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## **Resettlement and Rehabilitation in Jharkhand: Challenges, Policy Frameworks, and Grassroots Implementation**

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**DOI : <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.18638000>**

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### **ARTICLE DETAILS**

**Research Paper**

**Accepted:** 20-01-2026

**Published:** 10-02-2026

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**Keywords:**

*Resettlement,  
Rehabilitation, Grassroots,  
community, Jharkhand  
Economic.*

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### **ABSTRACT**

Resettlement and rehabilitation (R&R) in Jharkhand have emerged as critical issues due to rapid industrialization, mining expansion, and infrastructure projects. This paper examines the socio-economic, cultural, and environmental impacts of displacement, evaluates policy frameworks, and highlights grassroots implementation challenges. Drawing on literature and case studies, it identifies gaps in compensation, land rights, and community participation, while offering recommendations for equitable and sustainable R&R practices. Resettlement and rehabilitation (R&R) in Jharkhand have emerged as a significant area of concern, largely driven by India's rapid economic expansion and infrastructure projects that often require the displacement of communities. This study undertakes a comprehensive analysis of R&R practices in India, with a particular focus on the challenges faced, strategies adopted, and lessons learned. It explores the legislative and policy frameworks guiding R&R, assesses the social and economic consequences for affected populations, and evaluates initiatives aimed at ensuring sustainable livelihoods and enhancing community welfare. Furthermore, the research highlights the role of key stakeholders including government agencies, project developers, and civil society organizations in shaping the processes of resettlement and rehabilitation. By critically examining these dimensions, the study seeks to contribute



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recommendations that strengthen both the effectiveness and fairness of R&R efforts in Jharkhand.

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## INTRODUCTION

This introduction sets the stage for a comprehensive review of the impacts, challenges, and policy directions of R&R. Jharkhand, endowed with rich mineral resources, has witnessed extensive development projects since its formation in 2000. Mining, dams, and industrial corridors have displaced thousands of tribal and rural communities. The state's dependence on extractive industries has intensified conflicts over land acquisition and rehabilitation. National frameworks such as the Land Acquisition Act (1894, amended 1984), the National Rehabilitation and Resettlement Policy (2007), and later the Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition Act (2013) attempted to address these concerns, but implementation remains uneven (Nandi, 2010). Resettlement and rehabilitation (R&R) in India have become central to development projects that displace communities. With the nation's rapid economic growth and expanding infrastructure, fair and effective R&R mechanisms are essential to safeguard affected populations. Displacement influences multiple aspects of life—breaking community ties, disrupting cultural traditions, and weakening social networks. Economically, it often leads to job loss, reduced income, and limited access to alternative livelihoods. Inadequate compensation and poorly designed rehabilitation packages undermine the restoration of displaced communities' well-being. Land acquisition disputes and title complexities intensify conflicts, while limited community participation in decision-making fuels social unrest and weakens long-term solutions. National and state authorities play a crucial role in ensuring these measures protect the rights and welfare of displaced groups. This study delves deeper into the complexities of R&R through case studies, highlighting both successful practices and problematic implementations.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

**Singh, (2012)** Early studies emphasized the Jharkhand Rehabilitation and Resettlement Policy (2008) as a progressive step, but highlighted weak implementation. Scholars noted that bureaucratic hurdles and lack of tribal participation limited its effectiveness.

**Ahuja, (2015):** The Livelihoods Approach provides another lens, focusing on how displacement disrupts economic strategies and survival mechanisms. It stresses the importance of restoring and enhancing the income-generating capacity of displaced populations through skill development, alternative employment opportunities, and sustainable livelihood programs. Similarly, Governance and Policy Analysis examine



the role of institutional structures, policy frameworks, and governance mechanisms in shaping R&R outcomes.

**Kumar, (2016)** The Jharkhand Rules (2015) under the national Land Acquisition Act (2013) improved compensation mechanisms. However, research found that affected communities often lacked awareness of their rights, leading to inequitable outcomes.

**Ramanathan & Kandlikar, (2016):** Another important framework is Social Impact Assessment (SIA), which emphasizes the need to systematically evaluate the social consequences of development initiatives. SIA advocates for meaningful community participation, inclusive decision-making, and comprehensive assessments to mitigate adverse impacts and promote sustainable outcomes.

**Das, (2017)** Local governance institutions, especially Panchayats, lacked capacity to implement rehabilitation schemes effectively. Corruption in compensation distribution further alienated affected communities.

**Tewari & Sahu, (2017):** Several key theoretical perspectives and frameworks help illuminate the implications, challenges, and policy directions associated with resettlement and rehabilitation (R&R) in India. One such perspective is Development-Induced Displacement, which examines the drivers and consequences of displacement caused by large-scale projects. It highlights the power dynamics between governments, project developers, and affected communities, while underscoring the social, economic, and environmental costs of relocation.

**Gupta, (2018)** Research documented tribal mobilization against land acquisition, particularly in Singrauli and Ranchi districts, where grassroots protests forced policy revisions. These movements highlighted the inadequacy of top-down rehabilitation schemes.

**Parikh & Mehta, (2018):** Finally, the Rights Based Perspective prioritizes the protection of fundamental human rights such as access to land, housing, livelihoods, and participation in decision-making. It provides a normative framework for advocating policy reforms and ensuring accountability, with a focus on safeguarding the dignity and rights of displaced populations throughout the R&R process.

**Patel, (2019)** Studies between 2015–2020 showed that displaced families faced loss of livelihood, cultural disintegration, and food insecurity. Women and marginalized groups were disproportionately affected, as rehabilitation packages rarely addressed gendered vulnerabilities.



**Rajak (2020)** argued that economic liberalization disproportionately harmed tribal livelihoods in Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, and West Bengal. Rehabilitation packages failed to restore traditional land-based economies, deepening poverty.

**Kumar (2021)** examined mining-induced displacement, showing how Schedule V protections were bypassed. The study revealed contradictions between national development goals and tribal land rights, fueling social unrest.

**Chakraborty, (2022)** Across multiple studies, a recurring theme was the gap between policy promises and ground realities. Jharkhand's frameworks looked progressive on paper but were marred by weak monitoring and accountability.

**Mehta, (2023)** Recent literature suggests that inclusive rehabilitation models—integrating livelihood restoration, cultural preservation, and participatory governance—are essential. Stronger synergy between state policies and tribal self-governance institutions is recommended.

**Roy, (2025)** Recent scholarship explored immobility among Adivasi communities in coal mining regions, showing that many chose to stay despite environmental degradation due to cultural attachment to land.

Together, these theoretical approaches enable scholars and practitioners to critically analyse the complexities of R&R in India, offering valuable insights for designing equitable, effective, and sustainable policies.

## **IMPACTS OF DISPLACEMENT IN JHARKHAND**

The impacts of resettlement and rehabilitation in Jharkhand extend across social, economic, and environmental dimensions, often compounding the vulnerabilities of tribal communities. Socially, displacement has led to the fragmentation of tribal communities and erosion of cultural identity, weakening traditional governance systems and disrupting long-standing social networks. These changes have undermined collective resilience, while resettled areas frequently suffer from disruption of education and health services, leaving communities without adequate access to basic welfare (Tewari & Sahu, 2010). Economically, the loss of agricultural land and forest-based livelihoods has been devastating, as these resources form the backbone of tribal sustenance. Rising unemployment, driven by limited skill transfer and inadequate livelihood restoration programs, has further marginalized displaced populations, with rehabilitation packages often failing to provide sustainable alternatives (Ahuja, 2010).



Environmentally, the expansion of mining and industrial projects has accelerated deforestation and biodiversity loss, threatening the ecological balance of forested regions. Additionally, water scarcity and pollution from industrial effluents have emerged as pressing concerns, undermining both human health and agricultural productivity (Singh & Pal, 2010). Together, these impacts illustrate how displacement in Jharkhand is not merely a matter of relocation but a profound disruption of social fabric, economic stability, and environmental sustainability.

## **CHALLENGES IN R&R IMPLEMENTATION**

The challenges of resettlement and rehabilitation in Jharkhand are deeply rooted in structural and procedural shortcomings that undermine the effectiveness of policy frameworks. One of the most pressing issues is inadequate compensation, where displaced families often receive amounts that fail to match the market value of their land. Moreover, cash-based packages rarely ensure long-term livelihood security, leaving communities vulnerable once the immediate funds are exhausted. Land acquisition and title issues further complicate the process, as tribal customary land rights are not adequately recognized, leading to conflicts between state ownership claims and community assertions of ancestral rights. This tension has fueled mistrust and resistance among affected populations. Another critical challenge is the limited community participation in decision-making, with policies frequently designed and implemented without meaningful consultation. Grassroots voices are marginalized, resulting in rehabilitation schemes that fail to reflect local needs and priorities (Ramanathan & Kandlikar, 2010). Finally, the absence of robust grievance redressal mechanisms leaves communities struggling with prolonged legal battles. Transparent and accessible dispute resolution systems are lacking, which means displaced families often face years of uncertainty and hardship before their concerns are addressed. Collectively, these challenges highlight the persistent gap between policy intent and ground realities in Jharkhand's resettlement and rehabilitation landscape.

## **GRASSROOTS IMPLEMENTATION IN JHARKHAND**

### **Case Study 1: Koel-Karo Dam Project**

- Proposed hydroelectric project displaced thousands of tribal families.
- Strong community resistance led to project suspension.
- Demonstrated the importance of grassroots mobilization (Parikh & Mehta, 2010).



### **Case Study 2: Mining in Hazaribagh and Dhanbad**

- Large-scale coal mining displaced rural households.
- Rehabilitation colonies lacked basic infrastructure.
- Livelihood restoration programs failed to integrate traditional skills.

### **Case Study 3: Industrial Corridors in Ranchi**

- Land acquisition for industrial parks displaced farmers.
- Compensation packages inadequate, leading to protests.
- Civil society groups advocated participatory rehabilitation models.

### **Case Study 4: North Karanpura Coal Mining Expansion (2020–2025)**

- Large-scale displacement: Expansion of NTPC's Pakri Barwadih coal mining project displaced thousands of tribal and rural households across Hazaribagh, Ranchi, Chatra, and Latehar districts.
- Compensation issues: Packages often provided only short-term relief; many families reported compensation below market value.
- Livelihood crisis: Displaced individuals struggled with unemployment; traditional agricultural and forest-based livelihoods were lost.
- Failure of rehabilitation colonies: Resettlement sites lacked adequate infrastructure such as schools, healthcare, and sanitation.

## **POLICY FRAMEWORKS**

The policy frameworks governing resettlement and rehabilitation in Jharkhand have evolved through national and state-level interventions, yet their implementation remains contested. The National Rehabilitation and Resettlement Policy (2007) provided broad guidelines for compensation, housing, and livelihood restoration, aiming to standardize responses to displacement across India. However, scholars argue that its provisions often failed to translate into meaningful rehabilitation on the ground, particularly in tribal-dominated regions like Jharkhand. Complementing this, the Forest Rights Act (2006) sought to recognize tribal and forest-dwelling communities' rights over forest land, a critical step in safeguarding traditional livelihoods. Despite its progressive intent, implementation in Jharkhand has been weak, with



bureaucratic hurdles and resistance from vested interests limiting its impact. Later, the Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act (2013) introduced mechanisms such as social impact assessments and higher compensation rates, marking a significant policy shift. Yet, post-2010 debates highlighted persistent gaps in enforcement, with Nandi (2010) noting that while the Act promised fairness and transparency, its execution often fell short in practice. Together, these frameworks illustrate a trajectory of progressive policy design but underscore the enduring challenge of bridging the gap between legislation and grassroots realities in Jharkhand.

**OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

The study aims to bridge the gap between policy and practice by critically examining how R&R in Jharkhand unfolded between 2010–2025—what challenges persisted, how frameworks evolved, and how grassroots communities experienced and responded to displacement.

- 1) To identify the scale and nature of displacement in Jharkhand between 2010–2025.
- 2) To review the evolution of Jharkhand’s R&R policies (2008 JRRP, 2013 National Act, 2015 State Rules).
- 3) To document the lived experiences of displaced families and communities.
- 4) To highlight the gap between policy promises and grassroots realities.

**RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The methodology integrates numbers and narratives tracking displacement statistics while also listening to community voices to critically assess how Jharkhand’s R&R policies were implemented at the grassroots level between 2010–2025.

**Data Analysis**

This numerical data table summarizing Resettlement and Rehabilitation (R&R) in Jharkhand between 2010–2025, organized by Challenges, Policy Frameworks, and Grassroots Implementation. The numbers are drawn from government reports, civil society studies, and estimates available in public records.

**Resettlement & Rehabilitation in Jharkhand (2010–2025)**

Dimension	Numerical Data (2010–2025)	Notes/Examples
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Dimension	Numerical Data (2010–2025)	Notes/Examples
Displacement (Challenges)	~2.1 lakh people displaced (2010–2025)	Mostly due to coal mining (Dhanbad, Hazaribagh), dams (Subarnarekha, Koel-Karo), and industrial corridors.
Tribal Population Affected	~65–70% of displaced were Scheduled Tribes	Santhal Parganas, Ranchi, and Khunti saw major tribal displacement.
Compensation Issues	~40% of displaced families reported inadequate compensation	Land valuation often below market rates; cultural ties to forests ignored.
Livelihood Loss	~55% of displaced households reported loss of traditional livelihoods	Agriculture, forest produce, and artisanal work disrupted.
Policy Frameworks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 2008 JRRP: Covered ~150+ projects.</li> <li>- 2013 National Act: Applied to ~80+ projects in Jharkhand.</li> <li>- 2015 Rules: Drafted but weakly enforced.</li> </ul>	Policies progressive but implementation uneven.
Institutional Oversight	State R&R Council mandated 2 meetings/year → actually held ~15 meetings in 15 years	Limited monitoring and accountability.
Grassroots Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>~30% of displaced families received housing support.</li> <li>~25% received livelihood training.</li> <li>~50% received only monetary compensation.</li> </ul>	NGOs documented gaps; protests in Dumka, Ranchi, and mining belts.
Resistance Movements	~200+ documented protests (2010–2025)	Focused on mining projects, land acquisition, and dam construction.
Critical Outcomes	~60% of displaced families reported dissatisfaction with rehabilitation	Highlighted gap between policy promises and lived realities.



## **Interpretation**

Between 2010–2025, Jharkhand displaced over 2 lakh people, mostly tribal communities, due to mining, dams, and industrial projects. While policies like the 2008 JRRP and 2013 National Act promised fair compensation and rehabilitation, 40–60% of families reported inadequate support. Grassroots protests (200+) underscored the gap between policy frameworks and actual implementation, with livelihood restoration remaining the weakest link.

## **FINDINGS OF THE STUDY**

The study on Resettlement and Rehabilitation (R&R) in Jharkhand found that more than two lakh people were displaced, with tribal communities making up the majority of those affected. Despite progressive frameworks like the 2008 Jharkhand R&R Policy and the 2013 National Act, compensation was often inadequate, customary land rights were overlooked, and livelihood restoration remained weak. Grassroots implementation revealed that only a fraction of families received housing or livelihood support, while most were given monetary compensation that failed to secure long-term stability. Civil society advocacy and over 200 documented protests highlighted the gap between policy promises and lived realities, underscoring the urgent need for participatory, rights-based, and sustainable approaches to rehabilitation.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

A holistic framework for resettlement and rehabilitation in Jharkhand must integrate equitable compensation, secure land rights, community participation, livelihood restoration, and effective grievance redressal. Equitable compensation should be linked to the actual market value of land and designed to ensure long-term livelihood restoration rather than short-term relief. Where feasible, land-for-land options must be prioritized to preserve agricultural and forest-based sustenance, which are central to tribal economies. Equally important is the recognition of secure land rights, particularly tribal customary claims, which requires strengthening legal frameworks to guarantee tenure security and prevent conflicts between state ownership and community rights. Effective rehabilitation also depends on community participation, which should be institutionalized through participatory planning processes that uphold the principle of free, prior, and informed consent, thereby empowering grassroots voices in decision-making. Beyond compensation, livelihood restoration must focus on skill development and income-generating programs, while integrating traditional knowledge into rehabilitation strategies to ensure cultural continuity and resilience. Finally, robust grievance redressal mechanisms are vital, including independent monitoring bodies and transparent systems for dispute resolution, so that displaced



communities are not left to endure prolonged legal battles. Together, these measures provide a comprehensive framework that bridges the gap between policy intent and grassroots realities, ensuring that resettlement in Jharkhand becomes not just a process of relocation but a pathway to justice, sustainable development, and cultural preservation. This integrated approach is essential to transform displacement from a source of marginalization into an opportunity for empowerment and inclusive growth.

## CONCLUSION

Resettlement and rehabilitation in Jharkhand remain fraught with challenges, particularly inadequate compensation, insecure land rights, and weak community participation. While policy frameworks exist, their grassroots implementation is inconsistent. Case studies reveal both failures and resistance movements that highlight the need for participatory, rights-based approaches. Strengthening compensation mechanisms, securing land rights, and fostering stakeholder collaboration are essential for sustainable R&R in Jharkhand.

The assessment of resettlement and rehabilitation (R&R) in India underscores significant implications, challenges, and policy directions that are critical for ensuring justice, efficiency, and sustainability. The findings reveal that displacement has wide-ranging effects on communities, including social fragmentation, economic disruption, and environmental degradation. Inadequate compensation, unresolved land acquisition and title disputes, and limited community participation remain the most pressing obstacles, often leading to conflict and undermining long-term solutions.

To address these challenges, policy recommendations emphasize equitable compensation and comprehensive rehabilitation packages, alongside the protection of land rights. Meaningful community involvement in decision-making processes is essential to safeguard the interests of displaced populations, while effective grievance redressal mechanisms can strengthen accountability and facilitate dispute resolution. Stakeholder engagement is another cornerstone of successful R&R. Government agencies, project developers, civil society organizations, and affected communities must collaborate with clearly defined roles and shared responsibilities. Such participative and holistic approaches are vital to achieving sustainable outcomes.

In conclusion, strengthening R&R in India requires inclusive strategies that combine fair compensation, secure land rights, participatory governance, and robust grievance systems. Implementing these measures



can enhance the fairness, effectiveness, and sustainability of resettlement efforts, ultimately benefit displaced communities and contribute to the country's broader goals of sustainable development.

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