

Comments on the EIA of Dibang Multipurpose Project

General:

It is an ordinary and casual piece of work. Normal expectation was a good and sincere effort and the authorities to justify with data and facts/figures that the impact may not be severe. However, no agency is perhaps ready to put a good and sincere effort and then take the pain of justification based on sound logic. Certainly such projects are required and a good EIA does not mean that projects should be shelved. A good report may result in some modification of the project that may be of greater interest to the country as well as human beings. BUT with money power, the tendency is to put logic behind short term profits.

Specific:

Chapter 3, Para 3.2.4 (page 03-5). In c) Naga-Patkai ranges have been shown as eastern extension of Shillong plateau BUT how? Because Shillong or Meghalaya plateau is a part of the Deccan massif (separated by Ganga-Brahmaputra in Rajmahal-Garo Hills gap) but Naga-Patkai are not.

Table 3.5. It is on rainfall data but where are the figures?

Chapter 4, Para 4.2 (page 04 - 41). Written in a casual manner that too in a layman's style and above all to mislead the readers with false statements.

- ▶ So far the entire world has one Tiger species but the report states of 'different Tiger species' (line 8 on para on mammals).
- ▶ It is further clarified that 'different Tiger species' were directly sighted. This shows that although everybody knows of only one Tiger species in the world, the scientists who wrote the EIA confirmed of 'different Tiger species'. This makes the area unique in the world – only such place on earth's surface. Under these circumstances can they recommend construction of the dam? [The area must be protected as the only site in the world having more than one Tiger species!!!].

Page 04-42. The EIA report further enriches the area by dragging Himalayan tahr *Hemitragus jemlahicus* from Sikkim and western Bhutan (its eastern limit) to Dibang area where it never occurred.

Page 04-45. In the list of avifauna (birds), many unknown birds have been listed such as at sl. 17. Brown Pied Hornbill. So far no such bird is known in the world and if they have really seen it, it is a sort of discovery and apparently, no hydroelectric project should be taken up to destroy its habitat!

- ▶ The EIA has also changed the nomenclature of 'Woodpecker' to 'Wood Packer'. It is not known why they have done so since they were supposed to be qualified persons [hopefully not to 'pack' the woods to be drowned in the reservoir!].
- ▶ Similarly, the 'Flycatchers' have become 'Flying catchers' (sl. 61), 'Fantail' became 'Fanter' (sl. 62), 'Thrush' became 'Thrash' (sl. 65) [hopefully not to 'thrash' anybody who opposes!], 'Tesia' became 'Testia/Tortia' (sl.79) both in English and scientific names.

Page 04-51. In the list of reptiles, the "discovery" of a new python named *Python aculetes* (at sl. 6) could be significant to preserve the area and stop the project. So far no such pythons have been recorded anywhere in the world!

- ▶ Similarly, the presence of two species of King cobra, one named *Ophiophagus acula* (sl. 3) and the other *Naja hanah* (sl. 5) has created a history. It is the only such pocket in the world where two

species of this majestic snake is reported. Hats off to the scientists and writers who prepared this EIA. Now nobody, not to speak of NHPC should dare to damage the area through this project as EIA report makes it a unique place in the world where more than one Tiger species is found, where two species of King cobras are found, where a new python unknown elsewhere in the world occurs, and where birds 'pack' woods.

Chapter 6. Para 6.2.1. It is self contradictory. It has mentioned 'impacts are temporary . . . mainly during construction' and then 'but may attach significance . . impacts'. The serious impact from the influx of labourers for long 8 years has not been highlighted on the page.

► Para 6.6. has serious contradictions. Here the report says that "no major wildlife is observed" but in the above mentioned chapters and paras, they have mentioned of some **world records** so far as wildlife is concerned. These include : (1) 'different Tiger species' (only one Tiger species is known in the world, hence, it is an important record); (2) Occurrence of Himalayan tahr (known to occur up to Sikkim and western Bhutan only); (3) many unknown birds including Brown Pied Hornbill, Wood Packers, Flying catchers, Fanters, Thrash, Testia/Tortia, etc. (4) "discovery" of a new python named *Python aculetes*; (5) presence of two species of King cobra, *Ophiophagus acula* and *Naja hanah*.

Conclusions on the basis of EIA report:

In view of various sensational discoveries made by the scientists and writers of this EIA report, it is apparent that the project needs to be shelved and the area protected to save 'different Tiger species', many unknown and strange birds, a new python species and the unique two species of King cobras. As this is the only such place on the globe / planet/ earth / world having these specialities!

General Conclusion on the project:

To meet the power requirement and industrial development of NE India, many such projects are needed but the sites should be carefully selected so that the impact is relatively less. I personally oppose major dams across the main rivers such as the Siang (Brahmaputra), Dibang and Lohit and want to see them 'free flowing'. These major rivers of the region have played vital role in determining the geomorphology, biogeography, even demography and culture, and last but not the least history of the region. Already a few large projects on some of the major tributaries such as Subansiri, Siyom, etc., are under construction and a few more such tributaries may be taken up [in Dibang also, there are many large tributaries of which one or two could be taken up]. NE India covers only 8% of the area of the country and it should not be 'overloaded' to generate power for the area that is 12 times bigger. The downstream impact and ecological problems will be within 8% only and will not spread over the remaining 92%.

Experience from some big projects elsewhere may also be taken into account. A recent study has found that the bottom of the three-gorges reservoir in China has gone up substantially due to siltation.

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