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## **Development-Induced Displacement: A Gender Perspective**

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Development induced displacement is a contesting issue throughout the world. Deprivation of common people in the name of national development is not a new thing but on the other hand to ensure national growth development is extremely necessary. All the development issues have been initiated for the sake of the growth of the entire nation but in reality it only ensures the growth of a particular portion of the whole population by depriving another part of population from their natural environment.

In this paper, we have undertaken an anthropological field based study among a group of peasant families in the village under Kharagpur- I Block in Paschim Medinipur district of West Bengal, on a comparative study among the women as well as children of the landloser and non- landloser families which have been taking place after the acquisition of agricultural land for the establishment of a heavy industry.

The findings revealed that acquisition of agricultural land for industry leads to change among the women as well as children of landloser families who depended on agriculture for their livelihood. Field data showed that the school dropout rate among female members of landloser families have been increased than non-landloser families. This study is also showed that after the acquisition, livelihood pattern have been changed among the female members of landloser families. And the “age at marriage” have been decreased among the girls of landloser families than non- landloser families.

### **Introduction**

Development induced displacement is a contesting issue throughout the world. Deprivation of common people in the name of national development is not a new thing but on the other hand to ensure national growth development is extremely necessary. All the development issues have been initiated for the sake of the growth of the entire nation but in reality it only ensures the growth of a particular portion of the whole population by depriving another part of population from their natural environment. Every year more than 15 million of people are displaced due to initiation and completion of several developmental projects globally (Mathur 2006). In India, 50 million people were displaced during the last fifty years after independence (Roy 1999).

This man made forced displacement led the population into several impoverishment risks. They became impoverished socially, psychologically, and economically. They feel powerless when they are uprooted from their natural habitat and accept the fact as fate. A small minority mostly from the upper class may improve themselves economically but most of the poor, Dalits, and Tribals lose out with the intervention of development projects creating ‘haves and have nots’ (Mahapatra 1999). Tribal population in India constitutes 8.6 per cent of the total population where it constitutes 40 per cent of the DPs or PAPs (Fernandes 2008). Women also suffer a lot. The deprived population gets

marginalized in terms of social and psychological status in addition to economic marginalization. This deprivation also prevents them to be aware of their personal as well as community strength (Cernea 1997).

In this paper, we have undertaken a field based anthropological study among a group of peasant families in a village under Kharagpur- I Block in Paschim Medinipur district, West Bengal, regarding the effects of acquisition among the women of landloser families.

### **Area and the people**

The villages of the study area come under the administrative jurisdiction of Kharagpur-I block of present Paschim Medinipur district. The Kharagpur-I block is situated in the western part of the district and is bounded in the north by the *Kasai* river. On the west and the south of the block lie the Jhargram sub-division while the Kharagpur township is located in the east. Although the two major townships of the district are situated almost in the vicinity of this block it is chiefly an agricultural area with few patches of *sal* forest. The area is characterized by vast open cultivable lands interspersed with village settlements connected by unmetalled roads.

According to a survey conducted by Block Development office in 1997- 98 the block has an area of 201 sq. km. or 27,979.21 hectares within which 18,500 hectares are under cultivation (66.12 per cent). The same survey has also found that out of the total cultivated area at about 6,905 hectares are under more than one crop which turns out to be 37.32 per cent of the cultivated land of the block. The total population of the block is 1,21,685 of which the males outnumber the females (male 62,314 and female 59,364), and there are 22,666 scheduled castes (18.62 per cent) and 29,974 (24.63 per cent) belong to the scheduled tribes. Among the scheduled castes the females (11,683) outnumber the males (10,983) while within the scheduled tribe population the sex ratio is in favour of the males (15,528 males and 14,448 females). The population density of the block turns out to be a little more than 605 persons per sq. km. while the average household size is slightly above 5 persons. The district statistical handbook, which is based on 1991 census data, however differs from the survey conducted by the Kharagpur-I Block Development Office. According to 1991 census figures the total population of the block had been recorded as 1, 21,659 while the area of the block was 281.94 sq. km. and this gave a population density of 432 persons per sq. km. with 268 mouzas of which 225 were inhabited (District Statistical Handbook, Medinipur 1998).

### **Methodology**

The study mainly depends on direct intensive observation, interviews and collection of case studies from the villagers affected by land acquisition. The economical surveys were conducted among the households of the Gokulpur village with the help of structured and open ended questionnaire schedules. The qualitative information regarding the feeling and attitude of the persons were collected through repeated conversations with those persons over long period of time.

### **Dependence of the villagers on agriculture**

The name of the village which has been studied specifically is Gokulpur and it is a multiethnic farming village. The village is situated at about 7 kms from the Medinipur town which was the District Headquarters of erstwhile Medinipur. This village is located very near to the river *Kasai* on the east and in the west lie the south- eastern railway track which runs between Medinipur and Kharagpur railway station.

On the east of Gokulpur, lie the village Borkola. At the south side of this village, there are Chunpara and Nimpura. In the west and north lie the villages Amba and Ajobpur respectively. Except Chunpara all the other villages that surround Gokulpur are agricultural villages in which most of the inhabitants depend on agriculture and agricultural related economic pursuits. In Gokulpur too, the majority of the villagers are depended on the cultivation of paddy and various kinds of vegetables.

There are mainly two types of land in Gokulpur. They are termed as ‘Jal Jami’ and ‘Kala Jami’ in local parlance. The villagers call those lands as ‘Jal Jami’ which are low lying and hold water during the rainy season while the ‘kala Jami’ is located near the housesites and at higher elevations than the ‘Jal Jami’. In the rainy season, people cultivate mainly paddy in the ‘Jal Jami’. On the other hand, ‘Kala Jami’ is used for vegetable cultivation, in the winter season. In Gokulpur 48.26 per cent land belongs to the category ‘jal’ out of the total amount of land under cultivation. This has been calculated from the data collected by our household census survey.

**Table 1 Land Type in Gokulpur**

Land Type		Total
Kala Jami (in acres)	Jal Jami (in acres)	
61.89 (51.74)	57.73 (48.26)	119.62

*Figures in parentheses represent percentage out of column total*

We would now describe the land holding pattern of the households of Gokulpur in the following table. This table has been constructed on the basis of the two types of land (‘Jal’ and ‘Kala’) owned by the villages.

**Table 2 Land Holding Pattern of the Village Before Acquisition**

Size category of landholding in acres	Number of household	Mean household size
Landless	98 (25.26)	4.50
≤ 0.5	59 (15.21)	4.38
0.5 – 1.5	87 (22.42)	4.85
1.5 – 2.5	61 (15.72)	4.15
2.5 – 3.5	27 (06.96)	4.55
3.5 – 4.5	28 (07.22)	7.28
4.5 – 5.0	10 (02.58)	9.90
5.0 +	18 (04.64)	6.67
<b>Total</b>	<b>388</b>	<b>4.95</b>

*Figures in parentheses represent percentage out of column total.*

This table reveals the nature of landholding pattern of the Gokulpur village before the acquisition of land for the Tata Metaliks Company. Land is one of the most vital life support resource for the peasant families of this area. But that does not mean that all the families of this village owned agricultural land before the acquisition. There was about 25 percent families in the village who

were landless even during the pre-acquisition period. The rest 75 per cent families owned some amount of agricultural land. The landholding pattern of these landowning families, however shows that there were fewer families (about 20 per cent) who owned 2.5 to 5.0 acres or more land. Majority of the families in this village (about 53.35 per cent) owned 0.5 to 2.5 acres of land. The highest percentage of families in a single category of land holding belongs to the cohort 0.5 to 1.5 acres of land, which is 22.42 per cent of the total number of families.

We should also look into the family size vis- a- vis the land ownership pattern in the village in order to understand the nature of dependency on land. The mean household sizes of families and their corresponding landholding categories clearly reveals a pattern. It shows that families from the landless level upto the level owning 3.50 acres of land supported 4.50 persons on an average which is also very close to the average household size of the total village. But the average household size rises to more than 7 persons as soon as the level of landholding crosses 3.50 acres and the former rises to 9 persons with a landholding of 4.5 to 5.0 acres. This relationship between household size and landholding pattern implies that it is agricultural land which held a higher number of persons in a family. The earlier study based on field surveys done in Gokulpur during 1996 (after land acquisition) also revealed the preponderance of landless and land poor families. There were 34 percent landless families and about 49.40 percent families under the landholding category ( $\leq 0.5- 1.5$  acres) out of the 329 families (Guha 2007). Comparing the two surveys it can be said that although there is no radical shift in the landholding pattern in the village over the 12 years but some improvement has occurred in terms of landownership of families in this village. For example, in 1996, there were 14 families owning 2.5 to 3.5 acres of land while according to 2007 survey, 27 families (out of present 388 families) were found to belong to this landholding category. On the higher side, the situation is more revealing. There were only seven families owning 3.5 to 7.5 acres of land in 1996 where as in 2007 as high as 56 families belonged to the above landholding category. Does this mean that during 1996- 2007 some land has been distributed to the villagers of Gokulpur through land reform? The household census and economic surveys conducted during 2007 in the village did not yield any case of land distribution by the Land Reforms Department of the Government. Our field interviews revealed that many families of Gokulpur purchased agricultural land and some have received land as dowry which is a very common practice among the peasant families in this area. It seems that we have to investigate in more detail regarding the improvement in landowning scenario in Gokulpur which of course is not related directly to acquisition of land for the industry. But the improvement in the landownership pattern proves another point. The point is although the peasant families in Gokulpur are living under a constant threat of land acquisition, since many industries have come up in this area, but they are still trying to stick to their agricultural occupation through landownership.

### **Land acquisition for Tata Metaliks**

Tata Metaliks is a heavy industry, which was established within the jurisdiction of the Kalaikunda Gram panchayat during 1992. This is a pig- iron manufacturing plant which was found to produce about 290 tonnes of pig- iron per day in 1995- 96. After the establishment of Tata Metaliks, the company has built up a metal road on the western side connecting the plant with the national high way 6 in a place named Sahachawk. The south- eastern railway station line runs on the eastern side of the industry. The Kharagpur railway station is only about 5 kilometers and the Medinipur district headquarters is 7 kilometers from this place. In this

connection we can recall that in his answer to a question on 1.6.1992 in the West Bengal Legislative Assembly the land and Land Reforms Minister mentioned that 217.23 acres land was acquired for the Tata Metaliks (Guha 2007 P. 85).

The land acquired for the pig- iron industry belonged to “jal some” class according to the age-old system of classification made by the Land and Land Reforms Department. The possessions on these lands were given to the company on different dates in the month of August 1991 and declaration notifications were published from November 1991 to January 1992. The Land Acquisition Department approved a rate of Rs. 20,686 per acre. The cases of Land acquisition for Tata Metaliks have shown that the Government of West Bengal desired a quick acquisition of land for the company and that is why Act-II was employed for the said purpose (Ibid p.87).

In the following table we have shown the agricultural landholding scenario of the Landloser families in the village pre and post the acquisition.

**Table 3 Pr-acquisition and Post-acquisition Agricultural Landholding Scenario of the Landloser Families in the Village**

Size category of landholdings in acres	Before land acquisition	Mean household size	After land acquisition	Mean household size
Land less	-	-	5 (5.05)	3.60
≤ 0.5	10 (10.10)	1.90	28 (28.28)	4.21
0.5 – 1.5	38 (38.38)	3.97	39 (39.39)	6.21
1.5 – 2.5	23 (23.23)	6.80	19 (19.19)	5.16
2.5 – 3.5	17 (17.17)	7.80	03 (03.03)	9.66
3.5 – 4.5	04 (4.04)	8.20	03 (03.03)	9.33
4.5 – 5.0	-	-	1 (01.01)	14.00
5.0 +	07 (7.07)	9.40	1 (01.01)	11.00
<b>Total</b>	99	5.63	99	5.63

Figures in parentheses represent percentage out of column total.

This table shows pre acquisition and post acquisition agricultural land holding scenario of the landloser families in Gokulpur. After land acquisition 5 families among the total number of 99 families became landless which constitutes 5.05 percent of the total landloser families. The families having less than 0.5 acres of land dramatically increased from 10 (10.10%) to 28 (28.28%) after land acquisition. It was noticed that even after land acquisition the number of families having 0.5- 1.5 acres of land increased from 38 (38.38%) to 39 (39.39%). But, the families having 1.5-2.5 acres of land decreased from 23 (23.23%) to 19 (19.19%). Similarly a good decline was noticed in the number of families having 2.5 acres to more than 5.0 acres of land the number of families decreased from 28 (28.28%) to 8 (8.08%) after acquisition. On the other hand, the number of households within the size category 2.5- 5.0+ acres has declined from 6.53 to 4 only.

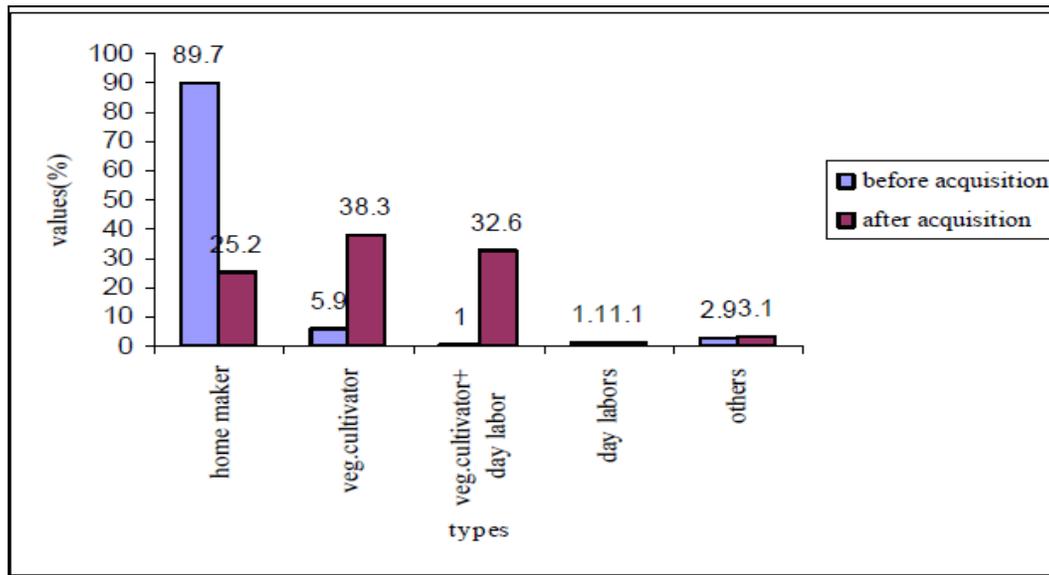
### Impacts of land acquisition on women:

In every agricultural as well as in rural society the women possess a safe and secure place within the household premises. But a sudden drastic fall in the economic level can force them towards the outer world in search for betterment. This betterment further enhances their social status within the intra family; inter family as well as in social level.

### Changing occupational pattern of women:

Sudden loss of agricultural land due to acquisition leads to economic impoverishment of the land cent loser sample population that further motivates the women to step outside in search for a financial resource.

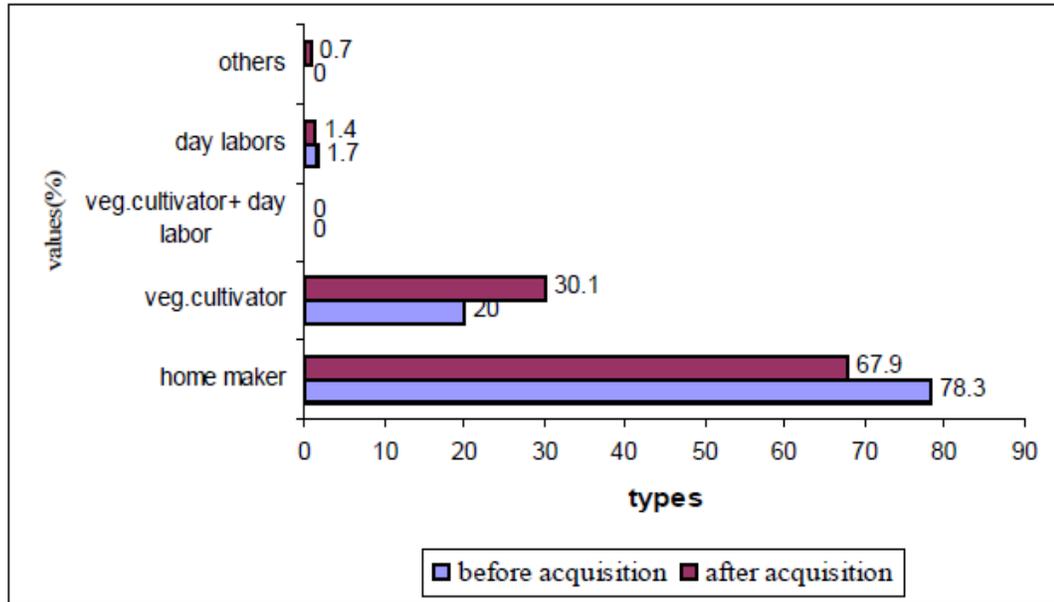
**Fig: 1 Changing occupational pattern of land loser female population after acquisition:**



Before the acquisition of land the minimum number of women was engaged with earning their livelihoods. Almost 90 per cent of the total female population was homemakers. But after the period of acquisition it dropped down to 25 per cent per cent this sudden drop down further accumulates in the vegetable cultivator per cent day labour (Fig. 1) which symbolizes that women were forced to step out of their house in search of a livelihood which help them to contribute in the family level. As a fresher they preferred to work as a vegetable seller and cultivator as well as an agricultural day labor in neighboring areas.

This economic enhancement after acquisitions not only help this people to contribute and strengthen their family income but it also provide a good platform for decision making.

**Fig. 2 Changing occupational pattern of land owner female population after acquisition:**

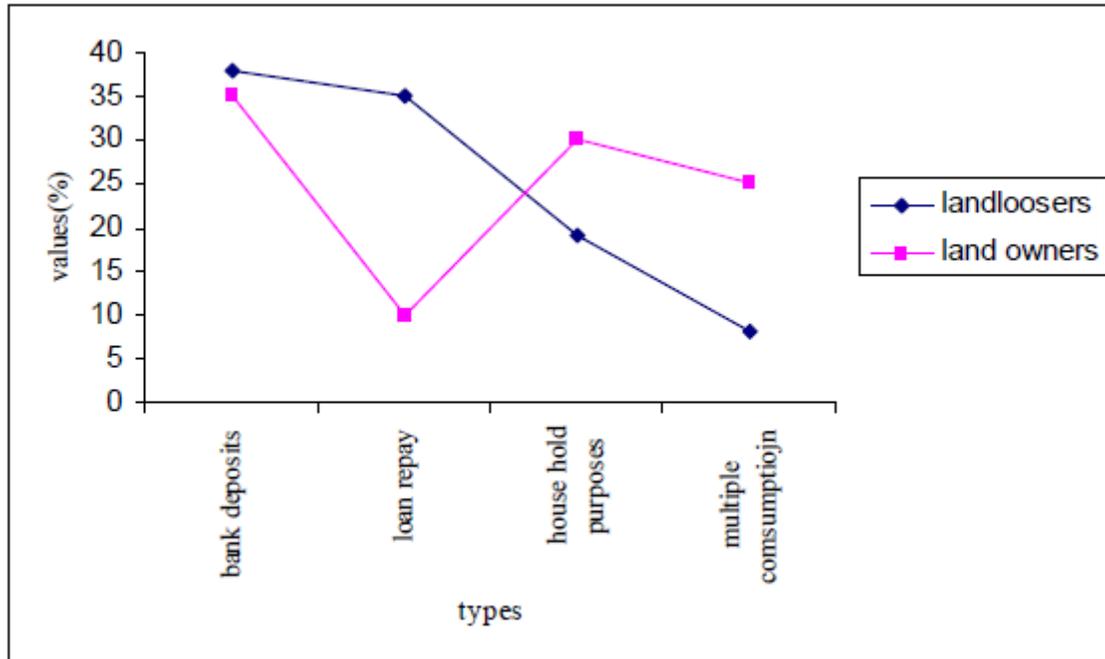


As economic necessity was not related with the population who did not lost any of their land , thus forceful occupational change is completely absent among them. Before acquisition almost 80 per cent of the populations were homemakers among who near about 10 per cent transferred themselves into vegetable cultivators. The affected female community was the main reason for this changing occupational pattern. Women who changed their occupation were willingly eager to enjoy a financial freedom like the affected women. Thus no drastic change can be seen throughout. Two interesting fact can be seen in this aspect. They did not maintain two parallel jobs in the same time and also did not prefer much to work as a day labor in both before or after acquisition period that also prove that they were neither in ‘urgency’ nor in ‘necessity’.

**Utilization of money earned by the women:**

The main aim behind earning money in necessity is generally related with survival, while in other cases it is mostly related with the freedom. The degree of necessity and the utilization of earned money is completely depended on the current financial status of the earning person.

**Fig. 3 Utilization pattern of cash income by women:**



The women utilized their income in several ways. Majority of the landloser women population as well as the land-owner women population share the common intensity to deposit it or a part of it in the bank for future purpose. Again land losers also paid much attention to repay their loan (37.63 per cent). But majority of the land owners liked to consume it on household purposes beside the bank deposition. Multiple mode of consumption is also common which also includes the expenditure on educational purposes. Here the land owners secure a better position than the losers, as it is very obvious that people who want to earn because just to enjoy financial freedom, would spend more on consumption than the people who work for their survival.

#### **Changing pattern of ‘out of school’ after acquisition:**

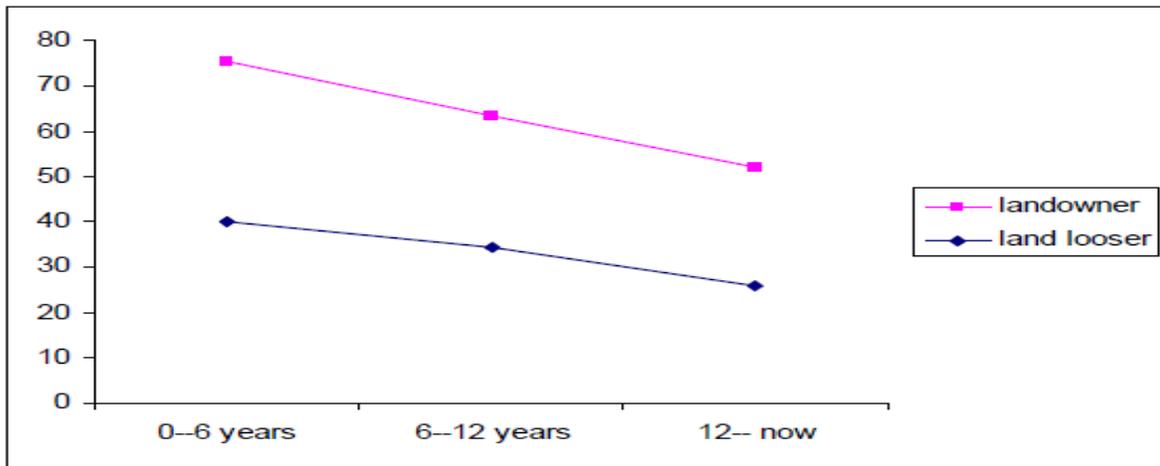
In the rural areas there is a general tendency of being dropped out as the people possess minimum knowledge about importance of education. In addition the misbalanced economic life can worsen the whole situation and accelerate the dropouts. As the objective of the study was not only to measure the dropout rate but the objective was to measure it over the periods of two decades thus a back calculation has been done to trace out the trend of dropouts.

To measure the drop out trend 6-16 years age range is generally used. But as per requirement of the study objective a back calculation has been done to ensure accurate results. Thus in this case the age range is 6-38 years. For example if a boy was 21 years old during the period of acquisition and lost his study due to financial influence then he should be considered as a drop out. At present his age would be 37 years. But in this study still he is considered as a drop out and chosen as a sample to the whole drop out population in order to find out the whole scenario over the period of time.

#### **Comparison of ‘out of school’ status:**

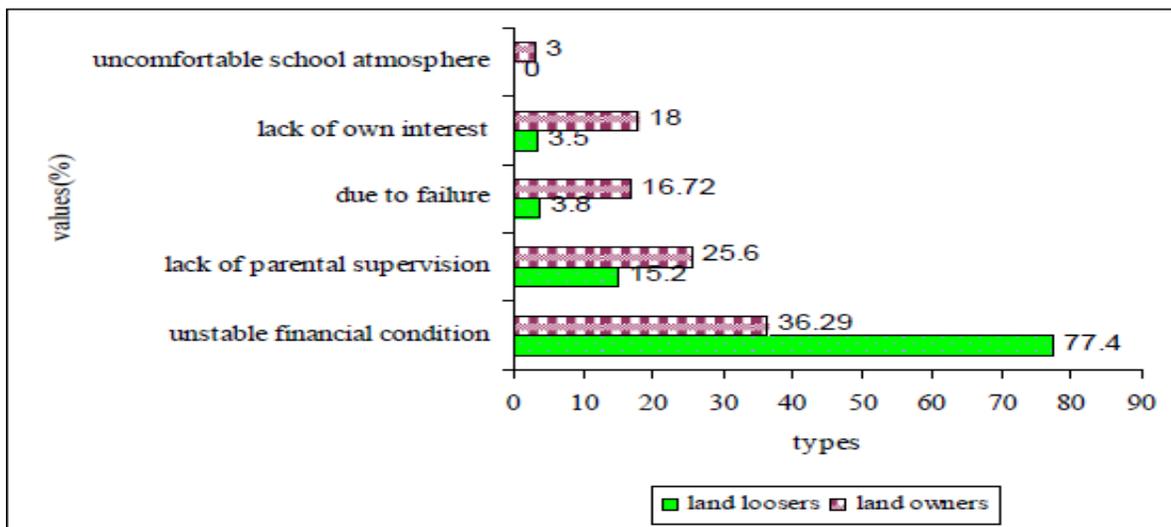
A comparative account on the drop out scenario over the period of these two decades has been given Fig. 4. Among them the land loser community possesses more drop out in comparison with the land owner. A sudden drop down at the educational rate after acquisition has been observed, which further decreased during the second and is increased in the final stage. So it can be said that the drop out among the loser community decreased over the period of time. Here first, second and final stage is an approximate time measurement where maximum changes have been found that point has been marked as a stage.

**Fig. 4 Comparison of ‘out of School’ status:**



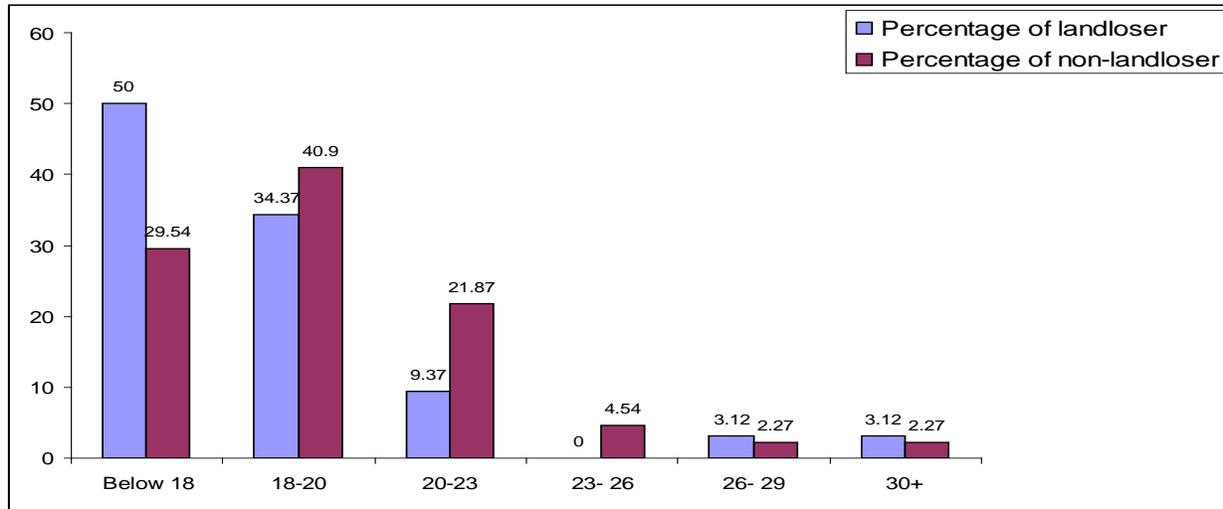
The neighboring community possesses almost a straight line (Fig.4) throughout the period of time that ensures that dropout rate was almost following the common root as it follows in any rural areas after acquisition to present date.

**Fig. 5 Peoples’ perception about drop out:**



Various reasons worked as a stimulator in case of drop out of male. In case of land losers community the maximum dropouts occurred due to the unstable financial condition that was caused by the acquisition of land where in case of the neighboring community most of the drop out occurred due to the lack of parental guidance or motivation. The least drop down occurred among the loser community due to the unfavorable school atmosphere where in case of the neighboring community the same reason is valid for the least dropouts.

**Fig. 6 Percentage of “Age at marriage” among the landloser and Non-landloser female members of study area**



This figure (no. 6) attempt to show the “Age at Marriage” among the female members of both landloser and non-landloser of our study area. This figure shows that the maximum percentage (50 percent) of marriage have been occurred among below 18 years age of landloser families. On the other hand the maximum percentage of marriage have been occur between 18 to 20 years among the non-landloser families.

### Concluding Remarks

The major finding of the paper shows that land acquisition in a rural area does not only lead to landlessness but also like the male members, children as well as female members of the landloser families also have been effected in the different aspects. Beside this, our data showed that the school dropout rate among female members of landloser families have been increased than non-landloser families. This study is also showed that after the acquisition, livelihood pattern have been changed among the female members of landloser families. And the “age at marriage” have been decreased among the girls of landloser families than non- landloser families.

### Acknowledgements

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