

1. Provide us a one paragraph to one-page narrative report highlighting the effects of this research on the field of Pakistan Studies.

Mega dams forcibly displace a large number of people who need to be resettled. The situation in Pakistan is no different and with the current focus on dam building in the country, it is important to understand how the Pakistani state has historically addressed the issue of resettling it's displaced. With the help of AIPS short term grant, I was able to address some pieces of this puzzle by tracing the evolution of Pakistan's resettlement policy using the case of the Tarbela Dam through archival research in Islamabad.

My investigation focuses on two critical periods of displacement: the 1960s-1970s when the dam was built; and the 1990s and 2000s, when the global anti-dam resistance forced the government to address legacy issues in the resettlement of the Tarbela displaced. These two periods reflect different pressures on the state. In the former period, the government was only beginning to deal with the large-scale displacement caused by development infrastructure projects. It relied on existing and archaic colonial era laws, such as the Land Acquisition Act of 1894, but supplemented these with ad hoc policy measures drawing from the experience of settling the partition refugees. The second period reflects different anxieties of the state – a global anti-dam movement had forced powerful development institutions, like the World Bank to recognize the high social and environmental cost of building large dams. Subsequent reforms in the development sector and pressure from the World Bank forced the GoP to establish a Tarbela Commission in 1998 to address outstanding cases of resettlement. Based on a preliminary analysis, I can state that while the second period corresponded to significant changes in approaches to resettling the displaced the effect is not as significant since ad hoc measures come against legacy colonial laws and end up replicating many of the issues of the former period.

In terms of contribution to the broader field Pakistan Studies, I make three significant ones. First, our knowledge of the historical impact of dams and the resettlement in Pakistan is fairly limited. My work will partly fill this gap in knowledge. Second, while studies have shown the problems with the archaic land acquisition law that undervalues land, incurs long delays, and excludes the landless, we know little about the policy debates and state's anxieties around addressing these shortcomings for projects of great significance during the early period of state-making and nation-building. My study provides insights into Pakistani state's anxieties around settling the displaced, and links up with literature on resettlement after partition. Third, it provides for an effective baseline and comparison for new resettlement policies that have been debated since the early 2000s. These debates are both of relevance and interests to scholars who study issues of infrastructure development in Pakistan.