

ABSTRACT

AN ASSESSMENT OF RURAL RESETTLEMENT PROGRAM IN THAILAND: A CASE STUDY OF LARGE HYDROPOWER DAM RESETTLEMENTS

by

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The main objective of this research was to establish a prescriptive model for future resettlement design. The assessment methodology contains bivariate and multivariate analyses that include at least two groups of cross-sectional data; before and after resettlement. This data was obtained from household surveys of experimental groups at the Sirindhorn, Khao Laem, Bang Lang, and Rajjaprabha resettlements. Some villages located near to the resettlement projects were surveyed as control groups for comparison purposes.

Results of the assessment and comparisons showed that: 1) there are two principal types of resettlement policies operating in Thailand, namely a policy under the revised Land Settlement Act 1968 for organizing self-help land settlement, and a policy declared under the project-by-project Cabinet Resolution; 2) two types of resettlement design - field-crop based and tree-crop based - - have been in operation for resettlement development; 3) all case study projects showed they were capable of handling the resettlement schemes although existing guidelines for standard compensation and resettlement are not considered adequate; 4) two major indicators could identify the success of the re-establishment of economic and social systems: the resettlers' income and living standards at the outcome stage; 5) a project environmental impact assessment study, and separate environmental and socioeconomic studies for the resettlement scheme component are necessary to include at least baseline socioeconomic and property survey information of the affected people, and a soil suitability study of the proposed new farmland; 6) the lives of project resettlers after resettlement in tree-crop based resettlement projects are relatively better than for those new communities in field-crop based schemes due to the low risk to farm income earnings; 7) the per household income of the resettler groups is relatively higher than the income of control groups due to the positive effects of project intervention that provided a number of special economic and social rehabilitation programs to the project resettlers; and 8) the resettlers' income and living standards are no doubt significantly affected by the resettlement design.

The household income of resettlers is an important dimension of the success of the re-establishment of the economic system of the new land settlement. Results of the analysis of variance and the multiple classification analysis indicated that the situation of households in the resettlement project, and households not in the resettlement project, are highly concerned with the level of household income. The former have significantly higher income than the latter. This is an absolute the effect of project intervention.

Results of the two multivariate analyses indicated that: 1) factors that significantly determine per capita income of resettled households are the age and the technical skill of the household head at the time of relocation; the size and the quality of farmland allotted, and the occupational training and extension programs; 2) factors that were found to significantly determine resettlers' living standards were: the age and the religion of the household head, the cash compensation for lost and damaged properties, the assistance during relocation, the size and the quality of the soil on the new farmland, the allowance during the nonproductive period, the occupational training and extension programs, the marketing assistance, the water works supply systems, the news reception, and finally the outcome conditions including the per capita income and the value of household properties and the opportunity for leisure time after resettlement.

If the overall concept for compensation and resettlement is to improve the welfare of people in the country, it follows that people who are affected by the project development should receive the project benefits and/or mitigate measures in such a way that they will at least regain or improve on their previous welfare. This central concept should be contained in the principles of the national resettlement policy, first established in 1963, and not revised since then. Other beneficial directives included in the operational directives are: 1) minimization of land acquisition; 2) methods in compensation (by using the replacement cost approach) and that the program of relocation and rehabilitation applies to directly and indirectly affected people; and 3) the replacement community is to be provided with better infrastructure and facilities.

The following components should be incorporated in the resettlement process:

- 1) Separate environmental assessment of the resettlement project and a more comprehensive socio-economic baseline survey to include an inventory of affected persons assets and property;

- 2) A comprehensive compensation and relocation plan that clearly states the rationale and methods to be employed in the project land acquisition and compensation aspects;

- 3) Specific economic and social rehabilitation programs for the project affected people to ensure that at least their former welfare is maintained;

- 4) Clear guidelines to encourage people to participate in the project's development;

5) Periodic monitoring and evaluation programs of the resettlement projects;

6) Adequate provision of managerial resources particularly for finance and budgetary assistance, time and manpower resources for implementing the above project resettlement development activities; and finally

7) Organizing of project funds so that there is long term rehabilitation support provided from project profits.

The aspects of compensation for opportunity loss and the behavior of the household in fertility, migration and investment for human capital and for economic activities after resettlement are recommended for further studies.