

Disrupted and Dislocated Livelihoods: Impacts of Khuga Dam on the Livelihoods of the Displaced People in Churachandpur, Manipur

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Abstract: This paper makes a micro study on the changing livelihoods of the Khuga Dam displaced communities in Churachandpur. It systematically assesses some of the crucial socio-economic constraints by evaluating the peoples' responses to the changes that have occurred and their ways of adaptation and consequent impacts on the new environment. It is found out that large sections of the people had to adjust with the newly introduced means of livelihoods in their relocated settlements. The construction of the Dam had disrupted and dislocated the once stable means of livelihoods of the people and compelled them to turn to their immediate surroundings for minimum sustenance. Activities like clearing of forests for jhum, cutting and burning of woods for fuel and charcoal, have been largely intensified. Intense pressure has been put on the existing forests and ecological balances. It is questionable that the changed livelihoods of the people would be sustainable in the long run.

Keywords: Khuga Dam, Disrupted Livelihood, Displaced People, Jhuming, Charcoal Making, Sustainability.

Introduction

Man's impact on environment for development is manifold. Developmental activities, in the process of advancing towards the goals,

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may vary in its definitions, if not controversial. The reason behind is that more often the purported development pursued for 'all' may act as a root cause of distress, deprivation and impoverishment to other section of society. Besides, developmental activities alter or damage the natural environment too. Amartya Sen describes development as "freedom" which means "removal of major sources of unfreedom such as poverty as well as tyranny, poor economic opportunities and social deprivation" and so on. There is, no doubt however that "social modernization can substantially contribute to expanding human freedom" (Sen 2000: 3). However, there are many examples that the so called development induces displacement of people, disruption of local livelihood and ecological stability in modern world. The hydel project or construction of dams is one of them. The ever increase in human population and human needs compel us to look out for more resources, giving pressure on environment. The planners look out for available options to cope up with the growing demands. Developmental projects like construction of dams help in tapping water for generating electricity, providing irrigation, drinking water, flood control, etc. However, it also submerges forest and agriculture lands, displace people and leads to innumerable sufferings of the displaced people.

Construction of dam for development has direct and indirect impact on the people and environment. Such development projects not only affect the tribal ecosystem but also the natural ecosystem. Loss of properties, agricultural lands, forested lands and even human lives draw much attention against such development which changes the entire lifestyle of the affected people. Judge (1997: 840) laments that "the displaced families, after given some monetary compensation, they were forgotten." Being critical on the socio-economic impacts he further questions: "what happened to their living conditions? Where did they resettle? Could they socially integrate in their new setting?" So, the question of how oustees will make a living after displacement has always

been a matter of lowest concern to project planners. The little interest that is taken is more a consequence of wider public awareness and local resistance or the high profile of the project concerned (Kothari 1996: 1480).

Brun (2005) observes that “displacement often leads to loss of home, possessions, and social networks. It also introduces the displaced persons to new places, people and environment.” Pressure on land and forest has been enormous on account of construction of dams and displacement. In the process of developmental projects people lose their assets, properties and lands, which resulted in the loss of livelihood and subsequently change their economic profession. Dube (1983) contends that due to “pressures brought about not only by modern technology but also by the need of greater productivity for a growing population, this artificial barrier between agriculture and forestry is breaking down.”

With regard to rehabilitation and resettlement Goyal (1996:1461) assesses ad hoc and piecemeal resettlement initiatives at the state or project level as largely ineffective, and even harmful in some cases. The provisions of these policies have been inadequate and discriminatory, leaving large number of people worse off as a result of development projects which are otherwise supposed to provide general benefits. She adds: “in the absence of adequate resettlement, most of the displaced people, and especially those belonging to disadvantaged social groups, have been reduced to poverty and destitution.” This statement is true with the conditions of the displaced tribals in Churachandpur district of Manipur.

Problem

The construction of Khuga Multipurpose Project may be beneficial for the people of Churachandpur town and its peripheries in larger context, but the impact on the livelihood and the economy of the displaced peoples cannot be overlooked. There are more than 3000 populations being

displaced by the construction of Khuga Dam. The project has been completed and inaugurated in 2010 by Sonia Gandhi. While the venue and the huge mansion serves as the one and only spot of tourist attraction in the district, there is hardly any other purpose it serves for the residents surrounding it. The main purpose, i.e. power generation has not been initiated till today. Besides, irrigation as well as domestic water supply has not been facilitated. While the system and development has been stalled, the displaced communities are at the receiving end. Their livelihood systems have been disrupted and dislocated. The government took complacency in paying off some amount of money to the affected populations to compensate their losses. However, whether the monetary payment made to the farmers and land owners in exchange of their paddy fields and their cultivated lands really compensated their losses remains the main concern. The construction on the one hand and destruction of livelihoods on the other hand has collateral impact on the new environments where they are relocated. While the pressure put on forests and immediate environments is high, the volume of distressed migrants into the town areas is also significantly high.

Objectives

The paper empirically highlights the extent of changes in livelihoods of the Khuga dam affected peoples. It also attempts to throw light on the consequences of changes in the means of livelihoods of the peoples.

Methodology

Out of the various socio-economic indicators, only livelihood issue has been investigated in this paper. Therefore, the paper deals mainly with the problems on livelihoods in relation to the displacement. In order to meet the above objective relevant data has been collected from both

primary and secondary sources. The primary data has been generated by intensive fieldwork¹ selectively conducted in six displaced villages with the help of a framed schedule through random sampling method. Information related to displacement procedure, compensation, socio-economic and environmental conditions were collected from government and non-governmental organisations based in Churachandpur district. Secondary data sources consist of books and journal articles, government publications, etc.

Data collected includes both before and after the displacement and comparison and analysis was made regarding the qualities or quantities of the socio-economic and livelihood conditions of the people. All the raw data are converted into percentage for easy comprehension. For the fulfillment of the first objective, questionnaires had been made to incorporate the occupational structures of the people before and after the displacements. The consequences of the displacements and changes in livelihoods or occupations were assessed from data collected in the fields too.

In the field survey, six displaced villages with about 350 households of nearly 2000 populations have been randomly taken as the samples. The villages are inhabited by different Kuki-Chin ethnic communities such as Zou, Thadou and Paite. The socio-economic survey include indicators such as occupations, income, assets and social amenities of the displaced peoples in their respective villages in two phases of times - before and after the displacements and the changes have been identified in systematic manner.

To investigate the changes in occupational structures, livelihoods and other parameters pertaining to the displaced peoples, two sample years - 2005 and 2009 have been taken and considered. The actual displacements took place in the year 2007 and completed in 2008. Therefore, the two assumed years give the required information of the impact in livelihoods of the displaced peoples.

For analytical evaluation of the livelihood changes and other related impacts, the data collected have been processed by simple statistical methods such as frequency table and percentage.

Hypothesis

Based on this empirical research, two important hypotheses have been put forward for test:

1. Displacement necessarily changes livelihood system; and
2. The change in livelihood virtually put pressure on the surrounding forests.

Impact on Occupations

Occupational types may be classically divided into primary, secondary and tertiary sectors/activities. It is found (table-1 & 2) that out of the total number of working populations in the selected six villages, the percentage of population engaged in primary activities such as cultivation, farming and daily unskilled labour such as collection of forest products like charcoal and fire wood is the highest (84.6%) followed by secondary (9.1 %) and tertiary activities (6.3%). The striking feature of the occupational structure is the percentage of non-workers i.e. who do not earn any income comes to around 41.6 per cent which is significantly high. This means, a significant proportion of the population of the sampled area is non-productive and only 58.4 per cent of the total population is productive with primary culture. Therefore, the high dependency rate would normally add to the burden of the active populations. The occupational structure also helps us to know about the prevailing economy of the study area. The percentage of cultivators to the total population reveals that the economy is mainly agrarian and that of self-subsistence.

Table 1: Number and Percentage of Workers and Non-Workers among the Khuga displaced populations

S.N.	Name of Village	No. of Population	No. of Workers	% of Worker	No. of Non-workers	% of Non-worker
1	Sehken	300	160	53.3	140	46.7
2	Zoumun	253	132	51.4	123	48.6
3	Ngoiphai	564	302	53.5	262	46.5
4	Mata Mualtam	590	375	63.6	215	36.4
5	Geljang	89	56	62.9	33	37.1
6	Lamjang	499	317	63.5	182	36.5
	Total	2295	1342	58.4	955	41.6

Source: Field Work, 2009

It is also shown that the percentage of non-working populations is significantly high in three villages crossing over 40 percentage - Zoumun (48.6%), Sehken (46.7%) and Ngoiphai (46.5%) while the other three remain below 40 per cent - Geljang (37.1%), Lamjang (36.5%) and Mata-Mualtam (36.4%).

Table 2: Occupational Structure of Khuga Displaced Persons

Types of Occupation	No. of persons	Percentage
Primary	1135	84.6
Secondary	122	9.1
Tertiary	85	6.3
Total	1342	100.0

Source: Field work, 2009

Changes in Livelihood and Income

The agricultural activities of the displaced persons have shifted alarmingly from wetland to jhuming or shifting cultivations which had increased from mere six per cent before displacement to a whopping 44.5 per cent after displacement. The abrupt shift in the type of cultivation is obviously due to the loss of wetlands or paddy fields which are submerged under the dammed water. Here, we get the immediate consequence of displacements by the construction of Khuga Dam. The people's primary source of income and livelihoods had been disrupted and destroyed completely. They were dislocated leaving behind their livelihood means under the water. Dependence on forest and forest products such as timber, charcoal making and firewood cutting has also considerably increased. It is revealed that from previously 6.4 per cent in the year 2005, the percentage of populations depending on forest and forest products increased to 50.5 per cent in 2009.

Other usual occupations like gardening and livestock farming do not see much change (Fig. 2). Traditionally the people in the rural areas of Churachandpur in general and *Haopi*² area in particular engage in jhuming and wetland cultivations. Other activities such as collection of forest products like firewood and charcoal, handicrafts, fishing, gardening and farming are temporary, if not seasonal. However, the scenario considerably changed after the construction of Khuga Multipurpose Project. Due to loss of the primary activities, mainly wetland cultivations, the people now have no other choice but to shift their 'seasonal' occupations as 'permanent' occupations. Thus, it is observed that while wet paddy cultivation was the main source of livelihood before displacement, the people mainly depend on jhum land and forest-products after displacement.

Displacement necessarily changes the socio-economic life of the people. This has been proved by the Table-3. Around 80 per cent of the displaced peoples who were engaged in wetland cultivation before displacement in the year 2005 completely lost their cultivable lands after

displacement in 2009. Dependence on the forests and forest products, mainly of charcoal burning and firewood cutting, increased tremendously from 6.4 per cent in 2005 (before displacement) to 50.5 per cent in 2009. This clearly is indicative of heavy pressure made on to the environment. Livestock farming saw decrease in percentage - from 4.5 to 3.3 per cent in 2005 and 2009. This is due to physical shift in settlement and movements of populations which normally discourages to own livestock and other bulky materials. Instead, the people preferred to dispose off in marginal prices to the local traders. Business and some sorts of small trading also declined from 3 percent to only 1.7 per cent.

Types of Occupation	% in 2005 [Before]	% in 2009 [After]
Wet paddy cultivation	80	*
Jhuming	6.1	44.5
Forest products (wood and charcoal)	6.4	50.5
Farming (livestock)	4.5	3.3
Business	3	1.7

Source: Field work, 2009. *Note: * paddy fields submerged under water*

Again, it is evident from the investigation that, the shift in occupations essentially has negative impact on the income of the displaced peoples. Table 4 classifies the annual average income of the IDPs into three groups as 'Less than 20,000', '20,000-40,000' and 'More than 40,000'. It is normal to observe that the peoples' income declined after displacement. Around 26 per cent of the families who had annual income of less than Rs.20, 000, increased to 44.8 per cent after the displacement. The families with annual income between Rs. 20,000 and 40,000 decreased from 58 percent to 46.3 per cent in 2005 and 2009 respectively. The annual income group of above Rs. 40,000 also declined from 16 to 9.9 per cent before and after displacements. While the percentage of the higher income groups decreased on the one hand, the percentage of lower income groups increased significantly. This clearly shows that the overall income of the population decreased after displacement.

Percentage	Less than Rs.20,000	Rs.20,000- 40,000	More than Rs.40,000
Before Displacement (%)	26.0	58.0	16.0
After Displacement (%)	44.8	46.3	9.9

Source: Field work, 2009

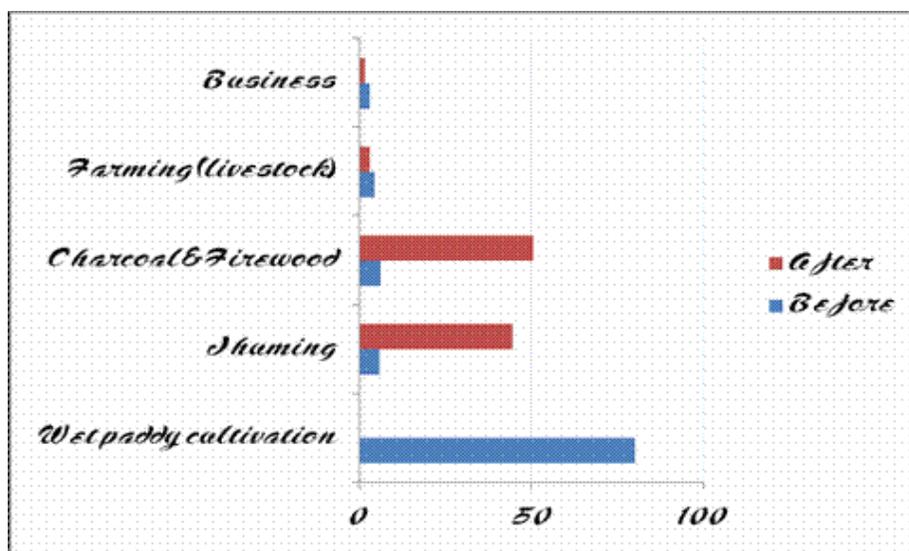


Fig. 1: Changes in livelihoods before and after displacement

Status of Land Ownership and Assets

It is seen that, before displacements 78.5 per cent of the displaced families owned lands in the form of cultivated wetlands and forests, whereas, 16.1 per cent accounts for tenant and 5.4 per cent are landless (Table 5).

The landless labourers were engaged in daily wage labours. The tenants, on the other hand, cultivated wetlands where the rent is fixed to half or two-third of the produce. Most of the people rented lands for cultivation. The land-lease system has been traditionally practiced since long time among the tribal communities.

Table 5: Land Tenure status (in %)

Land owner	78.5
Tenant	16.1
Landless	5.4

Source: Field Work, 2009

From the five selected villages, after comparing the assets owned by each village before and after displacement, it is noticed that some assets like open wells, tube wells and tanks, which were once available, are no longer found in the new villages after the displacement. Other assets like valuable trees - Jack fruit, tree-bean, mango-trees, etc. were reduced considerably or even vanished in some places (Table 6). It is of great loss because normally for trees to mature and bear fruits, it needs two to three years. Livestock such as pigs, chickens, cattle, etc. are the other sources of income which have decreased or in some cases no longer found among the displaced communities. It means the people are deprived of some of their additional sources of income.

Table 6: Assets of the Internally Displaced Persons (IDRs) before (Bf) and after (Af) Displacement

Assets	VILLAGES											
	Zomun		Sehken		Maltam		Ngopthai		Geljang		Langjang	
	Bf	Af	Bf	Af	Bf	Af	Bf	Af	Bf	Af	Bf	Af
Open well	4	-	2	-	14	-	11	-	2	-	15	-
Tube well	2	-	2	-	3	-	3	-	1	-	3	-
Pond/Tank	6	1	2	1	5	-	5	-	2	-	2	-
Trees	87	22	145	56	99	10	167	48	57	20	215	87
Cattle	11	1	17	03	9	-	23	8	3	-	33	9
Coat/Pig	13	3	25	5	16	-	45	10	8	-	45	18
Poultry/bird	205	86	231	69	167	54	352	129	98	24	323	108
Total	328	113	424	134	313	64	606	195	171	44	636	222

Source: Field Work, 2009

Changes in Basic Social Amenities

Comparing the amenities or facilities enjoyed by the displaced populations, we can find that some facilities like electricity and water irrigation were totally absent in the new villages. The type of houses, employment opportunities and availability of drinking water are worse than before.

Table 7: Quality of Social Amenities as responded by the displaced peoples after displacement

<i>Amenities</i>	<i>Better (%)</i>	<i>Worse (%)</i>	<i>Same (%)</i>	<i>Total %</i>
Type of house	0	70	30	100
Electricity	0	100	0	100
Drinking water	0	73	27	100
Water for irrigation*	0	0	0	0
Employment	0	94.5	5.5	100
Market	0	25.3	74.7	100
Transportation	5.1	23.9	71	100
Recreation facility	10	20	70	100
Drainage	0	55	45	100
Wage disposal	0	0	100	100
Toilet facilities	0	22	78	100
Place of worship	0	0	100	100
Medical facilities	0	13	87	100
School	0	45	55	100

*Practically, the IDPs do not use the dammed water for agricultural purposes.

Source: Field Survey, 2009

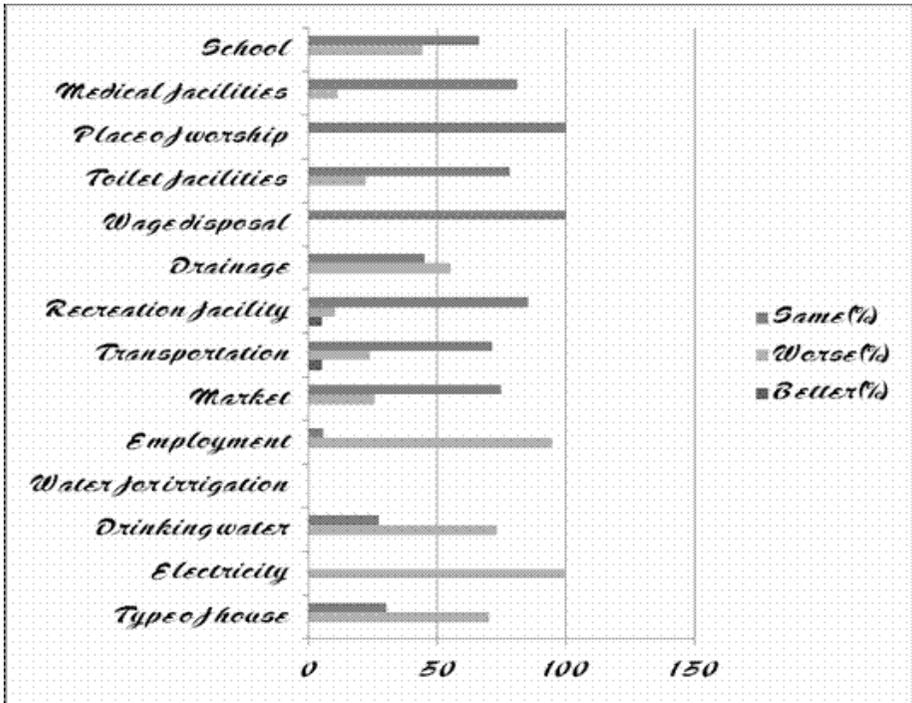


Fig 2: Quality Measurement of amenities after displacement

One remarkable positive impact is that transportation facilities at some of the villages residing proximity to the site of the dam are better off than before (Table 7). But in most cases, the distances of the main road connecting Churachandpur town from villages have increased and the road conditions worsen. During winter season, the roads are dusty while it is muddy in the rainy season. Since road connectivity is poor, accessibility would obviously be less and the people are likely to spend more money on transportation. Employment opportunity is very less and in the infertile soil nothing grows except few trees and crops in the new villages. The sources of drinking water are worse than before. In some of the villages water is very scarce and no supply was made from the government or private authority.

Some of the basic social amenities such as electricity, water,

medical facilities, transportations, types of houses, etc. are found to be worse after the displacement. It is shown (Table 7) that the displaced people do not feel adequate with the current systems and forms of rehabilitation carried out by the governments or any stake holder. It is sad indeed that at least some of the basic amenities have not been met properly.

Changes in the Sources of Water

Khuga River and its tributaries serve as the most important sources of water for domestic use, accounting for 49.2 per cent before displacement, whereas ponds (30.8%) and tube wells (20%) act as supplementary. After the displacement, although, water sources from pond, tube well or hand pumps diminished considerably, share of river and streams increases (68.4%). About 29% of the displaced residents started using the dammed water (Table 8.). In some places people solely depend on locally connected taps for drinking purpose which take almost an hour to fill one bucket. Therefore people began to shift their sources to the dammed reservoir for drinking and other domestic uses.

Table 8: Sources of drinking water before and after displacement

Sources of Water	Before (%)	After (%)
Pond	30.8	1.8
River and streams	49.2	68.4
Water reservoir	0	29.8
Tube well	20	0

Source: Field Work, 2009

Other Critical Shortages

There are other critical shortages faced by the people in regard to

livelihood. The main problem is food scarcity faced by more than half of the displaced people. About 28 percent of the displaced people faced scarcity on employment opportunities, 2 per cent on firewood for cooking purposes, 1.4 per cent on problems of drinking water and 3 per cent on harsh topography. Again, 2 per cent of the cultivators have problems related to infertility of soil.³ The people lost their main occupation and there are fewer opportunities for employment. Thus, they first took hold of the forested lands in their vicinity and plowed up the infertile soil for jhuming and also fell the trees for firewood and charcoal. In fact, charcoal selling is the main and immediate means of making money for the displaced people at present. Besides, there is water shortage in some area where they have to wait for hours to fill their containers.

Social and Cultural Changes

There have been a lot of cultural changes spectacular among the people after they were displaced. As observed (Table 9), clearing of forest (80%) for jhuming and forest products like firewood and charcoal is enormous as it is the easiest and immediate means to support their livelihood. There is no other dependable work to engage other than charcoal making/burning, fire wood collecting and some minor farming and gardening which are seasonal. Since there is no viable job in the new villages, large number (8.5%) of the working populations also migrated out to other places in search of jobs. The young and energetic ones normally go to towns and other cities of India to find jobs and support their families. Social evils like drunken brawls and gambling increased. There is also a considerable rise in the rate of drug addiction (8%) among the displaced populations, which might be due to a prolong stress and forced idleness.

Table 9: Cultural changes after displacement

<i>Types of socio-cultures</i>	<i>Percentage Growth</i>
Clearing of forest	80.9
Different food habits	2.0
Domestic violence	0.6
Workforce disappeared	8.5
Drunken /drugs addiction	8.0

Source: Field work, 200

Mismanagement of the monetary compensation is a common phenomenon among the displaced people. Many of them are immediately inclined to 'consumerist attitude' - purchasing luxurious goods and articles at the cost of their assets and properties lost in the construction of the dam. Some of them wasted their money in merrymaking, drinking, gambling and drug consumptions. After the money got exhausted another story of life began. Out of frustration, some people would take up to thefts, lootings and other forms of social evils. Moreover, the amount of money compensated for the loss of properties and lands were too less to purchase a new one or dependable assets. Receiving Rs. 9000 (Nine Thousand rupees) per acre of land is found to be too meager for starting a new life. In 2007, due to scuffle between the agitating IDPs and the security forces, three persons (IDPs) were shot dead by the latter.

Positive Impacts of Khuga Dam

As per the survey, 50 per cent of the respondents asserted that they benefit nothing from the construction of the Khuga Dam. As for the displaced communities, dam gives nothing much except it debars the opportunities they enjoyed. Although many of the negative impacts of Khuga Dam have been enumerated, it is not devoid of positive results too. Nevertheless, the Khuga multi-purpose project provides drinking water (29%), fishing (4%), recreation (2 %) and minor irrigation (8%) to the displaced

communities (Table 10). Although the displaced people might not enjoy the irrigation facilities, it may be ensured that when the irrigation supply is channelised in future, those residing in the downstream can practice double cropping in a year.

Table 10: Some benefits of Khuga Dam (in %)

Drinking water	29
Fish	4
Recreation	2
None/nothing	50
Irrigation	8
Can't say	7
Total %	100

Source: Field Work 2009

Discussion

After thorough evaluation, the empirical data shows that the negative impact of Khuga dam is more than that of the positive ones for the displaced communities. The displacement led to a shift within primary activities - from fully dependent on wetland/paddy cultivation to jhuming, firewood and charcoal making. Interestingly, other activities such as small business, livestock farming, etc. saw a decline in percentage (Table-3). It is obvious that, paddy or lowland cultivation is fully wiped out from the occupational structure of the displaced communities. So, the villagers in the vicinity of the dam are now engaged heavily in jhuming and charcoal burning. Forests have been extensively cleared for Jhum cultivation, firewood and charcoal. Hence, construction of dam is definitely followed by displacement as well as stress on the people's immediate environment. In the process of displacement, thousands of people lost their stable livelihoods and as a result they are bound to be opposed to such brand of development. Thus, the first hypothesis stating

that displacement necessarily changes livelihoods has been proved to be valid in this context.

As the displaced people lost their agricultural lands - their traditional and sustained livelihoods, a question arises on the sustainability of their present occupational structures. Jhuming/shifting cultivation is not environmental friendly in nature. Besides, felling of trees for jhumland, firewood and charcoal is an 'extreme means' of livelihood apart from its negative impacts on the environment. They are meant only for subsistence. It is by no means comparable to the benefits accrued from the stable wetland cultivation whose production as well as productivity is much higher. Jhum cultivation is dependent on high amount of rainfall too. However, it is not possible to cultivate with the help of irrigation facilities that the yield is unpredictable. Charcoal and firewood making mainly depend on the abundant availability of matured standing trees. After a tree is being cut down it naturally requires at least four to five years to recycle and mature again. There are evidences of large tracts of hills where the trees were cut down completely for charcoal and firewood purposes and are now abandoned to recycle naturally. Therefore, loss of agriculture lands is the main cause of over 'encroachment' in to the forested lands. However, over-dependence on forest and forest products for sole livelihood would not be sustainable in long run. The clearing of forest is done in a large scale for Jhum cultivation, firewood and charcoal and was too rapid that many mountains and hills look barren and dry. If this form of deforestation continues unabated after sometime all the trees will be cleared out and the land will transform merely to grassland or dryland.

It has also been found that large numbers of households from the newly settled villages are deprived of facilities like electricity, proper transport networks. The supplies of drinking water, health centres, schools, employment opportunities, markets, etc. have worsened. Less effort is made, as rightly pointed out by Singh (1990: 568), to minimise

the loss of “essentials of social, cultural and-spiritual value”. There are a lot of changes in the behaviour pattern of the displaced people. Some of them were mentally disturbed by the displacement that they would start to indulge in many social evils like gambling, drunken brawls and violence. The displaced community feels the sense of loss and vulnerability without any proper “redressal mechanism”.⁴ This further leads to increasing frustration and rage among them.

Some positive results, no doubt, are observable. Being located proximity with the Khuga Lake, the displaces in new villages begin to experience favourable weather condition despite harsh topographies. Many of them carried out fishing in the lake for supplementing their income and sustenance. However at present, the authority of the Khuga Dam had already prohibited fishing in the lake hampering the immediate resort of livelihood for the displaced people.

Lastly, the nature of compensation is one of the most important issues as it has large implication on the socio-economic status of the displaced people. While the *patta* land holders were, to some extent, adequately compensated (monetarily), the non-*patta* land holders were the unfortunate section.⁵ For example, the amount of money compensated to the latter group is too less to purchase even half the size of land they had lost. Many of the affected families complained of their loss for standing trees being officially stated as already compensated for, but in reality it is not so. This begins to shake the stability of the livelihood bases of the tribal people.

To this end, Smitu Kothari (1996) points finger to the Land Acquisition Act, which “is used to pay insultingly low cash payment that is grossly inadequate to restore and enhance standards of living”(Kothari:1480). The displaced people have also been perceived as a burden to the development projects. However, many indigenous communities are ignorant about their rights ad issues and would accept any amount of money for compensation.

The socio-economic issue of displacement has been aptly described by Chris de Wet: “Resettlement has an inherent tendency to create social and economic impoverishment. So, we consciously need to

plan and implement resettlement as a development undertaking, which will leave the affected people better off than before” (Wet, C: 4645). The evidence of this statement can be found in observing a micro-development project like Khuga Dam on the livelihood impacts on the displaced communities.

It goes on without saying that the affected people (IDPs) of dams are always at the receiving end. They are permanently dislocated, but inadequately relocated. The monetary compensation and rehabilitation programme did not provide fair and just package to the IDPs. Land compensation calculated at market value itself is arbitrary and found to be too less to restart a new life. Many felt that they were given much less than what they are entitled to. It is by no means they had a share in the benefits of the construction of Khuga multi-purpose project. The displaced people even left their homes and places and immigrated to urban areas. This phenomenon is evident from the decreasing population of the working force. Moreover, feelings of helplessness and loss of identity developed in the minds of the people migrating from rural to urban/towns.

Mismanagement of money and consumerist attitude among the “resettled” persons is one of the most unfortunate effects of Khuga Dam. The displaced people, who are mostly illiterate, were unable to speculate that their villages would ever submerge under water. They were mentally unprepared for the abrupt dislocation although the project had started since long time, and even if there were people who, not long ago, knew that they are to be displaced, made little effort to arrange for alternative lands. When they began to look for land they were left with little time; some were forced to vacate their house, others moved to higher slopes close to their old village, knowing well that they would eventually have to shift to an area allotted by the government. This made them feel unsettled and insecure.

The landless or small and marginal farmers or tenants are the worst hit. Before displacement they were able to sustain themselves

through share cropping and by working as agriculture labourers within the villages. But after displacement they are left with no option but to look for alternative employment outside the village. Many of the displaced persons have left their villages and migrated to the urban areas to do manual labours, thereby giving pressure on density of population in Churachandpur town.

Due to clearing of forests for settlements and charcoal making in catchment areas soil erosion and siltation are at hand. Hydro power projects have a major contribution in meeting the energy needs of the country, and is somehow, indispensable for the developing countries. However, the socio-economic needs of the affected people and environmental impacts also need to be carefully examined. The constitutional mandate should be cautious not to violate the interests of the politically and economically weaker groups of communities.

Conclusion

Based on occupational types of the people, the problems of livelihood may systematically be examined in three dimensions. Firstly, the landowners lost their homestead, agricultural lands (paddy fields) and forests too. Most of them purchase land in the town, migrate and settle there. Only a few of them settle in their relocated villages but after buying some plot of lands in the town or peripheries. Some are found running small business in the town or in their villages. As they are patta land holders, the amount of compensation is also high and adequate enough to further start alternative means of livelihoods. However, the non-patta land owners are not as fortunate as that of the patta owners. The amount of money they got as compensation is not high enough to buy plots and construct a house and settle in the town or city. So they mostly settle in their new villages.

Secondly, the landless cultivators usually rent lands for cultivation from the land owners in exchange of fixed proportion of the produce. After the submergence of all the paddy land by Khuga Dam their basic

livelihood has been destroyed. Since they are not the landowners they did not receive any financial aid or compensation for the loss of their cultivable lands. They are left with little alternatives to reconstruct their livelihoods. So, while some of them moved out of their villages to towns and cities for daily wage labour, others settle in their relocated villages and started shifting/jhum cultivations in the forests. Some of the households of the displaced villages did not even have the opportunity to carry out jhuming. However, it is empirically found out that many people of this category began to depend on firewood and charcoal making. Moreover, many tribal peoples, after practicing lowland cultivation for centuries, cannot easily shift their occupational activities to upland or shifting cultivation. For many of them as shifting cultivation is difficult they resort to other means of livelihood especially charcoal making and selling it to the urban areas.

Lastly, the landless labourers consist of the landless group who are engaged neither in cultivation nor in service sectors, but in daily wage skilled and unskilled labour throughout the year. These people mainly work in the construction of Khuga Dam and also other odd jobs in the villages or town. As the construction of Khuga Dam was completed, many of these people were left jobless. Then, they begin to engage themselves in charcoal burning and other manual activities.

Therefore, having found the problems on the livelihood, some important suggestions may be made to mitigate them and to fill the gap of research in this issue. Facilities like transport and communication, electricity, water supply, health centres and schools should be restored to the displaced villagers. Proper electricity and transport facilities would create new opportunities of livelihoods by developing small scale and cottage industries.

The Dam area can be fully developed for recreational spots and attraction of tourists. This will augment the income of the people settling in the surrounding areas by opening small business shops and markets. The canals meant for supplying of water for irrigation are neither cemented nor plastered, that the water frequently leaks and the walls

collapse. Proper care should be taken to avoid leakage or breaking of the canal in order to save the paddy fields in the adjacent areas. Proper water supply would facilitate double cropping in the paddy fields and vegetable gardens.

Assessment on the environmental impact particularly on deforestation due to changes in livelihoods may be carried out in future research. This would academically be useful to answer the question on sustainability of the tribal livelihoods in relation to their surrounding environment and other related issues.

It is a well established fact that displacement is a disruptive and painful process. Economically and culturally, it disrupts and dislocates the people settling in the area; creates high risk of impoverishment that typically occurs in the form of landlessness, joblessness, homelessness, marginalisation, food insecurity, etc. The qualities of village amenities have considerably been weakened. Interestingly, about 50 per cent of the displaced populations have not benefited from the construction of Khuga Dam. While the impact has been far and wide, the resettlement and rehabilitation process and mechanism had been quite nominal.

So, out of the three categories of workers, the landless cultivators and labourers were worst affected by the disruption and dislocation of their traditional livelihoods. There has been a great deal of occupational shifts from the traditional wetland cultivations and daily labours to forest and forest product extractions particularly charcoal making. Thus intense pressure has been put on existing forests and ecological balance. There are instances where even the roots of trees were unearthed to make charcoal for living. So, if this unsustainable trend of livelihood system continues unabated, the future holds bleak for mankind, plants and animals.

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Notes

¹ The field work (collection of primary data) was carried out from January to February 2009.

² *Haopi* area refers to the present study area situated in the foothills of a high mountain locally known as *Haosapi Tang* (Mount Haosapi) running N-S direction along the south eastern fringes of Churachandpur district, Manipur.

³ Field Work, 2009

⁴ Borrowed terms from Srinivasan, Bina (2001), 'Social Impacts of Large Dams: Gender, Equity and Distribution Issues', *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 36, No. 43. p. 4114.

⁵ For the loss of 2-3 acres of non-patta agricultural land holders, around Rs. 80,000 is being given as compensation. Whereas, the market price of the same sizes costs Rs. 2-3 lakhs (Based on the author's Interview with the affected families in Sehken and Bohlui villages, dated 25/01/200)

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