

Land Transfer for New Township and Its Impact from Dwellers' Point of View: A Case Study of New Town Kolkata

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Abstract : New Towns are usually built up at city-periphery with an eye to accommodate overspill population and functions of the city. 'New towns are self-sufficient planned towns having a full range of urban economic and social activities, so it can provide employments for all of its inhabitants as well as a balanced self-content social community could be maintained'. In 3rd world countries New towns often emerge from scratch i.e on the area having no urban background and therefore, it needs a massive land conversion from rural to urban. This paper aims to study the implication of such land title transfer into rural sustainability with a case study at Jatragachi, New Town Kolkata. Broad objectives of this study are to understand 1. new changes in this area like i) changes in land use, ii) demographic changes, iii) occupational changes of the local people and 2. their view about new town planning. Major observations are stated below. The studied area was completely rural till recent years and is now at the heart of New Town Kolkata. Though this area is now under the jurisdiction of New Town Kolkata Development Authority (NKDA), it is still administrated by rural self-government. It creates administrative confusion and misuse of public capital. It is observed in this study that cultivation was the mainstay of livelihood for the majority of residents till recent past. There was a dramatic rise in irrigated area in the decade of 90's pointing out agricultural prosperity. The area achieved the highest productivity of rice in the District. Percentage of marginal workers dropped significantly. In addition to it, ascending women's literacy rate as found in this rural Mouza obviously indicates a constant social progress. Through land conversion, this flourishing agricultural land has been transformed into urban area with highly sophisticated uses. Such development may satisfy educated urban elite but the dwellers of the area suffer a lot. They bear the cost of new town planning through loss of their assured food and income as well as their place identity. The number of marginal workers increases abruptly. The growth of female literacy drops down. The area loses its functional linkages with its surroundings and fails to prove its actual growth potentiality. The physical linkages (like past roads and irrigation infrastructure) which had developed through time to support the economy become defunct. The ecological services which were provided by the agricultural field are denied. The historicity of this original site is demolished. Losses of the inhabitants of the area who have been evicted are also immense and cannot be materially compensated. Therefore, the ethos of such new town planning in stake of rural sustainability is under question. Need for an integrated approach for rural and urban development planning is felt in this study.

Keywords : new town, sustainable development, growth potentiality, land transfer

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