RESEARCH PAPER PROPOSAL

Introduction:

India is a vast country with large population and is having a range of cultural diversity and bounty of resources. Immediately after independence, national development has been largely equated with economic growth and surplus. Large, concentrated industries, irrigation projects have been symbol of such development, which through the process of industrialization promised to set India on the path of modernization and development. One of the inevitable outcomes of this has been massive environmental degradation and development induced displacement. A series of large dams were planned and built on some of the major rivers in India. Large dams promised to solve the problem of hunger and starvation by providing irrigation and boosting food production. Controlling floods and providing much needed electricity for industrial development.

Well, that is the positive aspect of the dam building, but it also has a major negative aspect also, as it is a major cause for the displacement of the poor peasants and other people, who are uprooted and displaced where ever the dams are planned and constructed. Dams are the largest cause of displacing people and as per one estimate it is only 25% of those displaced people, who are rehabilitated, which leaves a lot of backlog for settlement. Thus it is obvious that it leads to a situation of conflict among the displaced people on many fronts and with the Government. One such dam was constructed in Himachal Pradesh in India in the early 1960’s which led to a conflict between the people who were ousted from their ancestral lands. This conflict will be the subject of my research paper.

Background of the conflict:

The Government of India decided to construct Indira Gandhi Canal for irrigation of the dry lands in Rajasthan, which is a desert state in India. The larger aim was to covert part of the Thar Desert from waste land to agriculturally productive area as part of the Green revolution. To provide water to this project a dam was constructed on the river Beas in district Kangra in Himachal Pradesh, which is about 1000 – 1300 kilometers away from the irrigation site in Rajasthan. Due to the construction of this dam, nearly 30729 hectare of land was submerged under the water and about
10039 persons were ousted and displaced from their ancestral lands. This gave a shock to the people as they were emotionally attached to the land and the area. They were to be separated from their near and dear ones and were almost coming on the road from where they had to start their life again. The people of Himachal Pradesh are simple hill folks, who were given the assurance of rehabilitation by providing them the alternative land in the Indira Gandhi Canal Irrigation Command area in Rajasthan. The area which is totally different geographically and the climatic conditions are extreme, it being cool and pleasant in Himachal and extremely hot and dry in the desert of Rajasthan. Moreover the compensation paid to the people was not adequate, as it was paid at the rates of the values of the land in the 1960's, where as the cases were decided after decades, thus causing a lot of heart burn and resentment among the people. Therefore this whole project created a conflicting situation for the people of Himachal Pradesh on the one hand and also for the people of Rajasthan, where the people displaced from Himachal were being settled. The people of Rajasthan were finding it difficult to accept the outsiders, so at that end also there was a conflicting situation. This has led to a conflicting situation among the people themselves as it has personally broken them down emotionally and psychologically. It has caused scarcity of land, brought a sense of insecurity and a sense of neglect to the people. Under the Four Perspective Model, this conflict is Emotional, as its core concerns are fear, loss and grief, rage, Structural as it has built in structural inequalities and also part of Interest model as its core concerns of underlying goals and objectives have to settle by conflict management technique of negotiation, mediation and bargaining to make it win-win situation.

I would like to develop a research paper on this conflict and suggest a specific conflict management plan.