

LOSS OF AGRICULTURAL LAND DUE TO LAND ACQUISITION FOR INFRASTRUCTURAL DEVELOPMENT

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ABSTRACT

This research paper examines the proportionate loss of agricultural land and the suffering of various categories of farms due to acquisition of land by the government in the name of infrastructural development. Infrastructural development may be a progressive path for economic development provided that the acquisition of agricultural land should not hamper the agricultural potentiality. The small farms have become marginalized and found to be the worst sufferer due to the land acquisition. Consequently, it has been affecting the rural agriculture by way of decrease in agricultural production succeeded by attracting more rural-urban migration, high density of urban population, industrial pollution, slum development, etc.

Key words: Land acquisition, agricultural sector and infrastructure.

JEL Classification: Q24, R52

INTRODUCTION

In the current liberalised and globalised economic situation, infrastructural development is steadily gaining more significance as compared to agricultural development even though, the agricultural sector is more eco-friendly and the mainstay of majority of people of the country. Now, government is involved in the acquisition of agricultural land in the name of infrastructural and economic development. The policy framed by the government for acquisition of agricultural land not only makes the farmers marginalised but also attracts them to migrate to urban areas. As a result the productivity of agricultural sector is getting badly affected and exert hazardous effect on the economy. Thus, the indistinguishable relationship between the infrastructural and economic development should be built in such a way that can create the way for sustainable development.

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The acquisition of land for various types of projects including building of roads has become a serious problem in Uttar Pradesh, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Haryana, Orissa and West Bengal. This problem has arisen due to the fact that lands are being acquired unsystematically without proper rehabilitation. According to a report, in the past there were protests by the farmers in as many as 40 districts spread over ten states where nearly four lakh acres of fertile and cultivable land was at stake (Mukherjee, 2011). However, infrastructural development is absolutely critical for the economic growth of India (Sharma, 2009). Accordingly, rapid expansion of infrastructure across the country is highly required. With this, industrialisation has to accelerate and as such urbanisation is inevitable requirement for all the purposes (Ramesh, 2011). For infrastructural development, acquisition of land is important. Before the acquisition of land, its form and the consequent rehabilitation of the land owner should clearly be spelled out. It should not be left for public discourse as has been happening for a number of years (Rajamani, 2011). Besides, urban agriculture is a required to trim down the poverty. So, the policy maker should frame successful policy to alleviate poverty by supporting the agricultural land in urban area instead of the establishment of industries (Mkwambisi *et al.*, 2011). Similarly, the decadence of urban agriculture due to the acquisition of land for the infrastructural and industrial development is a serious problem and considered a threat to economy and ecology (Mishra, 2012). Thus, in recent years, there has been much discussion and debate on land issues related to acquisition for purposes of industrial and infrastructural development.

Most of the studies have emphasized on the causes and effects of growth of the infrastructure, industrialisation and urbanisation without specifically analyzing much about the proportionate loss of agricultural land and thereby, a loss of agricultural production and productivity in the economy due to the acquisition of land. Thus, in the present study, an attempt has been made to examine and analyse the proportionate loss of agricultural land due to the acquisition of land. More specifically the objectives of the study were:

- i. to analyse the proportionate loss of agricultural land due to the acquisition of land in the name of infrastructural and economic development and
- ii. to examine significant difference in the proportionate loss of land per farm due to land acquisition across the areas (irrigated and non irrigated) and farm sizes.

METHODOLOGY

The present study was confined to Bargarh district of Orissa (India). This district is an agriculturally developed district and considered as the rice bowl of Western Orissa. The National Highway-6 (Mumbai to Calcutta) passes through this

district. Recently, the National Highway Authority of India (NHAI) is expanding the National Highway to four lanes and for that government has acquired the agricultural lands without considering its nature and loss of agricultural production.

This study was based on the primary source of data collected through a pre-designed schedule, the help of secondary source of data collected from the published/unpublished records of different departments of the government and other sources has been taken to cross check the primary data for 2011-12. The sample areas were selected by stratified random sampling method. The areas fall in the national highway from Sohela to Bargarh (25 kilometers) both from irrigated (double crop area) and non-irrigated (rain fed) areas. The selection of the sample farmers was made on the basis of Census Method. As such sample consisted of 200 farmers selected randomly who were the victims of land acquisition. The farmers were categorized into three strata such as Small (≤ 2 hectares), Medium (≥ 5.01 and ≤ 10 hectares) and Large (> 10 hectares) based on the operational holdings. To test the significant difference in the proportionate loss of land due to land acquisition across the areas and firm sizes, the 'F' value was computed by two-way ANOVA.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In the name of infrastructural development for the expansion of national highway in the study areas government has acquired the agricultural land without considering its nature, importance and fertility. Due to this, the area operated by the farmers earlier is gradually decreasing and consequently, creating more small and marginal farmers. The total area operated by the farmers before and after acquisition by the government is presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Area operated by the farmers before acquisition and area acquired by the government

Farm categories	Farms (%)	Total area operated before acquisition	Percentage of total area operated	Area		Percentage	
				Acquired	Remainder	Acquired	Remainder
Irrigated area (98)							
Small	69.39	82.56	45.95	32.38	50.18	39.22	60.78
Medium	26.53	79.32	44.14	12.14	67.18	15.31	84.69
Large	4.08	17.81	9.91	4.86	12.95	27.29	72.71
Total	100.00	179.69	100.00	49.37	130.32	27.48	72.52
Non irrigated area (102)							
Small	74.50	125.46	54.87	36.42	89.04	29.03	70.97
Medium	20.59	72.85	31.86	14.57	58.28	20.00	80.00
Large	4.91	30.35	13.27	4.05	26.3	13.34	86.66
Total	100	228.65	100.00	55.04	173.61	24.07	75.93
Overall area (200)							
Small	72.00	208.01	50.94	68.80	139.21	33.08	66.92
Medium	23.50	152.17	37.27	26.71	125.46	17.55	82.45
Large	4.50	48.16	11.79	8.90	39.26	18.48	81.52
Total	100	408.34	100.00	104.41	303.93	25.57	74.43

Source: Field Survey (2011-12)

Figures in parentheses are number of farmers.

It was observed that in irrigated area as the percentage of land operated in the case of small farms was found to be highest (45.95). It was followed by medium (44.14) and large farms (9.91) respectively. Like the irrigated area, the same trend was observed in the case of non-irrigated farms. The percentage of land operated in the case of small farms (54.87) was found to be highest which was followed by medium (31.86) and small farms (13.27) respectively. The results presented in Table 1 revealed that in irrigated area, the percentage of land acquired by the government for the expansion of national highway was found to be highest in the case of small farm (39.22) followed by medium (15.30) and large farms (27.27) respectively.

A similar trend was observed in the case of non-irrigated farms. The area acquired by the government was found to be highest in case of small farm (29.03%) followed by medium (20.00%) and large farms (13.34%) respectively. On the overall level the percentage of acquisition of land by the government was found to be highest in the case of small farm (33.08) followed by large (18.48) and medium farms (17.55) respectively. However, the proportionate loss of land per farm due to land acquisition was different across the areas as well as farm sizes. The perusal of Table 2 revealed that in irrigated area the proportionate loss of land per farm due to land acquisition was found to be highest in the case of small farm (0.39).

Table 2: Proportionate loss of land per farm due to land acquisition

Size of the farms	Proportionate loss per farm	
	Irrigated	Non irrigated
Small	0.39	0.29
Medium	0.15	0.20
Large	0.27	0.13
Total	0.27	0.24
F-value across the area		1.18 ^{NS}
F-value across farm sizes		3.12 ^{NS}

Source: Field Survey.

NS: Non-significant.

It was followed by large (0.27) and medium farms (0.15) respectively. However, the trend was quite different in the case of non-irrigated farms. It was found to be highest in the case of small non-irrigated farms (0.29), was followed by medium (0.20) and large farms (0.13) respectively. It was found that there was no significant difference in the proportionate loss of land per farm due to land acquisition across the areas. Similarly, there was no significant difference in the proportionate loss of land per farm due to land acquisition across the farm sizes. The difference in the proportionate loss of land per farm due to land acquisition across the areas and farm sizes are found statistically non-significant. It authenticates that there was proportionate loss of land per farm due to land acquisition irrespective of areas and size classes of farms in the present study.

CONCLUSIONS

It can be concluded that the proportionate loss of land per farm due to land acquisition by the government for the expansion of national highway in study areas in the case of small farms has higher proportion as compared to other farm sizes. The small farms have become marginalized and found to be afflicted severely. Moreover, it was affecting the rural agriculture due to higher rural-urban migration. This will result in decreased agricultural production succeeded by high density of urban population, industrial pollution, slum development and other natural and human hazards. In order to overcome this problem the farmers should be compensated on the basis of market value of land or allot the land to affected farmers along with adequate compensation for displacement. It is therefore suggested that before the acquisition of land for the expansion of national highways, the government should sensitize the farmers regarding the rehabilitation plan, valuation of land, compensation, employment of the displaced, preservation of environment, etc.

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