



## SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS CHANGE OF WOMEN DUE TO THE LAND ACQUISITION OF JINDAL STEEL WORKS, SALBONI.

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### ABSTRACT

Land acquisition of Jindal Steel works in Salboni is one of the largest land acquisitions by Private Party in West Bengal. In 2007 the JSW stated their land acquisition for constructing a Steel plant in Salboni. For this reason they acquired around 4300 acres of land. From the peasants' point of view, secure access to land provides a valuable safety as a source of shelter, food and income in times of hardship, and a family's land can be the last available support in the instance of disaster. In the rural areas, land ownership can be a vital source of capital, which transfers as a permanent wealth to the next generation. It is also important for their identity as peasant. This study primarily seeks to understand how a private company acquired one of the largest lands of West Bengal directly and how the acquisition changed women status in society.

**KEYWORDS :** Land acquisition, women status, Salboni, JSW

### LITERATURE REVIEW:

Women are particularly impacted by land acquisition as their livelihoods are affected and they are excluded from the proceeds of land transactions (Darkwah et al., 2017), large-scale land acquisitions aggravate the feminization of poverty (Porsani et al., 2018), Interrogating Large-Scale Land Acquisition and its Implications for Women's Land Rights (Fonjong, 2017), acquisition of agricultural land for industry leads to change among the women as well as children of land loser families who depended on agriculture for their livelihood (Majumder, A. 2014).

### OBJECTIVES:

The primary objectives of this study are to develop an understanding on the process and nature of the land acquisition and change of women status in terms of socio-economy for land acquisition of JSW, Salboni. As a consequence of the acquisition by the Jindal Company there were peasant resistant movements opposing the acquisition of agricultural land in Salboni, West Bengal. This study seeks to develop a participatory ethnographic research on the following issues:

- To identify the process of the land acquisition of Salboni by Jindal. In terms of relationship between structural change and transformations in patterns of social conflict.
- To assess the role of cultural representations in social conflict; that leads to change of the socio-economy of the affected women.
- To identify the lag between promises and the fulfilment of the promises of JSW. That is responsible for degrading their economic condition.
- To identify the changes of status of the women of affected people by the land acquisition of Jindal Steel Works, Salboni in terms of social and economically.

### METHODOLOGY:

To fulfill the above mentioned objectives this research undertakes ethnographic study in the places where protests marked the social movements for land acquisition of JSW, Salboni. The study has identified different layers/groups associated with the movements of the land acquisition (like national and international players, political parties, rights groups, peasant groups etc.) and translators who facilitated collaboration between people in various layers. The researcher has purposively selected participants from the various layers. In doing so this researcher has kept in mind that maximum representation of participants should be come from the lowest layer. Semi-structured interviews and observations were conducted on these participants. Secondary data from all the sources like the government offices, Jindal etc. studied for this research. This study is primarily qualitative in nature with standard qualitative data

analysis methods like content analysis.

### DISCUSSION:

Land acquisition of peasants leads to change status of the women as well as children of the land losers' family severely. Land acquisition responsible for food crisis, occupation change, place of occupation change, family bondage change, health hazards, income synchronize, unrest among society, increase school dropout rate among female members. This study has also showed that after the acquisition livelihood pattern have been changed among the female members of land loser families. Moreover the "age at marriage" has been decreased among the girls of land loser families. Sometimes they are undergone into trauma of insecurity as there were large amount of conflict in these areas among the Maoists, Harmards and villagers. The conflict was arisen from the day of laid the foundation stone of the company by chief minister Sri Buddhadev Bhattacharya. At the day bomb blast was held aiming at the car of Sri Buddhadev Bhattachaya. From then the Maoists increased their organisation here and the Harmards installed their camps aiming to resist Maoists. At the same time both the Maoists and the Harmards tried to include the villagers as their members of their organisations. For these reason the antisocial did torture on the villagers as well as on the women of the villages. Firstly the families of the women lost their land and then they also lost their jobs, and access of getting jobs at local areas, access of getting hunting gathering from the Salboni jungle, networking with the local nearby villages. The families of the women had gone under crisis of livelihood. They had to change their occupations; they had to go to cities for their jobs.

The Jindal and the West Bengal Government of the time started concentrating the total attention to initiate a steel factory at Salboni. But unfortunately such dream is still unrealized and everything is gone in vein. Steel plant was never to come. Mr. Sajjan Jindal, chief of the Jindal Company commented "No, the condition of coal is bad now. Iron ore is not available. The industrial plant acquired 4225 acres of land to set up a 10.0 mtpa (million ton per annum) integrated steel plant in the year of 2012. So the project of the factory is to be postponed. As a consequence, the project affected House Holds was in severe condition in terms of their livelihood, income and accessibility of local resources. Immediately after that villagers' agitation was started in 2014; as out of the 4225 acres of land 294 was private land (Rayoti). The local people, (Committee for saving land, "Bhumi Raksha Committee") said to Jindal, - "Start industry, or give our land back." In 2014, the existing JSW employee and local villagers, including land loser families started movement with placard, demanded immediate initiatives to start the proposed project work. The

West Bengal State Government took initiatives to mediate the situation and tried to solve the problem. After long discussion in 2015, the JSW announced for a cement producing unit my investment of INR 615 crores. The plant authority had capacity to employ only 200 people only. Regarding the matter the Government of West Bengal spent lot of time. But unfortunately the local peasants were not brought into the discussion regarding the rate of the lands neither with the Government nor with the Jindal authority. So the rate was fixed primarily by the West Bengal Government and the Jindal.

According to villagers the Jindal promised to the land losers and the villagers before the acquisition that they would provide the following facility for them-

- a. They would give 50% share of total cost of the land of the land owner in Jindal steel company.
- b. They would construct the roads in between the villages.
- c. They would provide permanent job to the land losers in the company
- d. They would construct multi speciality hospital in this area.
- e. They would provide domestic animal
- f. They would help to construct houses of the villagers.
- g. They would provide electricity facility
- h. They would make play ground for the villagers
- I. They would provide drinking water to the villagers.
- j. They would train to the local youth and would give job them in this company.

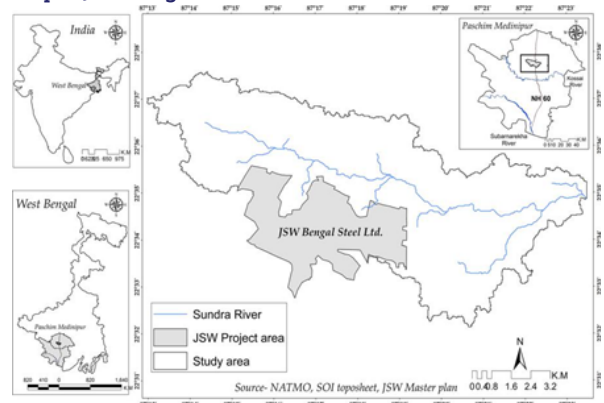
After 7 years of land acquisition the steel project had postponed. In spite of the promises the Jindal Company had given only 3 play grounds, provides some medicines from their small hospitals, Constructed 1 tube well in these villages, provides some medical camps in these villages, trained to some youth for football player. Gaps between their promises and keeping their promises had made frustrated to the villagers.

As a result of the land acquisition of Jindal in Salboni so many labours had lost their job, around 700 families lost their lands. Around 14 villages depended on the land directly or indirectly. The people of the villages used to get Rs. 2000/- to 3000/- per month as a beneficiary of the forest, collect food from the forest in free of cost, collect honey from the forest for selling or for consuming, collect wood in free of cost for selling and the fuel, manage to get job in the land mainly as a agricultural labour, used the land as a grazing land, collect wood in free of cost for construction of their own houses, hunt many animals for consuming or for selling, farmers produce agricultural goods for daily needs and for selling. Primary occupations of villagers were daily labour and agriculture in the land and gathering wood from the jungle of the land and rearing of animals.

After acquisition of the land the labours lost their job, farmers lost their lands; changed their occupation, villagers lost the source of income from beneficiary of the jungle, lost the source of income from gathering of wood, lost the source of huge income from animal husbandry as they were grazing their animals in the land. Road connection among the villages for obtaining job easily was stopped for surrounding the lands by concrete wall. Most of the villagers used to domesticate 20-30 cows or buffalos or goats for selling the animals and they used to graze them in the land before the land acquisition, but now they domesticate 2 to 3 only.

After losing the job of the labours from the land the labours went out of the villages for searching the job. They went to various cities and other remote villages where job of agriculture or other job is available. Some of the labours went to other state of India in search of job. But as most of the labours were illiterate or less educated, they could not found any permanent job or job of moderate salary. The land owners became daily labours.

### Map of JSW Bengal Steel Plant



In this time the labours or the land losers who lost the lands or job had strived to sustain their family. As the large amount of land was acquired by the Jindal, price of the nearest land was increased. So, the land losers could not buy the nearest agricultural land for agriculture. New arena for the joblessness people was not created.

Level of income of most of the villagers was decreased. The families could not support to their girl children by physically or economically properly as most of the parents used to spare their time outside their village in search of jobs. The insufficient income of the families could not provide money for education as well as proper food of their girls. A portion of the school going girls had stopped their education for shortage of family income. Private tuitions were stopped for long time as the guardians could not provide money and safety. Local girls could not go outside of their locality for education, as the conflict between the Maoists and Harmards were going on in this area after acquisition the land. Securities of the girl children were decreased. Sports and outdoor games of the local children were stopped. Occupations of the women at outside the villages were stopped as they may be victimized by the antisocial during the conflict.

On the other hand due to food insecurity and shortage of income, job insecurity of the villagers, health status of the girl children had been deteriorated. After acquisition the land as land owners had lost their land, labours have lost their jobs, local source of food has been decreased, and communication system among the villages had been disturbed, so food insecurity of the villagers is inevitable. Quality of food of the villagers had been deteriorated. They used to eat only rice and vegetables collected from local field or pulses. Girls could not get proper nutrition. Owing to insufficient income of the parents of the children they could not get medicine properly. As the most of the parents of the children spent their time in search of income money, they did not give time to their children. Children were reared without their parents in most of the time. Their aged guardians or neighbours used to rear them. As a result they were not taken care properly. In some cases mother used to take their child at their work place with their guardian. Mother used to watch the child and feed them there. Before the acquisition the women used to collect Sal Pata from that forest and used to sell in the market. They used to manage their jobs at the lands that were acquired by the Jindal. They also used to gather wood for their fuel as well as their source of income. They used to do as agricultural labours at the lands that were acquired by the Jindal. Those were safe, easily manageable, low time consumable, less hazardous, and easy to get jobs. But after the acquisition the women of the land losers' family had lost all the opportunity and way of livelihood as well as their social status.

### CONCLUSION:

Land acquisition and involuntary resettlement –rehabilitation pushes the affected people to vulnerable, farmers become

marginalized. Children and women were the most affected persons due to any land acquisition. Safety, economic condition, education, health were deteriorated in a result of the land acquisition. Women were one of the most vulnerable as they lost their previous socio economic status, they were victimized physically by the antisocial people, they had been marginalized. So, in land acquisition process there should be proper plan and rehabilitation and resettlement process should be maintained carefully.

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