



TALK TO EXPERTS-12

Author

Problems related to Acquisition of land

Last week, we were discussing the kind of highways projects that could not be completed due to the hike interests during construction and we will look into some of the reasons that have resulted into this deadlock

situation where incomplete projects lie almost dead without any signs of progress.

Acquisition of lands tops the list of causes that delay the completion of the projects. In fact, this issue has gained alarming proportions in every domain. Not only the Highways but also the Port Trusts also face this perennial problem of the land acquisition. The problem begins with the protests by the land owners. Land owners have their own problems when their lands are wanted by the government for the development of the infrastructure of the country. First, they depend on their lands for their livelihood. And unfortunately, they are not ready to believe the promises of the government that they will be compensated for their lands. Earlier instances of failures to give compensation in time have influenced the land owners not to trust the authorities' words assuring compensation. In some cases, the land owners claim better compensation since what is offered is very inadequate and paltry. The government comes forward to pay compensation according to their market prices which more often are theoretical in nature rather than practical. Regulatory constraints thus affect smooth transition of land. It is said that if only the compensation has been adequate, there could have been voluntary offer for sale making compulsory change of the owner unnecessary or less burdensome.

One more point of view has been expressed in favour of the landowners. The government wants to acquire the land for the development of the country; but the locals who give lands find no benefits for them, immediate or remote. Sometimes, the government is said to have promised job opportunities to the locals; but when the project is completed, they find they are not given employment; on the other hand, people from outside on the basis of their education are taken in. So, the hope of employment to survive is frustrated.

These are said to be predominant causes for the delay in completing the projects that need massive blocks of land. The government can take necessary steps to address the issues. In public hearing before the project is given relevant departmental clearances, people could voice

forth their grievances and they do. But all the same, the discontent among the land owners seems to persist. It is suggested a clear fair strategy can be evolved at the initial stage itself which brings about better understanding between the land owners and the project developers, be they private or the government. In a long term view, a national policy can be framed that makes transition of land from the owners to the project developers smooth and satisfactory so that the projects ultimately do not suffer unnecessary setbacks.