

**Impact of road widening in the socio economic conditions of people residing along the National highway number-44 (from Nagrota to Jajarkotli) in the state of Jammu & Kashmir: A case study**

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**Abstract**

*Infrastructural development, particularly faster movement and transportation of goods in a country like India, is a guiding factor for economic development. Infrastructure development projects can have both negative and positive impacts on the local residents. Though in due course of time this brings benefits to society but sometimes it is disruptive to people whose land is acquired. The present study is an attempt to reach to the sufferers in order to gain an understanding on the impact of road widening in the socio economic conditions of people residing along the National Highway number - 44 (from Nagrota to Jajarkotli) in the state of Jammu & Kashmir. It has been found from the study that the land availability of the affected family has been decreased due to the implementation of the project. It is discernible from the study that there is a change in income at pre and post project stage of the affected families. Besides, the study revealed that some of the people lost the source of their livelihood and in some cases, earning became very less due to which they were unable to maintain their previous standard. In addition to this there is lot of gaps in policy and financial support provided as well as implementation of resettlement issues. The study also revealed that ample training and guidance to the affected families with regards to the changing socio-economic scenario is required from government side.*

**Keywords:** Economic development, Infrastructure, Impact, Roads widening.

**Introduction**

Sustainable development desires governments to deliver community amenities and infrastructure that guarantee safety and security, health and welfare, social and economic enhancement, protection and restoration of the natural environment. Road and Highway sector plays a significant role for emerging economies like India due to existing infrastructure gap and enhanced transportation requirements for improving the quality of life of people (Gupta et al., 2016). Road network is one of the key components and it stimulates overall development of the country by providing access to economic and social infrastructure and facilities (Babu et al., 2015). Infrastructural development, particularly faster movement and transportation of goods in a country like India, is a guiding factor for economic

development. Proper transportation of goods requires wide-ranging transport systems and increasing road traffic requires better riding feature of roads and uninterrupted movement. Hence it becomes necessary to develop new roads (Banzal et al., 2013). Acquisition of appropriate land and other assets is the early step in the process of providing such facilities and infrastructure. In order to obtain land for specific purposes, governments have the power of compulsory acquisition of land. Compulsory acquisition of land for development purposes brings benefits to the increasing needs of the growing populations (FAO, 2008). However, it can adversely affect the socioeconomic well-being of the people whose assets are acquired, as well as the communities they live in. Impacts of compulsory acquisition of land include physical relocation, disruption of livelihoods, potential breakdown of communities, social disarticulation among people and the psychological trauma of moving into an alien environment. Present study is an attempt to reach to the sufferers in order to gain an understanding on the impact of road widening in the socio economic conditions of people residing along the National Highway number - 44 (from Nagrota to Jajarkotli) in the state of Jammu & Kashmir with following Objectives:

1. To access the impact of road construction on land availability of the Affected Families.
2. To access the impact of road construction on annual income slabs of the Affected Families.
3. To access the impact of road construction on sifting pattern of income source of the Affected Families.



Figure – 1: Location Map

### Methodology

The study is based mainly on the primary data collected from project affected families with the help of a well drafted pre tested structured questionnaire. The universe of the study included all those families who were affected through road widening. The details are given below:

Total no. of families	1206
Agricultural land	799
Residential	225
Shops	182

Source: Final Feasibility report for Jammu to Udhampur widening project National Highway Authority of India

About 100 respondents were selected randomly from the list of affected families obtained from the final Feasibility report of national highway authority of India, Channi Himmat Jammu. Key informant interviews and focus group discussions were also undertaken with affected persons including women and vulnerable groups, shopkeepers, and local leaders during the survey.

Data has been collected mainly through structured questionnaire and interview. The questions were designed in an easily understandable manner that the respondent may not have any difficulty in answering them.



Public consultation at Domel



Public consultation at Domel



Public consultation at Jhajjar Kotli



Public consultation at Jhajjar Kotli



Public Consultation at Jhajjar Kotli

#### Results and discussions

From the data collected from the respondents, it reveals that the number of landless families of  $\leq 1$  kanal is 10 and marginalized affected families are 4 during post project stage, whereas, the number of families with land availability of  $\leq 1$  kanal at pre project stage was 14. The number of landless families of 2-5 kanal is 16 and marginalized affected families are 20 during post project stage, whereas, the number of families with land availability of 2-5 kanal at pre project stage was 36. The number of landless families of 6-10 kanal is 11 and marginalized affected families are 13 during post project stage, whereas, the number of families with land availability of 6-10 kanal at pre project stage was 24. The number of landless families of  $\geq 11$  kanal is 4, marginalized affected families are 13 during post project stage and limited affected families 9, whereas, the number of families with land availability of  $\geq 11$  at pre project stage was 26.

From the above discussion and Figure 2, it is found that, land availability is reduced in the affected families during post project stage, due to acquisition of land for the project.

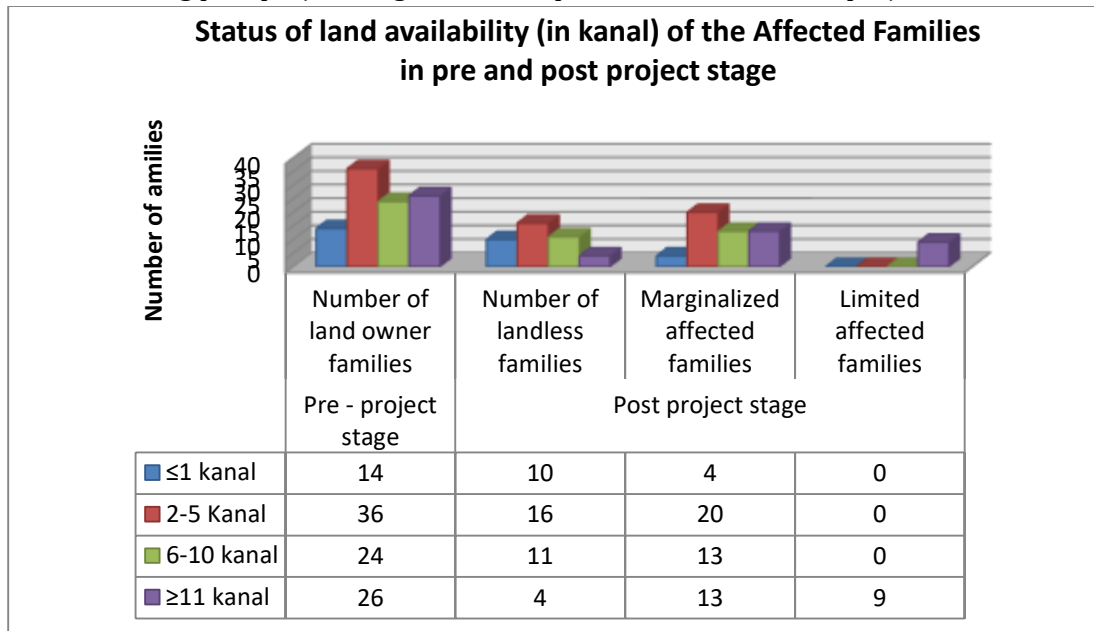


Figure - 2: Status of land availability (in kanal) of the Affected Families in pre and post project stage

Annual income of the affected families is specified in the figure 3. It is discernible that there is a change in income at pre and post project stage. There were 81 families whose earnings were more than one lakh in a year and at post project stage. The standard of living came down and only 39 families could maintain the previous standard of living with an income slab greater than one lakh. It demonstrates that a drastically fall in standard of living of the affected families.

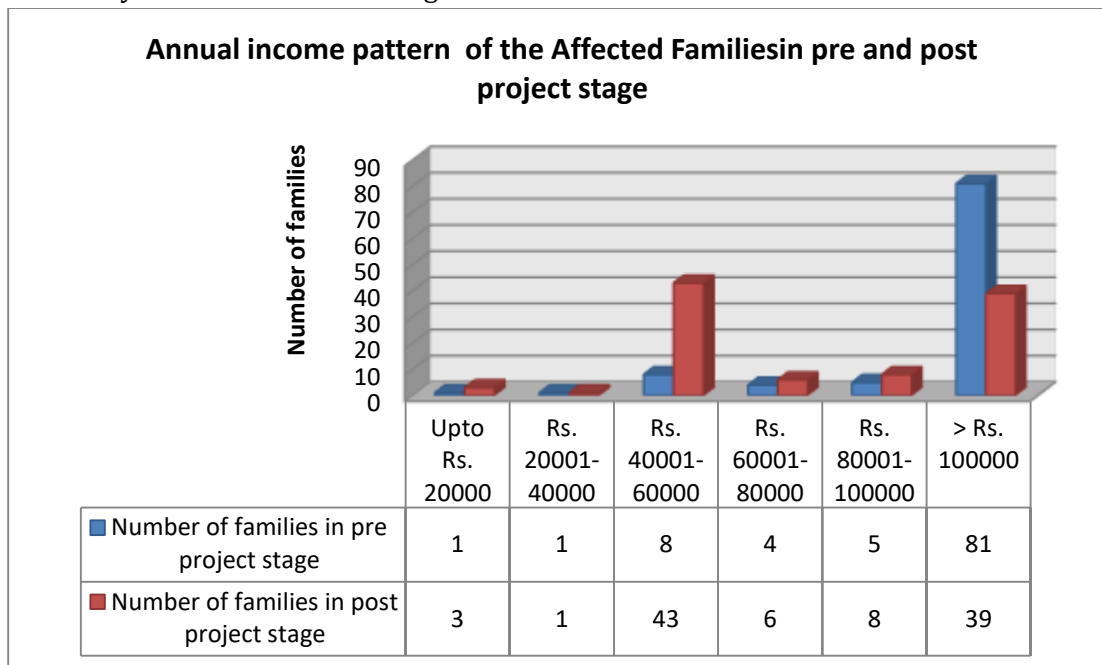


Figure - 3: Annual income pattern of the Affected Families in pre and post project stage

Besides, the study revealed that some of the people lost the source of their livelihood and in some cases, earning became very less due to which they were unable to maintain their previous standard. Further, from the deep analysis presented in Figure – 4, regarding the occupation shifting pattern, it was found that 49 percent affected persons retained their business and rest 51 percent were shifted to other occupations viz., Agriculture, Labor, Private service and Government service and trade.

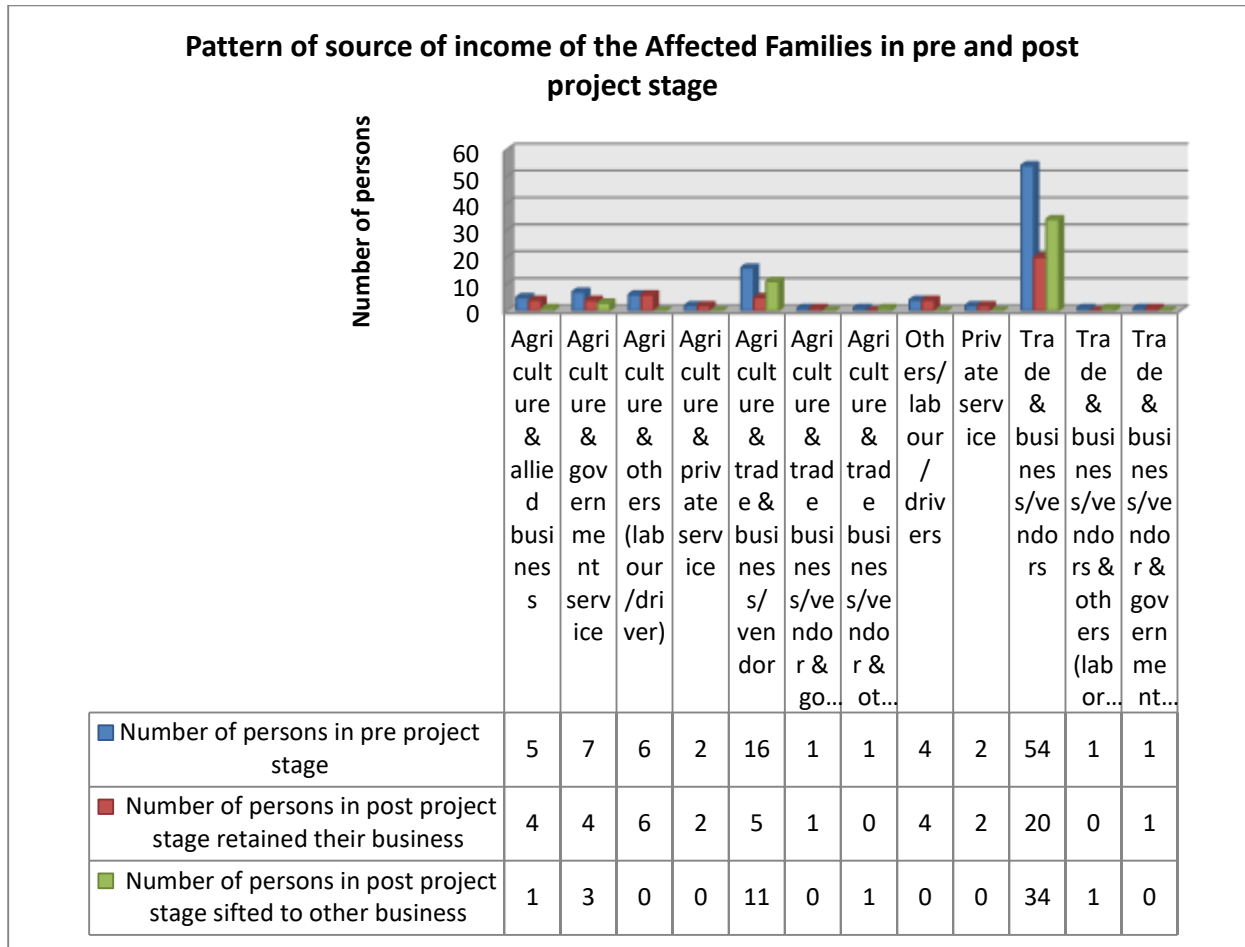


Figure - 4: Pattern of income source of the Affected Families in pre and post project stage  
Implication of Research

The study is an attempt to reach to the sufferers in order to gain an understanding on the impact of road widening in the socio economic conditions of people residing along the National Highway number - 44 (from Nagrota to Jajarkotli) in the state of Jammu & Kashmir. The study has found that the land availability of the affected family has been decreased due to the implementation of the project. The study also has found that the socio-economic status of families has been negatively affected due to the lack of policy loopholes in implementation as well as inadequate provision of any financial support and lack of training for sustaining their income level from government side. In addition to this there is lot of gaps in resettlement options promised and actually provided.

Basing on the above facts, it is recommended that, government have to look after the proper policy and financial support provided as well as implementation of resettlement issues. The study also revealed

that ample training and guidance to the affected families with regards to the changing socio- economic scenario is required from government side.

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