

Land-Based Economic Displacement and Livelihood Reconstruction; A survey of Literature

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SUMMARY

The debate as to how land-based displacement should be compensated for during large scale development or mining projects still remains an unresolved issue within the resettlement practice and the literature. While such projects can have a significant impact on the livelihood of many, economic displacement is often regarded in the resettlement planning process as an afterthought leading to the poor management of land-based livelihood strategies mostly to the detriment of the poor in developing countries. This paper, which is part of a major study, is a literature review of land based economic displacement with the view to identifying the associated impacts and the effective approach that could be employed to achieve a sustainable land-based livelihood restoration post displacement. The outcome of the review reveals that while the proportion of impoverishment risks associated with land loss in large scale development project is between 10-20%, its impact on the affected households is dire especially for rural livelihoods. Development-induced land-based displacements have consistently led to the risks of landlessness, reduction in land sizes for agriculture pursuits, reduction in crop yield and other agriculture output, loss of human and social capital, joblessness and heightened food insecurity. Given the devastating impact of land-loss on land-based livelihood, resettlement researchers and international safeguarding instruments are unanimous about the provision of replacement land to compensate for land and land-based livelihood lost to development projects. The paper therefore concludes that, land-based compensation and livelihood restoration need to move beyond the quantification of just the size of the affected land as a physical asset and provide robust mechanisms to remedy the loss of human and social capital, reduction in agriculture output, loss of income during transitional period, potential food insecurity and stress and shocks that threatens the sustainability of land-based compensation and livelihood options. This study provides a conceptual framework for sustainable land-based compensation and livelihood restoration that serves as a focused guide to project sponsors, resettlement practitioners, and researchers in the design and evaluation of resettlement projects.

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