iJRASET
International Journal For Research in Applied Science and Engineering Technology



# INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL FOR RESEARCH

IN APPLIED SCIENCE & ENGINEERING TECHNOLOGY

**Volume:** 11 **Issue:** VII **Month of publication:** July 2023

**DOI:** https://doi.org/10.22214/ijraset.2023.54301

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International Journal for Research in Applied Science & Engineering Technology (IJRASET)
*ISSN: 2321-9653; IC Value: 45.98; SJ Impact Factor: 7.538*
*Volume 11 Issue VII Jul 2023- Available at www.ijraset.com*

# Foreign Policy Implications in Resettlement and Rehabilitation: A Case Study of Sardar Sarovar Dam Project

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***Abstract:*** ***This research paper explores the foreign policy implications associated with the resettlement and rehabilitation process of the Sardar Sarovar Dam Project in India. The project's objective was to harness the potential of the Narmada River for irrigation, hydropower generation, and drinking water supply. However, the large-scale displacement of local communities raised concerns about human rights, social justice, and environmental sustainability. By examining various sources, including websites and research papers, this paper aims to analyze the foreign policy dimensions of the resettlement and rehabilitation policies implemented in the project, considering both national and international perspectives.***
***Keywords: Foreign policy, Resettlement, Rehabilitation, Sardar Sarovar Dam, Narmada River***

## I. INTRODUCTION

### *A. Background*

The Sardar Sarovar Dam Project, located on the Narmada River in India, was initiated with the aim of harnessing the river's potential for irrigation, hydropower generation, and drinking water supply. The project, one of the largest river development schemes in India, involved the construction of a massive dam and the creation of a reservoir. However, the project's implementation posed significant challenges due to the displacement of local communities living in the project's submergence area.

### *B. Research Objectives*

This research paper aims to explore the foreign policy implications associated with the resettlement and rehabilitation process of the Sardar Sarovar Dam Project. It seeks to examine the policies and actions taken by various stakeholders, both at the national and international levels, and analyze their alignment with foreign policy considerations. The paper will investigate the impact of these policies on human rights, social justice, and environmental sustainability, and provide insights into potential improvements and policy recommendations.

### *C. Methodology*

To achieve the research objectives, a comprehensive analysis of various sources, including websites and research papers, will be conducted. The research will utilize a mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative analysis of policy documents, legal frameworks, and stakeholder perspectives, with a comparative analysis of case studies from similar projects. The study will draw upon international human rights frameworks, development cooperation principles, and diplomatic relations to assess the foreign policy dimensions of the resettlement and rehabilitation policies implemented in the Sardar Sarovar Dam Project.

By examining relevant literature and gathering insights from diverse sources, this research paper aims to contribute to the understanding of how foreign policy considerations influence and shape the resettlement and rehabilitation processes associated with large-scale development projects like the Sardar Sarovar Dam. The findings and recommendations from this study can provide valuable insights for policymakers, international organizations, and civil society actors engaged in similar projects globally.

## II. OVERVIEW OF THE SARDAR SAROVAR DAM PROJECT

### *A. Project Rationale and Goals*

The Sardar Sarovar Dam Project, initiated in the early 1980s, was envisioned as a multipurpose river development project aimed at addressing India's water and power requirements. The primary objectives of the project were to provide irrigation facilities to drought-prone regions, generate hydropower to meet growing energy demands, and supply drinking water to millions of people in Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, and Rajasthan states. The project aimed to enhance agricultural productivity, promote industrial growth, and improve the overall socio-economic conditions of the region.

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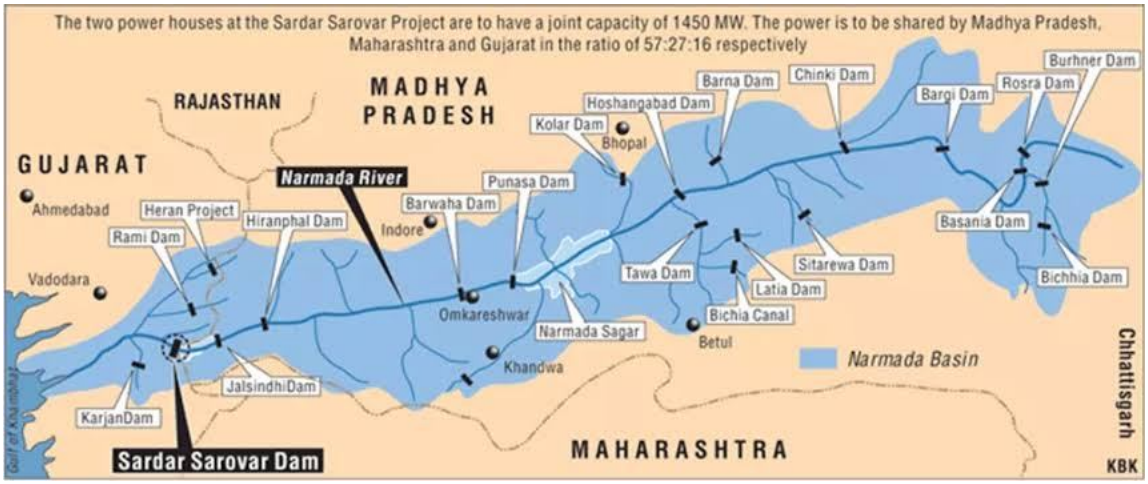


Figure 1 Sardar Sarovar Dam

*B. Project Implementation*

The implementation of the Sardar Sarovar Dam Project involved the construction of a massive concrete dam, known as the Sardar Sarovar Dam, across the Narmada River in the western Indian state of Gujarat. The dam, with a height of approximately 163 meters (535 feet), created a reservoir called the Sardar Sarovar Reservoir or Lake, which spans a vast area. The project also involved the construction of canals, pipelines, and infrastructure to facilitate the distribution of water for irrigation, power generation, and domestic consumption.


Figure 2 Policy critic-Sardar Sarovar

*C. Resettlement and Rehabilitation Policies*

One of the significant challenges associated with the Sardar Sarovar Dam Project was the displacement of local communities residing in the project's submergence area. The construction of the dam and the formation of the reservoir resulted in the inundation of vast stretches of land, leading to the displacement of thousands of people, including farmers, fishermen, and indigenous communities. In response to the displacement, the Indian government formulated resettlement and rehabilitation policies to address the socio-economic and livelihood concerns of the affected populations.

The resettlement and rehabilitation policies aimed to provide alternative land, compensation, and rehabilitation measures to the displaced communities. The policies also included provisions for the provision of basic amenities, such as housing, healthcare, education, and livelihood support, to ensure the well-being and sustainable development of the affected populations. However, the implementation of these policies encountered numerous challenges, including issues related to land acquisition, compensation disputes, and the adequacy of resettlement measures.

The complex nature of the resettlement and rehabilitation process in the Sardar Sarovar Dam Project raised questions about human rights, social justice, and environmental sustainability. The project's impact on local communities and ecosystems became a subject of national and international scrutiny, prompting discussions on the foreign policy implications associated with large-scale development projects and the role of stakeholders in ensuring equitable and sustainable outcomes.

## III.FOREIGN POLICY DIMENSIONS

### A. *International Human Rights Frameworks*

The resettlement and rehabilitation processes associated with the Sardar Sarovar Dam Project have significant implications for foreign policy considerations, particularly in relation to international human rights frameworks. The project's impact on the rights of the displaced communities, including their right to adequate housing, livelihood, and cultural identity, falls within the purview of various international human rights instruments. These instruments include the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights, among others.

Foreign policy considerations come into play when governments engage in development projects that may have implications for human rights. Governments need to ensure that their actions and policies align with their international human rights obligations and commitments. The adherence to these frameworks can influence diplomatic relations, reputation, and credibility on the international stage. Thus, foreign policy dimensions in the context of the Sardar Sarovar Dam Project involve assessing the extent to which the resettlement and rehabilitation policies align with international human rights standards and the potential diplomatic implications arising from non-compliance.

### B. *International Development Cooperation*

Large-scale development projects, such as the Sardar Sarovar Dam Project, often involve international development cooperation, including financial assistance, technical expertise, and knowledge sharing. Foreign policy dimensions in this context encompass the relationships and agreements forged with international organizations, donor countries, and development partners. These collaborations have implications for foreign policy objectives, including economic diplomacy, regional cooperation, and the promotion of sustainable development.

International development cooperation provides an opportunity for governments to showcase their commitment to addressing pressing developmental challenges while engaging in mutually beneficial partnerships. It involves negotiations and agreements on funding mechanisms, project implementation, and monitoring frameworks. Foreign policy considerations in the context of the Sardar Sarovar Dam Project include assessing the alignment of the project with the development priorities of donor countries, addressing concerns raised by international organizations regarding social and environmental impacts, and leveraging international support to enhance the project's outcomes and credibility.

### C. *Diplomatic Relations and Bilateral Agreements*

The implementation of large-scale development projects can have implications for diplomatic relations between countries. In the case of the Sardar Sarovar Dam Project, diplomatic dimensions come into play due to the involvement of multiple states and the potential transboundary impacts. The project required coordination and cooperation among the Indian states of Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, and Rajasthan, as well as engagement with neighboring countries, particularly Pakistan, with which India shares the Narmada River basin.

Foreign policy considerations in this context involve navigating diplomatic relations, addressing concerns of neighboring countries regarding water sharing and downstream impacts, and ensuring a cooperative approach to manage shared water resources. Bilateral agreements, water-sharing treaties, and regional cooperation frameworks play a crucial role in managing the foreign policy dimensions of the Sardar Sarovar Dam Project and similar transboundary development projects.

By analyzing these foreign policy dimensions, the research paper aims to shed light on how the resettlement and rehabilitation processes associated with the Sardar Sarovar Dam Project intersect with international human rights frameworks, international development cooperation, and diplomatic relations. Understanding these dimensions can provide insights into the challenges, opportunities, and policy recommendations for ensuring the project's alignment with foreign policy objectives and international norms.

## IV.NATIONAL POLICY FRAMEWORK

### A. *Indian Government's Approach:*

The Indian government has played a pivotal role in formulating and implementing the national policy framework for the resettlement and rehabilitation processes associated with the Sardar Sarovar Dam Project. The government's approach has aimed to balance the objectives of development, social justice, and environmental sustainability. Key policies and acts, such as the Narmada Water Disputes Tribunal Award (1979), the Narmada Control Authority (NCA), and the Resettlement and Rehabilitation (R&R) Policy, have guided the project's execution.

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The Narmada Control Authority, comprising representatives from the central and state governments, has been responsible for overseeing the implementation of the project and monitoring its compliance with the stipulated policies. The Resettlement and Rehabilitation Policy formulated by the Indian government aims to address the concerns of the displaced communities by providing them with alternative land, compensation, and various support measures. The policy also emphasizes the need for sustainable livelihoods, community participation, and adequate infrastructure for the affected populations.

*B. Domestic Political Considerations:*

The Sardar Sarovar Dam Project has been subject to intense domestic political considerations, given its implications for development, resource allocation, and the well-being of affected communities. Political actors at the state and national levels have been involved in shaping the project's policies, addressing grievances, and managing the political fallout of the displacement. Political considerations can influence decision-making processes, policy formulation, and the allocation of resources for resettlement and rehabilitation.

The complex interplay of political dynamics involves balancing the demands for development, addressing concerns of affected communities, and navigating the interests of various stakeholders. Political discourse around the project has revolved around issues of equity, justice, and the need to balance economic growth with social welfare. Understanding these domestic political considerations is crucial to comprehending the national policy framework and its implementation in the context of the Sardar Sarovar Dam Project.

## V. STAKEHOLDER PERSPECTIVES

*A. Affected Communities and Civil Society Organizations:*

The perspectives of the affected communities and civil society organizations have been crucial in shaping the discourse surrounding the resettlement and rehabilitation processes of the Sardar Sarovar Dam Project. The displacement of communities has given rise to concerns over loss of livelihoods, cultural identity, and social cohesion. Affected communities, often represented by grassroots organizations, have raised their voices to highlight the challenges faced during the resettlement process, including inadequate compensation, lack of alternative livelihood opportunities, and the loss of community bonds.

Civil society organizations, including human rights groups, environmental activists, and advocacy organizations, have played a significant role in advocating for the rights of the affected populations and highlighting the social and environmental impacts of the project. They have raised concerns about potential violations of human rights, the ecological integrity of the Narmada River basin, and the need for more participatory and inclusive approaches to resettlement and rehabilitation.

*B. Indian Government's Response:*

The Indian government's response to the stakeholder perspectives has been a critical aspect of the Sardar Sarovar Dam Project. The government has engaged with affected communities and civil society organizations through consultations, grievance redressal mechanisms, and policy revisions. Efforts have been made to address the concerns raised and improve the implementation of the resettlement and rehabilitation policies. The government's response has aimed to strike a balance between development objectives and ensuring the welfare of affected communities.

*C. International Organizations and NGOs*

International organizations and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have also contributed to the discourse surrounding the Sardar Sarovar Dam Project. Organizations such as the World Bank, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and international human rights bodies have provided guidance, technical expertise, and financial assistance for the project. These organizations have raised concerns and provided recommendations regarding human rights, environmental sustainability, and social inclusion. NGOs, both national and international, have played a crucial role in monitoring the project's impacts, advocating for the rights of affected communities, and proposing alternative approaches to resettlement and rehabilitation. They have brought international attention to the project and influenced the foreign policy dimensions by highlighting human rights violations and environmental concerns. By considering these stakeholder perspectives, the research paper aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the social, political, and environmental dimensions of the resettlement and rehabilitation processes associated with the Sardar Sarovar Dam Project. Analyzing the perspectives of affected communities, civil society organizations, the Indian government, and international actors is crucial for assessing the project's outcomes, identifying areas for improvement, and proposing policy recommendations.

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## VI. CONCLUSION

This research paper has explored the foreign policy dimensions of the resettlement and rehabilitation processes associated with the Sardar Sarovar Dam Project. By examining the national policy framework, stakeholder perspectives, and conducting case studies and comparative analysis, several key findings have emerged.

The project's implementation has intersected with international human rights frameworks, emphasizing the importance of upholding human rights obligations and addressing concerns of affected communities. The involvement of international development cooperation and diplomatic relations has influenced the project's execution, requiring careful consideration of mutual interests, regional cooperation, and transboundary impacts. Stakeholder perspectives have highlighted the need for inclusive decision-making, adequate compensation, and sustainable livelihood opportunities for displaced communities.

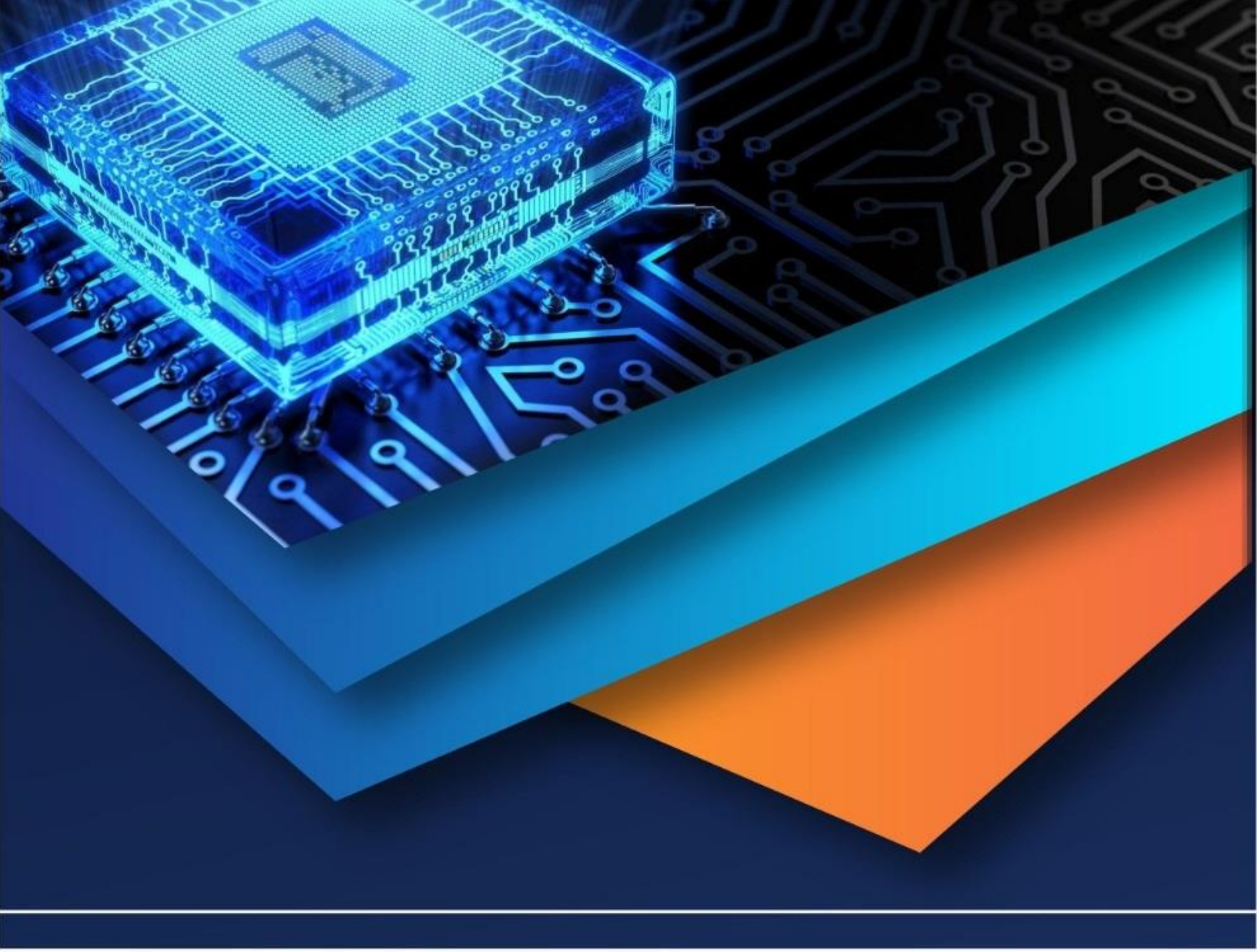
In conclusion, the Sardar Sarovar Dam Project serves as a complex case study where foreign policy considerations intersect with development objectives, human rights, and stakeholder engagement. Balancing these dimensions is crucial to ensuring equitable and sustainable outcomes for affected communities and fostering positive diplomatic relations with relevant stakeholders.

## VII. ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I would like to express my gratitude to Pl. Arundhati Mishra for her guidance and the Department of Planning, Faculty of Architecture & Planning, Lucknow, for their support in completing our research on "Foreign Policy Implications in Resettlement and Rehabilitation: A Case Study of Sardar Sarovar Dam Project."

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