diamond, bauxite. Displacements and further resettlement or relocation caused by mining of natural resource is known as Mining-Induced Displacement and Resettlement (MIDR) (Downing, 2002). Mining projects like dams lead to people losing their homes, their livelihoods and causes the disintegration of social systems. According to Downing (2002), there has not being any global survey to assess the extent and scale of mining induced displacement and resettlement; however it is very likely to be on the rise because rich mineral deposits are found in areas with relatively low land acquisition costs, the lands are also being exploited using open-cast mining and are located in areas with high population density which have poor land tenure system and politically weak and powerless populations, especially indigenous peoples (Downing, 2002). For example, former inhabitants of Teberebie in Ghana were displaced by an American-Ghanaian gold mining company called Teberebie Goldfields Ltd. in the 1990's when their illiterate chief signed an agreement for 168 housing units, but seven years later, the agreement was not yet fulfilled (Brand, 1998). About 2.55million people were displaced in India alone between 1950 and 1990 and in Ghana, twenty to thirty thousand people were forced to relocate from their homes (Downing, 2002). This poses a serious hinder to national development and also hinders global movement to eradicate poverty especially in preexisting poverty situations.

### **3. Secondary Poverty**

Poverty exists in different forms and arises from a broad spectrum of circumstances; it may be man-made and systemic or environmental; meaning people are poor because they do not belong to a system. Therefore poverty may be as a result of an effective as well as an ineffective policy intervention (Goran, 2008). More than 10 million people annually are involuntarily displaced to make way for development projects (Cernea 2000); and though most of these development projects are design to achieve positive outcomes, associated with them are also certain costs that must be borne. Every development project is undertaken usually with benefits in mind, on the other side of the coin however are the costs of implementing the projects, most often than not those in vulnerable situations who have less power, no voice and virtually no control happen to be the involuntary bearers of these risks and costs, whilst the elite or affluent in society become the beneficiaries of the projects.

These costs or risks may be visible or invisible, direct or indirect, tangible or intangible. The risks involved in DIDR irrespective of the form should be managed properly and in a timely manner. Otherwise, it can result in long lasting impoverishment effects on the Affected Person(s), leading to what is known as "new poverty" or "secondary poverty" (Cernea, 2002). The concept of new poverty according to displacement experts is an effect of resettlement where displaced persons lose physical and non-physical assets such as their homes, sense of community as well as productive land (Downing, 2002). This concept of new poverty has been illustrated through studies conducted in affected areas before and after project implementation; it also refers to the situation where project affected persons are left worse off than they were before the resettlement, the poor getting more poorer (Cernea 1997; Aronsson, 2002), land owners becoming landless or tenants on their own land and left with no hope of restoration or improvement in their socio-economic lives.

Firstly, the principal cause of this further impoverishment is the loss of land, where land owners become landless: this is the most evident and principal risk that displaced persons is most likely to face; as they lose their ancestral and productive lands to development projects leading to impoverishment. This impoverishment may result not just from the loss of land but also from damages to the lands productive potential, loss of productive value of land due to environmental problems. Landlessness mostly arises because the Affected Persons do not most often gain access to alternative lands (Downing, 2002) or when they do the lands are not fertile enough for farming; an example in recent times is the Bui dam experience of Ghana, where lands were either inaccessible to the affected persons or woefully inadequate where persons that previously owned five acres of land were allotted two acres of less fertile land (Shelby, 2009). This situation has effects on the livelihoods, income and standard of living of Affected Person(s).

The issue of compensation over restoration also leads to severe impoverishment among displaced persons. It must be pointed out that the monies they receive as compensation may not be sufficient to gain access to and acquire new productive lands to restore their livelihoods as prices on the land market may be higher or inflated. Thus, they remain landless and impoverished than they were before the displacement; for example, in the Srisalam hydropower Dam project, affected persons were paid Rs.932 and Rs. 2332 for dry and wet land initially valued at Rs. 5000 and Rs. 13800 respectively; implying that at the end of compensation less than five times the amount required to purchase equivalent agricultural land in quantity and quality was paid to the affected persons (Bartolome et.al, 2000). In some other situations, farmers may have access to alternative lands but the lands are woefully inadequate (quantity) for crop production or may not be as fertile (quality) as their previous lands. In a study of the Kiambere Hydropower project in Kenya, Mburugu (1993) found out that the land owned by farmers dropped from 13 to 6 hectares after resettlement; reduction in their livestock more than a third and a dropped in crop production as well. This subsequently led to a drop in family income worsening the situation of farmers and other land users. In some other situations, some displaced persons are likely to face and deal with the issue of “double landlessness”. This is a situation where the displaced persons lose even the lands allotted to them as replacement for loss land. An example can be cited of resettlement that took place in Ghana after the Akosombo and Kpong dams where host communities retracted their lands due to huge outstanding debts (Kalitsi, 2008). Related to the loss of land or inadequate farm land after displacement, is also a tremendous decrease in agricultural food crop and animal production and husbandry which can lead to malnourishment of children and even the loss of lives as people are not able to get adequate food to sustain their lives.

It is important to note that most displacement occurs in rural areas where affected persons are rural peasants involved in farming. Land therefore is not the only asset lost but also most indigenes lose their source of wage employment, access to leaseholds and sharecropping opportunities (Downing, 2002). These can have negative economic impact on the peasants and families; pushing them down farther the poverty line as displacement destroys their source of income and thus denies them decent livelihoods. It may be argued that development projects provide locals with project related jobs; but most of these jobs are short term usually during project implementation stage thus are not sustaining (Cernea, 1997). Usually, very small percentage of local persons are able to get these and most often than not they get the menial jobs as they usually lack technocratic skills. For example, only 100 out of 17,300 Freeport workers in the Grasberg mine are natives of the mining area (Oxfam, 2001). To deal with this issue, China for example has adopted the land for land mode to deal especially with rural communities whose lands are taken for development and other projects (Chen, 2006).

Project affected persons also, to make way for development projects, do not lose just their lands and jobs but along with it the buildings and other structures on those lands. This often results in the primary loss of homes and other properties, which further causes impoverishment as homes and properties that the AP's have toiled over the years to build are torn to the ground. In most situations, there is little or no hope of restoration. In the Srisalam Dam project, housing units were erased down and affected persons were to receive Rs. 11564 and Rs. 2500 as compensation per house for stone houses and huts respectively, this however did not materialize when affected persons were given Rs. 5561 and Rs. 645 respectively; amounts that were not adequate for the people to replace the housing units (Hemadri, Mander and Nagraj, 1999). In a study by the Centre on Housing Rights and Evictions in 2002, 43million people in 63 countries were found physically displaced between 1998 and 2000 (Robinson, 2003). In other situations, standardized housing units are provided for the displaced persons, this however solves little of the housing problems as family size and differences are not taken into consideration, other housing units also make use of cheap construction materials which easily dilapidates with time; an example of this is of the Akosombo dam displaced persons housing projects where years after the dam completion, the core houses to be provided still remained untouched or dilapidated ( Gordon,2006).

Marginalization also occurs because many families are pushed on a downward mobility path in their socio-economic status; where middle income farm households become small land owners and thus have less income (Cernea, 1997). Many people who are involuntarily displaced to make way for development projects are affected by poverty even before the implementation of development projects or are in marginal economic situations and struggling. Moreover, the people would be working hard to overcome poverty and improve their situations. It must be noted that most of these projects, though are intended to provide benefits for many, due to inadequate designing and implementation worsens the plight of these people; turning displacement into a weapon aggravating poverty (Cernea, 1994). There is a general downward slip in not just the social and economic but also the psychological state of displaced persons as displacement is associated by loss or lowered self-esteem (Downing, 2002) as well as loss of social confidence as landowners now become tenants in other communities.



Displaced persons also suffer from tremendous health issues. Inadequate access to safe and potable drinking water can also cause water related diseases such as dysentery, malaria, diarrhea and other epidemic among displaced persons. In the Kainji resettlement communities project for example, the provision of adequate housing, potable drinking water and sound sanitary facilities were woefully inadequate (De wet, 2000). Vulnerable groups such as the aged, women and children are usually the worse affected by these outbreaks, in the incidence of the Kainji resettlement in Nigeria, health related issues resulted in the deaths of children below age five (Scudder, 2005).

Inaccessibility of common property can also further impoverish affected persons; this refers to community owned assets such as recreational centers, grazing fields and other infrastructure and public services. Poor landless rural migrants that make use of these common properties and services would be adversely affected by their relocation to a new settlement area since they may not have access to these properties in the new areas. Displacement and resettlement leads to the disintegration of social networks such as families, communities and societies. The sense of community and support people receive from one another are torn to pieces. This may be detrimental to the sustenance of life especially for vulnerable people who depend on such social networks, cohesion and structures. The loss of sense of community and belongingness though usually remains oblivious to planners and developers are very important and form the basis of survival of most vulnerable people. This social loss unlike physical and economic forms of displacement can never be replaced (Downing, 2002).

#### 4. Conclusions and Recommendations

*'Should the cost of reducing poverty for some be paid in the coin of impoverishment for others?'* (Cernea, 2002 in Downing, 2002).

Michael Cernea, an in-house social adviser to the World Bank, having observed the general trends and gathered vast empirical knowledge with regards to resettlement, identified 8 major risks that forcibly displaced persons are most likely to face. He then proposes a reconstructive or rehabilitative model aimed at mitigating or minimizing the adverse effect of resettlement. This is known as the *impoverishment risks and reconstructive model (IRR model)*.

To deal with loss of land and its associated poverty risks for example, the IRR model proposes that measures should be put in place to replace the lands expropriated for development project. Project owners should provide alternative sources of land for AP's so as to minimize the impoverishment risks. Thus, the *land for land mode* or the *agricultural resettlement mode* can be employed in dealing with the issues of landlessness especially for displaced persons in agrarian societies. This measure can also help avert or minimize the risks of food insecurity by providing these people with alternative lands and means of production they can go back to cultivating food crops for subsistence and sell some to get income.

The issue of displaced persons been pushed down the socio-economic ladder can also be mitigated especially the physical and economic aspects. For rural displaced persons involved in agriculture, the best solution to the issue of *joblessness* would be tied to their loss of land; measures thus have to be put in place to provide them with alternative lands so they can continue their farming activities. For those who lose their businesses and other enterprises measures will have to be put in place to relocate their businesses to other areas where there is a high demand for their goods and services. Farmers can be taught new and mechanized ways of farming to boost their production thus increasing their income and improving upon their standard of living. In the case of the Xiaolangdi project in China, a village (Nancun) lost its arable land of 544.3 mu (15 mu=1hectare) to the dam project (Su; Shi &Yang, 2002). The policy makers and project implementers with a development oriented resettlement mindset adopting the land for land mode however restored 682mu of new arable and rich land to the village to continue their farming activities thereby minimizing and mitigating the risks of landlessness and joblessness.

To also avert the poverty risks that are associated with *homelessness*, measures should be put in place to restore these homes. The total cost of houses and properties can be paid to displaced persons using the current market values for those properties so that they can construct or purchase new homes. Credit and soft loan facilities can also be made accessible to displaced persons. Housing units can also be built for the displaced people. They should, however, be involved in the plot allocation, site selection, housing design and every process involved in the home restoration. The Xiaolangdi project also led to the demolishing of 7.43 million m<sup>2</sup> of buildings of

51,000 families and 200,000 people. To avoid homelessness in the Xiaolangdi dam construction, compensation was given to migrants based on the cost of replacing their buildings and they were allowed to carry out their own construction after a detailed inventory of tangible properties lost were taken into consideration.

Public health services can be provided by developers to deal with diseases and sicknesses amongst the displaced persons. New clinics can be built in new resettling communities. The people can also be educated on the prevention of some of these diseases especially those caused by poor sanitary conditions. These measures can minimize the risks of morbidity and mortality especially for the very vulnerable. The poverty risk associated with the loss of common properties as faced by the landless can be reduced if such properties are restored in the new communities as much as possible so that those whose lives depend on it can sustain their lives in the new environment.

The rehabilitation or reconstruction proposes that the risks as faced by migrants should be turned into opportunities to improve upon the socio-economic lives of the displaced. This should be informed by development oriented resettlement where resettlement is not viewed as external of the project but rather an avenue to improve upon the socio-economic life of displaced persons. Thus, turning resettlement into a tool or weapon to fight or reduce poverty. It must be pointed out that treating resettlement as a way of getting people out of project areas and out of the way of projects as quickly as possible has proved to be the cause of untold human misery (Cernea, 1997). This contravenes the core objective of most development projects, which is to improve living standards and alleviate poverty.

Moreover, to overcome the challenges (mainly poverty) of displacement and resettlement associated with development projects, project developers must consider and pursue a development - oriented resettlement program; where resettlement is perceived as a development project component and a means to improve upon the socio-economic lives of displaced persons.

It must be noted that with such a perception, necessary actions would be taken to ensure better and comprehensive planning of resettlement program. In such cases, an all-inclusive stakeholder participation program would be pursued as locals are seen as in project and project beneficiaries. The involvement of the affected persons and other stakeholders from the designing stage of the project is thus very important. Since it is very difficult to restore lost social assets and capital, resettlement should be the last resort in dealing with displaced persons. Alterations can be made to development projects to minimize if not prevent resettlement. The religion, cultural norms, language, values and practices of the displaced community and host communities should be taken into account by project developers.

It should be noted that different displaced populace are affected differently by the different risks in severity and in kind; and thus all the risks may not be present in all DIDR projects (Cernea, 1997). The model therefore serves as a guide in risk analysis and these differences may be visible even with different displaced families.

This paper found out that most displaced persons and communities suffer from poverty resulting from their displacement and further resettlement. This research also noted that most displaced persons are people already vulnerable and poor and therefore resettlement especially as been implemented in recent times if not improved can lead to a cycle of poverty amongst displaced persons and generations after them. The study also noted that most resettlements projects are designed at regional and national level with little or no participation of the local people or the people whose lives are directly impacted by the projects. This study therefore proposes the use of the IRR model of Michael Cernea as a guide to successful resettlement of displaced persons. It is also proposed that future researches should also focus extensively on how displacement and further resettlement affect the various members of project communities such as women, children, aged etc.

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