Chapter 4

IMPACT OF DISPLACEMENT ON WOMEN

In the previous chapter we discussed we have discussed the demographic situation of the villages under study, understanding their population, their literacy level, their health status and access to health facilities, the apparent caste dynamics, their role of elderly and their community living, and the occupational situation in these villages. In the present chapter, the impact of displacement as shared by the displaced women will be discussed. It will be attempted through detailed analysis of the qualitative information gathered as primary data from the women in all the three villages. The focus group discussions, observations, and qualitative information from the interview schedule is the base for the information shared here.

A community that is settled in a particular location for a long period of time has its own pattern and systems of lifestyle, it has a routine that is its culture (Downing & Garcia-Downing, 2009). When a development project is announced in such a habitation, the social structure is challenged, the norms and values are disrupted as a sense of unknown, imminent threat arises in the minds of the affected people and a dissonant culture is created (Downing & Garcia-Downing, 2009). However, the development projects do not accept such issues exist, in fact it refuses to acknowledge that psychological impacts are also important element when discussing resettlement and rehabilitation strategies (Agarwal, 1997; Downing & Garcia-Downing, 2009; Fernandez, 1991; Ghosh, 2015).
Through the following discussions in sections and subsections the researchers is attempting to share the understandings of the perspectives and opinions of the affected women from the community as shared with her during their face-to-face interactions.

4.1 Pattern of lifestyle before displacement and after displacement

**Pre-displacement scenario:** The women shared their pre-displacement everyday routine during their agricultural days as hectic, tiring and productive; their days would start before the break of dawn (3:30- 4:00AM), they would clean up the cattle shed and give morning food to the cattle, by then the men would be up and after milking the cows/buffaloes, they would leave for the agricultural field, sometimes the women would do this if the men were required to rush to the farms during cultivation season etc.; the women would prepare the meals for the day and help the children to get ready and go to school. They elderly in-laws will be attended to and then the women will also leave for the agricultural field where she would help in different processes of farming, be it ploughing, sowing, and so on. They would return home around mid-afternoon to serve meals to the in-laws, children who have returned from school by then or the little ones at home and the cattle. They would again leave for the farmland to help their spouses till the early evening. Both the couple return home in the evening, where the women will again prepare meal for the family and their dinner will be eaten by 7-8 PM. The women after ensuring that every member is resting would then relax for the day.

“...the routine may seem hectic to you, but that’s what was wonderful about it as every one of us felt that we have contributed something concrete, positive
every day.”[Excerpt from the FGD with the younger women group in Kalwara village, June 15, 2013].

The women unanimously share that working alongside their respective spouses and other family members in the field built their respective relationships closer and everyone respected and supported each other. There was immense level of hard work for every one of us but no one knew otherwise and were content in their respective lives, they had food grains for the family from their farm and the surplus was sold in the Sanganer wholesale market. This was the lifestyle across all the three villages.

**Post-Displacement scenario:** The lifestyle has changed since the acquisition for both the women and the men in all the three villages under study. The women share that more than half of their workload is no more there and they have lot of free time. They share their daily routine now as follows: as almost no one has any cattle anymore (in the participant group only one family in Jhai village was found to have one buffalo and the milk is consumed by the family, fodder is expensive when bought so no one else is able to afford to keep one, this family is affluent) the women do not need to wake up very early in the morning, now they wake up around 5:30 AM, prepare meals for the family members who have to leave for work or school, then they have their breakfast with their in-laws, then do the cleaning up of the house, sleep and laze around till children come back from school, then they have lunch and again sleep through the afternoon or chat with neighbourhood women, return home around 5 PM and start preparing the dinner, and feed the children and in-laws by 7:30, put them to bed by 8 PM, then they wait for their husbands to return, who come quite late and mostly in inebriated state, they have their dinner and go to sleep.
The women who have joined the workforce in different sectors do not get the relaxation time during the day and upon returning they have to prepare the family dinner and wait for their husbands who come late. It was pointed out by the women that due to inactivity, many of the women are suffering from many insistent body aches, they have gained weight although the food intake has lowered; their men have now taken up alcohol in a big way and it is a daily routine now, spousal violence as a result has also risen.

“…you see we (women) are patient and mature, we react to crisis in a different manner than men... we prioritise every action of ours through the parents-family’s lenses, we know if we fall apart who will look after our children, old in-laws... can you believe it in just one year in 2008 our village saw 8 elderly men’s death, we are sure it was because of the loss...” [Excerpt from FGD with the young women in Kalwara, June 15, 2013].

“...our sons are consuming alcohol as if it would take away the pain... it doesn’t happen like that, but they are not in a mental state to understand reason or logic...”[Excerpt from FGD with the old women in Bhambhoriya, May 25, 2013].

The dissonant culture is causing psychological stress among the women, their lack of physical activity, the change in their spouses’ attitude and adoption of alcoholism among the men in the community is observed as a negative impact of the land dispossession process.

4.2 Household Chores before displacement and after displacement

The women point out that all the household chores were the responsibility of the women in the household, which included the young brides and other young girls
in the house, which the literature has always found evident in Rajasthan per se (Ghosh, 2015; Mathur, 2005; Patel, 1994). As almost all the household were joint families and had more than one set of family, so the younger married women of the family mutually distributed the workload amongst themselves, be it early morning cleaning of the cattle-shed, courtyard, utensils, sweeping and mopping the rooms, and so on. Cooking was also distributed amongst them. It was mostly weekly or monthly allotment, however there were few women who shared that either they or their sister-in-law were asked by the in-laws and other family members to cook more often if anyone was particularly better than the other, in such cases the other bride will take care of the other responsibilities to a greater extent.

But after the acquisition, women are mostly at home, and the dynamics are gradually changing. It was shared that earlier as every son was equally responsible for the farm work and if anyone was engaged in any other activity, there contribution to the family pool was equal which helped in creating no rift among the members, but now with the complete absence of agricultural livelihood, all the men are forced to take up employment in the labour market or service sector according to their educational level, their tact in utilising the share of the compensation to their benefit. The participants shared the change in status of themselves according to their spouses work nature.

“...my husband is working as daily wage labourer and my brother-in-law is driving his own Jeep and earning the livelihood ...my position in the family as spouse has changed in the household... even cooking is done in separate turns by me and my sister-in-law according to what own spouses could provide...” [Excerpt from interviewing a women in Kalwara, June 2013].
Although the number of such cases is very less and far between (in the present study sample, there were only 8 cases), but the ugly face of modernisation’s self-centredness and its effects are entering the village household nevertheless. The distribution of household work is also getting affected according to the status of one wife getting employment while the other sitting at home. The family dynamics are seeing disintegration which is causing psychological pressure on the elderly.

“…once we are gone, we are quite sure our son’s will divide the property and separate and move out of the joint family settings that we practice now... we are sure they are just waiting for us to be gone... we had a beautiful family setting which is totally disturbed and shattered…”[Excerpt from FGD with senior women group in Kalwara, June 10, 2013]

4.3 Child Care before displacement and after displacement

The women unequivocally perceive their MILs and mothers as their guide for their training about their own children’s care and safety. Although it was pointed out by more than half the participants that as they had been married off to their respective families at an early age, and had been lived the majority of their adult lives in their in-laws house, they have come to depend on their MILs more than their mothers, seldom they would consult their mothers on nutritional aspects, etc. during their pregnancy and would often rely on their MILs. Some of the women shared that it was customary for the first child to be born in the mother’s natal family, so they were sent to their mother’s place in their 5-6 months of pregnancy and they returned home with their children in the second or third month after delivery.
“...my son was born here and my MIL took care of me throughout the pregnancy. She guided me well, now I find it a lot hard to handle everything alone. But she taught me well, so I think I'll be able to take care of everyone... ”[Excerpt from interviewing a women in Kalwara, June 2013]

“...we perform the customs that are there from our ancestors. Infact, when our elder son was born we performed the ‘Kua Pujan’...”[Excerpt from interviewing a women in Bhamboreya, May 2013]

“...my MIL had shown me the ways then, so I can tell my DIL and daughter in future...” [Excerpt from interviewing a women in Jhai, April 2013]

“...my MIL was alive when all my children were born, so she did all the customs. This project has not affected our customs or anything as we still live and work as taught by our elders... ”[Excerpt from interviewing a women in Kalwara, June 2013]

The women rely on their elders for guidance and support for taking care of their children. The younger generation of brides rely heavily on their MILs for guidance regarding child care and they plan to continue the same lessons with their daughters and daughter-in-law’ in future. The ‘kua pujan’ is a ritual performed at the birth of a boy child in the community. The girl child birth is not welcomed but not completely boycotted either as the women pointed out that they have never been asked to check for the sex of the child during their pregnancy, which is almost common practice (Mathur, 2005; Vlassoff, 2013) in other parts of Rajasthan, both in rural as well as urban settings. The element of son preference for the carrying on the family line and inheritance is crucial for Rajasthani lifestyle (Vlassoff, 2013:9) and remains a significant factor for girl child absence or indifference. In the present study area, though the birth of the
girl child is not celebrated in the manner as the boy child’s is but naming
ceremony ‘Annaprashan’ is held; according to the sex ratio data from the
Census 2011 we can point out that the prevalence of sex-selective abortions is
probably absent in these villages as shown in Table 4.1 below.

Table 4.1. Child ratio (0-6 years) in actual numbers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Village</th>
<th>Male (0-6yrs)</th>
<th>Female (0-6yrs)</th>
<th>Total (0-6yrs)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jhai</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kalwara</td>
<td>295</td>
<td>270</td>
<td>565</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bambhoriya</td>
<td>199</td>
<td>161</td>
<td>360</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Census Report, 2011

The participants pointed out post-displacement child care system has not been
impacted as such because their dependence on MILs remains the same and they
are guided by their elders as earlier. Their access to the presence of a new
lifestyle visible inside the SEZ units is positively affecting the child care as they
want their children to be healthy and grow into educated, well-groomed adults.

4.4 Economic or Productive Involvements before displacement and
after displacement

The women before the land acquisition were all engaged in agricultural labour
in their respective farmlands alongside their spouses and other family member.
Other than their respective household work, they were actively involved in
helping out in their family agricultural fields. Although it needs to be remembered that they were all engaged in the work with no monetary earnings as is common among all farmhand within families, but all the women were proud of their contribution to their family earnings as a whole. Not even one participant in the study had ever worked outside of their family farm or anywhere else before the project acquisition took place in 2006-07.

The women are now (post-displacement) participating in contributing financially in the family income. They have joined the labour force in various capacities such as maid servants, gardening staff in the SEZ, stitching work, helpers in Anganwadi, helpers in play schools, irregular daily wage labour works. The change in education level is impacting in women getting professional jobs as well, among the participants one is a primary school teacher in a private school established in the SEZ area. The importance of earning decent livelihood is visible in the participants. Sometimes we know something for a fact but we do not do anything about it, such as at times we hear rural women saying they understand the importance of education but are seen to have many drop-out, working children but these three villages are showing signs of change in this aspect in action,

“...oh no no, my daughter and sons are all going to the private school in SEZ...they will acquire knowledge and earn their livelihood... my daughter is very smart, she is in class seven and has been among the Best 5 in her class since she joined there 3 years back...I have high hopes for her, she already tells me she wants to study computer, I don’t know what it is but I spoke with my husband and FIL, they are encouraging her to fly as high as she wants to...I
can’t tell you how happy I feel when she shows me her workbooks with those star marks …” [Excerpt from interviewing a women in Jhai, April, 2013]

Although almost 75-80 percent of the women are now housewives or homemaker with no productive work for them due to different factors: agricultural work is completely finished due to land loss, employment in the gardening SEZ team was not found or some did not take, stitching work is not known by everyone and even amount of work is less so contractors incentivise the women who are presently involved in it and they are made to do it at a lower rate, due to lack of education the women are not able to apply for the helpers jobs in the adjoining newly-established schools although efforts are ongoing. The women pointed out that there are rumours of future employment opportunities in the SEZ in the handicrafts units and they are hopeful to get a chance there. The health conditions were also pointed out as factors for not getting opportunities in the gardening team,

“...I did not get work in the SEZ gardening team because I am fat, the contractor told me ‘ you can hardly walk, how will you work in this kind of labour-intensive work where you have to work continuously from morning to afternoon, I won’t take a chance with you no way.’ ... I am trying to lose weight you see, I hardly eat anything, but this stubborn fat just doesn’t go away... however, when I was actively engaged in the agricultural fields, I was not this bulky, am I not right...” she asks the other members for confirmation...[Excerpt from FGD with young women group in Kalwara, June 10, 2013].

The awareness of these women about their change in situation reflects maturity and acceptance of their circumstances. The women are geared up to participate
in the economic growth of their family and they are trying to identify the means through which they can achieve it. Some of the women are confident that the project is going to be good for everyone, not just the industries,

“...this project has helped opening job opportunities for us, women I believe. Many of the village women work there now...” [Excerpt from interviewing a women in Kalwara, June 2013].

4.5 Decision Making Position/Status of women

It is observed that the status of women in actual, real terms can often be identified from the kind of participation in the decision making powers they exert within their family unit (Agarwal, 1997; Ghosh, 2015), in fact a positive correlation is identified between women’s participation level and positive changes in the family situation with regards to education, health etc. (Vaidyanathan, 1989). The daily tasks which may be as simple and as complex as what to cook on a daily basis to what will be grown in the farm next season, or their children’s education and marriages are seen to be affected in a favourable manner when women in the household have active participation in such decisions. The financial aspects were bit tricky with different factors discussed later in the chapter. The researcher has tried to understand the participants’ views and opinion on the same in the below sections:

4.5.1 What to Cook
During their agricultural days, the women point out that along with annual grains for family consumption, their farms also gave them vegetables like okra, cauliflowers, cabbage, pumpkins, tomato, onion, etc. according to the season, which they also sold after keeping for own consumption. The cooking choices were varied and mostly MILs would guide the decision on a regular basis. The younger women were free to point out if anything else were to be suggested. The men had no role in this task whatsoever. If they wanted to eat something specific, they would tell the women in the house, like their mothers or wives while leaving for the farm in the morning or at night, and if it was available that would be cooked in the next meal. The villagers are mostly non-vegetarian, so in special occasions they cooked chicken or lamb; buffalo meat are also eaten when some sacrificial offerings are made and meat is distributed among the villagers.

“...generally it is my MIL who sifted through the sabji [vegetable] and anaj [wholegrains] bhandar [container or store room] and she would suggest which needs to be consumed early according to its ripen state you see...”[Excerpt from interviewing a women in Kalwara, June 2013]

The women share that they also cooked something of their liking which their MILs never objected, but due to the huge workload they themselves seldom did that.

However, post displacement their eating patterns have undergone a drastic change, they do not have easy access to vegetables or grains and are dependent on the market for purchasing the same. Due to the steep prices of the basic staple grains and vegetables, the women find it hard to manage the dietary
intake of the family, the elderly women have nothing to choose from and whatever seems cheapest in the evening market is purchased and cooked the next day. The absence of dairy products is also felt acutely by the women as milk was never a problem for the household consumption earlier, and their children would drink 2-3 glasses of milk on an average daily, now they cannot afford to buy more than a litre or two for the entire family of 7-8 members on an average and that too not more than one glass, sometimes not even that and only save it for making tea.

4.5.2 Child Education

In the village Jhai, education is taken seriously since a long while. This village has students going to Jaipur and Jodhpur for acquiring education, it also boasts of successful adult learners,

“... they point out that by girl education they do not just mean girl children but also adults and sometime older women too (among the participants, there are two members who have learned to read and write their names when they were in their late 40s which was about two decades back, they are now champions on girl child education)…“we understand the importance of education and so every single child in the village goes to school... we are proud to say our village has most numbers of B.A, M.A students, among both boys and girls, and those who have passed out and are now settled in this entire region...”[Excerpt from FGD with senior women group in Jhai, April 12, 2013].

In Kalwara and Bhambhoriya, awareness about education was there but due to prevalence of child marriage when once the girls achieve menarche, they are sent off to their in-laws house where they begin their marital copulated life.
There is no realisation among the people that the age of menarche has considerably gone down due to environmental and lifestyle changes in recent decades and girls in the age of 11-12 years of age are achieving menarche in their early puberty whereas it used to be 16-17 years earlier (Khadilkar & Stanhope, 2006).

Since the project was introduced in the area, there has been a gradual change in attitude among all the villagers in the three villages, they want their children to study as much as they want and they hope that their children will be able to work in professional capacities inside the SEZ unlike them,

“...when the SEZ AC bus comes inside the compound with young girls and boys sitting in it, I always see my girl in them... she is studying in 12th class with Science in Jaipur, she lives in a hostel there only... I always tell her about my dream, she says she’s going to try but don’t know if she will be able to reach that level...I am sure she will...even my son is in 8th class, he is surely going to do well, he was selected in the under-14 cricket team of Rajasthan state...I’m blessed to have so good children...” [Excerpt from interviewing a women in Kalwara, June 2013; she works in the gardening team in SEZ].

“...with this project we have realised that young people who educate themselves can work in these big offices and earn well, we have few tenants in our village now who have come all the way from Orissa and Bihar to work in these companies and by living here in our villages they are trying to save as much money as possible to send back home to their families... they are always working in the machine (laptop) whenever at home also... our children are
inspired by them…” [Excerpt from FGD with young women group in Kalwara, June 10, 2013].

4.5.3 When to get their children married

Earlier the children in all the villages were married off as early as 9-10 years, sometimes even younger than that. They would be kept at home till their menarche and then with the ritual of Gauna the girls will be sent off to their spouse’s house while the brides of the boys will be brought home. These girls were not allowed to study anymore and therefore they hardly finished their primary level of schooling and were put in the gruelling lifestyle of married women performing every task of the household.

However after the project arrival in their region, this trend has seen dramatic changes with many young DILs objecting to marrying off their children and surprisingly the senior women have seen the rationale behind it and are supportive of their DILs views,

“...most of us are fairly younger brides in the family, so we don’t really speak that much about issues. Although we are definitely part of the discussions regarding our children’s future, you see most of us are sending our children to private English-medium schools nearby, so that they have brighter future than us. Even our in-laws are very supportive about it. Yes, most of our children are married as is the culture in this area but we are definitely looking into it that they at least are educated enough. Probably this trend of early marriage will see a change in the next generation, in fact we are already seeing some couples not interested to engage in the same for their children (two such mothers were part of the discussion), you see these customs are going on in our society
because no one questions it but we are educated and our husbands too and we were able to convince our elders that this culture needs to be stopped, if we cannot change our surrounding, at least we can do so in our family, so it was decided that our children will be married when they are adults and their choice will also be given heed to but final call will be the elders’ “dekhiye chhote chhote badlao se shuru karna padta hain…(baby steps, you see, baby steps, in order to bring in the changes)...” [Excerpt from the FGD with young women in Bhambholiya, 30 May 2013].

“...every child is attending school, be it government or private. There is no pressure on joining the work force for the children, so they can study as much as they want. Our village has recently had 3 girls appearing their 12th Board exams, then 1 girl has joined College in Jaipur last year (the mother of the girl was in the group and she shared that although the marriage was finalized and engagement has already taken place while she was in her 12th class, the families approved that the marriage will take place after she graduates according to the girls wishes). Around 7-8 boys are studying in colleges, with one in Masters Level too.” [Excerpt from FGD with senior women in Kalwara, June 15, 2013].

4.5.4 Investments and Savings

The women, both senior and young, in the family are not consulted on any kind of investment or savings decision. That is always between the men, the situation remains same pre and post displacement among 67 percent of the participants in the study. The women who shared that they knew about the investments or savings in the family were from Jhai village and they shared that they also share
their opinion with their spouses as they gather any information about new schemes etc.

The women believe that opinions on such subject are not taken from them as they are not much aware about the same,

“... you see the men are more educated and aware, they go about in the world outside, meet so many people, gather so much knowledge...so how can we help in investment or savings plans... we aren’t even aware of such things...”

[Excerpt from FGD with young women in Kalwara, June 15, 2013].

The women’s lack of self-belief that they can also have ideas and opinions even if there is lack of formal education is evident among these young women. The senior women opine that they do share their views when asked for however discussions on financial matters have never been undertaken with the women in their knowledge. They do know if that is good or bad, but that that is the fact and reality of their lifetime. During one of the FGD’s with the senior women, the information that 25 percent land package was part of the resettlement package was known to them on the day of the discussion. Their men have never told them anything about it. This reflects that the men in these villages, do not think the women can have any opinion about property and finances and do not even consider sharing any kind of information pertaining to finances in the family. While another striking revelation is the participation of the women in one village where the education level is high among both men and women in comparison to the other villages. There seems to be a positive correlation between one’s levels of education to one’s confidence to share their opinions on important family decisions.
4.6 Cultural and Emotional Impact

The culture of a region is something intangible, abstract sets of systems and practices that though do not have physical form of its own yet could be identified from different elements in a region, like the customs, the festivals, the cuisines, the habits of the people, may all reflect certain particular specific features that may be called the culture of that region. In case of establishing a development project in a habitation area, the surrounding localities/ host community is influenced by the arrival of the new sub-culture and undergoes certain changes which are sometime beneficial and impeding in the long run. However, there is no denying that the routine culture definitely changes and creates dissonant cultures. It causes psychological hardships and affects people silently.

“...one of the saddest realities of our times is the effect of this project on performing our religious ceremonies, as with the absence of our fields, lot many rituals are not being performed as they used to be because the trees and the land is no more there... we are afraid our children will only hear stories of how some of the rituals ought to be performed as we do not get to perform them in its actual form anymore due to the lack of access to those resources ...”

[Excerpt from the FGD with young women group in Jhai, 11 April, 2013].

“... most people are doing away with observing some ancient rituals like Shradh, Gangaur, etc. but we in our village have not done so...for Gangaur we need to erect statue of shiv-parvati in our agricultural fields where we offer prayers over a span of 15 days, but now that our farmlands are gone, we erect the statue in the village temple as a group where we offer our prayers...the
auspicious occasion of shradh is also observed by all of us with all the rituals over the period of pitru paksha...” [Excerpt from the FGD with senior women group in Kalwara, 10 June, 2013]

The culture of a community gives it a sense of belonging, a sense of association to a particular social system that has immense sentimental value. A functioning society with certain customs and practices is keen to pass in on to the next generation for ensuring the preservation of the same for their upcoming, future generations, but its disintegration due to sudden man-made or naturally-caused disasters can play havoc to the psyche of the affected people and their social routine. The adverse intangible effects can be identified in delays and delusions such as sudden seemingly natural death of elderly people with no apparent physiological symptoms,

“...with the acquisition our access to our farms and trees have gone away which has had an adverse effect on all of us, so much so that many of our peers with no particular adverse health conditions suddenly passed away and we are still in shock...” (There have been 27 deaths of elderly people in this village over a period of 3 years from 2008 onwards). [Excerpt from FGD with the senior women in Kalwara, 10 June, 2013].

4.7 Their Idea of a Happy Village Life

The women, both senior group and young group across all the three villages had more or less similar views on their ideal happy village life – they preferred their earlier life before acquisition that had lots of hard work but they were at peace with themselves and with happy, healthy children and supportive spouses. The modernisation is disrupting their simple genuine lifestyle with artificiality and
some of the elders are worried that their society will have a complete breakdown sooner than later. The women are stressed with the uncertainty of tomorrow since the project as they realised that if a physical entity as large as land which was in their families for generations could be snatched away so easily and without any warning, what really is the guarantee for anything else,

“Happy village life is when everyone in the household and village is satisfied and content with whatever they have. We can surely say ours was a happy village earlier in so much as we were content and had a good night’s sleep unlike now when most of us are stressed out and lie awake till the wee hours of night as there is a strange atmosphere of unrest for us. We have everything now, way more than we did while we were farmers but we do not have peace of mind, contentment…” [Excerpt from the FGD with senior women in Kalwara, June 10, 2013].

“...for us therefore, a happy village is what we had earlier, fresh food, fresh air and access to resources that we required to enrich our knowledge, like educating ourselves, etc. Happy village life is when our elders are sitting around the courtyard with their peers in happy banter and not stressed and ill like they are these days. Many of them have passed away from the shock....” [Excerpt from the FGD with young women in Jhai, April 11, 2013].

“...we are truly happy if all our children are well fed. We will be content in our lives if we are able to sleep without any debt upon us... he had that when we were living with limited resources but self-sufficient...even, consuming alcohol was occasional earlier, and the men used to have mostly in the panchayat house or among friends in the field, but now they go to faraway places for employment
and are almost every night drinking, their health’s are also failing. We are all worried for them, these changes are bad…” [Excerpt from the FGD with senior women in Bhambhoriya, May 25, 2013]

“…for us village life means lots and lots of hard labour throughout the day and in the evening when we relax with our family and friends around, we listen to each other, we speak about our worries and joys with each other, we help each other out …” [Excerpt from the FGD with senior women in Jhai, April 12, 2013]

“…we are still trying our best to maintain the connectedness. Like, we have a major electricity problem in the region with constant load-shedding in the area, however, nowadays TV has become such a big addiction that the younger generation is completely hooked to it, we cannot blame them, it’s actually very entertaining, however we caution them that too much of it is not good. But for how long, we are foreseeing a future like in towns where neighbours do not speak with each other than on occasions or when some misfortune befalls. Simple village life is gradually getting eroded by modern indifferent attitude…” [Excerpt from the FGD with senior women in Kalwara, June 10, 2013]

“…we are very materialistic now, with desires to accumulate more and more material possessions to show off our affluence, we were never like that, it is a fact that there was a radio in almost everyone’s house which we used for entertaining ourselves, and there were only three TVs in the village then with no D2H connection and we would all sit in the courtyards and watch some movies or some songs around the evenings, if electricity was there. The life then was
The lifestyle change post acquisition has been drastic and not a single women interacted with is happy with the new system. They are trying to adjust to the new dissonant culture and are looking for strategies and mechanisms to avoid catastrophic results unlike the men who seem to plunge their unhappiness into alcohol. The general coping mechanism among men against women is to divert their attention to something unrelated but self-destructive (Mathur, 2005; Vijayabaskar, 2010).

4.8 The Displacement Process

According to most of the participants, especially from Bhambhoriya and Kalwara village the displacement process involved a notification in the local newspaper and a notification in the Panchayat house wall bulletin and then their respective Sarpanch confirming that the land acquisition would take place as soon as possible and that everyone would be compensated for the same and the project would open up new avenues for the people in these villages. There was no consultation meeting about the compensation and rehabilitation and resettlement with any of the affected people in these two villages. The unique land-for-land deal of 25 percent return of developed land to the affected parties was also unknown to all these women in Bhambhoriya; it was even evidenced by the researcher herself in one of the villages where upon hearing about it, they cross-checked with the ex-Sarpanch. The participants were astonished to know that all their men have disposed that deed by selling it to the land sharks during the initial days itself. In case of Kalwara village, misappropriations took place...
in the form of their own ex-Sarpanch exploiting them and buying their land off them at market price but never informing them about the compensation packages etc. it was pointed out that those who dealt directly with the executing agency were even facilitated on how to manage the compensation amount for their maximum benefit. Although in this village as well, women were not aware of the 25 percent land deal package,

... Six out of the ten participants in this discussion have been part of this incident and they feel agitated and betrayed by their own and do not hold any grudges against the project, whatsoever. Most of them, five of them are now employed as the gardening staffs in the SEZ and their husbands are also doing well in real-estate...the four participants whose family has been direct recipients of the compensation process pointed out that they were given the cheque and guided to open a bank account and save the money judiciously by the SEZ staffs in charge. They have fixed deposited the amount and one of the members family took a car loan against it and bought two vehicles, one is running as interstate taxi services that one son drives, while the other is a Mahindra Eco van that is used for plying school children to the International school in the project area, they have already repaid their loans and both the sons in the family are well settled with their parents and individual family in the same house in the village (one of the wife was the participant in this discussion)...

The participants in Jhai village were aware of the 25 percent land parcel deal although it was their understanding that this package had been designed only for their village after they had filed a case against the arbitrary acquisition. They were not aware of the deal as being part of the initial resettlement package in the
project itself. Their village was able to negotiate a better deal with the executing agencies of both land-for-land and job to at least one member of the affected family. These women have clear knowledge of the package and almost everyone in the study group from this village have the land deal intact and are looking forward to avail the developed land deal in near future.

“Many of our men have joined the SEZ as well in different work profiles, from security personnel, to administration assistant, to cleaning staffs and bell boys, canteen team too but none of the women in our village is in the gardening team as that contractor is also from our village and we do not want to seek employment from him”

By way of concluding the researcher would like to point out here that among the various dimensions that were explored, the cultural dimensions have been most severely affected as is evident from the women, both senior and younger age group participants lamenting that they are not able to perform rituals like Gangaur, etc. in the same manner that their earlier generation had taught them and they are saddened that their coming generation would never get to feel the festivities in its true essence. They are trying to build their community once again, but feel the loss of their cultural ethos which reflects profound sadness and guilt among the affected people. They feel guilty that they would not be able to pass on the enriched cultural practices that their ancestor had given to them. There is a positive change in attitude towards certain social practices that were hindering for them as well as upon the individuals it was carried upon, such as child marriage, which is an endemic practice across Rajasthani villages but they are gradually shunning it off for a healthy, successful and joyous future for their children. It may also be concluded from the aforementioned findings
that a crisis is perceived and reacted in different manners by women than men as shared by the participants in this study. Women become more protected towards self-preservation which includes protecting their children, their spouse, their in-laws, their near and dear ones and themselves. They try to pull each other up in case of sorrows and hardships, however in case of men it was perceived that they wallows into sadness and become self-destructive which affects their family’s as well. Alcoholism and spousal violence is on the rise leading to the women’s psychological stress, they want to find out ways to handle the changed circumstances before it worsens any further.