

# Socio - Economic Implications on Southern Highway Project Special Reference to Evicted People

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**Abstract** — In developing countries, development related population displacement has grown rapidly over the past few decades due to the compelling need for infrastructure as a result of fast growing population densities. Those displaced due to development projects are resettled by project planners, but have to face specific socio economic issues in their newly relocated areas.

This study focuses on identifying social, cultural and economic implications of evicted persons. The Southern Highway, the main development project was selected to examine this problem.

Both primary and secondary data sources were used to achieve the objective of this research. To collect the primary data from the units of sample the researcher used structured interviews and semi structured interviews. Guideline questionnaire along with the IRR Model was used to conduct the interviews. Other than this, researcher was able to carry out number of observations as prior to prepare the questionnaire as well as to check its accuracy of the answers given by the respondents.

Study Population of this study was 40 families which consist of 70 families who were living in that period.

Study samples have identified eight risks; Homelessness, Landlessness, Unemployment, Marginalization, Food insecurity, Increased morbidity and Mortality, Loss of common property and Services and Social disarticulation. In relation to that, the issues faced by resettled community can be divided three categories based on depth of problems.

Most affected problems were Physical Marginalization and Psychological Marginalization, Loss of Social and Cultural Value of ancestral home, Social Insecurity, Social Stress, Social Disarticulation, Landlessness, Deprivation of Social Capital. Breakdown the livelihoods, Loss of access to

common property were the marginally effected problems and less effected problems were food insecurity and morbidity.

The broad ranges of problems are not only the economic risks, but also the social and cultural problems also contribute. Those are inter-related problems and doesn't affect to the community equally therefore the dimensions of issues are differentiating from one another. One might think that the severances are high with the economic risks, but on the contrary social risks are severe than the economic ones. Due to the development projects, the environment in which the people lived in was subjected to harsh changes, the people lost their familiar environment and this can't be evaluated through the scales of economy.

**Keywords:** Involuntary resettlement, involuntary displacement, risks, evicted people.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Resettlement is a response to displacement, or involuntary movement. Displacement is a forced migration, where people move because of an external shock-whether it is a development project, a natural disaster or civil conflict. As same as Development induced displacement and resettlement (DIDR) occurs as a result of human driven economic activities, mainly related to large scale infrastructure projects such as irrigation, power, and roads. Resettlement is a socio cultural/economic process that happens initially to people rather than their physical environment (Muggah, 2008).

Involuntary resettlement is often a consequence of planned change generated by major development projects or programs. As a result of acquiring land for development projects, people are evacuated from their homes.

The main cause of involuntary resettlement is acquisition of their land and water resources for major development. According to that Southern Transport Development Project (STDP) was the first controlled access expressway to be built in Sri Lanka. It was constructed from Makumbura in Kottawa of the Western Province to Matara in the Southern Province covering a total distance of 128 kilo-meters.

Consistent with the position Report issued by the STDP to the project coordinating committee 10,271 lots were acquired for the Express Right Way. An estimated 1, 3338 families have been displaced due to land acquisition displaced households as well as livelihoods (Ministry of Land, 2003).

The objective of this study was to identify social, cultural and economic implications of evicted people due to STDP.

## II. THEORITICAL FRAMEWORK

The Model of Risks and Risk Avoidance (IRR Model) was applied to examine the issues being faced by the evicted community. This Model developed during the nineties by Michel M. Cernea Sociologist in cooperation with the World Bank.

IRR model has four functions. A) Predictive functions B) diagnostic functions C) Planning and problem resolving function D) Research function. Cernea has pointed out eight risks affecting displaced people. Such as; landlessness, joblessness, homelessness, social marginalization, increased mortality and morbidity, food insecurity, loss of access to common property and social disarticulation.

## III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Both primary and secondary data sources were used to achieve the objective of this research. To collect the primary data from the units of sample the researcher used structured interviews and semi structured interviews. Guideline questionnaire along with the IRR Model was used to conduct the interviews. This questionnaire was designed by the researcher especially for the research objective. Other than this, researcher was able to carry out number of observations as prior to prepare the questionnaire as well as to check its accuracy of the answers given by the respondents.

The highest number of people has been evacuated from Galle district than other districts and even number of affected AGA divisions were reported from Galle district. ie. Bentota, Elpitiya, Karadeniya, Baddegama, Bope, Poddala, Akmeemana, Emaduwa and Galle Kadawathsathara hence, Karadeniya AGA division was selected from Galle district to get study population. Karadeniya AGA Division, which consisted different socio-economic features, was selected to get study sample. There were two resettlement locations in Karadeniya AGA Division, which are *Pathirajawatte* and *Vilson estate*. Among these two, evicted people are living in *Pathirajawatte* resettlement scheme was study sample for data collection.

A sample 40 evicted families was selected using systematic random sampling which could be including entire population to the sample. Sample frame was collected from the resettlement office in Galle. According to that researcher was able to select 40 families one after other.

Since this was mainly based on qualitative data, Anthropic method used to analyze the data and Relevant theory applied to describe field data.

## IV. RESULTS

The analysis was based on empirical evidence focused on IRR Model. According to that it can be divided into three categories based on severity of the issues.

- A. Highest Social issues
  - (a) Physical Marginalization and Psychological Marginalization
  - (b) Loss of Social and Cultural Value of ancestral home
  - (c) Social Insecurity
  - (d) Social Stress
  - (e) Social Disarticulation
  - (f) Landlessness
  - (g) Deprivation of Social Capital
- B. Marginal Social issues
  - (a) Breakdown the livelihoods
  - (b) Loss of access to common property
- C. Lower Social issues
  - (a) Food insecurity
  - (b) Morbidity

Sample revealed several social implications. Physical Marginalization and Psychological Marginalization, Social and Cultural value of ancestral home, Social Insecurity, Social Stress, Social Disarticulation, Landlessness, Deprivation of Social Capital are the most significant implications of the community. These issues are interlinked and influence each other: Some play a primary role and others play a derivative role.

- *Physical Marginalization and Psychological Marginalization*

The main social issue was marginalisation among the evicted community under STDP project. The facets of marginalisation are multiple. The cultural status of displacers is belittled when they go to new relocation areas, where they are regarded as "strangers" and denied opportunities and entitlements. Psychological marginalization and its consequences are typically overlooked in the resettlement. For an example one elderly person said that, the high way is on his land ("*Oya para thiyenne ape idame*"). This statement has indicated that how much psychologically the person is affected by losing his land. Yet, cultural and behavioural impairments, anxiety and decline in self-esteem, have been widely reported from people. Further, they are labelled as "*Pàrata Yatauna Aya*" and "*Àpu Aya*" which in turn affects them psychologically. Though they have been received economical compensation the loss of their ancestral home (*Maha Gedara*) has caused loss of social and cultural value of "home."

When they relocate in new locations, they have been selected in dispersed manner. Therefore neighbourous relationships have been pulled apart and it has affected their social security too. The people, who lived in the former village as neighbours and relatives, have been randomly resettled in the new locations. Such type of selection has caused to raise other social issues among them. It cumulates physical exclusion from a geographic territory with economic and social exclusion out of the set of functioning social networks.

- *Loss of Social and Cultural Value of ancestral home*

The compensation provided for the demolished shelters are made by not assessing a forecasted market value rather than its replacement value, the risk of homelessness has increased. The Sri Lankan

Society basically built its homes of the offspring around the ancestral home called "*Maha Gedara*." Most people who were affected by the highway have lived their whole life near their ancestral homes. Though they have been offered compensation for their houses, the loss of their *Maha Gedara* has caused loss of social and cultural value of "home."

- *Social insecurity*

Social insecurity is the harshest problem, which was raised due to the random settlement. For an example insecurity among children was discovered by the research ie. When children came back from school to their homes, the parents used to let them stay at a neighbour's place until they came after work. But when they were re-settle in new community this option was practically difficult to carry out.

- *Social Stress and Morbidity*

Research has documented that more vulnerable groups, such as the elderly, suffer increased morbidity and mortality rates as an effect of losing their prior homes. Exposure to the "social stress" inherent in forced relocation was highlighted as having differential consequences on mental health across age, gender, and marital and occupational status.

- *Social Disarticulation*

Social disarticulation is another severe problem facing them. The dis-integration of social support networks has far-reaching consequences. It compounds individual losses with a loss of social capital, dismantled patterns of social organization are hard to rebuild. Such loss is higher in projects that relocate people in a dispersed manner rather than in groups and social units. The research has found various manifestations of social disarticulation, such as growing alienation, loosening of intimate bonds, weakening of control on interpersonal behaviour and lower cohesions in family ties.

Dismantled social networks that once mobilized people to act around common interests and to meet their most pressing needs are difficult to rebuild. This loss is greater in projects which relocate families in a dispersed manner, severing their prior ties with neighbours, rather than relocating them in groups and social units. This study found various manifestations of social

disarticulation within the kinship system, such as the loosening of intimate bonds, growing alienation and anomie, the weakening of control on interpersonal behaviour, and lower cohesion in family structures. Resettlers' relationships with non-displaced kinsmen were eroded and interaction between individual families was reduced. As a result, participation in group activities decreased; Weddings and Arms giving were discontinued; and common burial grounds became shapeless and disordered.

- *Landlessness*

People's productive systems, commercial activities and livelihoods are constructed. This is the principle form of de-capitalization and pauperization of displaced people, as they lose both natural and man-made capital.

Offering a small plot of land i.e. 20 perches and having to travel a long distance to utilize the previous unaffected lands in the native village are the results of landlessness. Compensation distributed among them was not adequate to acquire another plot of land in the same area where they lived-in earlier. In addition, the cultural symbolic value of the land was destroyed when land was acquired by the government for development projects i.e. loss of land inheritance.

When land is acquired, the small businesses which were running along that land were not evaluated properly, hence when these people are resettled in other locations; their businesses face grave difficulties. For an example, take a small wood workshop business being done by a person. When he is resettled at a new location he will have to face the competition with other similar type of businesses in that locality thereby hindering his economic prospects. Further, these types of businesses contribute to the unemployment in that area and when the business is re-located to a new area, the unemployment increases in the previous area.

- *Deprivation of Social Capital*

The disintegration of social support networks has far-reaching consequences. It compounds individual losses with a loss of social capital; dismantled pattern of social organizations are hard to rebuild. Such loss is higher with the evicted people since they have relocated in dispersed manner rather than in groups and social units. This

sociological study found various manifestations of social disarticulation, such as growing alienation, the loosening of intimate bonds, weakening of interpersonal behaviour, and lower cohesion in family structures.

- *Breakdown the livelihoods*

The risk of losing wage employment is very high both in rural and urban displacements for those employed in enterprises, services or agriculture.

Research findings point out two ways in losing jobs.

- a) They have lost access to land owned by others which are cropped, either leased or shared,
- b) Inability to find job opportunities from the new urban areas.

Though the project committees have proposed job replacement systems, they have not been implemented. Most of the communities who were affected are rural communities, which is 93%. Since belonging to a rural community, the whole living system was based on land based production and self-employment through these production systems. These land based production systems are collapsed when the resettled people are unable to find adequate lands which sustain cultivation in the resettled areas.

- *Loss of access to common property*

Middle income farm households do not become landless, but became smallholders. Marginalisation and lack of access to common resources are the marginal risks in the community. The causes of marginalisation occur when the infrastructure & services are discontinued after completion of the particular project and these programs discontinue integrating with the host community. For an examples play ground, some roads still have not been completed in the new location. The participation and vote of the affected people are not considered when re-establishing common resources such as wells, play grounds, etc. Hence the resettled people have to travel long distances from their resettled homes to gain access to those facilities thus weakening the common access to these resources.

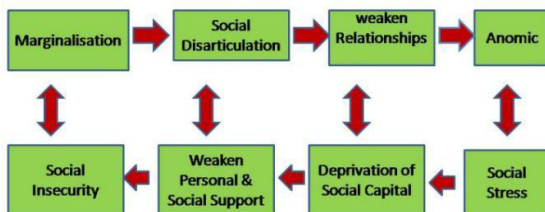
- *Food Insecurity*

Cernea describe in her theory, forced uprooting increases the risk that people will fall into

temporary or chronic under nourishment, defined as calorie-protein intake levels below the minimum necessary for normal growth and work.

According to the field evidences, though there was prosperity of edible things in the environment of their former villages, the new settlement does not contain riches of that sort, thus causes for food insecurity. Food insecurity and under nourishment are both symptoms and results of inadequate resettlement. During physical relocation, sudden drops in food crop availability and incomes are predictable. Subsequently, as rebuilding regular food production capacity at the relocation site may take years, hunger or under nourishment tends to become a lingering long-term effect. Example they have been provided with coconuts, jack fruits, green leaves etc. from their own land. But in new location they have not enough space for growing such trees. Nutrition-related risks reinforce morbidity and mortality risks (see further) and largely depend on whether the primary issues of landlessness and joblessness are effectively counteracted.

The Following figure shows mutual linkage of social risks that revealed from the research.



**Fig.1. Inter-relationship between Social Implications**

Marginalization affects to disorganise their social integration when the new projects stop their investment services and infrastructure after completion and the integration with the society abruptly. Social articulation is mandatory to all societies because strong social relationships which tend to formulate amongst the people tend to increase the personal support amongst that particular community.

In other words, the poor relationships that occur will generate alienation amongst society. When people are being alienated they tend to isolate the people from their family ties, labour and society. Thus they will be disappointed with regard to the

society they live-in. These circumstances in turn make an increase in social issues such as social stress among the community, loss of social capital and inter personnel support. The traditional Sri Lankan Society was based on a basic labour exchange system. They helped each other on common occasions such as paddy cultivation, funerals, alms giving (*daana*) and community work (*Shramadhana*). But after the resettlement, community has no strong relationships and sense of each other and the ad hoc settlement pattern is the key cause affecting these conditions. When they are placed in a new location where the neighbours are unknown to them, they will try to live separately and drawback from making new ties with that new society. They grow into individualism instead of social conciliation and social cohesion. Finally, all these facts and causes and leads to social security and it become the root cause for marginalisation again and the cycle completes.

The loss of social organisations among the resettled have been directly affecting to this. When searching for solutions to eradicate this situation and to break the chain of events occurring continuously, it was learnt from this research that by establishing community projects comprising of social organisations where the community of that particular location and the newly resettled are to work hand in hand, is the best solution. This creates an environment where the new and the host people in that society will not knowingly work as one unit to reach the objectives of the project. As time goes by, new ties and inter relationships will tend to grow among these two entities thus the feeling of isolation and insecurity will be forgotten and harmony will blossom. These two entities will become a single society and the cycle of social risks will dissolve. New employment opportunities will also make these bonds stronger and another is when those resettled and the people in that society work together for the common good, they become accepted to that society.

## V. CONCLUSION & FURTHER WORK

This research highlights several relevant issues emerged in the process of land acquisition. Based on this experience with case study on highway construction, it is observed that the community network has broken. Community integration has dismantled; common property has eroded; income

sources have lost; community insecurity and marginalization are arising in the new location.

The IRR model captured a broad range of issues and it is evident that not only the economic issues, but the social and cultural issues also contribute. Those are inter-related issues and do not affect the community equally. Therefore the dimensions of issues are differentiating from one another. One might think that the severances is high with the economic issues, but on the contrary, the social issues are severe than the economic ones. Due to the development projects, the environment in which the people lived in was subjected to harsh changes, the people lost their familiar environment and this can't be evaluated through the scales of economy.

This can be accomplished through targeted strategies such as;

- a. Implementing the involuntary resettlement policy issued by Asian Development Bank.
- b. When implementing resettlement plan points given in Social Impact Assessment (SIA) report to be considered.
- c. Involving the community for the risk analysis and give considerable amount of importance their ideas when making decisions.
- d. Establishing new social institutions and integration programs.
- e. Building good relationship between community and project implementation officers.

Identification and anticipation of trends and risks offers an opportunity to take policy and project actions that could counter the risks.

Finally, some recommendations can be acquaint minimising social issues in the resettlement. Two basic strategies may be pursued in the resettlement plan for economically and socially re-establishing those newly resettled persons. One is land –based strategies and other one is non-land based strategies. Those displaced people are from urban or semi urban settings, they usually depend on non-land based livelihoods. ie. The service sector, industrial employment, self employment etc. but sometimes if they possess also some farming lands. The approach to their situation should take into account, in addition to their need for new housing plots, their access to employment opportunities and when warranted, to some land for farming or gardening.

In the same time when people resettle, community preference should be obtain by project planner to relocate them. The majority preference of those displaced to move in group as cultural/social units. i.e. as entire kin group, extended family, ethnic group, neighbourhood, whole hamlet or village unit etc also bears upon their potential to get socially organized economically productive quickly at the new location. This preference must be supported as long as it does not adversely affect the choice of feasible re-development options or genuine preference of some for individual self relocation. Such support for relocation as cultural units would protect an important social resource the viable patterns of group organization which can act immediately at the new location cushion disruption caused by resettlement.

The consequences of development project and the associated resettlement have a very strong impact on virtually all areas of life both of individuals and of larger communities.

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