

Submission to UNFCCC on CDM for 4.5 MW Hul hydro power hydro project Chamba; Himachal Pradesh

We, the representatives of the village councils of the region to be affected by the Hul Hydro Project under the banner Saal Ghaati Bachao Sangharsh Morcha, and concerned citizens of the State of Himachal Pradesh would like to make this submission to register our serious objection to the consideration of the abovesaid project under the Clean Development Mechanism. We have carefully studied the PDD, apart from having detailed knowledge of this project from our study of all other project document and direct interactions with government officials and concerned persons in this regard. We submit the following:

- 1. The project location shown on the map on page 5 is wrong seems to be cut and paste job:** The project is planned on Hul stream, on the portion which flows through Sillagraht and Jadera Panchyats of Chamba District, which are around 20 - 25 kms far from Chamba town. The map on page 5, on the other hand, shows the project area in Tisa Thesil of Chamba district which is around 70 kms from Chamba town and around 90 kms from the project area.
- 2. Page 3 of PDD of document on contribution of the project activity to sustainable development are empty claims, ignoring the adverse impacts of the project on existing livelihood and surrounding environment-**

2.1. Social and Economic Well being: In mountains the smaller rivers and streams are the lifelines as they are used, more than bigger rivers, as livelihood. The benefits told by the project proponent seems to be minicule in comparision to the existing livelihoods going to be adversely impacted by the project.

- The project is going to be directly impact the 1000 households of Jadera and Sillagraht Panchyat. Both the Panchyats are dominated by Gaddis (sheep and goat heders) and Gujjar community (cattle herders) and one of the poorest section of scoiety.
- The projects coming up on the Hul are planned in some of the most pristine oak forests of the valley and are going to destroy these, and people's livelihoods based on livestock rearing and the create a scarcity of milk, ghee and honey for Chamba town. The forest dominated by Oak trees (only green fodder in winter as most other trees are deciduous) and Berberis shrubs (goat are dependent on for forage) the project will adversely impact the livelihood of this community which have not even been consulted regarding diversion of forest.
- This whole region is known for milk, ghee and honey production which depends on the local bushes and fodder available in the forest. Both the Jadera and Sillagraht Panchyat fulfill approximately 50% of dairy products need of the Chamba town. Almost all the families from Silla-Graht and Jadera Panchyats are dependent on sale of milk income to Chamba town and face acute shortage of green fodder (especially in winters). All the forests in Chamba district except coniferous forests are deciduous in nature and only Oak trees provide green fodder during winters. Today, Jadera and Sillagraht Panchyat supply milk to the Chamba town but due to this project the whole livestock economy of the area will destroyed.
- As both communities (Gaddis and Gujjars) have traditionally lead a migratory life and have been four decade back have been settled down by providing wasteland for cultivation by the state government. The project will close all the avenues to

develop irrigation to their fields. Recently, the two irrigation schemes were sanctioned in the area but these irrigation schemes will be destroyed by the project. The neighbouring Barour Panchyat which has a functional is a irrigation facility farmers are growing off season vegetable cultivation and are prosperous.

- Once the water of Hul stream will be diverted for the project around 41 watermills will be forced to close down. One watermill supports the livelihood of atleast five families. The project proponents are paying a small amount as one time compensation but which is no answer to sustained regular income over the years. These Gharats are bearer of Hatt and Gharat culture of hill community which will severly impacted by this project.
- Due to closure of these watermills the five hundred households will have to pay double the grinding charges for grains like wheat and maize (staple diet of the local population) in electricity run mills. Today, the charges of 1 kg of food grain in watermill is Rs.1.00 whereas in electricity mill it is Rs.2.00.
- In addition to this there are approximately fifty fishermen whose livelihood is being supported by this nala, and the construction of this project will completely destroy their livelihood. The loss of total sustainable employment in this region due to closure of Gharats and ceasing of fishing activity will be more than the new sustainable livelihoods generated by the installation of these two projects.
- In adjacent valley, in Palyur Panchyat due to construction of Him Kailash Micro hydel project out of 7 natural springs and seepages 6 totally dried up and one partially. In this scenario, when glaciers are reducing in size construction of any one micro hydel project can kill the Hull stream and is going to put all the present and the possible future uses in jeopardy.
- With phenomemnon of climate change the traditionally used natural water sources like spring and seepage are fast drying up in the area and the Saal river is the only regular water source for 8 panchyats. Even for Chamba town there are two drinking water supply scheme are supported by the Hul stream.
- The discharge of sources of various drinking water supply schemes to Sillagharat, Jadera, Paluhien, Sungal and Kaila Panchayats has been reduced and there is every likelihood of these sources going dry in the coming future. There is a proposal to provide lift water supply scheme to these panchayats which has been approved as MLA priority scheme. The IPH department proposes to lift water from Hul nallah as there is no other source in the vicinity from where the water could be lifted. The Irrigation Public health Engineer confirmed on inquiry that the intake point of the proposed water supply scheme falls in the stretch of the project. Another lift irrigation scheme named Pipeline irrigation scheme from Silla khud to Koni-ki-behi have been sanctioned under BRGF by Zilla Parishad Chamba (Jadera ward). The proposed lift water supply scheme by the IPH department and irrigation scheme under Backward Region Grant Fund would not get adequate water in future to provide drinking water irrigation facilities to the inhabitants of above mentioned panchayats if the execution of the project is allowed in the present shape.

2.2. Environment well being:

- The total length of Sal River is 28 kms and in this short stretch seven mini and micro proposed commissioned and commissioning power projects which will adversely impact the ecology, the geology, the socio-economic and the cultural status of the area. This project will disturb approximately 5 kms or one fourth of catchment of Hul stream.

- The project will destroy the pristine Oak forest which have been protected and managed by local community and one of the very few broad leaved forest left near Chamba town.
- The forest from which the channel is going to pass is a mixed forest dominated by Oak trees; very few this kind of mixed and dense forest has been left in Chamba. Not only the trees coming in the way of channel will be cut down but the disturbance and destruction caused by the labor force employed by the company will have a large toll on wild flora and fauna. The disturbance caused by this increased human activity and the explosives used by the company to construct channel path will disturb the whole area and will lead to distinction of faunal species like Black Bear, Tiger, Peej and etc.
- The channel to divert water for the project is going to destroy the forest where thousands of bushes and shrubs exist and play a critical role in holding the soil in steep slopes. If these bushes and shrubs will be cut down it will trigger off severe soil erosion.

Hull HEP is going to destroy the livestock economy of Sillagraht and Jadera Panchyats and will have adverse impact of these projects will be on watermill economy, fishing, irrigation and drinking water schemes and overall adverse impact on local ecology. This project is going to lead to private appropriation of community resources that are a support base for the subsistence livelihood and cash economy of the entire valley.

3. Demonstration of additionality

Page 13 of PDD: The implementation Agreement of Hul hydro project was signed on 26/12/2001 (<http://www.himurja.nic.in/ongprojects.html>) and **after 11 years of signing implemntation agreement** the HHPPL has not started the construction work of Hul project. (According to Hydro power policy 2006 Section 3. INCENTIVES TO THE DEVELOPERS:

3.1 By Himachal Pradesh Government (Page 50-51) states “

The Developer will be permitted to establish, own, operate and maintain the Project for a period of 40 (forty) years and the date shall be reckoned after 30 months from the date of the signing of the Implementation Agreement

.” (Annexure-1)). **If the project proponents claim they had CDM in mind while calculating the financial viability of the project, this claim is totally wrong.**

Moreover, not able to initiate the project in time the project project proponents have lost the time period to operate the project from 40 years to 35 years and are also paying Rs. 10,000 per MW per month (as fine for not constructing the project in time - Under the existing policy, IPPs are charged with a penalty at the rate of Rs 10,000 per MW per month for delay but the scheduled commercial operational date is not extended <http://www.tribuneindia.com/2012/20120628/himachal.htm#1>).

The delay in carrying out construction was due to stiff local opposition to the project. The Jadera Panchyat outrightly rejected the project and passed a resolution against the project in 2003 (Find Chronology of the events).

In these 11 years the project proponents have spent millions of rupees to crush the demand of people, they have even hired the local goons and attacked on the peaceful demonstrations of affected communities; filed false cases against local community members and paid the police for protection for months etc.

1. **[8 Chamba panchayats come together against hydro-power project](http://www.indianexpress.com/news/8-chamba-panchayats-come-together-against-hydropower-project/830730/)**

2. [Five injured in brutal attack in Chamba valley of Himachal](http://hillpost.in/2010/02/14/5-injured-in-brutal-attack-in-chamba-valley-of-himachal/18553/latest-news/ravinder)
(<http://hillpost.in/2010/02/14/5-injured-in-brutal-attack-in-chamba-valley-of-himachal/18553/latest-news/ravinder>)
3. [Protest continues against Hul power project; Balkrishan Prashar](http://www.tribuneindia.com/2011/20110421/himachal.htm)
(<http://www.tribuneindia.com/2011/20110421/himachal.htm>)
4. [Dharna against Hul project enters 37th day; ADM's report supports locals](http://www.indianexpress.com/news/dharna-against-hul-project-enters-37th-day;-adms-report-supports-locals/792788/)
(<http://www.indianexpress.com/news/dharna-against-hul-project-enters-37th-day;-adms-report-supports-locals/792788/>)
5. [Violence on Project-Affected People in Himachal Pradesh;](http://www.epw.in/authors/dev-berhotra) (www.epw.in/authors/dev-berhotra)
6. The information provided by Hul Hydro Power Private Limited (HHPPL) in section E on page 32 related to stakeholder consultation of PDD document is simply an eye wash to hide grave human right violations and protest against the project since 2003 when the the affected first knew about the project.
 - The venue of stakeholder consultation mentioned in the PDD is Devikothi Forest Rest house which is one of the remote places in Tisa thesil and is not even falling in the project affected area. This meeting should have been done in the local area of any of the affected villages where affected community would have easily participated and/or at district headquarter which is only 20 kms from project. The stakeholder meeting held 100 kms away from the project site is nothing but an eyewash.
 - The advertisement about stakeholder consultation published in only one newspaper seems to be an attempt to prevent the spread of news among community members. Even Shri. Man Singh,, the elected head of Jadera panchyat which is one of the affected Panchyat, did not know about the CDM process and stakeholder consultation. Then how would a common person have known and participated in this process.
 - In the same section related to “E2:Summary of comments received ” it is mentioned that only two people have raised queries and no written comments were received. Even the identities of these two persons have not been presented/revealed in detail.

We have every reason to believe that the company has not held any stakeholder consultation for the project and has simply cut and paste this section from the PDD for some other project located in Tisa area of the District.

Conclusion:

The above mentioned facts show that the local community is going to pay a high cost for the Hul hydroelectric project whether in the form of losing access to forests, drinking water supply, irrigation facilities, watermills and degradation of their natural environment. Hul hydro Power Corporation Limited has used every tactic to suppress the genuine demands of one of the most oppressed sections of the society which is dependent on forests, livestock and agriculture for their livelihood. The whole process of CDM is giving extra leverage to already rich companies in the name of clean energy and the UNFCCC must critically examine the environmental and social impacts of Hydropower Projects, large and small, before any further projects are considered as eligible under CDM.

Please also see attached the following documents and articles which are evidences of the controversy surrounding this project:

1. **India: Power co goons assault villagers protesting project in remote Himachal valley** By Subir Ghosh Sep 16, 2011 11:17AM UTC (<http://asiancorrespondent.com/65118/india-power-co-goons-assault-villagers-protesting-project-in-remote-himachal-valley/>)
2. **Small but not so beautiful September 2007** By Manshi Asher and Prakash Bhandari; (<http://himalmag.com/component/content/article/1382-.html>)
3. *Petition to the Chief Minister of Himachal Pradesh* - <http://www.petitiononline.com/scraphul/petition.html>
4. *Photos on a seperate file*

Mansingh, Pradhan, Jadera Panchayat

Ratan Chand, Secretary, Saal Ghaati Bachao Jan Sangharsh Morcha

Prakash Bhandari, Himdhara, Environment Research and Action Collective, Palampur