**Land Acquisition Act 1894**

26 July 2014

Speaker- Mr. Awais Malik

As the number of mega projects is increasing in the development portfolio of government of the Punjab, the need to acquire land is increasing. There are protests by the people whose lands are being acquired by government of the Punjab. Recently, land has been acquired for the River Ravi Front Project which is being established as a city of five million people. Large chunks of land have been acquired for the garments city project in Sheikhupura. If the land acquisition continues like it is now, a lot of people will be deprived of their land. In fact, there is no escape from land being acquired as the law governing land acquisition is quite stingy.

Considering this, PURC held a forum on Saturday, 26 July 2014 at its office to generate knowledge on the subject. Mr. Malik, a lawyer by training explained the different clauses of section 4 of the Land Acquisition Act in detail. He particularly focused on the processes using which government could acquire private land for public purpose under Section 4 of the Act. He also explained the procedures of acquisition and compensation to private land owners. Further, he described list and types of projects falling under public purpose for ease of audience having different background, e.g. sociology, Geographical Information System (GIS), business administration, public policy, etc., and how can claims be made by land owners after certain time period.

The central point of discussion revolved around introducing a new law of land acquisition which allows acquiring land only if there is no other way. Secondly, the new law should have provisions to include the affectees in decision making. Thirdly, the law should provide for keeping checks on unnecessary land acquisitions by the government. Fourthly, the law should have no provision for acquiring land for private purposes.