



# DISPLACED INDIGENOUS PEOPLES AMONG RESETTLEMENT SITES IN SAN JOSE, TARLAC

Rafael C. Yabut

College of Public Administration and Governance,  
Tarlac State University

**Abstract:** The study conducted was an assessment of the lived experiences of the displaced Indigenous Peoples among resettlement sites in San Jose, Tarlac. The researcher aimed to contribute to the existing knowledge on the resettlement due to the construction of large dams. These sites accommodated the households displaced from Barangay Maamot, which will serve as the reservoir for the Balog-Balog Multi-purpose Project. One of the primary challenges identified and had a highest rate by the participants was the difficulty in finding opportunities for income generation. Approximately 25% or 8 individuals expressed their struggle in locating sources of employment or means to earn income. Given the researcher's role as a policymaker in the resettlement program of BBMP, his insights and participation in the proposed study have the potential to contribute valuable perspectives and recommendations for enhancing the efficacy and inclusivity of the resettlement efforts for the displaced indigenous people in San Jose, Tarlac.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Indigenous Peoples are different social and cultural groups with deep ties to the land and natural resources where they live, work, or have been forced to leave. Their identities, cultures, methods of making a living, and both their bodily and spiritual well-being are all intertwined with the land and natural resources on which they are dependent. They frequently look to their traditional leaders and groups for representation, which often hold perspectives that are distinct from those of the culture or civilization that is dominant. Many Indigenous Peoples still speak a language that is different from the official language or languages of the country or region where they live. However, many Indigenous Peoples have lost their languages or are on the verge of extinction because they have been kicked off their lands and/or moved to other places (The World Bank, 2023).

Notwithstanding their cultural disparities, Indigenous Peoples across the globe encounter comparable challenges concerning the safeguarding of their entitlements as unique communities. For a considerable period, Indigenous Peoples have endeavored to secure recognition of their identities, customary way of life, and entitlement to ancestral lands, territories, and natural resources (Ivers, 2023).

However, throughout history, their rights have been continually violated in spite of their efforts in their everyday lives. At this time, Indigenous Peoples are thought of as one of the most vulnerable and marginalized populations all over the world. It is now acknowledged by the global community that safeguarding the rights and preserving the unique cultures and lifestyles of indigenous populations necessitates the implementation of specific measures (United Nations, 2023).

The researcher aimed to contribute to the existing knowledge on the resettlement of displaced Indigenous Peoples (IPs) due to the construction of large dams. That is why he have the dedication to propose a study about the displaced Indigenous Peoples among resettlement sites in Barangay Sula, San Jose Tarlac. These sites accommodated the households displaced from Barangay Maamot, which will serve as the reservoir for the Balog-Balog Multi-purpose Project. Additionally, the researcher was actively involved in the implementation of the resettlement plan as an Acting Assistant Project Manager at National Irrigation Administration - Tarlac, where their primary project is the Balog-Balog multipurpose project. Through this

proposal, the researcher intended to contribute to the development of future plans and actions for resettling affected communities, such as in Barangay Maamot, San Jose, Tarlac and Sta. Juliana, Capas, Tarlac, which served as part of the BBMP reservoir. As the Acting Assistant Project Manager, the researcher was responsible for leading meetings on resettlement issues and ensuring the approval of the MOA Addendum by all relevant parties.

Furthermore, the researcher also acted as the official representative of NIA BBMP - TARLAC in meetings with local government units (LGUs), the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP), the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), and indigenous communities (IPs). Given the researcher's role as a policy-maker in the resettlement program of BBMP, his insights and involvement in the proposed study can contribute valuable perspectives and recommendations for enhancing the effectiveness and inclusivity of the resettlement efforts for the displaced IPs in San Jose, Tarlac.

## **STATEMENT OF THE OBJECTIVES**

The present study aimed to know the situation of Indigenous Peoples who have been displaced among resettlement sites in Barangay Sula, San Jose, Tarlac, specifically in three sitios of Barangay Maamot, namely Maamot proper, Dirita, and Tangan-Tangan.

Specifically, this study sought to answer the following objectives:

1. To determine the different resettlement sites for displaced Indigenous People in San Jose Tarlac.
2. To narrate the lived experiences of the IPs in these resettlement sites.
3. To address the problems and need of the IPs in the resettlement sites.
4. To determine the implications of the study to Public Administration.

## **SCOPE AND DELIMITATION**

The scope of this research study focused on gathering insights and experiences from Indigenous Peoples residing in resettlement sites in San Jose, Tarlac, Philippines. The study aimed to explore the challenges, impacts, and perspectives of indigenous communities in relation to their resettlement experience. The research conducted within the geographical area of San Jose, Tarlac, specifically targeting indigenous individuals or families who have been resettled in the area. The study will not cover Indigenous Peoples residing outside of San Jose, Tarlac or those who have not experienced resettlement.

The research primarily employed a qualitative method, specifically through interviews with the participants. The interview guide covered the topics related to personal experiences, challenges faced, cultural impacts, rights and representation, initiatives and programs, access to services, preservation of culture, livelihood opportunities, external support, and the role of local government.

The study acknowledged the limitations of a small sample size and its focus on a specific geographical location, which may not fully represent the diversity of experiences and perspectives of all Indigenous Peoples in the Philippines. The findings of this research may not be generalizable to all indigenous communities in the country.

Confidentiality was ensured, and participants' identities remained anonymous throughout the research process. The data collected were used solely for academic purposes and handled with strict confidentiality.

The recommendations and insights generated from this research study aimed to contribute to the development of policies, programs, and initiatives that may be possibly can address the specific needs and concerns of Indigenous Peoples in the resettlement sites, particularly in San Jose, Tarlac. The scope of this research study encompassed the fiscal year 2022-2023.

## **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

The researcher conducted a review and assessed the Indigenous Peoples who had been uprooted and were now living in resettlement sites in San Jose, Tarlac. During the process of developing the conceptual framework for the study, the researcher employed the IPO model. The IPO model portrayed a system with three steps, which were referred to as the input, the process, and the output. In the context of the system's life cycle, inputs are considered to be consumable resources and efforts that are brought into play at the beginning of the cycle. The procedure entails converting these inputs into the desired outputs in order to proceed.

In addition, the displaced Indigenous Peoples who were distributed around the resettlement sites in San Jose, Tarlac served as the study's input. They are the ones who gave the information that was required to finish the study. The researcher was aware of and evaluated the lived experiences of Indigenous Peoples when they were in the process stage of having their relocation places changed. The outcomes of this research study are

the suggested solutions to the issues and difficulties experienced by the IPs, together with the justifications for their consequences to the Public Administration.

## II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### RESEARCH DESIGN

In this study, the researcher employed a research design called qualitative using case study. The utilization of qualitative research design is a valuable methodology for the systematic observation and description of phenomena within their natural context. Unlike quantitative research, qualitative research is concerned with determining the whys and how's of the phenomenon under consideration. As a result, qualitative research is frequently defined as subjective (rather than objective), and findings are obtained in writing rather than numerically.

On the other hand, to determine the respondents of the case study, the purposive sampling method was utilized. In purposive sampling, the researcher settled out to identify members of the population who are likely to possess certain characteristics or experience relevant to the study being conducted. In this way, the respondents selected, or cases fit in the study and focuses only on relatively small samples.

### LOCALE OF THE STUDY

The researcher chose the Municipality of San Jose, Tarlac as the locale of the study in which the displaced Indigenous Peoples among resettlement sites in San Jose are here. The land area of the municipality is 592.81 square kilometers, which is equivalent to 228.89 square miles, and it accounts for 19.46% of Tarlac's total area. According to the results of the Census that was conducted in 2020, its total population was 41,182. This accounted for a total of 2.74% of the population of Tarlac province, which was equivalent to 0.33% of the total population of the Central Luzon area. On the basis of these numbers, the population density is estimated to be 69 people per square kilometer or 180 people per square mile. The municipality consists of 13 barangays namely: Burgos, David, Iba, Labney, Lawacamulag, Lubigan, Maamot, Mababanaba, Moriones, Pao, San Juan De Valdez, Sula, and Villa Aglipay.

### RESEARCH INSTRUMENT

As a means of collecting information, the researcher employed two distinct tools and instruments: (1) interviews and (2) an observation guide, as part of his overall research strategy.

**Interview Guide.** In the research process, the researcher aimed to actively involve the participants by delving into their personal experiences within the resettlement sites in San Jose Tarlac. The researcher created and employed a series of interview questions to collect relevant data and information that will contribute to the study.

**Observation Guide.** The researcher also used an observation guide to help the researcher to systematically observe and record information about a specific phenomenon or situation of the displaced IPs among the resettlement sites in San Jose, Tarlac. It provided a structured framework for collecting data through direct observation.

### DATA GATHERING PROCEDURE

The first step in the data gathering procedure was the researcher delivered a consent and request letter to the authorized people to obtain the necessary documents needed in this study. Also, the researcher started with documentation analysis of resettlement documents such as the LARP document of NIA (Land Acquisition and Resettlement Plan), the MOA on the compensation package and benefits to be received by the displaced Indigenous Peoples. After the letters had been settled, the researcher began to conduct interviews among the participants.

On the other hand, after the researcher had successfully gathered data from the participants, the next crucial step in the research process involves conducting on-site observations of the resettlement sites in San Jose, Tarlac. This additional phase aimed to provide valuable support to the results and findings of the study.

By physically visiting the resettlement sites, the researcher gained firsthand insights into the living conditions, infrastructure, and overall environment experienced by the individuals who have been relocated. This observational approach adds a layer of depth and authenticity to the research, allowing for a more comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing the participants' experiences and perceptions.

### Data Analysis

The researcher collated, tallied, and arranged all of the data and information they had gathered into figures and tables so that they could properly communicate the results of their study. As an outcome of this, statistical approaches were used in order to conduct the assessment.

**F = Frequency.** In statistics, the frequency of a data value refers to the number of times that a predefined difficulty or revealing assessment has been successfully met by the participants (Britannica, 2023).

**N = Population.** Total number of participants (Bhandari, 2020).

**% = Percentage.** Calculated by taking the frequency, F, and dividing it by the entire population, N, then multiplying the result by 100 to get the percentage, % (Korb, 2013). The main solution would be  $F/N \times 100 = \%$

**R = Ranking.** It is used by the researcher in order to put the data points in descending or ascending order, depending on the context, and assigning an ordinal number to each data point (Study.com, 2022).

**Sentiment Analysis.** A technique known as natural language processing (NLP) is applied in order to distinguish between the positive, neutral, and negative responses provided by the participants.

### III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

#### 3.1. Number of Project-Affected Communities and Families

Table 3.1 Number of Project-Affected Communities and Families

Number of Project-Affected Communities and Families					
Barangay	Total Sitios	Category			Total
		1 <sup>st</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup>	
A. Maamot, San Jose, Tarlac	26	557	243	11	811
B. Sta. Juliana, Capas, Tarlac	3	119	40	0	159
<b>Total</b>	29	676	283	11	970

The families/households that have been impacted have been classified into three distinct categories, as indicated in the aforementioned table. The process of categorization was conducted subsequent to two consecutive assessments in order to generate the master list of families impacted by the situation. Individuals included in Category 1 are those who experience direct impacts as a result of the project. Individuals classified in Category 2 are genealogically linked to those individuals listed in Category 1, whereas individuals in Category 3 do not share any familial ties with those listed under Category and are solely comprised of individuals who have migrated to Barangay Maamot.

### 3.2 Sentiments Analysis Result

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<b>Response</b>	<b><i>f</i></b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Rank</b>
Positive	16	50	1
Negative	8	25	2
Neutral	8	25	2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>100</b>	

The presented information showcases the results derived from an examination of the responses levels of positivity, neutrality, or negativity. Based on the tabulated data pertaining to the analyzed responses, it is evident that among the thirty-two (32) participants, half of them, specifically sixteen (16) individuals or 50%, expressed positive responses. Conversely, a quarter of the participants, comprising eight (8) individuals or 25%, conveyed negative responses, while an equal proportion of eight (8) individuals or 25% provided neutral responses.

The table presents data indicating that a majority or sixteen (16) of Indigenous Peoples exhibited favorable or positive reactions in relation to their recent relocation or resettlement sites. According to their statements, the acquisition of this new location is anticipated to facilitate their personal and familial development, particularly in terms of their children's educational pursuits. According to their statements, individuals residing in both old and new sites face challenges in maintaining their livelihoods due to the need to support their families. However, the new sites offer improved conditions as they provide access to educational opportunities, healthcare facilities, and other beneficial resources.

The significance of both the old and new homes for the eight (8) participants who hold a neutral stance is noteworthy. Historical residences presented numerous avenues for generating income due to the inhabitants' proficiency in agricultural practices, fishing, and various skilled trades. Conversely, they express contentment with the prospect of their offspring gaining access to formal education and pursuing their aspirations in life.

Finally, the remaining eight participants expressed a negative sentiment towards the resettlement sites due to their perceived lack of employment prospects in these new locations. Due to their indigenous status and residence in their ancestral dwellings, these individuals enjoy a state of unrestricted autonomy, particularly in terms of sustenance and essential provisions. The new sites discourage individuals from pursuing and providing support for their family. Individuals are required to adhere to the established protocols set forth by the government. It has been observed that the responsibility for providing livelihood opportunities to individuals lies with the Government, as this issue pertains to them. The newly developed location provides enhanced accessibility, albeit at a cost in comparison to their previous residences.

### 3.3 Intervention Measures

Table 3.3 Intervention Measures

Problems	Measures	Objectives	Strategies	Expected Outcomes
Hard time looking for income earnings opportunities	Establish vocational training programs in order to improve the employability and skills they have.	Increase employment opportunities for the Indigenous Peoples	Collaborate with local educational institutions, TESDA and NGOs to provide these vocational training programs that they need.	Improved skills leading to increased job prospects and opportunities.
Lack of septic tank/water supply	Secure funding for the construction of septic tanks and installation of water supply systems and water pumps.	Ensure access to basic sanitation and clean water for the IPs	Collaborate with government agencies and experts to assess the infrastructure requirements.	Improved sanitation conditions and access to clean water
Promises for a land was still not granted to them.	Strengthen community of IPs in organizing and mobilization efforts to raise awareness and put pressure on authorities	Secure land and ownership	Engage legal experts and human rights organizations to advocate for their rights when it comes to land.	Improved land tenure security and ownership for them.
Limited access to natural resources	Develop community-based resource management plans and agreements	Ensure the equitable access and sustainable use of natural resources for the community.	Collaborate with environmental experts and government agencies to conduct the resource mapping in order to identify the availability of natural resources.	Improved understanding of available natural resources and their sustainable utilization.
Discrimination	Implement educational programs to promote inclusivity, diversity, and equality	Foster a culture of respect and equality	Integrate inclusive and diverse content into school and the resettlement sites.	Reduced the case of discrimination and increased acceptance of diversity.

Lack of programs for their livelihoods	Develop and implement community-based livelihood programs and foster partnerships with government agencies and NGOs to expand livelihood support.	Enhance the income-generating opportunities for the community.	Consult the community to identify their needs and preferences as well as provides training and support for their implementation of it.	Increased availability of livelihood programs and diversified income sources to support their needs in a day to day basis.
Lack of medical assistance and hospitals	Establish community health centers or mobile clinics to provide basic healthcare services for the people in the resettlement sites or the IPs.	Improve access to healthcare services	Collaborate with healthcare professionals and NGOs to establish and operate community health centers or mobile clinic.	Improved healthcare infrastructure and increased access to specialized medical services.
No action from LGU in preserving their culture	Engage in a dialogue and collaboration with local government officials and NIA to emphasize the importance of cultural preservation.	Promote and preserve the cultural heritage of the natives.	Organize meetings, workshops, and cultural events to raise awareness about the importance of cultural preservation and engage local government officials in dialogues.	Increased recognition and support from the local government in preserving culture of them.
High price of electricity	Advocate for affordable electricity rates and transparent pricing mechanisms.	Ensure access to affordable and reliable electricity	Form alliances with consumer advocacy groups and raise awareness about the impact of high electricity prices.	Improved affordability and transparency in electricity pricing.

One of the primary challenges faced by the displaced IPs pertains to the difficulty they encounter in seeking income-generating opportunities. The participants proposed the implementation of vocational training programs as a means to enhance their job potential and skill sets. The primary aim of this initiative is to enhance the employment prospects for indigenous peoples (IPs). However, in order to accomplish this objective, it is imperative for them to establish collaborative partnerships with local educational institutions, such as TESDA, as well as other non-governmental organizations (NGOs), in order to facilitate the provision of vocational training programs for the target population. The anticipated results of this initiative are the enhancement of the skills possessed by the IPs, thereby increasing their employment prospects and expanding their opportunities.

Another problem that needs to be addressed is the absence of a septic tank and a reliable water supply. The participants made an intervention aimed at securing funding for the construction of septic tanks, as well as the installation of water supply systems and pumps. By implementing this approach, it is highly probable that the (IPs) will effectively guarantee access to fundamental sanitation facilities and potable water resources.

Nevertheless, it is imperative for them to employ strategies that involve collaborating with government agencies and experts to thoroughly evaluate the infrastructure needs. Through the implementation of such measures, it is almost certain that individuals residing in impoverished areas will experience enhanced sanitation provisions and increased availability of potable water resources.

In conjunction with the challenges faced by the displaced IPs, it is noteworthy to mention the commitments made by the government regarding the provision of land to these individuals. One proposed approach to address this issue involves enhancing the cohesion and collective action of Indigenous Peoples' communities through organizing and mobilization initiatives. These efforts aim to increase awareness and exert influence on relevant authorities. Through this approach, individuals will be able to establish and safeguard their rights to land and acquire ownership. Nevertheless, it is imperative for individuals to actively involve legal professionals and human rights entities to assert their land rights. The anticipated results of this intervention are to enhance the land tenure security and ownership for the Indigenous Peoples (IPs).

Subsequently, there existed a restricted availability of natural resources. In addition to the researcher's interviews with the participants, they expressed that in their new resettlement sites, they encountered limited access to natural resources in comparison to their previous residences. To address the concerns and challenges faced by the IPs, the proposed approach involves the implementation of community-based resource management plans and agreements. The implementation of this measure will serve to guarantee fair and balanced availability and long-term utilization of natural resources among members of the community.

However, in order to accomplish this task, it is imperative for individuals to engage in collaboration with environmental experts and government agencies to facilitate the process of resource mapping. The anticipated results of this intervention are to enhance comprehension regarding the existing natural resources and their utilization in a sustainable manner.

Another issue that requires immediate attention is the problem of discrimination. It is inevitable that they have consistently exhibited this behavior. Both the participants and the government recommended the implementation of educational programs aimed at promoting inclusivity, diversity, and equality. This will cultivate an environment characterized by principles of respect and equality.

In order to achieve this objective, it is imperative for educational institutions to incorporate inclusive and diverse content within their curriculum, as well as within the resettlement sites. The desired outcome of implementing these measures is a reduction in instances of discrimination and an increase in the embrace of diversity.

Some of the difficulties faced by the indigenous peoples (IP) community residing in the resettlement sites in San Jose, Tarlac pertains to the absence of livelihood programs. The participants proposed the development and implementation of community-based livelihood programs, as well as the cultivation of partnerships with government agencies and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to enhance the scope of livelihood support they receive. This will facilitate the augmentation of income-generating prospects for the community. However, in order to accomplish this, it is vital for individuals to engage in consultation with relevant stakeholders or IPs to ascertain their specific requirements and preferences. In addition, it is absolutely necessary to provide extensive training as well as ongoing support in order to make the successful execution of these projects a reality. The purpose of these actions is to make it easier for indigenous peoples (IPs) to participate in programs that provide a means of subsistence and to expand the variety of revenue streams available to them so that they can fulfill their day-to-day needs.

Moreover, there was a dearth of medical assistance and healthcare facilities. One proposed intervention involves the establishment of community health centers or mobile clinics to deliver fundamental healthcare services to individuals residing in resettlement sites or indigenous peoples (IPs) communities. The enhancement of access to healthcare services is expected to be significantly improved.

Nevertheless, in order to accomplish this, it is imperative for them to engage in collaboration with healthcare professionals and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to establish and effectively manage community health centers or mobile clinics. The hoped-for outcome of this initiative is the enhancement of healthcare infrastructure and the expansion of accessibility to specialized medical services.

Furthermore, the participant expressed that the local government unit (LGU) did not take any measures to safeguard their cultural heritage. The suggested approach entails initiating a dialogue and fostering collaboration with local government officials and the National Irrigation Administration (NIA) to underscore the significance of cultural preservation. The implementation of this initiative will serve to both enhance and safeguard the cultural heritage of indigenous populations. In order to accomplish this objective, it is necessary to arrange and coordinate meetings, workshops, and cultural events with the purpose of enhancing awareness regarding the significance of cultural preservation. Moreover, it is imperative to actively involve local government officials in dialogues to foster engagement and collaboration. The anticipated results of this



initiative are heightened acknowledgment and assistance from the local government in the preservation of their cultural heritage.

Finally, the issue of exorbitant electricity costs should be considered. The stakeholders, including the participants, government officials, and the researcher, proposed advocating for the implementation of affordable electricity rates and the establishment of transparent pricing mechanisms. The primary objective is to guarantee equitable and dependable access to cost-effective electricity. In order to accomplish this objective, it is recommended that they establish strategic partnerships with consumer advocacy organizations and undertake initiatives to enhance public consciousness regarding the ramifications associated with elevated electricity costs. The expected outcomes of this initiative are enhanced affordability and transparency in the pricing of electricity.

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