

Post Evaluation of the Resettlement Process of Upper Kothmale Hydro Power project

G.S.P. Gunarathne, D.B.M.P. Punchihewa Department of Social Sciences, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka
Sajaanpraveen7@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

The Upper Kothmale Hydro-Power project (UKHP) is known as the third largest hydroelectric dam of Sri Lanka; situated in Talawakele in the Nuwaraeliya District. The construction work of the project was completed in 2011. The total 497 families were resettled as a result of the UKHP and there were huge resettlement issues. Resettlement is an important as well as a controversial process in any development project. Therefore, it is more important to find out the impacts of the resettlement of people in UKHP. This study mainly focused on the socio impacts of the resettlement process. The general objective of this study is to assess the socio impacts of resettlement process of UKHP. Specific objectives of this study are; to explore the issues after the resettlement process, to identify the satisfactory level of the affected people on infrastructure development as a part of the resettlement process which were created by the UKHP. This field study identified that there are pros and cons of the UKHP under resettlement process. When considering the favorable impacts, many jobs weren't affected, education of the students of the affected families were no harm. Many people are satisfied on the new infrastructure facilities (power supply, water supply, transport, educational, health and recreational facilities) which were served by the project. Most of the affected people had received compensation. The more properties of the people were damaged but all of them had received new houses and land. Compensations weren't satisfactory according to the public attitudes. However, it is important to note that when considering the whole resettlement process, it is more favorable when it compares with the resettlement process of the other development projects in Sri Lanka. Primary data were collected by field observation and surveying 90 households out of 497 households resettled by the project. Descriptive statistical methods; Graphs, charts, tables and percentages in SPSS were used to analyze and present the data.

Keywords: Compensation, Evaluation, Infrastructure facilities, Resettlement, Resettlement policies

Introduction and research problem/issue

The third largest hydroelectric dam of Sri Lanka, known as Upper Kothmale HydroPower project (UKHP) is situated in Talawakele in the Nuwaraeliya District of Sri Lanka. The UKHP is a project which was funded by the government of Japan. The whole project included A Dam and Reservoir, A Tunnel, An Underground Powerhouse, An Outdoor Switchyard, Double Transmission Line, A Housing Scheme and Common Amenities (CEB,

UKHP). The project had a continuous delay since its beginning of 1980's due to various issues. Especially the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) process identified key environmental and socio-economic impacts associated with the project in 1994 (Nandalal, 2007). The issues which particularly include the impact on St. Clair's waterfall due to stream flow reductions, possible effects on groundwater due to tunneling, impacts on downstream water usage due to dewatering of streams, and impacts on biodiversity, social impacts due to resettlement of affected people (Kodithuwakku and Moonesinghe, 2004). When consider the resettlement process of UKHP, altogether 497 households in 11 communities was affected by the Project and the affected households was relocated in eight new locations in a close proximity to their original settlement. Resettlement is an important as well as a controversial process in any development project. There were huge resettlement issues related to UKHP. Construction work on the project then began in 2006 and is completed by the end of 2011 under 6 year period. Therefore, it is more important to empirically examine the impacts of the project after implemented. With this background, this study mainly focuses on assessing the social impacts of the resettlement process. The general objective of this study is to assess the socio impacts of resettlement process of UKHP. Specific objectives of this study are; to explore the issues after the resettlement process, to identify the satisfactory level of the affected people on infrastructure development as a part of the resettlement process which were created by the UKHP.

Research Methodology

Research area is Talawakelle Estate, Talawakelle Division, Field No.3A in the Nuwaraeliya District of Sri Lanka. Both of primary and secondary data were used for this study. Primary data were collected by field observation and surveying 90 households out of 497 households resettled by the project (CEB, UKHP). Secondary data were collected by CEB reports, CEA reports and internet websites was used. Descriptive statistical methods; Graphs, charts, tables and percentages in SPSS were used to analyze and present the data.

Results and findings

The field survey was focused on 3 ethnic groups; Sinhala, Tamil, and Muslim. According to major impacts of the resettlement process, surveyed data reveals that 66.7% of household properties were damaged which include many lands and properties, the line rooms, a number of commercial establishments, agricultural land, and community facilities in the reservoir area. However, 73.3% of people's jobs were not affected because the resettlement process occurred in a very close proximity with compared to their original settlement. Therefore they had not wanted change their

workplaces. Also most of them were worked as a labor in other's estates and it was caused to save their jobs after the resettlement process of UKHP.

91.1% of student's education was not affected because of the project. This is also a result of a closest resettlement process with their original settlement and students had not need to change their schools and other educational institutions. On the other hand, a school was constructed as a part of the common amenities which were provided by the UKHP.

According to the satisfactory level of the respondents on new infrastructure facilities provided by UKHP; power supply, water supply, transport, educational, health and recreational facilities, 28.9% of affected people are strongly satisfied, 64.4% of people are satisfied and 6.7% of people with the ideas that have no change on the former indicated infrastructure facilities.

According to the public attitudes on the compensation they received, 33.3% of affected people hadn't got compensation and 66.7% of people had received, on the other hand, 62.2% of people who got their compensation aren't fully satisfied with the amount which they had paid, but 37.8% are satisfied.

Conclusions, implications and significance

According to this field study, the researcher identified that there are pros and cons of the UKHP under resettlement process. When considering the favorable impacts, many jobs weren't affected, education of the students of the affected families were no harm.

Many people are satisfied on the new infrastructure facilities (power supply, water supply, transport, educational, health and recreational facilities) which were served by the project. Most of the affected people had received compensation.

The more properties of the people were damaged but all of them had received new houses and land. Compensations weren't satisfactory according to the public attitudes. However, it is important to note that when considering the

whole resettlement process, it is more favorable when it compares with the resettlement process of the other development projects in Sri Lanka.

There are some recommendations for the resettlement of development projects; introduce well-planned mechanism comprising all the stakeholders including affected people in order to decide the more appropriate compensation scheme which based on the replacement cost. Otherwise, create an annual evaluation of the impacts of a resettlement process, because those impacts can be changed by time passes, enforce law and policies properly such as Land Acquisition Act, National Environment Act, and National Involuntary Resettlement Policy etc.

References (Selected)

CEB, UKHP, CEB. Retrieved January 08, 2017, from <http://www.ukhp.lk/resettlement>

Kodithuwakku, Dekshika C; Moonesinghe. Vinod. (2004). The EIA process and The Upper kotmale Hydropower project. Sarid Journal, 5, 2-4.

Nandalal, H.K. (2007). Upper kotmale Hydropower Project in Sri Lanka. Importance of Public Participation in Project, 3-5.