

Pandemonium of Development – Induced Displacements on the Sociopolitical organization of Households Displaced by the Establishment of Kirandich River Dam in Kenya

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Abstract: Dams and water reservoirs are essential infrastructure required for economic development. However, their establishment has sometimes led to massive population displacement. The establishment of Kirandich River Dam in Kapkokei area of Kabarnet led to the displacement of 128 households, who were later resettled in Kamaille Sub-location of Mochongoi division. However, the effects of displacement on displaced households in their new settlement remained largely unknown. This study examined pandemonium of development – induced displacements on the sociopolitical political organization of households displaced by the establishment of Kirandich River Dam in Kenya. Specifically, the study examined the effects of development-induced displacements on the family, health and medicine, livelihood and political organization. The study was anchored on the Cultural Ecological Theory and the Impoverishment, Risks and Reconstruction Model. This was a case study involving 106 respondents selected through multistage sampling methods. The study collected data through questionnaires, in-depth interviews and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs). Displacement undermined the institution through disruption of familial ties and networks that families had nurtured over the years prior to displacement. Displacement also imperiled the institution of health and medicine among the displaced households as well as indigenous dispute resolution structures. While displacement compromised pastoralism and formal employment-based livelihoods, it enhanced farming as a source of livelihood. Displacement also impeded displaced people's access to basic social services such as education, health and transport.

This study recommends for comprehensive review of compensation policies on forced evictions and the inclusion of community assets as part of compensable items. There is also need for provision of social services and infrastructure in areas earmarked for resettlement prior to the actual resettlement.

Keywords: Pandemonium, Displacements, Sociopolitical Organization, Displaced Households, Kirandich River Dam.

1. INTRODUCTION

Development-induced displacement is conceived as the process that takes place when people are forced to leave their homes as a result of development of projects such as the construction of dams, roads, airports, as well as urban clearance initiatives, mining, deforestation and the introduction of conservation reserves (Baviskar, 2009). Other forms of population displacement include conflict-induced displacement and disaster induced displacement (Tesfaye, 2007). Development-induced displacement is considered as the greatest cause of population displacement (Getu, 2005). However, while large

scale development projects such as urban development, mining, deforestation and conservation reserves have caused massive human displacements around the world, dams account for 66% of development-induced displacements (World Bank, 1994).

Kirandich River Dam is located 10 kilometers East of Kabarnet Town, the headquarter of Baringo County. The Dam was established to supply potable drinking water to Kabarnet town and its environs owing to persistent water shortage in the area. The establishment of the Dam was preceded by feasibility studies in early 1980s, which found Kirandich River as the most ideal location for the dam. The study also revealed that a total of 128 households would be affected, with 98 of them being compelled to give up their entire land for the establishment of the dam and supportive affiliated facilities. Mochongoi division was identified as the area where households displaced to pave way for the construction of the dam would be resettled. Households whose entire land were appropriated for the construction of the dam were relocated to their new settlement in 1995. The Dam was constructed between 1996 and 1999, with commissioning done in 2001.

People displaced people to pave way for the construction of Kirandich Dam had lived in Muchongoi (their new settlement) for 24 years by the time the current study was being undertaken. The effects of displacement following the construction of the dam on displaced people had not been unexplored since the resettlement of the displaced people in Kamalel Sub-location of Mochongoi division in mid 1990s. It is against this background that this study explored the pandemonium of development – induced displacements on the sociopolitical organization of households displaced by the construction of Kirandich River Dam in Kenya. The study was prompted by findings of previous studies, which found that displacement and subsequent resettlement affect displaced people psychologically, socially and economically (Onwuegbuzie and Teddlie (2003).

2. OBJECTIVES

This study sought to examine the effects of development-induced displacements on [1] family, [2] health and medicine, [3] livelihood and [3] political organization.

3. METHOD AND MATERIALS

3.1. Sampling Method and Procedure: This study had a sample size of 106. The study used three sampling methods namely census, stratified random sampling and purposive sampling. Census method was used to pick households of displaced people. This method of sampling is preferred when entire population is very small or it is reasonable to include the entire population in the study. The entire households of the displaced were only 98; it, therefore, included all of them in the study. Purposive sampling was used to select key 8 informants. The key informants selected for this study were area assistant chief, area chief, 3 community elders and 3 senior managers of Kirandich River Dam.

3.2 Data Collection Methods: Qualitative and quantitative procedures of data collection were used in data collection. Interview schedules were the main instrument used to collect quantitative data for the study. Interview schedules had both structured and unstructured questions, which enabled for the collection of standardized responses while simultaneously providing respondents the opportunity to respond without restrictions. Qualitative data was obtained through the use of in-depth interviews. Interviews were largely used to obtain information from key informants. The study employed a semi structured interview guide containing some pre-determined questions for the respondent.

3.3. Data Analysis: This study used descriptive and inferential statistics to analyze data after appropriate data coding. Descriptive statistics used in this study were frequencies and percentages. Inferential statistics were used to test the associations and relationships between independent and dependent variables. Inferential statistics used in this study were Chi-Square and Pearson Correlation.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.1 Effects of Displacement and Resettlement on the Family Functioning

When asked to state the effect of displacement and resettlement on family functioning, respondents appeared to suggest family functioning was more undermined than enhanced. Results in Table 4.1 shows that 72% of the respondents felt that displacement and resettlement had undermined family functioning 28% % who held that it had enhanced family functioning.

Table 4.1: Effects of Displacement on Family Functioning

Effect	Frequency	Percent
Greatly Enhanced	16	17.2
Enhanced	10	10.8
Somehow undermined	24	25.8
Undermined	38	40.9
Greatly Undermined	5	5.4
Total	93	100.0

This study established through key informant interviews that some displaced households did not move and settle in the new settlements earmarked for them. They instead chose to look for alternative land for settlements near their previous settlements. This meant that extended family units were split, whereby some remained in their original lands while others moved to resettle elsewhere. This led to the disruption of social ties and networks that families had nurtured over the years.

However, according to some informants, displacement enhanced rather than undermined family functioning “Tension had been building in our families over competition for scarce family land. The relocation of some of us to a new settlement helped in easing competition among male siblings over declining sizes of ancestral land” (male in his early 40s). Discussants also highlighted how change in land tenure system from customary (original settlement) to private tenure (new settlements) had granted them individual freedom on land utilization. “Decisions on how to utilize family land for livelihood was quite labourous given the many interests and group consensus that had to be built. It is now easier to make decision on land use given that land in the new settlement is individually rather collectively owned” (Male in his early 50s). Although decisions on land use (original settlements) was rarely challenged, it nonetheless led to the build-up of tensions between collectivists and individualists. Therefore, displacement and subsequent relocation of some households to a new settlement inadvertently contributed to de-escalation of tension and suspicion between the two opposing camps.

It was widely held among displaced people that displacement interfered with the institution of elders thereby undermining the family in its socialization functions. This position was informed by informants’ accounts, which indicated that only young adults and children accepted to relocate to the new settlements. An informant in his early 60s but who moved to the new settlement in 1990 while aged 32 years asserted that elders declined to leave their ancestral land (original settlement) citing unfamiliarity and insecurity in the area earmarked for settlement of displacement people. An informant narrated the difficulty they faced when confronted with issues that required elders’ interpretation and presence. “We make phone calls to elders who remained behind (ancestral land) when faced with unfamiliar issues that require their interpretations. Alternatively, we travel to Kirandich (original settlement) or facilitate their travel to this place (new settlement) (Male informant in his late 40s). There was no doubt that the absence of elders among displaced people in their new settlement rendered families ineffective in the transmission of cultural knowledge and moral guidance to younger generation.

It also emerged during Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) that displacement of households from their habitual residence and subsequent establishment of Kirandich Dam, led to the loss of community’s cultural artifacts. Discussants averred that displaced people had cultural artifacts and symbols that give it identity over other communities. They noted that the construction of the Dam occasioned loss of forests and water bodies, which their community had historically utilized for religious and spiritual activities, initiation ceremonies, celebration of their heroes and installation of leaders and elders. A community elder in his early 80s observed “We lost *kimwochet*, (a religious altar used for performance of cultural activities), *Yemtit*, *Sinendet*, and *Soket* (sacred trees) used for performing sacred rituals, and graves following clearance and excavation of the area” (male elder in his early 80s). The absence of these artifacts and other cultural features did not only impede families in their socialization functions but also desecrated the institution of elders as custodians of a community’s culture.

Our findings are in many respects in line with findings of previous studies. While examining the effects of population displacement for urban renewal in selected urban areas in Ethiopia, Tebarek (2013) reported that the process of relocating people from the inner city to the outskirts resulted in the disruption of business ties with customers, fragmentation of informal and social networks and general loss of neighborhood-based organizations. Although the study by Tebarek (2013) was done in the context of an urban development, the study nonetheless illuminates some of socio-economic effects of development induced displacement that applied as well to the current study.

4.2 Effects of Displacement and Resettlement on Health and Medicine

Results of the study in Table 2 show that majority of the respondents felt that displacement and resettlement had significantly undermined the institution of health and medicine in the community. For instance, 85% and 15% of the respondents generally held that displacement had undermined and enhanced respectively the institution of health and medicine in the community.

Table 2: Effects of Displacement on Health and Medicine

Effect	Frequency	Percent
Greatly Enhanced	8	8.2
Enhanced	6	6.8
Somehow undermined	4	4.3
Undermined	27	28.8
Greatly Undermined	48	51.9
Total	93	100.0

It was noted by informants that forests and natural habitats were destroyed to pave way for the construction of the Dam. The forests had rich and diverse eco-systems, some of which the community had historically used as medicine. The destruction of the forests following the construction of the dam robbed displaced households an important source of vital medicine for livestock and humans. Although the new settlement (Mochongoi) where displaced households currently live neighbour other forests namely Arabel and Marmanet Forests, extraction of traditional medicine from these forests remained a huge challenge for resettled households. This was in large part due to government regulations and the absence of elders who were the custodians of traditional medicine. "Kenya Forest Service (KFS) prohibits access to these forests. Elders who are knowledgeable about traditional medicine remained in Kirandich (original settlement). "There is no one to lead us in the extraction of medicine from the forests" (male in his late 40s).

It was perceptible from the informants' accounts that development-induced displacement led to substantial loss of human and material resources that constituted a significant portion of the institution of health and medicine of the displaced people. Moreover, government's decision to declare alternative forest resources as important biodiversity areas also hampered community's access to traditional healthcare services. These findings concur with that of Andnet (2010), which equally found that development-induced displacement compromised community's access to forest resources such as medicine, food, fuel, fodder and building materials.

Displacement and resettlement also compromised community's health by denying them access to clean drinking water and conventional healthcare services. The study established resettlement was not preceded by the establishment of social services such as water, healthcare and schools among others despite authority's incessant assurance. Noticeably, there was only one public health facility and one private health clinic in the area nearly three decades later. The public health facility was not only under-staffed but also lacked essential diagnostic facilities and pharmaceuticals thus confining them to the very basic health care services. Lack of medical staff and delivery facilities meant that most women in the area were being attended to by traditional midwives at a time when other parts were enjoying free maternal care services. Results of the present study mirror those of the previous studies, which equally found that displaced people had no access to basic social services (Fernandes, 2007; Tesfu, 2014).

While the settlement was situated in Baringo County, there was no motorable road linking the settlement to Baringo County referral hospital. This was not only compromising the ability of the residents to access emergency and specialized medical services, but also increasing the cost of accessing healthcare services in the neighbouring counties. Thus, a combination of inadequate health facilities and staffing, poor road conditions and high cost of transport as well as waning fortunes of traditional healthcare system had imperiled the institution of health and medicine among the displaced households.

4.3 Effects of Displacement on Livelihoods

When asked to state the effect of displacement and resettlement on family functioning, respondents appeared to suggest that livelihoods were enhanced rather than undermined by displacements and resettlement. Livelihoods affected by displacement and resettlements were farming, livestock keeping, formal employment and formal business as shown Table 3.

Table 3: Effects of Displacement on Livelihoods

Source of Livelihood	Frequency	Percent
Greatly Enhanced	36	38.9
Enhanced	34	37.2
Somehow undermined	8	8.7
Undermined	14	15.2
Total	92	100.0

Pastoralism was the main source of livelihood for displaced people in their original settlements. Crop production gained traction over the years in response to reduced land holding that rendered traditional pastoralism untenable. However, a small proportion of the households continued to derive their livelihoods from pastoralism. "These people (referring to natives of Kirandich) were traditionally pastoralists. But a significant proportion of households in the community began crop farming in the early 1980s to complement pastoralism whose fortunes was shrinking due to reduced land holding" (male in his mid-50s). Informants highlighted that the emergence of non-pastoral sources of livelihood had led to communal tension tensions between pastoralists and crop farmers in large part due to conflicting production approaches "Farmers fence off their farms, which had led to closure of livestock migration routes making it hard for livestock to access pasture and water. This forces pastoralists many times to trespass farmlands leading to conflicts" (Male in his late 50s).

While displacement destroyed some livelihoods in Kirandich area, relocation of some households to a new settlement provided an opportunity to households that had embraced crop production as their main source of livelihood. Study participants observed that the new settlement had greater potential for farming than their previous settlement due to its predictable rainfall and fertile soils. Informants also hailed the availability of markets for the produce in the nearby urban areas notably Kinamba, Nyahururu and Rumuruti towns. This notwithstanding, informants complained of post-harvest losses due to poor roads, which hampered timely delivery of their fresh produce to the market. Lack of access to essential services is also documented in previous studies as one of the socio-economic effects of development induced displacements to the displaced people. For instance, Gebre (2008) in an examination of the experiences of people displaced by large scale projects in Ethiopia found a lack of physical mobility within and beyond their locality as a common characteristic of the economic life of displaced people. Displaced people complained of lack of roads and means of transport to important destinations such as markets and locations of government services.

Displacement had adverse effects on formal employment as a source of employment. Through observation, the study noted government institutions such as schools and dispensaries as the notable sources of formal employment in the settlement. Contrastingly, respondents highlighted the presence of numerous public and private institutions in the previous settlements, which offered them more formal employment opportunities. There was therefore, no doubt that relocation of people from an area with far much superior formal employment opportunities to an area where such opportunities were deficient undermined displaced people's access to formal employment as a source of livelihood. Overall, while the area where displaced people were resettled was more fertile and endowed with forest resources, poor road networks and the absence of a vibrant business community in the area made the new settlement appear generally worse off than their previous settlement.

4.4 Effects of Displacement on Political Socialization

This study also sought to establish how displacement and resettlement had affected community's political organization. Displacement undermined political organization of the displaced people according to 92.4% of the study participants who responded in the affirmative when asked to state the effects of displacement on their political organization. Table 4 is the results of the respondents' views on the effects of displacement on political organization of displaced people.

Table 4: Effects of Displacement on Political Organization

Representation	Frequency	Percent
Greatly Enhanced	6	4.3
Enhanced	3	3.3
Somehow undermined	20	23.9
Undermined	63	68.5
Total	92	100.0

Unlike this study which found majority of displaced to be generally satisfied with the level of political representation, a study by Muggah (2000) reported that majority of displaced people are generally dissatisfied with the kind of political representation in their new settlements. Although most of the displaced people engaged in this study stated that they were fairly represented in the local political processes, this study could not find any evidence of effective political representation. As already cited, the area had no meaningful educational and health facilities, there were gross under-staffing in education and health institutions, roads were poor and none motorable, widespread insecurity, residents had no access to clean and adequate drinking water among other essential services. This study could, therefore, not understand exactly what the displaced people meant by fair representation when there were no tangible indicators of effective political representation on the ground.

The effects of displacement and resettlement on community's sociopolitical organization was also examined in the context of the institution of elders. Discussants asserted that elders among the displaced and resettled households lacked special features that added value and glamour to the institution of eldership such as large herds of cattle, large tracks of lands and deep knowledge of community's traditions and culture. This was attributed to the relocation from original to the current settlement which disrupted communal structures responsible for the socialization of young adults into authoritative elders.

Elders are not only custodians of community's morals but are also instrumental in peace building, dispute management and spiritual guidance. Discussants held that elders' effectiveness in these roles depended on the availability of cultural instruments within which they derived their authority and enforced their decisions. These instruments included cultural sites such as shrines, totems, graves of community legends and medicinal plants among others. Moreover, there were important symbols and artefacts that elders needed while carrying out important communal rituals. Informants mentioned special spears, bows and arrows, special clubs and shields among others. Majority ($\frac{7}{8}$) of the discussants held that elders in the new settlement had not lived long enough to have developed cultural resources essential for undertaking cultural activities. According to informants, the absence of these cultural resources rendered elders ineffective in their traditional roles including peace building and dispute resolution.

Although elders still handled some disputes among resettled households, their decisions were not final and binding on the disputants as the case was in the original settlement. "We have seen people going to court when they lose cases brought before elders. This is unlike before displacement when elders' decisions were rarely challenged in formal courts" (Female in her late 30s). It was clear from the informants' accounts that displacement had undermined the institution of elders in many areas including peace building and dispute resolution.

5. CONCLUSION

Displacement and resettlement had adversely affected the displaced people in many important areas of life. For instance, displacement had undermined people's access to health services, education, and secure and reliable sources of livelihoods. Displacement had also eroded the esteem and prestige of the institution of eldership and loss of cultural artifacts and symbols. Displacement had also compromised displaced people's access to traditional medicine and indigenous foods. Displacement also disrupted indigenous structures responsible for dispute resolution and peace building. This study recommends that future resettlements should be preceded by construction of health facilities and deployment of medical personnel, building of schools, construction of roads linking the area to markets and other important destinations, building police posts and deployment of adequate security officers, and construction of water facilities in places earmarked for resettlement.

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