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Ecological and Cultural Dimensions in Development: A Study of Himachal Pradesh

Introduction

Peoples and communities maintaining the universality of their beliefs and the organising principles of their specific cultures are challenged in the face of the prevailing development paradigm. Such development has undermined the basis of the equilibrium (ecological and social) which had evolved over generations. A significant change in social relations from Gemeinschaft to Gesellschaft has resulted (Tönnies, 1957). In the perception of local communities living a more or less traditional lifestyle, nature and culture amalgamate into a reality where material, social and spiritual aspects merge into an encompassing view. In Himachal Pradesh a high rate of displacement has resulted as a result of development projects. Development as it is happening is undermining the interdependence among communities which constituted the basis for peaceful co-existence. It is increasing the penetration of market norms. A number of hydro power projects are coming up in the Sutlej, Beas and Yamuna basin. This in disregard of the fact that agricultural/ecological based cultures and communities have been flourishing in the valleys of the Sutlej, the Beas and the Yamuna over centuries. Not only do such development projects bring about disintegration of rich cultures leading to identity crisis and marginalization in addition to loss of livelihoods in the state of Himachal, they are also leading to frequent flooding.

The current paper is based on research compiled by me during the award of the C.R. Parekh fellowship in 2009 and also draws from my ICSSR sponsored study entitled "Development at what cost! A study of migration, loss of livelihood security and development induced resettlement in Himachal Pradesh". The research attempts to explore how communities adapt or resist to changes in their natural and social environment. Communities and their specific cultures provide the basis for the identity of individual members as well as their primary social context. It is a well-known fact that humans enter the ecological scene with their traditions, perceptions, resources, social organizations in short culture. Ecological changes and displacement result in changes in both the cultural and economic milieu. The study will have important implications for policy as it will help make suitable recommendations regarding a development policy which keeps the interests of the local population in mind by promoting livelihood security/diversification and curbing development induced migration. The study while drawing from disciplines like ecology, anthropology, economics is attempting to contribute to social philosophy.

Environmental deterioration and displacement/forced migration caused by industrial and hydro power projects have become significant problems in Himachal Pradesh. A number of hydro power projects have come up and still others are proposed in the Sutlej, Beas and Yamuna basin in the state. The river basins in Himachal Pradesh are subject to frequent landslides that are triggered by a combination of steep slopes, the absence of vegetation, excessive rainfall, and some seismic events. These landslides can partially or completely dam flows in the river. Failure of the dams can be unexpected and catastrophic, such as the flood that occurred in 2005 in the Sutlej river basin. Over the past four decades, the oustees of Bhakra dam project in Bilaspur and Pong Dam project in Kangra district of the state have undergone nightmarish experience. More recently land acquisition for the Kol dam hydel project in the basin of the Sutlej in Mandi and Shimla districts have left the people panicking. Various hydro power projects such as NathpaJhakri, Bhabhanagar and KarchamWangtoo in Kinnaur district have indulged in intensive mining and construction activities resulting in much loss of vegetation and changes in land use. Numerous other hydro power projects are

coming up in Kinnaur including Tidong, ShongtongKarcham and Integrated Kashang hydro-electric project. The ecology of the district is under immense pressure from these projects. Kinnaur has been ripped, of many of its Chilgoza pine and *chuli* (apricot) forests.

Also recently efforts from civil society organizations, community based organizations and communities and individuals have led to Lafarge Cement Pvt. Ltd. moving its office from Sunni in Shimla district implying that the plant site is being shifted from this area. Three petitioners from different villages in Sunni and Karsog including one from Shakrori, one of the affected villages in Sunni, filed a case before the National Environment Appellate Authority against the plant. Among other things, the petition alleged that the plant was coming up within 10 km of a wildlife sanctuary. Such proximity is not allowed without the permission of the National Wildlife Board, which Lafarge had not sought. The NEAA cancelled the clearance given to the project after a site visit. Lafarge then went to the Himachal Pradesh High Court pleading against cancellation of the environmental clearance.

In the HC, the petitioners claimed that Lafarge hid the fact that its proposed cement plant was close to a wildlife sanctuary, which was later affirmed by the state forest department as well as the statutory Forest Advisory Committee of the Union environment ministry and finally by the appellate authority. The Majathal Wildlife Sanctuary fell within 5 km of the plant site, NEAA had concluded. Lafarge contested the petitioner's argument that it had made wrongful claims about the ecological impact of the project on the people and land. The appellate authority, while cancelling the green clearance to the cement plant, had noted that the land was cultivable and that there had been near total opposition to the project from the affected villagers. NEAA had said the villagers were against the location of the plant near their land as it would impact their agriculture, horticulture and livestock.

As regards the Renuks dam project, the National Green Tribunal on July 10 2012 allowed the project developer--Himachal Pradesh Power Corporation Limited (HPPCL)--to go ahead and pay compensation to people whose land is being acquired for the Rs 3,600 crore project. Last year, the tribunal had stalled the project by staying payment of compensation to project-affected people and forest clearance to the project. The tribunal, however did not vacate the stay on the forest clearance. About 337 families will be affected by the 40 MW Renukadam project and its reservoir (see Renuka dam will displace villages, submerge forestland). Two villages had been paid compensation when the tribunal gave the stay order, say the petitioners from the affected villages who want the project to be scrapped. The project was challenged in the tribunal by the Renuka Dam Sangharsh Samiti during 2011. The petitioners had accused the project proponents of not including a large number of trees that will be submerged by the project. Forest clearance for the project was yet to be granted because of dispute on the counting of standing green trees. Activists and petitioners were of the view that there were more than 1.5 million trees whereas HPCCL claimed that only approximately 1,70,000 trees stood in the submergence area. Downstream areas from the dam site upto Ponta Sahib shall be impacted by the project, people will lose irrigation facilities and other river based livelihoods. More recently in July 2013, the state forest management has asked the dam management to submit a certificate from the deputy commissioner under the Forest Rights Act 2006

In Solan district in order to urbanise peripheries around industrial areas of Baddi and Barotiwala, the Government of Himachal Pradesh extended the Town and Country Planning (TCP) Act, 1977 to Barotiwala in the late 1980s. In 2006-7 the government extended the act to a larger area of 231 revenue villages and formed the Baddi-Barotiwala-Nalagarh Development Authority. The authority's master plan attempts to earmark areas in the region for housing, industries, entertainment and commercial purposes. The local people have been protesting since September 2008 as their livelihoods have been overlooked and sites have been randomly designated and lands are being acquired compulsorily for expansion of roads.

Development practitioners and human rights advocates have questioned whether large-scale development projects ever offer just development as they cause large scale displacement. Others have argued that impoverishment can be mitigated or avoided by careful planning that includes development initiatives for the affected. This study is situated in this problematic.

Literature Review:

Environment, Development Projects and Displacement

The Supreme Court has recently ordered the Union Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF) to appoint an expert committee to ascertain whether existing and under-construction hydropower plants and projects in Uttarakhand contributed to the flood disaster that hit the state in June 2013. At the same time the apex court ordered a fresh scrutiny of the proposed 24 hydropower projects on the Alaknanda and Bhagirathi rivers, which environmental activists and expert bodies have been opposing. The Supreme Court also ordered MoEF and the Uttarakhand government not to give any more environment clearances for hydroelectric projects in Uttarakhand. The expert body for ascertaining the role dams played in the disaster should constitute representatives of the state government, Wildlife Institute of India (WII), Central Electricity Authority, Central Water Commission and other expert bodies, the court said¹.

The bench of justices gave the order while hearing a special leave petition of Alaknanda Hydro Power Company Limited, a subsidiary of infrastructure major GVK. The appeal challenged the Uttarakhand High Court direction to hold public hearing for increasing height of dam of the controversial Srinagar Hydro Electric Project on the Alaknandariver. Residents of Srinagar, political parties, activists and spiritual leaders had been opposing the project as it would submerge the Dhari Devi temple (the temple deity was removed from the original rock outcrop during the Uttarakhand floods). The Supreme Court in its order expressed concern over the large number of hydro-electric projects mushrooming in Uttarakhand and their impact on the Alaknanda and the Bhagirathi river basins. "The cumulative impact of those project components like dams, tunnels, blasting, power-house, muck disposal, mining,

¹IN THE SUPREME COURT OF INDIA
CIVIL APPELLATE JURISDICTION
CIVIL APPEAL NO. 6736 OF 2013@ (SPECIAL LEAVE PETITION (C) NO.362 OF 2012)
ALAKNANDA HYDRO POWER CO. LTD.APPELLANT
Versus
ANUJ JOSHI & ORS.RESPONDENTS WITH Civil Appeal Nos.6746-6747 of 2013 (Arising out of
SLP(C) No.5849-5850 of 2012) and T.C. (C) No.55 to 57 of 2013

deforestation etc. on eco-system, is yet to be scientifically examined,” the bench observed. The court further directed MoEF to examine 24 out of total 39 proposed projects that are likely to cause significant impact on the biodiversity of the Alaknanda and the Bhagirathi river basins. The impact of these projects was brought to public notice by Dehradun-based WII. The institute made an impact assessment of hydro power projects on aquatic and terrestrial biodiversity in Alaknanda and Bhagirathi basins.

According to the website of Uttarakhand Jal Vidyut Nigam Limited, 45 hydropower projects with a total capacity of 3,164 MW are operational in Uttarakhand, and around 199 big and small projects are proposed or under way in the state. In the Alaknanda-Bhagirathi (tributaries of the Ganga) basin alone, which is said to be most impacted, 69 hydropower projects with a total capacity of 9,000 MW are under way, according to the high level Inter-Ministerial Group (IMG) formed by the Union Ministry of Environment and Forests to consider matters relating to environmental flows and hydropower projects on the Ganga and its tributaries. As per the report, implementation of all 69 projects would affect 81 per cent of the Bhagirathi and 65 per cent of the Alaknanda. The apex court in its 72-page order (pdf) says the study conducted by Alternate Hydro Energy Centre (AHEC) to assess cumulative impact of hydro-power projects on the Alaknanda and the Bhagirathi lacked depth. The National River Conservation Directorate (NRCD) of MoEF had asked AHEC and IIT Roorkee to carry out the study, which finalized in December, 2012. The order has also indicted the disaster management authority of Uttarakhand for its inability to manage the flood-induced disaster in the state. The court has asked the authority to submit a report in three months as to whether it had any disaster management plan in place and how effective that plan proved when the tragedy of unprecedented scale struck Uttarakhand².

Case studies from different parts of India show that deforestation has exacerbated migration by both men and women. Development policies, whether the building of big dams, taking over of forest and agricultural lands for industrial enterprises or restrictions on the local population regarding the use of forests and common property resources (Minocha, Richa 2005), has meant a loss of control over basic resources for local women and men. With few local options available, they are forced to enter the labour market, whether locally or as migrants.

A significant study was done by Nitya Rao, Kumar Rana in which the case of *santhals* was discussed. With erosion of traditional livelihood and few local options available *santhals* have been forced to enter the labour market as migrants. Faced with the negative impact on schooling and health care, poor living and working conditions, and constant fear of sexual abuse, the entry into the labour market by a large number of *santhals*, is in itself a reflection of a process of development that has displaced large numbers from their traditional livelihoods without providing secure and sustainable options locally. It has brought about an

²Jitendra (2013). Did hydel projects have a role in Uttarakhand disaster? asks Supreme Court, Down to Earth, August 14.

alienation of *santhal* lands primarily through loans and control over capital by a few. Their customary paradigm of community ownership has got lost somewhere along the way, and been replaced by individual progress and fulfilment.

The number of people displaced by programs promoting national, regional and local development is substantial. The most commonly cited number is approximately 10 million people per year (Cernea 2000:11). Development projects leading to involuntary displacement include urban relocation and renovation, and water and transport infrastructure. In rural areas, forestry projects, mining, biosphere reserves, and national parks are displacing people. Road and other infrastructure may require urban, suburban, peri-urban, or rural relocation. Scudder (1996:49) noted four categories of people affected by development-induced displacement and resettlement: the displaced, the hosts among whom they settle, other river-basin residents, and immigrants. While immigrants usually benefit, the other groups risk negative impacts. Attention has been paid to relocatees and more recently to hosts, but the majority of the adversely affected may be in the third category; sometimes at a great distance from the project site, they are rarely included in projects. Spread over wide areas, they are also less likely to mount effective resistance. The non-displaced are affected in many ways. At SardarSarovar (India), downstream fisher folk from Bihar were concerned about the indirect displacement of families dependent on fishing (Appa and Patel 1996:145). The Manantali Resettlement Project (Mali) did a fairly good job of resettling the people in the reservoir area, yet no initiative aided the downstreamers hundreds of miles away when their agricultural systems were affected by the changing river regime (Salem-Murdock et al. 1994). Hosts have gained more attention in recent years but it is important to remember them. Their interests may be in direct conflict with those of resettlers, even though they have agreed to accept displaced groups. Competition arises because of the added pressure on natural resources, common property, and social services (Pandey 1998; Koenig and Diarra 1998).

Many governments are uneasy about those who use common property or open-access resources. Waterways for instance are considered national or provincial resources whose development should be undertaken in the interest of the public as a whole; government strategy has often been to convince Natives to surrender rights to valuable resources for the common good (Waldrum 1988). Reconstituting common property or open-access resources raises many issues. In some cases, these resources form the main or only resources used by the population, e.g., pastoralists, fisher folk, foragers (hunters and gatherers), and some farmers. In other cases, the use of common property resources complements income from privately owned farms or wage work. The poorest and women often depend most on these resources (Cernea 1996). Indian social scientists have argued for the recognition of customary tenure among “tribals” living in government forests (Mahapatra 1999a), but have not yet been successful. In many parts of the developing world, urban residents of spontaneous neighborhoods lack title and are considered squatters. Sometimes, they have the right to compensation; other times, they do not (Meikle and Walker 1998).

Economic aspects of livelihood restoration and Diversification in strategies

Economic sustainability, including intergenerational equity, needs to be foregrounded so that stocks of capital assets do not decrease. Consideration of these assets needs to include the stock of skills and knowledge (human capital) and environmental assets (Pearce 1999:59). Hayes (1999) suggested looking explicitly at physical, human, social, and natural capital.

Until now, the displaced have been fortunate when a resettlement project reconstituted their major resource. Yet this approach ignores multiple activities undertaken individually or by

groups more commonly heterogeneous than homogeneous. In much of the world, rural residents who define themselves primarily as “farmers” cannot live by farming alone. Lassailly-Jacob (1996:188) noted that when resettlers became self-sustaining in rural African settlement schemes, it was often due to activities other than farming. Planners have not paid attention to resource diversity in rural areas. In Orissa (India), programs were planned for viable agricultural fields but ignored homestead plots, leading to a substantial decline in income-earning possibilities for women and variety in the family diet (Pandey 1998). Viable social systems usually include people with a variety of occupations. While the majority of rural residents may be farmers, there are artisans, traders, and specialized service providers (e.g., health or religious practitioners), often ignored in development-induced displacement and resettlement programs. Indian resettlement policies often did not recognize residents who did not live from the land as displaced. Craft or service providers who lost their occupations due to displacement were not eligible for rehabilitation and resettlement (Pandey 1998:111).

Gender, Migration and Development Paradigms: Questioning the Database Approaches to migration in development discourses and theories have been, in the main, preoccupied with the expected and desired transition from an agrarian to an industrial or even post industrial social and economic order for which rural to urban migration is often seen as a rough proxy. The focus on transition was of course central to the earlier policy regime of decolonization oriented and state led industrialization and ‘development’ policy in India from the 1950s till the early 1980s. Its proxy in rural to urban migration has perhaps received even greater attention under the present regime of liberalization, privatized resource driven, and globalized market led ‘growth’ formally inaugurated by the Industrial Policy of 1991, albeit with more of an individual and less of a structural focus. Nevertheless, a common underlying thread running through otherwise divergent economic policy paradigms, is the broad understanding that the migration process leads to some form of settlement at a particular destination (probably urban), usually accompanied by occupational/sectoral change, enhanced incomes and perhaps some degree of social mobility. In actuality, the experience in India has been of a relatively slow rate of urbanization, the continuance of agriculture as the majority employment in the workforce, and the expansion of more circular forms of migration into, and around rural as well as urban areas. Temporary and circular migration appear to have further gained ground in the face of the increasing rather than decreasing weight of unorganized/informal and intermittent forms of employment in rural and urban areas, and by the unsettling and shrinking of more durable organized sector employment across the past three decades. As such, the premises and prognostications of the dominant development approaches to migration have come under question.

Circular movements of labour were of course brought into the debates on migration, not from any analysis of the macro-data, but rather through a not insubstantial body of work drawing primarily on qualitatively inclined anthropological research on labour, localized development activities of a few NGOs, and micro-surveys in some regions. It is this body of work that initially drew attention to the significant proportions of women in short term labour migration, particularly in rural areas (Banerjee, Karlekar, Teerink). Some of these studies have framed short term or circular migration as a mode of survival migration by the poor, some have focused on it as a livelihood strategy of families, some have located it in a more structural understanding of labour circulation and its relationship with accumulation regimes. Although mostly region or even community specific, these studies have all contributed to making available fairly detailed descriptions and analysis of migration patterns that cannot be extracted from the macro-data.

There is now sufficient evidence that members of peasant households move to employments outside agriculture to keep themselves clothed and fed as well as for sustaining their agricultural activities. High rates of self-employment in rural and even in urban areas have demonstrated that petty production in agriculture and non-agriculture still accounts for a major part of the workforce, including migrants. All migrants cannot therefore be subsumed into the single dominant (actual or potential) relation of labour and capital as is assumed in neo-classical development theories. There is evidence, for example, of wages in modern (often urban) industry or services not always covering the cost of social reproduction of workers and their offspring/families, which then continues to be borne by rural peasant based subsistence activities. In such cases, a degree of difficulty exists in binding social categories and indeed even individuals as economic agents into an analytical frame based only on economic theories and categories that are derived from developed capitalism. It appears that the complete jettisoning of the much criticized dualistic frame of early development theories would pose additional problems rather than resolve them, and leads to unwarranted evasion of the agrarian question that remains central to understanding the patterns of labour migration in contemporary times. This has become even more significant in the contemporary period of agrarian crisis where a large proportion of peasant households are confronted with deficits in agriculture and look for external incomes to fill the gaps.

Even though the model of growth, accumulation and development of modern technology and industry leading to a reduction of both mass underemployment and the concentration of labour in low productive sectors (that underlay the dualistic model), has been belied by experience in India, and it is increasingly clear that the conditions and constraints of the present stage of capitalism on a worldwide scale were only partially taken into account by the classic development model, its sector based conception cannot be dismissed as irrelevant for a developmental perspective on labour migration.

National data sets have been slow to respond to research on circular, seasonal and short term migration and have remained anchored in what has been called a 'permanent settlement paradigm'. The welcome recent inclusion of a separate category of short term migrants in the 2007-08 migration survey by NSSO as also an additional question on temporary migration, is still dogged by definitional weaknesses that persist in excluding a large proportion of short term and circular migrants. It is of course also true that the official migration data relates primarily to population movements, in contradistinction to development or economic theories of migration which are primarily based on labour migration (Ravi Srivastava, 2009), and there are genuine difficulties and a degree of fuzziness encountered in trying to distinguish between the two. Nevertheless, the data on migration for employment (as a reason for migration) has long been thought to approximate levels of economic/labour migration. In general, while female migrants vastly outnumber male migrants in the population movement/migration data for India, the proportions of female migrants identified as moving for employment related reasons is so small as to be rendered insignificant, in contrast to males where the proportions migrating for employment reasons are the most significant. We believe that it is the mono-causal approach (i.e., the attribution of a single reason for migration) followed by the macro surveys that has been a major factor in camouflaging at least some economic/labour based decisions in women's migration under other apparently non-economic social reasons. For example, some implicit or actual labour migration by women may appear in the data as marriage migration or as other forms of associational movement by women simply because both may coincide, but the social reason is presumed to be all important, even where women of a migrant family enter the paid or income earning workforce in their individual capacity at any given destination, it is still possible that marriage or family movement would be given as the reason for migration since the social (marriage and family and movements) and economic (employment, business, etc.) reasons for migration are often congruent to the point of intersection in the case of women.

When combined with lack of adequate attention to short term migration, where explicit labour migration by women is known to be not insignificant, an underestimation of female labour migration appears to be inbuilt into the data. Several decades of macro-data on migration have thus presented a largely unchanging picture of women migrating for mainly social reasons and men for economic reasons. The net result has been an entrenched and reasoned proclivity towards using male migration (a perceived proxy for labour or employment oriented economic migration) as the primary indicator in development oriented discussions on migration at the cost of gendered analysis.

Finally, there is the question of the unit of labour. Anthropological research has already drawn attention to the circulation of family units or male female pairs for wage labour in some industries/activities that are virtually completely manned by migrants. For example, millions of migrant workers are recruited in pairs (*jodis*) or family unit by contractors for brick making near and in kilns across the country and for harvesting sugarcane across large areas in western and southern India. That social or employment relations are all based on individual units of labour is clearly not as universal as is assumed by the employment and migration data and indeed even by the laws related to labour.

It seems to us that an orientation towards a permanent settlement paradigm, a monocausal approach to migration that tends to a rigid distinction economic and social reasons for migration, a lack of focus on circular modes of labour migration, and a flattened out and purely individual labour unit based conception/definition of work/employment, inclines the

macro-data towards concealing more than revealing many important features and trends in relation to labour, gender and migration that operate on the ground.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study are 1.) to study the causes and nature of migration and to see if displacement from livelihoods is a major cause of out-migration within and from the state; 2.) to study the social and economic impacts of development policies (with particular reference to land acquisition) on women and on female migration in particular and 3.) to study the nature of development-induced resettlement processes in Himachal Pradesh.

Methodology

Survey has been conducted in Malana village of Kullu district and in Kinnaur district. Both a household level questionnaire and a questionnaire for a focussed group discussion have been designed under the study. The household level questionnaire has also been translated to Hindi.

Data Collection: Both quantitative and qualitative data from primary and secondary sources are being used in the study. Household level data with respect to migration trends and demographic aspects will be collected from the selected Panchayats. Narratives- Oral histories of displacement and resettlement are being recorded. Focussed group discussions have been conducted on community members.

Implications

The study will have important implications for policy as it will help understand the causes of displacement in the state which will then help make suitable recommendations regarding a development policy which keeps the interests of the local population in mind. The research will support anthropologists seeking to explore broader connections between political ecology and the social milieu. It will help understand the regional politics in the historical and current context of Himachal Pradesh. Development projects such as hydro power, and industries such as cement and other chemicals are being sited in the midst of flourishing ecology and agriculture based cultures. This is resulting in physical and emotional displacement, loss of biodiversity and agriculture (hence folk medicines), and loss of livelihoods. Policy needs to determine that only resource based industries (such as a medicinal plant industry where people have significant knowledge of the medicinal plants in their region and their use) come up in an area so that local communities are not uprooted.

The study will be gender affirmative as it will help establish the nature of female migration in the state. The indigenous knowledge of people (especially women who have acted as agents for conservation of this knowledge) is a significant oral resource which needs to be integrated and acknowledged. The issue of what can be the nature of development is an important issue which is already part of the public discourse in the state and the country. The project can contribute to this discourse in a significant manner and the study will be useful for students of Anthropology, Gender Studies, Economics, Political Ecology as well as for policy makers³.

³From my ICSSR sponsored project "Development at what cost! A study of migration, loss of livelihood security and development induced resettlement in Himachal Pradesh".

Survey of Malana village⁴

The Malana hydro power plant is located about 24 km from the Bhuntar airport and about 500 km from Delhi by road. Power is transmitted to the Himachal Pradesh State's Bajaura connection point via a high voltage transmission line built. Construction of Malana Hydropower Plant I was commenced in January 1999 and included several Indian contracts for civil works. BHEL supplied major electromechanical works. The plant was commissioned in July 2001. Later Malana II was given to the Everest Power Company by the Himachal Pradesh government and has been under execution since 2004.

Malana village believed to be the oldest democracy in the world developed a uniqueness of socio-cultural life almost independently upon their sense of environmental ethics through centuries in a distinctly remote and secluded part of Himachal Pradesh. Malana is a tributary to River Parbati which falls in River Beas within the catchment area of the Upper Beas Basin in Kullu district of Himachal Pradesh. The Malanese tribe has their abode in a secluded part of this river valley at considerably high elevation of about 2,500m (8,000' ft). Existence of this tribe, comprising hardly one thousand people, was explored in the 1860s when A.F.P. Harcourt, the Magistrate of erstwhile Kullu, Lahaul and Spiti district arrived in this part of the mountain in 1868 on a reconnaissance survey mission before preparation of the first gazetteer of this district. Being basically an administrator, Mr. Harcourt had a good sense of anthropological observation. He visited this village twice, first in 1868 and then in 1870, and studied numerous aspects of life and culture of this apparently strange tribal community, with which he compiled a reasonably detailed account in 1870 (Harcourt, 1872 *reprint*). Since then, over more than a century, several environmentalists, anthropologists and amateur photographers paid visits to this amazing world of ethnic life but little could have been explored about their society, culture and economy because of the complete apathy and unfriendly notion of these people towards the outsiders. Long after Harcourt's visit to this part, in the seventies and eighties of the twentieth century, Collin Rosser, a well-known British anthropologist visited Malana and described his experience in the chapter 'The Hermit Village' in his book *Indian Villages* (Rosser, 1986). It remains, as ever a matter of conjecture how this small ethnic group, who remained completely cut-off from the neighboring parts of the Kullu valley as well as from the rest of the civilised world, developed an entirely independent cultural and socio-political system within their small territory. In 1987 a documentary on this village, made by Ramesh Pathania, a resident of Kullu was telecast on the Doordarshan. In fact this was the first visual recording of the moving life in that village, with its customs and traditions and the life of the inhabitants. Professor Guruprasad Chattopadhyay has through the series of his adventure-oriented field studies during 1988 – 2007, attempted to explore some aspects of life of this Malanese tribe for a systematic understanding of their socio-cultural and socio-economic systems and the way they are drifting away from their original cultural heritage under the rapid influx of culture from the civilised world. Recently a hydro power project has come up in Malana.

The Malana Hydroelectric Plant is located 24 kms away from the Bhuntar airport. Water is collected at the plant's intake which consists of a barrage head regulator, a desilter, and a small concrete dam reservoir. Water is transferred via an underground headrace tunnel and steel surface penstock into the power house located at Chauki village. Power is transmitted to the Bajaura connection point of Himachal Pradesh State via a high voltage transmission line built by the plant. The installed capacity of the plant is 86 MW. The Malana Hydropower

⁴While a significant part of the household survey in Malana has been completed, a complete analysis has not been conducted so far and hence this report does not include it.

Plant was commissioned in July 2001. The construction works commenced in January 1999 and it included several Indian contracts for civil works. The major electromechanical works were supplied by BHEL. 51% of the ownership of the project is with the Bhilwara group and 49% with S.N. Power, Norway. It was claimed that efficient and early commissioning in the project lead to lower than normal costs -less than Rs. 3.90 crore per MW, as against a normal cost of Rs. 5 crore per MW.

Later in connection with the proposed CDM credits for the Malana Hydroelectric project II in Himachal Pradesh, Himanshu Thakkar wrote in February 2008 that it will not be appropriate to accept the project for Clean Development Mechanism (CDM)^{5, 6} credits and the project should not be validated under the current circumstances. The conclusion was based on reading of the Project Design Document for the 100 MW Hydropower Project (as available on the UNFCCC website) and the Environment Impact Assessment for the project, and also based on his organization SANDRP's representative having visited the project site before the public hearing for the project. SANDRP has monitored India's power sector over the last few years. Some of the main reasons for this conclusion are listed below.

1. The project is clearly not additional: The project was given to the Everest Power Company by Himachal Pradesh govt five years back. It has been under execution since 2004. The project has already achieved financial closure on Aug 3, 2006, without any assumption of CDM credits, hence the project has been going on without the need for CDM credits. The project was justified in its Techno Economic Clearance application to the Central Electricity Authority, without mentioning the need for CDM credits. The project signed Power Purchase Agreement on July 25, 2005, again without mentioning the CDM credits. So the power from the project is already been contracted to be sold, with all the assumed costs included, and without the consideration of CDM credits.

2. The project makes rather shocking claim that there was no alternative to this project for the entire power sector in India, thus it presents business as usual without project as the only baseline option. This is clearly wrong and unacceptable. There are many options available for power sector in India, including Demand Side Management options, reduction of the huge transmission and distribution losses, improving end use efficiencies, improving generation performance of existing power projects, and also a large number of new generation options, most notably, small hydro, wind, solar and so on.

⁵ The **Clean Development Mechanism** (CDM) is one of the flexibility mechanisms defined in the Kyoto Protocol (IPCC, 2007). It is defined in Article 12 of the Protocol, and is intended to meet two objectives: (1) to assist parties not included in Annex I in achieving sustainable development and in contributing to the ultimate objective of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), which is to prevent dangerous climate change; and (2) to assist parties included in Annex I in achieving compliance with their quantified emission limitation and reduction commitments (greenhouse gas (GHG) emission caps). "Annex I" parties are those countries that are listed in Annex I of the treaty, and are the industrialized countries. Non-Annex I parties are developing countries. The purpose of the CDM is to promote clean development in developing countries, i.e., the "non-Annex I" countries (countries that aren't listed in Annex I of the Framework Convention). The CDM is one of the Protocol's "project-based" mechanisms, in that the CDM is designed to promote projects that reduce emissions. The CDM is based on the idea of emission reduction "production" (Toth et al., 2001, p. 660). These reductions are "produced" and then subtracted against a hypothetical "baseline" of emissions. The emissions baseline are the emissions that are predicted to occur in the absence of a particular CDM project. CDM projects are "credited" against this baseline, in the sense that developing countries gain credit for producing these emission cuts.

⁶IPCC (2007). "Glossary J-P. In (book section): Annex I. In: Climate Change 2007: MReport of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (B. Metz et al. Eds.)". Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, U.K., and New York, N.Y., U.S.A..http://www.ipcc.ch/publications_and_data/ar4/wg3/en/annex1sglossary-j-p.html.

3. A project of such magnitude should have shown that it has followed the recommendations of the World Commission on Dams, but neither the project has shown it, nor has it followed the WCD recommendations. This is true for both the generation side as well as the transmission side of the project.

4. The Environmental Impact Assessment of the project is not available in the local language to the affected people.

5. The claim that there will be no adverse downstream impacts is not supported by study of the downstream biodiversity and their relation with flows across at least two years, as normally required.

6. The claim in the project report that, "The direct beneficiaries of this project (apart from the project proponent) shall be the villagers of Malana village, which is a small village of about 500 families situated on a plateau of Chandrakhani mountain at a height of about 12000 ft" is totally wrong and misleading. The people of Malana village, host to one of the oldest examples of local self government, will only get adverse impacts of the project, no benefits.

7. The claim of the project report that, "The project will help in mitigating the substantial peaking power deficit" is wrong as majority of the claimed 428 GWhr power in 90% dependable year will be generated in no peaking mode as the project will not be working as peaking power station during summer and monsoon months when there is more water in the glacier fed river. Similarly the claim of the power from project being environment friendly is misleading, as all such projects have significant adverse impacts in the local area, all suffered by the local communities, who typically get no benefits from such projects, they are not even part of the planning or decision making processes and they are not even fully informed about the projects impacts, even full EIAs are never available in local languages. Moreover, the projects also consume a lot of materials and create adverse environmental impacts during their lifetime, which all should be calculated while calculating the potential of carbon emission reduction from such projects.

8. The claim that, "The project activity is not sufficiently profitable in the absence of CDM revenues, and it faces important geological, institutional and investment barriers" is not correct. The project has been taken up many years ago, when there was no known possibility that the project would get CDM credits. Moreover, such projects are taken up without CDM credits.

9. While calculating the power density of the project, a figure of 3.5 ha is used in the project report for submergence. However, the project would require a total area of 37.62 ha of land as per the EIA of the project and even the reservoir of the project would require 6.4 ha. Thus, the project report of the project is giving wrong information, thus misleading UNFCCC and everyone.

A representative from SANDRP visited the affected villages in early May 2004 and found that the affected people did not know anything about the project, its impacts, its EIA-EMP or about the public hearing slated for May 18 and 19. On getting informed about their role in this process, the affected people wrote letters to the concerned officials in the Himachal Pradesh Pollution Control Board and Himachal Pradesh Environment Council informing that they had not been informed about the above and hence the public hearing should not be held as

scheduled. The local newspaper also reported about this on May 5, 2004. All this clearly shows that there has been no worthwhile public consultation for the project and the claims to the contrary are wrong. Under the circumstances, validation of the project in current form for CDM credits will not be appropriate and it would be absurd if the project gets validated, registered as CDM activity or gets CERs (certified emission reduction).⁷The developers signed a power purchase agreement (PPA) with the government, reached financial closure and started construction before even submitting the project for CDM approval. That is, they decided to undertake the project without knowledge that the project will be successfully registered as a CDM project. It is clear then, that the project would have gone ahead without the CDM, for in fact, it did.

Malana is one of the last remaining mysteries of the Himalayas, inhabited by a fiercely independent people, who still have their own governance systems intact, with their own deity Jamlu, and a unique language which is not spoken outside the village. Reaching there has traditionally been difficult. Malana village is situated directly below the dam, and so will be directly impacted by the changes to the river caused by the dam as well as the dam construction. The guidelines for the stakeholder consultation requirements are minimal. But they do provide a few basic principles. The guidance is: “An invitation for comments by local stakeholders shall be made in an open and transparent manner, in a way that facilitates comments to be received from local stakeholders and allows for a reasonable time for comments to be submitted. In this regard, project participants shall describe a project activity in a manner which allows the local stakeholders to understand the project activity...” “Facilitating comments” requires as a minimum that all people directly affected by a CDM project should be informed of the project and of opportunities to provide comments on the project. Enabling “local stakeholders to understand the project activity” means that the villagers must be given full information about the expected effects of the project on them in a language and means that they can understand. Given the remoteness of the village the villagers should have been effectively made aware of the public consultations, and should have been provided enough information about the effects of the project in an appropriate manner.

Amlan Datta has directed a 2 hour long film on Malana called Bom-Aka One day ahead of democracy in 2011, a remote village in the Himalayas, isolated from outside civilization for thousands of years has been fostering a divine existence in harmony with nature and a unique model of democracy of consensus. The hidden treasure of their governance has been trust and they have been selecting not electing! They have also been producing some of the best quality hashish. In the seventies came some white men who taught them how to rub the crème and drew them into hashish trade. Malana crème became world famous. The rule of our modern day democracy has to be established, so Malana becomes a part of Indian electorate. In name of development the curse of modern world starts destroying their traditional culture and social practices. In 2007, his film shows a united community got divided and went to vote for the Indian general elections.

⁷Himanshu Thakkar (ht.sandrp@gmail.com).

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A focussed group discussion was conducted in the village by the researcher as well as interviews were conducted. The previous Kardaar⁸ of the village said in his interview to the author/researcher that the situation in the village changed after elections started taking place in the village in the year 2007. The congress wanted the hydro power project people to get the road to Malana, the BJP didn't want it. The villagers were cheated into giving permission for the Malana hydro power project, their thumb expressions were taken to show that the No Objection Certificate had been granted. The Kardaar said that his father was instrumental in getting electricity to Malana and that they have not really been against development and mainstreaming. He said that he didn't approve of the opium trade as quite a few young men had become dopes and lost their minds. However he said their deity Jamlu must not have been against its cultivation as it was a source of livelihood for the people and long years ago "hashish" was cultivated in the deity's land. He said whatever is cultivated in the land of the deity is distributed equally. The Kardaar further said that Rs.3.75 lakhs have been paid for a bigha of land which went for the project which was very little. When they said it was not enough, they were told that their titles were not clear on the land so they had to be happy with what they got⁹. In the focussed group discussion people from Malana said that no stake holder analysis was conducted in the village. The promises made to the people according to them, such as that the roads will be brought right upto Malana were not kept.

Two women from the present Kardaar's family told the researcher that the position of women had probably deteriorated with the advent of power project. The deity gave the same powers to both men and women. Both men and women had the right to choose their partners as well as to leave them if they had problems. However, now after mainstreaming and the coming of the power project things had changed. The power of the deity had reduced. They now had electricity and owned mobile phones but none of that had made life easier as they still had to work as hard for a living as before. The women who were interviewed in the village said that life in Malana was hard for women. They started at 6 in the morning and went on till nine in the night. Although earlier women didn't marry outside the village, now the project people had taken away a few women, and some others had also found their partners outside the village. Maasi Devi told the researcher that a lady from her husband's family married in Rasol (another village not very far from Malana). She was later instrumental in getting their undivided land acquitted by the hydro power company. She said the amount they got for this land was Rs. 3.75 lakhs/bigha which was hardly anything. She said women now carried mobiles and went to courts to solve their marriage disputes but that hadn't made it better. Earlier Jamblu, their deity had given them the power to take the initiative to get their marriage dispute solved or even to leave their husband.

Survey has also been conducted in Tidong project area and Kashang project area in Kinnaur district. The results are being interpreted and will be added to this paper soon.

⁸An important member of the deity's committee who is involved

⁹ A suspended Superintendent of Police, K.K. Indoria was named for creating problems and causing panic and divide among the villagers while negotiations regarding the power project were taking place.

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