



RESETTLEMENT AND REHABILITATION PROGRAMME FOR THE INFRASTRUCTURAL DEVELOPMENTAL PROJECTS: A CASE STUDY OF JAMUNA BRIDGE

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Abstract: There is a need of infrastructural development for the development of any country. It is for the welfare of the large number of people, though some people may be affected directly or indirectly affected by it. For the construction of the Jamuna Bridge also, some people were affected for whom a massive resettlement and rehabilitation programme were undertaken. The paper tries to review the policy of the Bangladesh Government towards the resettlement and rehabilitation programme undertaken for the affected people by the construction of Jamuna Bridge. It also tries to evaluate the resettlement and rehabilitation programme. The data used for the paper have been collected through social survey and field observation. It is found that the resettlement and rehabilitation programme is different from traditional one and has been introduced for the first time in Bangladesh. In this programme priority has been given to social and economic rehabilitation. As a new type of activity the programme could not be able to avoid different type of problems like providing lower compensation rate for the land than its actual value, construction of temporary houses or ploughing of vegetables and crops in fallow land during the period of land acquisition, deprivation of actual land owners' right on the basis of false land records etc. In spite of such problems, the importance of the resettlement and rehabilitation programme is placed within its exceptional viewpoint and newness.

Key words: Acquisition, resettlement, rehabilitation, displacement, infrastructural development project

Introduction

In recent years there has been a widespread concern, especially in the developing countries about the problems of people displaced from their usual habitat as a result of various developmental activities. Commutively, these activities have disrupted the social, economic and cultural life of million of people. Their number is growing every year and there is hardly any region without some dislocated people [Gumber (1991)]. But resettlement is comparatively a recent experience in our country, particularly in the field of development interventions. Resettlement of the people affected by political upheavals or natural calamities has already known to us. But resettlement for development induced displacement of the people is a new phenomenon. Now a day an infrastructural development project involving displacement of people must have resettlement components, otherwise the donors do not agree to finance it [Mannu (2000)].

Although infrastructural development project play an important role in socio-economic and cultural development of the country, at the same time they cause havoc in terms of depletion of

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natural resources and particularly the displacement of thousands of people from their ancestral homes and habitats. People living on previous areas for centuries are not only physically displaced but they also lost their livelihood. Consequently, the displaced people face various kinds of impoverishment risks. All infrastructural development projects launched in Bangladesh show similar patterns of displacement and threat to livelihood marred the future of displaced people [Sheikh (2001)].

Here, Jamuna Bridge[†], the biggest infrastructural development project of Bangladesh is our concern. The focal objective of the bridge is to establish a strategic link between the east and northwest regions of Bangladesh, to integrate the country by generating multifarious benefits for the people, promoting better inter- regional trade, economic, social and cultural development [Khan (1998)]. It has also enabled rapid movement of goods and passenger traffic by road and rail across the river Jamuna. In addition, it has facilitated transfer of electricity and natural gas which has produced opportunity for industrialization especially in northwest region. Hence, it is said that construction of Jamuna Bridge is a landmark in the development efforts in Bangladesh. Due to the construction of the bridge, about 1, 05,000 people were affected directly or indirectly [Hossain (1998)]. Here, the term directly affected was meant for the people who lost their agricultural land, homestead structure and other properties, while indirectly affected was meant for the people who lost their source of income. A total of 10655 acquisitions were made in 63 *mauzas* on east and west banks of the Jamuna river for the purpose of construction of Jamuna Bridge. Of these 7231 were in 38 *mauzas* of Tangail district and 3424 in 25 *mauzas* of Sirajgonj district [Karim, 2003)]. An award was made for each acquisition. The special aspect of the construction of the Jamuna Bridge was to resettle and rehabilitate the project affected people. In that case massive rehabilitation and resettlement programme was taken for the project affected people. Following The World Bank Operating Directive 4.30[‡], a resettlement plan namely Revised Resettlement Action Plan[§] (RRAP) was prepared by the Government of Bangladesh to mitigate the adverse impacts of land acquisition and displacement [Syeduzzaman (2001)]. Besides, with a view to resettle and rehabilitate the affected people a Resettlement Unit (RU) was formed by Jamuna Multipurpose Bridge Authority (JMBA) through which resettlement and rehabilitation work was done. Then two resettlement sites, one located at village Sataria, Jamtaildas, Jamtailkhirpur and Dukhiabari of Sirajganj sadar upazila of Sirajgonj district and another at village Palsia and Nikrail of Bhuapur upazila of Tangail district, were established [ADB (1997)]. It should be mentioned here that a total of 7378 acres of land was acquired from Kalihati and Bhuapur upazila of Tangail district and Kamarkhand and Sirajganj sadar upazila of Sirajganj district. In other words, from both sides of the river Jamuna for the construction of various components and facilities, including the east and west guide bund for river training and protection [Hossain (1998)]. The bridge authority not only gave cash money as a compensation for the acquired land but also took special programme for the project-affected people. Side by side, monetary compensation, all kinds of community facilities such as schools, mosques, health care centers, community centers, approach roads, play-ground, tube-wells, sanitary latrines, electricity and other facilities were provided to the project affected people. For the implementation of the programme properly some national and

[†] The longest bridge in Bangladesh as well as South Asia and 11th longest bridge in the world. The bridge was opened to traffic on 23 June 1998.

[‡] According to the operational directive of the World Bank, involuntary resettlement as that of the JMB Project should be considered as an “...integral part of project design.....” and be conceived and executed as development programs, with resettlers provided sufficient investment resources and opportunities to share in the project benefits. Compensation to the displaced persons should be at full replacement cost, and assistance and support be provided during the process of relocation. In addition, the affected persons should be “...assisted in their efforts to improve their former living standard, income earning capacity, and production levels, or at least to restore them.

[§] The primary objective of Revised Resettlement Action Plan is to restore and improve the economic and living standard of the affected persons within a short period

local NGOs namely, BRAC (Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee), RDM (Rural Development Movement) and RADOL were also appointed. In Bangladesh, such kind of rehabilitation programme for the project affected people has never been taken before [Chowdhury (1998)]. The paper is an attempt to review the policy of the Bangladesh Government towards the resettlement and rehabilitation programme of the people displaced due to the construction of the Jamuna Bridge as well as it will also evaluate the resettlement and rehabilitation programmes of JMBA.

Materials and Methods

In the present study, social survey and field level observation methods have been employed. This paper has originated from a set of data and information collected mainly from the secondary sources. Besides, the necessary primary data for the paper has been collected from 140 persons out of 3424 persons resided in the resettlement site located at village Sataria, Jamtaildas, Jamtailkhir and Dukiabari of Sirajgonj Sadar upazila of Sirajgonj district and 110 persons out of 7231 persons resided in the resettlement site located at village Palsia and Nikrail of Bhupur upazila of Tangail district during July 2000 to December 2000. The respondents have been selected from the two resettlement sites randomly. In order to collect relevant and necessary data, a structured interview-schedule has been used, which includes both open-end and close-end questions. Collected data has been analysed with the help of computer, then it has been presented in simple tabular and descriptive form.

Results

Project affected people: The total number of affected people due to the Bridge project is about 77,222. The survey conducted by BRAC revealed that 6156 households (39,422 people) affected directly (e.g. lose of agricultural land, properties) (JMBA, 1994). Of these, 4,131 households lived in Tangail district, and the rest 2,025 households in Sirajgonj district. Another 5,900 households (37,800 people) affected indirectly (e.g. tenant cultivators, farm workers, small businessman, squatters, *uthulis*** or non-titled persons). Here, a detailed description of the project affected person (PAP) categorized and their provision and entitlement is given below.

Table1 Number of affected households due to the construction of Jamuna bridge

Sl. No.	Description of Project Affected Persons Category	Number of Households		
		Tangail district	Sirajgonj district	Total
1.	PAPs losses homestead and agricultural land	1070	296	1366
2.	PAPs losses all or parts of agricultural land only	2474	1399	3873
3.	PAPs losses homestead only	470	330	800
4.	Weaving, business, industries, shopkeepers losses place of employment	40	50	90
5.	Tenant farmer/cultivators	312	249	561
6.	Farm laborers	1645	416	2461
7.	Squatters and <i>uthulis</i>	743	1432	2175
8.	Households already relocated	418	313	731
9.	Non-farm labourers	88	530	618
	Total	7260	5415	12675

Source: Anon, 1998

Land acquisition act: The Land Acquisition Act which has nation-wide coverage, was passed way back in 1894; and with slight modifications, it is still followed today. The Act empowers the

** *Uthuli* is regarded as refugee, disaster and displaced persons. Generally, the local people use the word *uthuli* with a view to abuse, or to show disdain and even to make fun somebody. *Uthulis* are the households which do not own homelots, but make homes on other's land and pay no rent

government to acquire any private land for 'public purposes' after the payment of a reasonable compensation [Vaswani (1992)]. The Bangladesh Government passed the Act entitled Jamuna Multi-Purpose Bridge Project (land acquisition) Act 1995 for land acquisition and payment of compensation. The Act states that whenever land is needed for any public purpose, a notification to that effect shall be published in official Gazette and in the daily newspapers circulating in that locality and the collector shall cause public notice of the substance of such notification to be displayed at convenient places in the same locality. It shall there upon be lawful for any officer to enter upon and survey and measure the levels of any land in such locality, and to mark the boundaries and line by placing mark and cutting trenches on the land proposed to be acquired.

Acquisition and awardees: Acquisition means action of acquiring. It reflects the transfer of right from a person to the state [Ramanathan (1996)]. A total of 10,655 acquisitions were made in 63 *mauzas*^{††} on east and west banks of the river Jamuna to serve the purpose of Jamuna Bridge. Of these, 7,231 were in 38 *mouzas* of Tangail and 3,424 in 25 *mauzas* of Sirajgonj district. An award was made for each acquisition. There were in all 1, 06,555 awards. According to the household survey conducted by the JMBA through BRAC, a total of 6,738 persons received compensation for their losses [JMBA (1994)].

Land area acquired: Land is normally acquired under the provision of the Land Acquisition Act, 1894. According to the acquisition record, a total of 2300.56 acres of land were acquired for Jamuna Multipurpose Bridge Project (JMBP) [Barua et.al. (1993)]. Of these 1535.6 acres was in Tangail district and 764.90 acres in Sirajgonj district. Among the total lands, agriculture and homestead lands accounted for 87.7% and 9.1% respectively. This excluded the lands acquired for the guide bunds.

Determination of compensation: Every Government has policies, laws and regulations requiring compensation for people for losing assets, yet these might not be sufficient to restore livelihoods and living standards. To restore the economic and social base, people

losing livelihood need three things: compensation for lost assets and income; transfer and relocation assistance; and help to rehabilitate and restore their lives [ADB (1998)].

To determine the compensation rate in the project area, the land market in five districts i.e. Pabna, Sirajgonj, Tangail, Bogra and Jamalpur were surveyed. And the rate in each *mouza* was determined by taking the average of previous one, two or three years sale value of each class of land recorded in the sale documents registered. The rates varied from one *mouza* to another, for all classes of land. The compensation for immovable properties like houses and trees was determined in terms of market value. The overall average rate for an acre of agricultural land was determined Tk.86, 374 in Tangail and Tk. 22, 017 in Sirajgonj. It is found that the rate of agricultural land of Tangail is 39.23% higher than that of Sirajgonj district. The rate at which compensation is received for homestead in Tangail is also 18% greater than that of Sirajgonj [Barua et.al. (1993)]. There were also basic differences in the compensation paid for immovable properties. In Tangail district, the affected households were paid for houses, trees and other immovable assets lost due to this bridge project whereas in Sirajgonj district such households were only paid removal cost of the houses and structures situated on the acquired lands.

Monetary compensation: Compensation means payment in money or in kind to which the people affected are entitled in order to replace the loss asset, resource or income [ADB (1998)]. In the case of Jamuna bridge the affected people were paid 50% more money for compensation than traditional value of the acquired land through the Deputy Commissioner of the concerned districts. The affected people were helped by giving cash money for the purpose of reconstruction of house, purchasing of land, stamp expenditure etc. They were also given money as a compensation of their trees. In some cases the compensation amount was given in a single installment whereas in some

^{††} *Mauza* is the basic and lowest administratively identifiable area unit defined by the department of land record of Bangladesh

cases it was given through more than one installment. Table 2 shows the distribution of affected people in regard to the number of installment of compensation money received.

Table 2 Installment of Compensation

Sl. No.	Installment	Sirajgonj	Tangail	Total	Percent (%)
1.	Single	34	79	113	45.2
2.	2-5	47	45	92	36.8
3.	6-9	17	15	32	12.8
4.	10-13	05	05	10	4.0
5.	14-above	01	02	03	2.0
Total		104	145	250	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2000

Utilization of compensation money: Though the compensation for the acquired properties was paid to the affected people, but the way of utilization of their compensation money was unknown. During the field work of the study, it was found that majority of the affected people were failed to make productive investment with the compensation money. It was brought to notice that a part of the compensation money was spent behind the concerned officials and in related sectors whose identity was not revealed because of the fear of reprisal. The payment made to acquisition officials were mostly at the times of assessing the quality of land and the value of other properties. There is a table below which shows the utilization sector of compensation money.

Table 3 Utilization of Compensation Money

Sl. No.	Utilization	Sirajgonj	Tangail	Total	Percent (%)
1.	Consumption	35	27	62	24.80
2.	Land purchase	20	15	35	14.00
3.	House repairing	24	19	43	17.20
4.	Business	30	24	54	21.60
5.	Loan repayment	12	08	20	8.00
6.	Bank deposit	05	05	10	4.00
7.	Wedding	05	05	10	4.00
8.	Others	09	07	16	6.40
Total		140	110	250	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2000

Income restoration: Income restoration is an important component of resettlement where affected people have lost their productive base, business, jobs, or other income sources, regardless of whether they have lost their houses. However, affected people who lose housing as well as income sources may be most at risk. When displaced people are worse off, they risk impoverishment and alienation, which may result in landlessness, joblessness, marginalization, morbidity, food insecurity, loss of access to common property assets, and social disorganization including crime and substance abuse [Cernea (1996)].

Generally there is scarce in job sector in a displacement situation, because most of the infrastructural projects have limited number of jobs offered to the affected people. Many projects follow what was popularly known as the TN formula^{**} i.e. one job for every displaced family [Singh (1996)]. In the case of Jamuna Bridge it is found that the directly affected people were resettled as a part of resettlement programme. Besides, some job facilities under the JMBP were created for them and they were also recruited there. Besides, some affected people were appointed in various NGOs through JMBA. But with this effort only 31% of the affected people under the study got employment opportunity, the rest 69% remained unemployed.

^{**} The TN formula was introduced in 1967 to ensure a job for an adult in each of displaced family the projects. Families without an adult are not covered by this scheme. This is an improvement over the older concept of financial compensation as rehabilitation for land

The JMBA considered human resource development to be an integral part of the resettlement programme. Hence, a provision was made for training for the unskilled or semi-skilled persons and rehabilitation for skilled persons in the Revised Resettlement Action Plan (RRAP) with a view to improve their level of income. With a view to provide training, target groups and possible training areas were identified and on the basis of that implemented strategies were formulated. There was also the provision of loan for the affected people after training so that the trained persons can be self-employed. Following is the table reveals the type of training programme arranged for the people affected by the construction of Jamuna Bridge.

Table 4 Type of Training Programme

Sl. No.	Training Programme	Sirajgonj	Tangail	Total	Percent (%)
1.	Poultry Farm	09	07	16	17.20
2.	Poultry (hen)	19	15	34	36.56
3.	Handicraft	03	03	06	6.45
4.	Fish Culture	01	01	02	2.15
5.	Sewing	03	02	05	5.37
6.	Poultry + Vegetable	04	04	08	8.60
7.	Poultry + Sewing	02	01	03	3.22
8.	Poultry + Fish Culture + Sewing	03	02	05	5.37
9.	Sewing + Fish Culture	03	02	05	5.37
10.	Others	05	04	09	9.68
	Total	52	41	93	100

Source: Field Survey, 2000

It is noted that affected people were eager to switch to new occupation there as a strategy just to survive under the ensuing hardship, or to improve their income.

Discussion

The resettlement of project affected people has become an important issue in present days and hence an integral part in project planning formalities (Gani, 1992). Generally, it is found that the responsibility of the government has been finished through offering compensation in cash or in kind. But there are number of issues involved in the process of resettlement and rehabilitation. Therefore, a proper, coherent and appropriate policy on the subject is extremely needed.

Some problems are to be identified in the way of resettlement and rehabilitation programme implemented by Jamuna Multipurpose Bridge Authority. It is revealed that the rate of compensation money given to majority of the affected persons for their acquired land is low compared to the actual value of the land in local market. This occurs as the authority has determined the compensation rate on the basis of the document of Land Registry Office. But in reality majority of the people, not only in the study area but also throughout the country, mention the value of the land as far as possible low compared to the real value of the land in local market to ensure of low registration cost. As a result, the affected people have deprived of real value of their land in spite of getting 50% more than the present value of land shown in registry office document. Besides, it is known that some of the affected persons being encouraged by some officials of the JMBA ploughed crops and vegetables in their fallow and sandy land or constructed new houses temporarily just during the period of land acquisition as the compensation rate of cropped land or homestead is higher than fallow land. In exchange for it they had to pay money to the officials. Again, all affected respondents, except powerful and rich, are known to be bound to give 10% of their compensation money to the land acquisition officials. It is reported that even in some cases the affected persons had to pay money to the persons related with compensation process for lessening their visits to the concerned office and for finishing their work there swiftly. It is also revealed that many poor people of the acquired area were lack of evidential documents of their land. In that context some people made new records of the land of others in the name of their

own with the help of concerned officials and were able to demand compensation money to the authority. As a result, the original owners of the land were deprived from his right. Moreover, it is found that people who received compensation money, many of them were unable to make productive investment as they were mostly illiterate and had little or no experience with hand living large amount of money. Again, compensation money was paid to the head of the family. Where associated members were entitled to a share in the family property, they claimed their share in the compensation money. Such type of some cases settled amicably but the rest led to family quarrel. Where the compensation amount was too meager to be divided among all the members entitled to a share, the economic condition of the family was unenviable. The economic status of the members who might have separated from such families was equally precarious. Moreover, the displaced families received compensation money well in advance, almost three years before the date set for evacuation. It was expected that the affected families would use the money for purchasing land and constructing of new houses. But this thought is seemed to be absent in the case of a number of families resulting in a condition of severe distress. In this regard some suggestions and recommendations are incorporated here which may be considered helpful for further rehabilitation programme.

1. In the case of mass displacement, the compensation should be distributed as early as possible by fixing a time frame.
2. Compensation should be given at a time to all affected families. And it should not be in a phased manner i.e. some families first and others later. There also should be a monitoring system functioning for the proper utilization of compensation money, otherwise the hardships of poor, illiterate and inexperienced affected people will not lessen.
3. At the project preparation stage detailed socio-economic survey and the land acquisition should be done at a time so that temporary structures may not be constructed or crops and vegetables may not be ploughed to get additional benefit.
4. The government should set up a monitoring committee to monitor the resettlement and rehabilitation activities during its operation period so that if any problem arises decision may be taken quickly.
5. In the resettlement process the role of government should not be replaced by the NGOs. At best NGOs can play supplementary role.
6. The Government should provide financial and technical assistance systematically for land development.
7. The value of acquired land should be fixed more than at the current market value to assess the loss and to provide suitable rehabilitation.
8. Employment oriented technical training should be provided impartially to the affected people so that they can easily get access to employment sector.
9. It is recommended to prepare the estimate for resettlement expenses at the stage of feasibility studies and to keep adequate funds aside for exclusive work of resettlement.

Conclusion

None can deny that infrastructural development is needed for the development of a country, though some people may be affected due to it. For the construction of the Jamuna Bridge a large number of people were displaced from their ancestral homestead and property. For those affected people Jamuna Multipurpose Bridge Authority (JMBA) took a massive resettlement and rehabilitation programme. But the resettlement and rehabilitation operation by its nature was a complex phenomenon for the implementing agencies as well as for the project-affected people. Besides, it was a challenging task to implement the resettlement and rehabilitation programme in regard to fulfillment of the requirement of the World Bank's operational directive 4.30 and the commitment of the Government of Bangladesh. In fact, it was a new type of activities for the plan preparation and implementation and hence faced some obstacles. But this new task has paved the way for new experiments in construction and rehabilitation sector in Bangladesh.

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