

# NATIONAL REHABILITATION AND RESETTLEMENT POLICY, 2007: A FRAMEWORK FOR INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT AND DISPLACEMENT MANAGEMENT IN INDIA

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## ABSTRACT

*Development projects such as dams, highways, industrial corridors, mining projects, smart cities, metro systems, and urban infrastructure frequently require large-scale land acquisition. Such projects often result in displacement of communities, loss of livelihood, socio-cultural disruption, and environmental stress. In India, weak compensation systems and inadequate rehabilitation mechanisms historically created conflicts between development agencies and affected communities. Marginalized groups including tribal populations, farmers, fishermen, and informal workers were often the most affected.*

*To address these concerns, the Government of India introduced the National Rehabilitation and Resettlement Policy (NRRP), 2007 as a comprehensive policy framework for the rehabilitation and resettlement of project-affected families. The policy aimed to integrate social justice, participatory governance, livelihood restoration, and sustainable development principles into the development planning process.*

*This paper critically examines the conceptual framework, objectives, provisions, implementation mechanisms, planning significance, and limitations of NRRP 2007. The study also analyzes the policy's contribution toward socially inclusive development planning and its role in shaping the Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act, 2013. Through the analysis of the Narmada Valley Project case study, the paper highlights the practical challenges associated with displacement management and rehabilitation planning in India.*

**KEY WORDS:** Rehabilitation and Resettlement (R&R), NRRP 2007, Development-Induced Displacement, Livelihood Restoration, Inclusive Development, Urban Planning

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Development is essential for economic growth, industrialization, modernization, and infrastructure expansion. In India, large-scale projects such as dams, industrial corridors, highways, metro systems, urban redevelopment projects, and mining operations have significantly contributed to national

development. However, these projects often require acquisition of agricultural land, forest areas, and residential settlements, leading to displacement of local communities.

Development-induced displacement has emerged as a major socio-economic and planning challenge in India. Displaced populations frequently face loss of land, livelihood, housing, social identity, and access to natural resources. In many cases, inadequate compensation and poor rehabilitation planning result in long-term economic vulnerability and social exclusion.

Before NRRP 2007, rehabilitation and resettlement practices in India lacked a comprehensive national framework. Different states followed varying rehabilitation policies, resulting in inconsistency and inequality in compensation and rehabilitation measures. Public protests and social movements against displacement highlighted the urgent need for a more inclusive and people-centric policy framework.

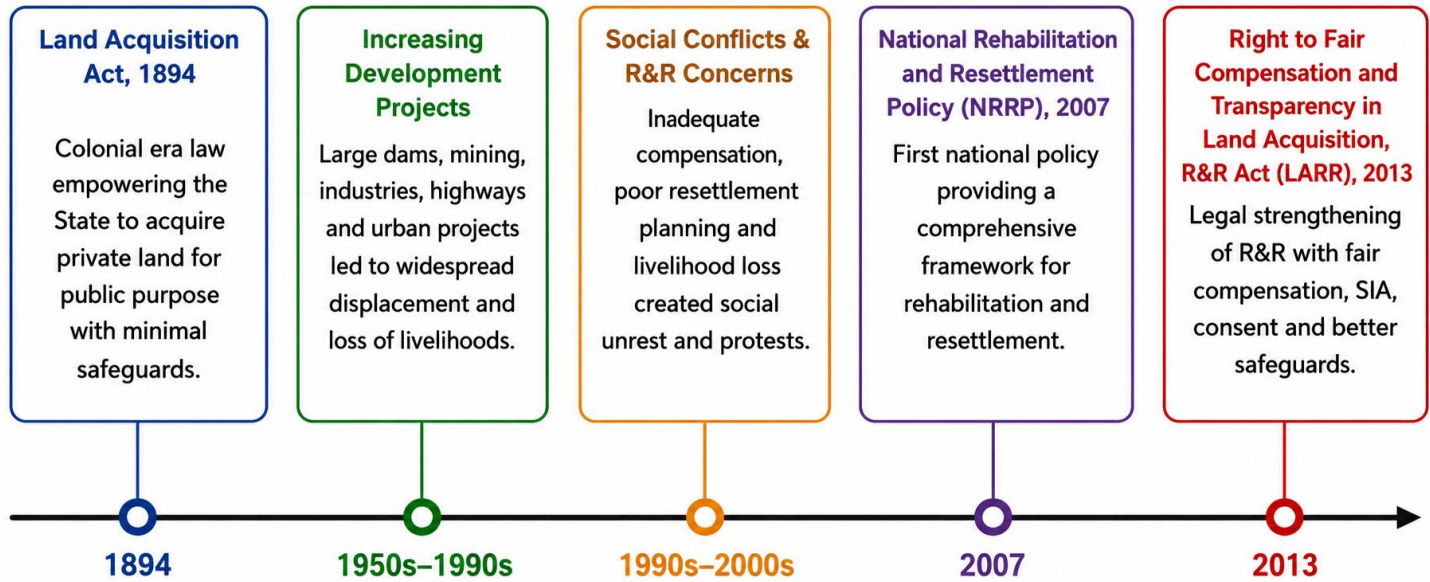
The National Rehabilitation and Resettlement Policy (NRRP), 2007 was introduced by the Government of India to ensure fair compensation, minimize displacement, restore livelihoods, and improve the living standards of project-affected families. The policy marked a significant shift from compensation-oriented approaches to comprehensive rehabilitation-based planning.

## **2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This study is based on secondary data collected from government reports, policy documents, journal articles, books, and case studies related to rehabilitation and resettlement in India. The methodology includes a review of Government of India policy documents, analysis of NRRP 2007 provisions, comparative review of rehabilitation frameworks, case study analysis of the Narmada Valley Project, and planning-based interpretation of rehabilitation strategies. The study adopts a qualitative and analytical research approach.

## **3. EVOLUTION OF REHABILITATION POLICIES IN INDIA**

The evolution of rehabilitation policies in India can be linked with increasing development-induced displacement after independence. Early infrastructure projects such as Bhakra Nangal Dam and Hirakud Dam displaced thousands of families without proper rehabilitation. Important milestones in the evolution of rehabilitation policies include the Land Acquisition Act, 1894, initial R&R discussions during the 1980s, the National Policy on Resettlement and Rehabilitation, 2003, the National Rehabilitation and Resettlement Policy, 2007, and the LARR Act, 2013. These policies reflected a gradual shift from compensation-focused approaches toward socially inclusive rehabilitation frameworks.



**Fig -1: Evolution of Rehabilitation and Resettlement Framework in India**

#### 4. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK OF REHABILITATION AND RESETTLEMENT

Rehabilitation and Resettlement (R&R) refers to the process of relocating displaced populations and restoring their socio-economic conditions after displacement caused by development projects or disasters. Resettlement refers to the physical relocation of affected families from their original place of residence to alternative settlement areas equipped with basic infrastructure and services, while rehabilitation focuses on restoring livelihoods, ensuring economic security, rebuilding social networks, and improving the overall quality of life of displaced populations. The conceptual framework of NRRP 2007 was based on the principles of social justice and equity, participatory planning and consultation, sustainable livelihood restoration, protection of vulnerable communities, human-centered development planning, and minimization of involuntary displacement. The policy recognized that compensation alone was insufficient and emphasized long-term socio-economic rehabilitation as an essential component of development planning.

#### 5. NEED FOR NRRP 2007

The need for NRRP 2007 emerged due to increasing conflicts and dissatisfaction associated with land acquisition and displacement in India. Several development projects faced strong opposition because affected communities experienced inadequate compensation, poor rehabilitation, and lack of livelihood support. Major issues before NRRP 2007 included inadequate and delayed compensation, loss of agricultural land and livelihoods, weak rehabilitation planning, lack of participation of affected communities, social disintegration and cultural loss, tribal displacement and environmental injustice, and administrative inefficiencies with weak monitoring systems. The absence of a uniform national policy

created inconsistencies across states and projects. Therefore, NRRP 2007 aimed to establish a standardized and socially inclusive framework for rehabilitation and resettlement management.

## 6. OBJECTIVES OF NRRP 2007

The major objectives of the National Rehabilitation and Resettlement Policy, 2007 were to minimize involuntary displacement caused by development projects, ensure fair and transparent rehabilitation practices, provide compensation and livelihood restoration measures, improve the socio-economic conditions of project-affected families, protect vulnerable groups such as Scheduled Tribes, Scheduled Castes, women, and marginal farmers, encourage participatory planning and community consultation, establish monitoring and grievance redressal mechanisms, and integrate rehabilitation planning into the overall development process.

The policy emphasized that development should not occur at the cost of social exclusion or economic marginalization.

## 7. KEY FEATURES OF NRRP 2007

The policy introduced several important rehabilitation provisions, including **Social Impact Assessment (SIA), compensation mechanisms for affected families, land-for-land provisions, housing and infrastructure development, livelihood restoration and employment support, safeguards for tribal and vulnerable communities, grievance redressal systems, and participatory governance mechanisms.** These provisions aimed to create a more balanced and humane approach toward development-induced displacement. Overall, the policy emphasized that rehabilitation and resettlement should focus not only on compensation but also on restoring the dignity, livelihoods, and well-being of affected communities.

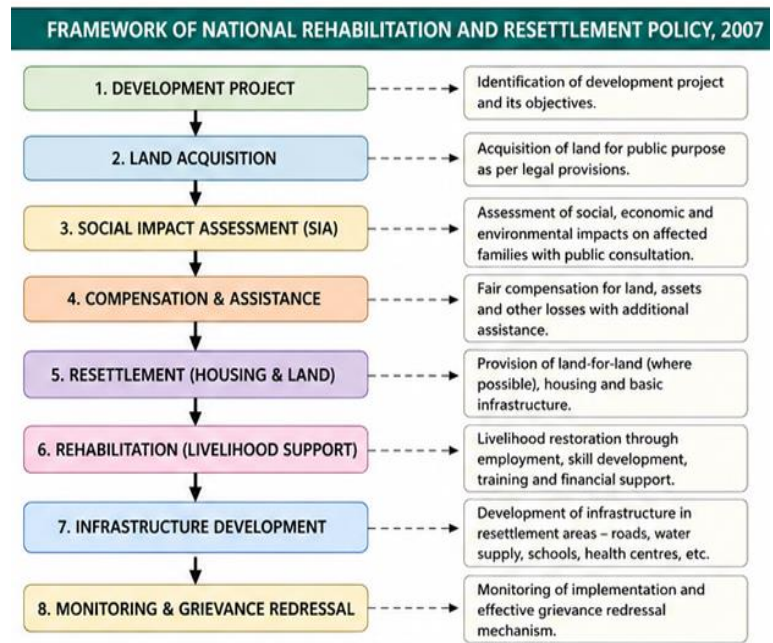


Fig -2: Framework of National Rehabilitation and Resettlement Policy, 2007

### 1. Social Impact Assessment (SIA)

Social Impact Assessment is one of the most important components of rehabilitation planning. It helps identify the social, economic, environmental, and cultural impacts of development projects.

SIA includes:

- Population and demographic analysis
- Livelihood assessment
- Environmental impact analysis
- Identification of vulnerable groups
- Community consultation and participation
- Risk and mitigation assessment

The inclusion of SIA in NRRP 2007 strengthened the planning process by integrating social equity into development projects

## **2. Compensation Mechanisms:**

The policy proposed compensation for loss of land, housing, livelihoods, and other assets. Compensation was intended to support economic rehabilitation and resettlement.

## **3. Land-for-Land Provision:**

In specific cases, particularly involving tribal populations and agricultural communities, the policy recommended land-for-land compensation.

## **4. Housing and Infrastructure:**

Resettlement areas were required to provide basic infrastructure such as roads, drinking water, sanitation, schools, electricity, and healthcare facilities.

## **5. Livelihood Restoration:**

The policy promoted employment opportunities, vocational training, and income generation programs for displaced families.

## **6. Special Provisions for Vulnerable Groups:**

Special safeguards were introduced for Scheduled Tribes, women-headed households, and economically weaker sections.

## **7. Grievance Redressal Mechanisms:**

The policy proposed institutional arrangements for addressing complaints and monitoring rehabilitation processes.

## **8. Participatory Planning:**

Affected communities were encouraged to participate in planning, implementation, and monitoring processes.

## **8. URBAN AND REGIONAL PLANNING PERSPECTIVE**

From an urban and regional planning perspective, NRRP 2007 represented a major shift toward socially inclusive and sustainable development planning. The policy recognized that infrastructure and economic development must be balanced with social equity and environmental sustainability. The planning significance of NRRP 2007 includes the integration of social impact assessment into planning processes, promotion of participatory governance and stakeholder consultation, inclusion of livelihood restoration in development planning, emphasis on sustainable rehabilitation infrastructure, reduction of social conflicts associated with displacement, and improvement in long-term socio-economic sustainability. The policy highlighted the importance of balancing development objectives with the welfare and participation of affected communities to ensure more equitable and sustainable planning outcomes.

For planners, the policy highlighted the importance of community-centered planning approaches and equitable distribution of development benefits.

## **9. LIMITATIONS OF NRRP 2007**

Despite its progressive provisions, NRRP 2007 faced several implementation challenges and limitations.

Major limitations of NRRP 2007 included weak legal enforceability, delays in compensation and rehabilitation, inadequate institutional coordination, poor monitoring and evaluation systems, limited participation of affected communities in practice, lack of transparency in land acquisition processes, and inconsistent implementation across states. These challenges reduced the overall effectiveness of the policy and created gaps between policy provisions and actual implementation on the ground.

In many cases, rehabilitation packages failed to restore livelihoods fully, especially for informal workers and tribal communities dependent on natural resources. Administrative inefficiencies and corruption further affected implementation effectiveness.

## **10. CASE STUDY: NARMADA VALLEY PROJECT DISPLACEMENT MAP**

The Sardar Sarovar Dam Project in the Narmada Valley is one of the most significant examples of development-induced displacement in India. The project aimed to provide irrigation, drinking water, and hydroelectric power to several states. However, the construction of the dam displaced thousands of families, particularly tribal communities living in the affected areas.

The project became internationally recognized due to protests led by social movements such as the **Narmada Bachao Andolan**. Activists highlighted issues related to inadequate rehabilitation, environmental degradation, and lack of participation of affected communities.

The Narmada case demonstrated the importance of comprehensive rehabilitation planning, community participation and consultation, transparent compensation mechanisms, livelihood restoration strategies, and long-term monitoring and evaluation. The case highlighted the need for a more inclusive and accountable approach to rehabilitation and resettlement in development projects.

The case also influenced national discussions on rehabilitation policies and contributed to the development of stronger rehabilitation frameworks such as NRRP 2007.

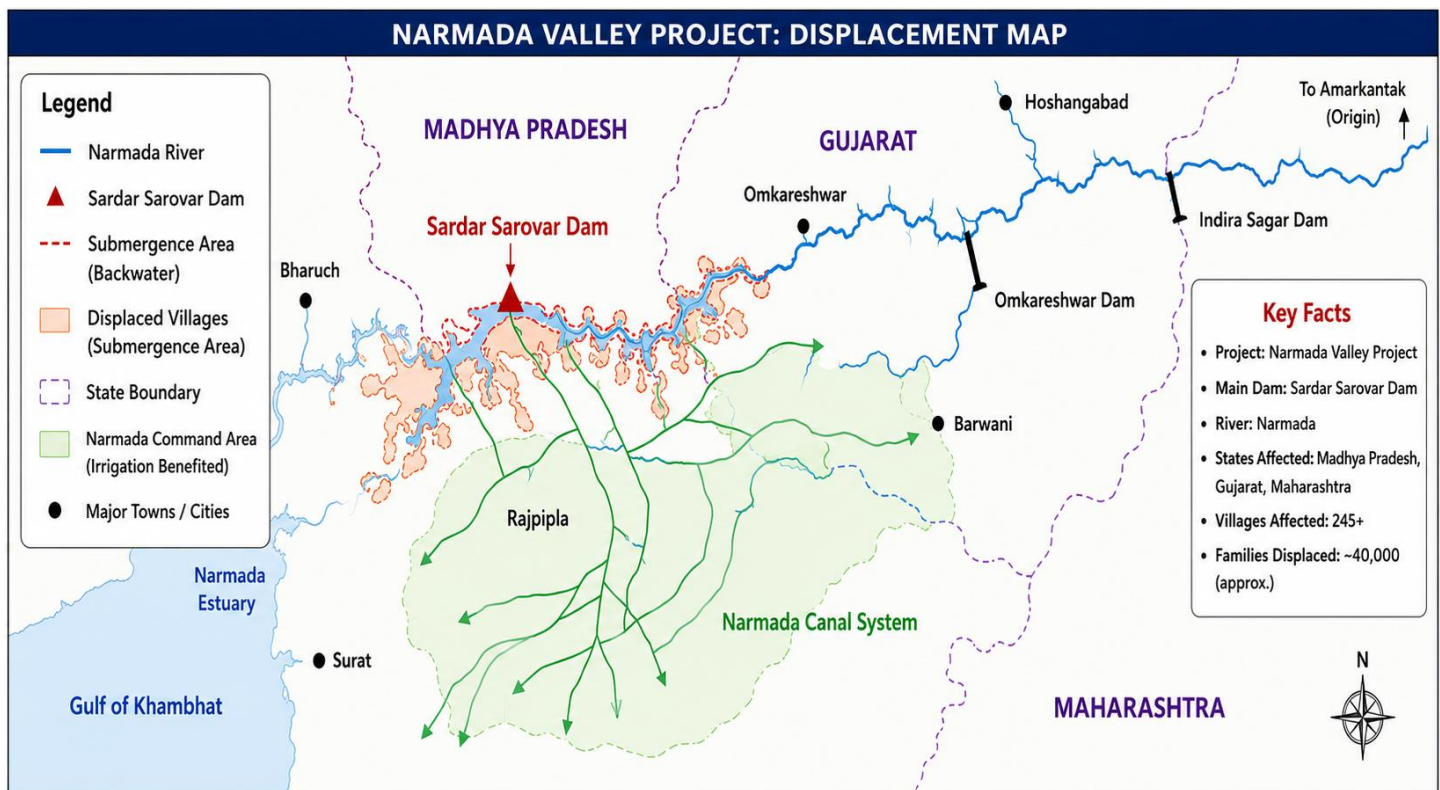


Fig-3: Narmada Valley Project – Displacement Map (Option 2)

## 11. CRITICAL EVALUATION OF NRRP 2007

Although NRRP 2007 introduced progressive rehabilitation principles, several implementation challenges remained. Major limitations included weak legal enforceability, delayed implementation, administrative inefficiencies, poor institutional coordination, compensation disputes, inadequate monitoring systems, and limited participation in practice.

These challenges reduced the effectiveness of rehabilitation measures and created significant gaps between policy objectives and ground-level implementation. In many cases, affected communities continued to face difficulties in receiving fair compensation, livelihood restoration, and proper rehabilitation support.

The gap between policy provisions and ground-level implementation reduced the effectiveness of rehabilitation outcomes.

## **12. LINKAGE WITH LARR ACT, 2013**

NRRP 2007 laid the foundation for the Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act, 2013. The LARR Act strengthened several provisions of NRRP 2007, including mandatory Social Impact Assessment, improved compensation mechanisms, rehabilitation as a legal right, transparency in land acquisition, and enhanced safeguards for vulnerable communities. The Act represented a significant step toward a more accountable, transparent, and socially inclusive land acquisition and rehabilitation framework in India.

## **13. LINKAGE WITH LARR ACT 2013**

The National Rehabilitation and Resettlement Policy, 2007 laid the foundation for the Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act, 2013 (LARR Act). The LARR Act significantly strengthened several provisions introduced under NRRP 2007 by making Social Impact Assessment mandatory, improving compensation mechanisms, enhancing transparency in land acquisition processes, and recognizing rehabilitation and resettlement as legal rights. The Act also introduced consent requirements for certain development projects and provided stronger safeguards for vulnerable groups, including Scheduled Tribes and marginalized communities. Thus, NRRP 2007 played a crucial role in shaping modern land acquisition and rehabilitation policies in India by promoting a more transparent, equitable, and socially inclusive development framework.

## **14. RECOMMENDATIONS**

The following measures can improve rehabilitation and resettlement practices in India, including GIS-based rehabilitation planning, digital monitoring systems, transparent compensation mechanisms, women-inclusive rehabilitation policies, long-term livelihood restoration programs, community participation platforms, sustainable settlement infrastructure, and strong institutional coordination mechanisms. The adoption of these measures can strengthen the effectiveness, transparency, and sustainability of rehabilitation processes while ensuring greater social inclusion and improved quality of life for affected communities.

## 15. CONCLUSION

The National Rehabilitation and Resettlement Policy, 2007 represented a significant shift toward a socially inclusive and people-centric rehabilitation framework in India. The policy attempted to balance economic development with social justice by emphasizing livelihood restoration, participatory planning, and protection of vulnerable communities.

Although implementation challenges remained in areas such as institutional coordination, monitoring systems, and compensation delivery, NRRP 2007 contributed significantly toward improving rehabilitation practices and policy awareness in India.

From a planning perspective, the policy highlighted the importance of integrating social equity, environmental sustainability, and participatory governance into development planning. The lessons learned from NRRP 2007 continue to influence contemporary rehabilitation and land acquisition frameworks in India.

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