

**Practices and Ideologies of Development: People's Responses
to Hydropower Projects in Uttarakhand**

**Thesis submitted to Jawaharlal Nehru University
for award of the Degree of
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY**

SHRUTI JAIN



Centre for the Study of Social Systems

School of Social Sciences

JAWAHARLAL NEHRU UNIVERSITY

New Delhi 110067

2016



जवाहरलाल नेहरू विश्वविद्यालय
JAWAHARLAL NEHRU UNIVERSITY
NEW DELHI-110067

Centre for the Study of Social Systems
School of Social Sciences

Tel.: 26704408
Email: chair_csss@mail.jnu.ac.in

DECLARATION

I, Shruti Jain, declare that this thesis entitled, "**Practices and Ideologies of Development: People's Responses to Hydropower Projects in Uttarakhand**", submitted by me, in fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the degree of **Doctor of Philosophy** in Centre for the Study of Social Systems, School of Social Sciences, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, has not been previously submitted, either in part or as whole, for any other degree of this or any other university and it is my original work.

Shruti Jain



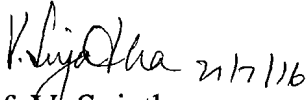
जवाहरलाल नेहरू विश्वविद्यालय
JAWAHARLAL NEHRU UNIVERSITY
NEW DELHI-110067


Centre for the Study of Social Systems
School of Social Sciences

Tel.: 26704408
Email: chair_csss@mail.jnu.ac.in

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the thesis entitled, "**Practices and Ideologies of Development: People's Responses to Hydropower Projects in Uttarakhand**", submitted by Shruti Jain, at the Centre for the Study of Social Systems, School of Social Sciences, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, in fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the degree of **Doctor of Philosophy**, is her own work and has not been previously submitted for any other degree of this or any other university. We recommend that this thesis be placed before examiners for evaluation.


Prof. V. Sujatha
(Chairperson)


Prof. Avijit Pathak
(Supervisor)

Acknowledgement

I am grateful for the circumstances that made it possible for me to undertake this research and hence to get to know Uttarakhand, its people and those who love and care for Uttarakhand. I bothered them incessantly to find the soothing touch of Pahar in the dryness of Delhi. The relationships I have built during the period of this study, I cherish with all my heart.

I feel that any such endeavor is not fully justified if the names of only few are penned. Also, it is simply not possible to 'acknowledge' everyone who has contributed. Yet I hope that I have made evident to each one my gratitude. This poem I had written for one friend, to whom I always turned to seek sanity and who would point towards the moon in the exhausting moments of despair. I have learnt to 'see' the moon, but have yet to know the depth of the beauty that my friend sees in it. I wish fervently I will get a glimpse of it sometime. I hope that these words will find an echo with all my friends and family to whom I am eternally grateful.

Knowing you
is the most
precious gift
life has given me.

I am grateful, but
it is still superficial, my gratitude.

For, I still have to
imbibe it, start living it.

I see the book on the shelf,
but I have not read it.

I respect now the silence
but do not understand
the wisdom underneath.

I realize now the worth
of words
the enchantment though
remains but momentary

I know that there is
pleasure in swimming,
but have not
let go of my feet
moulded and crushed
into the
earth.

Table of Contents

Introduction	1
Location of the Work	11
<i>Dam and Development</i>	11
<i>Uttarakhand: The Site of Enquiry</i>	23
Modes of Enquiry	28
<i>Access and Connectivity</i>	33
<i>Experiences as a Researcher</i>	36
Organisation of the Chapters	41
Chapter One	44
At Crossroads: The Ideologies and Practices of Development	
Trajectory of the Concept of Ideology	46
Modernity and its Developmental Model	54
<i>Nature as ‘Resource’</i>	54
<i>Cult of Quantification and Measurement</i>	57
<i>Unilinear Notion of Progress</i>	58
<i>Implications of the Tenets of Modernity</i>	60
<i>Educational Institutions and their Socio-Cultural</i>	63
<i>Unattachment</i>	
<i>Religion, Secularism and Science</i>	65
Politics of Hydropower Projects’ Promotion	69
<i>Neoliberalism as an Ideology</i>	69
<i>Hydropower Projects in India</i>	73
Counter Ideologies	79
<i>Beyond Sustainable Development</i>	79
<i>Meanings of Resistance</i>	86
“Regional Modernities” and Development in Uttarakhand	92
Conclusion	102

Chapter Two	104
Uttarakhand: At the Rift of Dreams and Reality, Abundance and Scarcity, Pahar and Plains	
Legacy of Resistances	108
<i>Chipko Movement</i>	112
<i>The Response to the 'Success' of Chipko: Jhapto Cheeno</i>	116
<i>Diminishing Agricultural Land: Protests against Enclosures</i>	118
<i>Extension of Chipko: Beej Bachao Andolan</i>	120
<i>Movement against Tehri Dam</i>	122
<i>Nasha Nahi Rozgar Do Andolan</i>	128
<i>Opposition of the Extractive Activities</i>	129
<i>Movement for Autonomy</i>	132
<i>Responses to Statehood Movement: Post-Statehood Situation</i>	138
Travelling in Uttarakhand Villages: Getting to Know Uttarakhand	142
<i>Migration and the Rift between Pahar and Plains</i>	143
<i>Community Life</i>	148
<i>Informal Governance Structures</i>	149
<i>Burden on Women</i>	151
<i>Livelihood in Uttarakhand Villages</i>	153
<i>Spirituality and Religiosity</i>	154
<i>Religion, Tourism and Hydropower Projects</i>	157
<i>Culture and Music of Mountains</i>	159
Conclusion	161
Chapter Three	163
Murky Energy, Trapped Rivers and Internal Colonies: Dominion of the Hydropower Sarkar in Uttarakhand	
Hydropower Projects and the Arguments for Development	165
<i>Thrust for More Energy</i>	165
<i>Regional Development and National Good</i>	167
<i>Multiple Uses of Projects</i>	169
<i>Consumption as a Marker of Development</i>	170
<i>Private Companies and the Renewable Energy Market</i>	171
<i>Climate Change and Clean Green Energy</i>	173

Run of the River Projects: Appropriating the Language of Alternatives	175
Rivers as Shared Lifelines or Rivers as Resources?	180
<i>The Case of Ganga</i>	180
<i>How Much Water Should a River Have?</i>	184
Hydropower Projects and the Disasters in Uttarakhand	185
<i>The 2013 Disaster</i>	185
<i>Responses to 2013 Disaster</i>	188
<i>Government's Response to Disasters: Another Environmental Report</i>	190
Company Practices	191
<i>Lack of Information, Lack of Accountability</i>	191
<i>Colonizing the Mountains?</i>	193
<i>Poor Management and Corrupt Practices</i>	197
<i>Broken Families and Their Dilemmas</i>	200
<i>Temporary Jobs as Insurance for Future</i>	201
<i>Increased Dependence on the Company</i>	202
<i>Manufacturing Consent? Gifts in lieu of Rights</i>	204
<i>Creating the Identity of 'Displaced' and 'Affected'</i>	204
<i>Corporate Social (Ir) responsibility</i>	205
<i>Resettlement Sites and Rehabilitation Process in Tehri</i>	207
Taking Away Essentials: Socio-Environmental Impacts of the Hydropower Projects	210
Conclusion	214
Chapter Four	215
<i>Bin Lade Kuch Bhi Nahi Milta Yahan Ye Jaan Kar?</i>	
Responses of People to Hydropower projects in Uttarakhand	
The Resistances and Their Residues	218
<i>Tehri Villages: The Present Situation and Unorganised Dissent</i>	218
<i>Movements Against the Small Projects</i>	233
<i>The Movement in Phalenda</i>	233
<i>The Movement in Bageshwar</i>	237
<i>Projects on Mandakini: The Appropriation of Activism</i>	242
<i>Projects on Alaknanda</i>	246
<i>A Lone Village's Struggle against the Vishnuprayag Project</i>	246
<i>NTPC Projects: Negotiations and Compromises</i>	248
<i>Vishnugaad Pipalkoti Project: Everyday Protests</i>	250

Different Players and the Ideological Playfield	252
<i>Hindutava Forces</i>	253
<i>Left Forces</i>	257
<i>Gandhian Forces</i>	259
<i>NGOs and Development as the Anti-Politics Machine</i>	262
<i>Marginalisation of People and Issues</i>	265
<i>Fragmented Struggles</i>	266
<i>Professionalization of Activism</i>	267
Counter Resistances	268
Culture of Resistance	270
<i>Public Intellectualism</i>	270
<i>Cultural Expressions</i>	273
<i>Cultural Response to Larger Questions of</i>	277
<i>Environment and Development</i>	
Attempt at Alternatives	279
Conclusion	283
Conclusion	287
References	293



मैंने गंगा को देखा
एक लम्बे सफ़र के बाद
जब मेरी आँखें
कुछ भी देखने को तरस रही थीं
जब मेरे पास कोई काम नहीं था
मैंने गंगा को देखा
प्रचंड लू के थपेड़ों के बाद
जब एक शाम
मुझे साहस और ताज़गी की
बेहद ज़रूरत थी
मैंने गंगा को देखा एक रोहू मछली थी
डब-डब आँख में
जहाँ जीने की अपार तरलता थी
मैंने गंगा को देखा जहाँ एक बूढ़ा मल्लाह
रेती पर खड़ा था
घर जाने को तैयार
और मैंने देखा-
बूढ़ा खुश था
वर्ष के उन सबसे उदास दिनों में भी
मैं हैरान रह गया यह देखकर

कि गंगा के जल में कितनी लंबी
और शानदार लगती है
एक बूढ़े आदमी के खुश होने की परछाई !

अब बूढ़ा ज़रा हिला
उसने अपना जाल उठाया
कंधे पर रखा
चलने से पहले
एक बार फिर गंगा की ओर देखा
और मुस्कराया
यह एक थके हुए बूढ़े मल्लाह की
मुस्कान थी
जिसमें कोई पछतावा नहीं था
यदि थी तो एक सच्ची
और गहरी कृतज्ञता
बहते हुए चंचल जल के प्रति
मानो उसकी आँखें कहती हों-
'अब हो गयी शाम
अच्छा भाई पानी
राम! राम!'

- केदारनाथ सिंह

Introduction

During a recent visit to the Safdarjung tomb, I again saw those names that the young carve out on the walls, to declare their love relationships. It struck me as an attempt to somehow give life to, and hope for a long lasting relationship at least on the walls, when otherwise relationships are getting as fickle, uncertain and liquid as the rains. Zygmunt Bauman (2004:96) will say that no commitment lasts long enough to get to the point of no return in 'liquid modern life'. For us, what is becoming more important is the image and the appearance of something, more than its feeling and existence itself. Taking a picture is more important than living the moment itself, appearance before others of oneself and of a good relationship will be sought even when there is no harmony in the relationship, bold declarations of well-being and growth often cover up the naked sounds of weeping underneath.

Claims to sustainable and green development seem as ironical, paradoxical or as hopelessly hopeful as the claims of enduring love on the walls of a tomb. The shared moment that itself could become eternal, and only about eternity of which we have any 'certainty', is spent in looking for a solid marker of its pronouncement. That which is good in our society, and the growth of which seems most reasonable and natural, is getting destroyed by lofty, 'ungrounded', high-handed and arrogant developmental aspirations. For immediate gains and time bound certainty, we can happily defame or destruct the eternal, for some claims, the walls of the tomb, and for increasing claims of consumption, the mountains and the rivers. We do not see a mountain peak, a river, a forest, or even a tomb, without thinking of it as a resource or the service that it could provide us with, or how we can make some practical use of it. There is less and less that ties us to our roots, homes, culture and nature. Our relationship with nature reflects our relationships with people, disengaged, ad-hoc or glossy. Where is the gratitude, the solace, the easy co-existence, the freshness, the merger and the feeling of being at home that an old fisherman could feel along the banks of Ganga?

Many city bred like me, have rarely experienced the feelings of oneness and an unmediated experience of nature that that fisherman lived. We experience the disabling feeling of not belonging, with nowhere to return to, uprootedness and of

social homelessness, as aptly described by Peter L. Berger (1974). I feel that it is for this reason that again and again I returned to the issue of homelessness in my work, although unknowingly. I volunteered with an organization working with the homeless in Delhi and later took the issue related to demolition of slums as my master's dissertation topic. Afterwards I went to work with the people who were to be displaced by the dams on the river Narmada in Madhya Pradesh. Even those who were not yet displaced lived uncertain lives that seemed to be hanging in time, for years at an end, with the constant fear of getting displaced any time. Thus, development in its different forms was experienced to be causing different kinds of homelessness. This discontent and homelessness that I had sought to understand and which I had vicariously experienced, got dispelled at the sight of the river Narmada - a river that makes the places it flows along, worthy of dwelling for countless. I hoped to live and work by a river.

The main thought that spurred me to undertake the research is the enormous turbulence that is currently taking place in the Himalayan state of Uttarakhand. Five hundred and fifty eight hydropower projects are planned in this small state. When I began my study I thought that with such an enormous onslaught, surely there will be ongoing resistances and attempts at the formation of a collective social movement. I could be a part of such a movement and write about it. That is the impression that I had received after talking to some activists and journalists in Delhi and after attending a seminar titled '*Himalaya main Vikas ki Janniti*' (Peoples' Policy of Development in Himalayas) on 28-29 December, 2010 at Gandhi Peace Foundation, New Delhi, wherein organisations and activists of different Himalayan States including Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand and states in the North-East India took part. After these discussions I had the impression that resistances were going on at different sites in Uttarakhand and a wider network in the form of *Nadi Bachao Andolan* was coordinating these. But this was not exactly the case, as I discovered after going to Uttarakhand in 2012 for a pilot study.

The state of Uttarakhand borders Nepal to the east along the Kali (also called Sarda) river, Tibet (China) to the North along the high passes of Mana and Niti, Himachal Pradesh to the west along the Tons river, and Uttar Pradesh to the south. Eighty five percent of Uttarakhand is mountainous region. There are three belts in the region; the Terai-bhabar constitutes the eastern low lying plains area between the

lower Himalaya and the Shiwalik hills and forms the most fertile land of Uttarakhand. Moving towards west, the middle Himalaya span mountains between 3,000 to 12,000 feet in height and the High Himalaya are sparsely populated with elevations between 12,000 to 25,000 feet. Uttarakhand has two political and cultural divisions in form of Garhwal and Kumaun. The western division Garhwal is named as land of forts (*gadhs*) or kingdoms. Kumaun is thought to be derived from Kurmanchal, a title used in *Puranas*. It has 13 districts, six belonging to the eastern Kumaun division (Udham Singh Nagar, Nainital, Almora, Champawat, Pithoragrah and Bageshwar) and seven belonging to the western Garhwal division (Tehri, Uttarkashi, Dehradun, Pauri, Chamoli, Rudraprayag and Haridwar).



Map 1: Districts of Uttarakhand, Source: www.mapsofindia.com.

Uttarakhand is a region known for its social movements which I describe later in my thesis, such as Chipko, Tehri and Uttarakhand statehood movement. However, the term ‘activist’ in Uttarakhand cannot be very clearly defined. The same is true for the terms ‘movement’ and ‘leader’. In Uttarakhand, there are many people from different walks of life and work backgrounds, including journalism, academics and management of environmental organisations, who keep associating themselves with or have been participating in social activism, consistently over the years. They can be seen as public intellectuals, but as they started off as activists in the different social movements, they identify themselves as activists and I also call them so. They remain mostly *kasba* or city based, while they frequent the villages often. There are also village based leaders and activists, who are resisting against the hydropower projects.

The *kasba* based activists often choose to be leaders, but mostly they choose to remain supporters. However, due to their popularity, they often get projected as leaders.

The distinction between a leader and an activist was explained to me by Dr. Ravi Chopra, Director, People's Science Institute. According to him, leaders mobilise people and the material resources, and work with an ideology, plan the actions and articulate the social movement's vision. For him, activists or *andolankaari*, are more concerned with action. He appeared as to be suggesting that the village based *andolankaari* depend on outside support and resources, which is often true, especially in terms of knowledge about the hydropower projects. However, those arranging for such resources are not always leaders according to me. They are often not based in field site of struggles, they are not responsible for long term action and their participation remains regulated. According to me, a leader would be someone who is grounded in the field of struggle and on whom the resisting peoples can depend upon for direction. They need not only be village based, but their ideological concerns should find resonance with the concerns of the people.

Andolan (movement) is a very frequently used term in Uttarakhand with scores of NGOs and public intellectuals and a history of social movements. Many NGO people have a tendency to call any social action or campaign they undertake, as *andolan*, for example a handing over of memorandum after a rally will be called a movement. There is more legitimacy, acceptance and a sense of legacy attached with the word *andolan*, than a social action of opposition, *virodh pradarshan*. I use the term movement interchangeably with resistances, for long term, organised actions. I use 'protest' for disjointed social actions and locale specific dissent. There are other responses in addition to these, which range from acceptance of the projects, to unexpressed dissent to a dissent that is explicitly expressed. 'Struggle' is a term that comes often for the spirit and dynamics that leads to protests and resistances.

The tag of 'anti' is not desired by the activists and it is easily used by pro-development (here pro-hydropower project) forces to delegitimize the opposition. Anti-dam gets equated to anti-development. Even the word 'movement' however, is not entirely 'safe', as even the act of going and working in a village, of mobilising against the free sale of land is termed as an extremist or Maoist act in order to discredit and curb it violently or to mobilise popular sentiment against the action. It

also shows how even when law and police which otherwise remain an alien presence for the villagers, become repressive when the people start agitating, in order to aid the global capital as it enters the Himalayan region as corporate agglomerations, known locally as company. I am using the words 'companies' coming with their 'projects', for referring to agencies responsible for undertaking hydropower development projects. I consciously choose to use the term company rather than corporate, since this word is locally used. The word company is also associated in some people's minds, with the East India Company and the baggage of colonial encounter with a company state. Mostly private companies are building the hydropower projects in Uttarakhand. As is expected in the neoliberal 21st century, government agencies are actively supporting the development projects through collaborations and are in practice operating like an enormous private organization, outsourcing most of the construction work to different private companies when they undertake a project.

Site-specific protests against the hydropower projects are there in all parts of Uttarakhand. They are either forced to enter into negotiations or are otherwise manipulated by the project companies and the local government administration. The presence of different ideological forces - Hindutava nationalism, the Left and Gandhian ideas along with the discourse of NGOs, makes the situation more complex. Attempts for formation of joint action forums have not seen much or consistent success. Further, the activities and practices of various groups and individuals differ. Some focus on court cases and some on direct mobilisation of the people for protest demonstrations. There is a deep impact of the struggle against the Tehri Dam on activists. Most remained involved in it as the movement went on for years and draw upon the memory and discourses of that struggle. Often it is the only benchmark that is known to the villagers who are impacted by hydropower projects at present, for making demands upon the project agencies, for understanding and coping with issues of development and displacement including rehabilitation and compensation.

There is common notion that Tehri dam affected people got good rehabilitation in plains area, where the standard of life is considered to be superior. Those who know of the situation of the resettled people, remain fearful about whether the hydropower project in their area will bring the same kind of dispossession. According to some activists, the Tehri dam's eventual 'victory' has also given legitimacy to further construction of such projects in the new state. There is a notion

of the 'failure' of the social movement and of a concomitant 'victory' of development. Few activists feel that the disregard for their vision of development expressed during the movement against Tehri dam and the earlier movements, provided further impetus to the autonomy movement that resulted in the creation of the separate state of Uttarakhand, carved out of the large state of Uttar Pradesh in the year 2000. Almost everyone in the region has stories to share, of corruption, dispossession and development linked with the Tehri dam. Tehri, in this sense was important for me to understand, despite many earlier studies related to the rehabilitation process that followed the dam induced displacement and to the anti Tehri dam social movement.

Presence of so many contending, dissenting voices and the multiple accounts of movement history also have created a legitimisation and recognition anxiety among the activists. In the villages, mostly there is no clear cut stance of anti project and pro project that the people take, since the people who had waited for years for development work in their villages remain ambiguous towards and unaware of the actual and wide-ranging impacts of the projects. Often, temporary jobs are too tempting and necessary and cannot be rejected. Project work after introduction goes on for years and private companies use tactics to introduce conflict amongst villagers to get their way. There is certainly no 'mass based', years on an end struggle, as I had expected to find after having returned from the Narmada Bachao Andolan (henceforth NBA). I decided to study this phenomenon of hydropower projects that are coming up to bring development in fragile mountain conditions and the different kinds of responses that the local people have to these projects, given the specific socio-cultural and political milieu of the region. Uttarakhand to me was also important as it has had a cultural, historical legacy of resistances coming out of concerns related to the environment and livelihoods. This legacy had to be understood in order to understand the responses that the people have. Also, due to this legacy, there were certain expectations in terms of responses by the people to the present situation.

Even after numerous years of resistance by the NBA and other social movements, such as that against the Tehri dam in Uttarakhand itself, dams are being proposed for the entire Himalayan region. There are already numerous studies related to the earlier movements and claims of development by the hydropower projects. So what was new that I was proposing to do in my study, I was asked many times. What is it that you will study that has already not been studied? Is there any new 'problem'

that I was going to resolve? I was initially thinking that there is nothing new, and then I began to say that the empirical location is different, processes of dispossession are different, the project technology is different, and the socio-political, cultural and historical legacy and the responses of the people therefore are different. But the dispossession is actually happening in similar ways in different parts of the country in the name of development and everywhere the dissent is more or less similar. I think what is essentially different is how I am making meaning of all this, my observations and interpretations and also some findings which are unique to the region. This also means that some observations may seem very obvious, simple, philosophical, or 'just mine'. Also, I feel there might not be anything different or new in the cracks in home after home and disappearance of one river after another, but the routineness and apparent normalcy of this disaster makes it all the more important and urgent and demands attention.

What has struck me profoundly during my work is how most of my life was spent more or less dissociated with and was not in tune with nature in a sense. I did not know what is it to see a river flow, how the cereals are sown and harvested, I had not seen most of the fruit trees save for a very few, and did not know the pleasure of plucking a fruit from the tree or pulling a vegetable from the earth and certainly did not know what kind of labour goes into the cultivation process. This certainly does not mean that there was no nature around me in the city of New Delhi where I grew up. However, my life was separated from nature in way that did not encourage direct association, relation or create opportunities for full appreciation and care for nature. The issue was not with presence or absence of a particular kind of nature, but with the perception of nature itself and of the kind of relationship that we have with it. At most, there is a glossed over relation that I could see that we have developed with nature. At times, the commitment to nature is flaunted as a status symbol. We may advocate and opt for organic food, but at prices that are beyond the reach of most, making it exotic. Rarely do we have gardens, the symbol of pruned and ordered nature as Bauman (1989) will say, and hardly do we work in them. Preferred are plastic plants, flowers and even plastic grass, to have the feel of nature and enjoying the sanitized no nonsense version of it. We may have started facing first-hand the impacts of climate change, the extremities of weather, but we have sanctuaries that are not available to, say a farmer. There seems to be a disconnect with knowing nature by

labour or as wilderness or as something inevitable and indispensable and hence acceptable in that form.

What is missing is perhaps, what Paulo Freire (2014:89-92) calls a 'dialogue', a relationship, an enchantment, openness and humility as opposed to the urge to dominate, extract and win over. Only with such dialogue the crucial difference between the mindset behind farming (symbiotic, returning what is taken away) as opposed to mining (a 'one-way movement, destructive, irreversible and irrevocable') could be realized (Bauman 2004: 20-21). This culture of dialogic conversation (Pathak, A. 2004:36) stands against principles of domination and aggression inherent in modernity. The dialogue is not possible with I –It relationship, which according to Martin Buber (1937), is about perceiving the nature as an object (or a machine), separating the human from nature, making the separation natural. I –Thou relationship on the other hand is based on a perception of natural connection, the flow from the one to the other, which forms the basis of notion of 'sustainability' as many understand it.

The perception of a 'tamed' nature, its quantification and the technocratic relationship with it, forms the basis of the development model propagated by modernity, with unilinear notions of well-being, good life, consumption and progress. These ideals further make invisible, the paradoxes of modernity. It is after I saw a 'healthy' river, well only relatively healthy, that I could understand fully the plight of Yamuna and the need to save the still 'flowing'/ 'living' rivers. It is after seeing the apples on a tree that I could see the 'falsity' of advertisements for packaged apples as freshly picked, crunchy and farm fresh. After seeing the amount of effort that goes in sowing seeds, harvesting, and then drying the crops for storage, I felt that cooking that seemed so difficult earlier is actually not an effort in relation to all the effort that has already gone into getting the vegetable or flour or pulses into our kitchens. It also then becomes possible to see how all the steps are interrelated and so there is a sense of responsibility that is felt about the human effort and 'resources' that make it possible for us to get the means of our survival and indeed, luxuries. I think it is important to feel this association and responsibility in our times as we remain negligent of the fact as to how nature has only become a 'resource' (Scott 1995:192), obscuring the immediate connection that our consumption patterns have with the crisis that the ecosystems are facing.

This realization brings me to the aspects that were bothering me about people's responses. I was expecting the people to fight against the onslaught on their immediate environment, homes and livelihoods. As clusters of hydropower projects are coming up in an area, I failed to understand why the people of one project were not able to relate to the similar situations and impacts faced by the neighbouring villages affected by another project. Why did people wish to fight individually, thinking that their individual social and political connections alone could help them, and only them, get benefits of development? Why could not the younger generation see beyond the immediate benefits of temporary jobs that the development projects bring? The feeling that most of the villagers had, that everyone has to fend for themselves, was disconcerting.

Whereas even the people who are losing everything are not able to fight as 'expected', the realisation about one's own relationship with the 'till now distant' environment makes one asks a related question, will only people whose essentials are at stake fight? If I am not to lose any material thing, is there no scope of me being a part of the social movement? Are we not in any way linked to and responsible for the environment, if our day to day life is not getting impacted in any way? Are locals the only 'custodians' of nature, even when it is taken away from them and they are getting alienated from the very nature on which they depend for their survival? Also, when the rivers and mountains are manipulated in a way that they turn destructive for the local people? There are demands of providing Uttarakhand a green bonus, a monetary recognition and support to the locals who take care of the forests and rivers, which are in fact benefitting the downstream areas more (Pathak, S. 2012). But can the city people, intellectuals, bureaucrats just term the locals as 'conversationalists', provide with financial 'help' and think that 'we' have done our due? Will 'we' take notice only when bigger disasters like that of 2013 flash floods in Uttarakhand will occur; ignoring the day to day tragedies that people are facing?

In this introduction chapter, I have tried to explain what questions and quests motivated me to work on my thesis topic. Next, I will give a socio-historical, conceptual and political background for the research. I then delineate the modes of enquiry that I used for the study after which I write my experience as a researcher in the region, mentioning the specificities of access to different field areas before providing an introduction to the organization of the chapters. In this research, I did not

seek to test a specific theoretical framework. Instead, I am drawing upon literature from political sociology, sociology of development, modernity, environment and movements, to better understand my field observations. I recognize the fact that I, like any researcher, enter the field with my specific social, economic, family status and educational and work background, and my gender, age, ethnic identities. Knowing this, I have sought to approach the field work as objectively as possible, even as I am aware that objectivity itself is seen as a myth, as is nature outside of social construction along the continuum of philosophical positions that academicians studying the interface of environment, technology and society take. I seek to recognise ‘the reciprocal effects’ that ethnography could offer for theory. What is at issue is not ‘a theory’s extension over ethnographic data, but the data’s capacity to extend our theoretical imagination’. What is hoped for therefore is a ‘reflexive project of inventively transforming analytical concepts, as opposed to applying them to data’ (Holbraad 2007:190).

Location of the Work

Dams and Development

Modernity for long has stood for techno-economic development. In India, dams were visualized as the embodiment of modernity and development since the Nehruvian era. There have been sustained protests and discontentment about the appropriation of water and land by the powerful few, lack of rehabilitation of the displaced persons and the adverse impacts on environment by dams. The discontentment with dams can be interpreted as a reflection of the wider ‘discontents’ with modernity. Since the 1990s, there is a renewed stress on ‘Hydropower’, in name of increased consumption needs for electricity, for further development of backward areas, and as a measure to mitigate climate change, which however, paves a way for global linkages and easier access to ‘resources’ of land and rivers. Especially in the Himalayas it has shaped up as a misnomer, in the form of a new phenomenon called ‘Run of the River (RoR)’ projects, claimed to be ‘green’ energy. Hydropower projects in Uttarakhand and in other Himalayan states include both storage dams and RoRs. The intense resistance against dams has shifted the focus on RoRs, with an attempt to dilute the debates related to alternatives to dams, and to negate the counter discourses and ‘counter-expertise’ (Nilsen 2007) that the movements like NBA have offered over

the years. The stress towards these dams comes at a time when big dams are being decommissioned the world over.

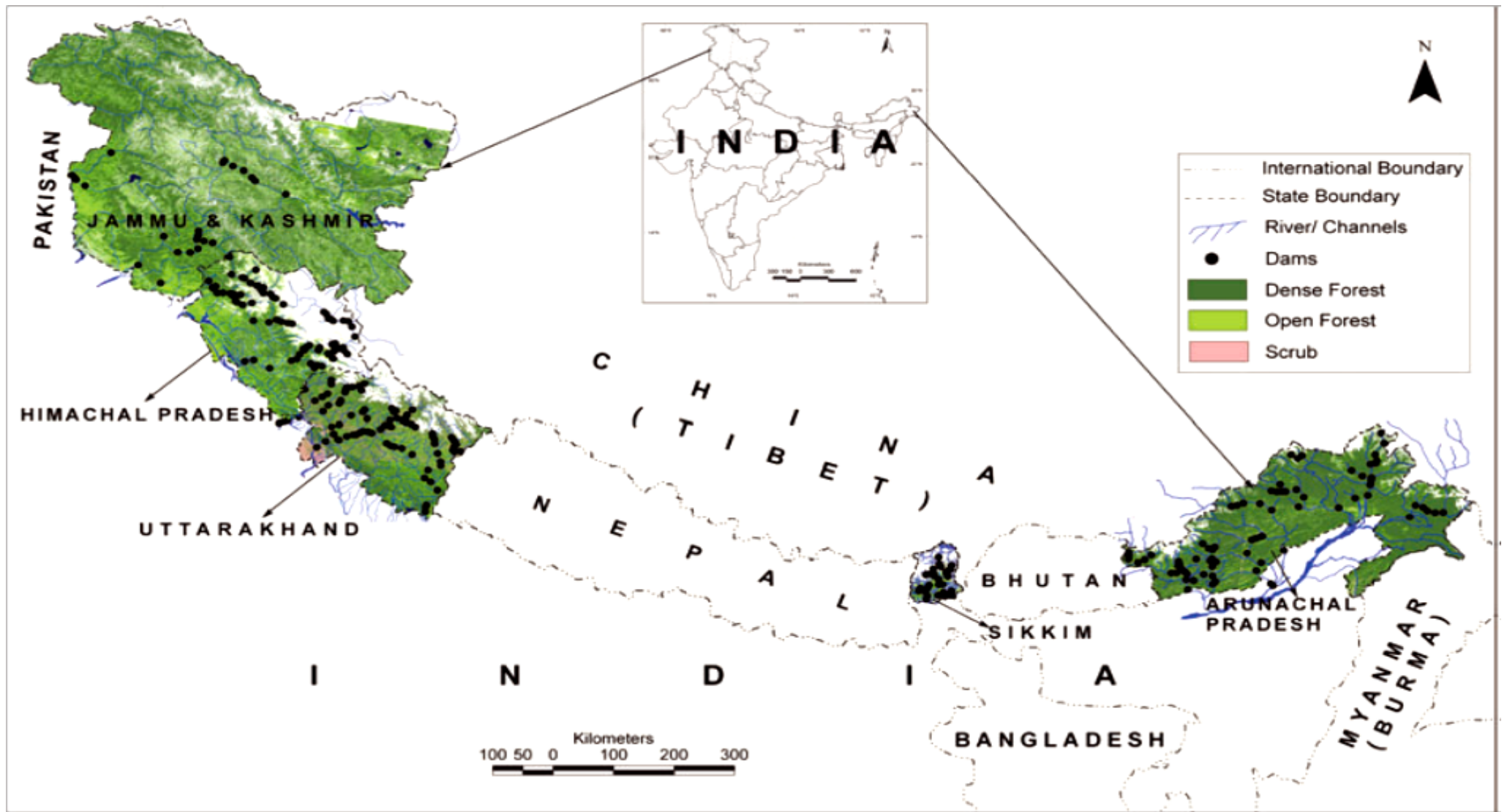
The labels of sustainable development and green energy are used in neoliberal India to promote hydropower projects. Using the term ‘sustainability’ and ‘green’ in environment impact assessment reports and environment management plans pretends to resolve the dichotomy between development and environment. For preparing the reports and plans of projects, new consultancy organizations are coming up, new firms are finding business. However, nothing much has changed in terms of the actual impacts of the development projects. The only thing that has changed is the increasing use of green, environment friendly terminology. As Patel (2015) highlights, technocratic indicators of sustainability limit its definition to resource management and efficiency giving the power to define sustainability to experts. This approach falls within the ambit of ecological modernisation. Equity, social justice and integral, holistic concern for environment and people’s interpretations of the concept of sustainability get neglected. Sustainability in this sense has tended to become an industry in itself. It has rather to be understood in its deeper meanings as a way of life dependent of our interconnectedness (Nadarajah 2013). A life that has to have some balance and limits, which is not merely human centric, technologically driven and consumption based, as mountain peoples’ lives are (Norberg Hodge 1991).

The proponents of hydropower are now campaigning that the proposed projects in the Himalayas are only run-of-the-river ones, and are hence harmless. This is incorrect on two grounds. One, the projects are technically not RoR ones, and hence they are not harmless or benign as they are projected to be. The concept of RoR project is that the power is generated by the natural flow of the stream, by using natural elevations. However, what is being done in name of RoR is different. Dams, including large dams, are being constructed to divert the rivers into tunnels. The tunnel of one project follows another’s in a sequential cascade. Hence, the water flows not in the river beds, but inside tunnels, and is only seen intermittently when it appears for power generation (Roy 2008:19). The disappearance of the rivers thus, has led to drastic impacts on the ecology, lives and livelihoods of the region. Two, the projects are actually storing water like the reservoir based projects, which stands against the very definition of RoR project (CAG 2010:3). Only a trickle of what was

formerly a river can be seen downstream a RoR dam, as even minimum e-flows¹ are not maintained.

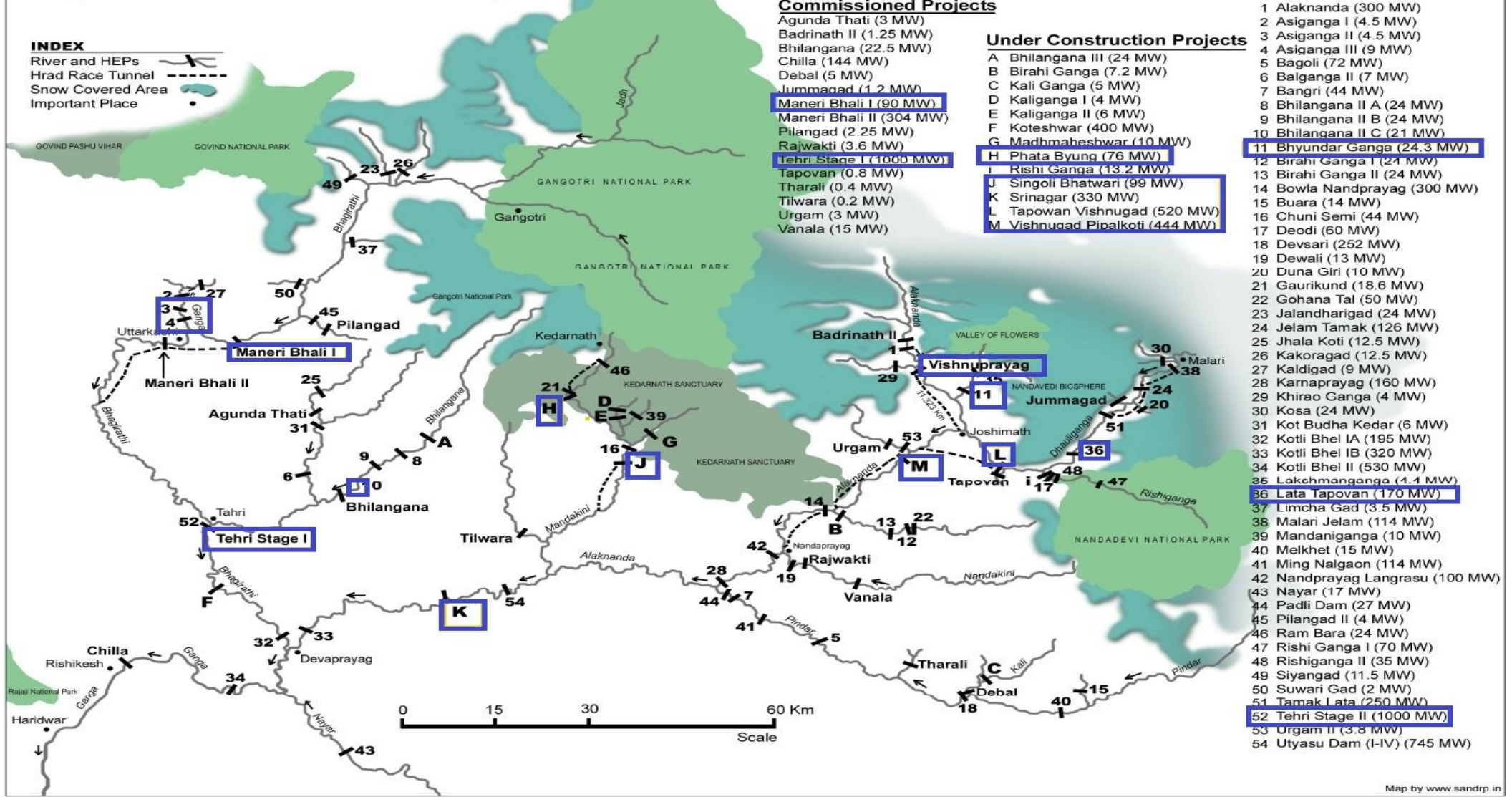
Hydropower projects are planned for the entire Himalayan belt. Every Himalayan state- Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Sikkim, Arunachal Pradesh, Assam as well as all major rivers from Ganga to Brahmaputra are included (Map 1). The tributaries are not left out either. If all the proposed dams are constructed in “*the 28 of 32 major river valleys, the Indian Himalayas would have one of the highest average dam densities in the world, with one dam for every 32 km of river channel*”. Over half of the dams are coming up in dense, ‘till now undisturbed’ forests (Map 2). Ganga basin would have the highest number of dams in the world (one on every 18 km of river channel) (see map 3 showing projects on rivers forming Ganga basin), followed by the Brahmaputra (1 on 35 km) and the Indus (1 on 36 km) (Grumbine and Pandit 2012:1065; 2013: 36). Ninety percent of the projects in the Himalayan belt are RoRs, but this does not change the impacts of the projects as per the scientists (Grumbine and Pandit 2013:36). It is to be noted that these estimates are an understated as only projects for which public data was available are considered in the above mentioned study and already existing dams are not considered. Map 2 is based on a study of only 292 projects whereas the actual number of projects is far greater but estimates are not available. In Uttarakhand alone, 558 projects are planned, and this includes small projects as well (Map 4). They will divert 1500 km of river length into tunnels, affecting close to 28 lakh people residing over this stretch (Tiwari 2012a). They will also lead to the displacement of close to five lakh people (Tiwari 2012b).

¹ Environmental or ecological flow refers here to the minimum flow of water released by a dam in a river that is required for the river to maintain a ‘healthy’ flow for ‘cultural and ecological purposes’. Various percentages of e-flows have been recommended by courts, tribunals and expert appraisal committees of MoEF. Although environmental flows are also used in the context of global flows of energy, waste, water, biodiversity etc. (e.g. in Spaagaren, Gert; P.J. Mol, Arthur and Buttel, Frederick H. (eds.) (2006) *Governing Environmental Flows: Global Challenges to Social Theory*, Cambridge: MIT Press). This is not what is meant here.

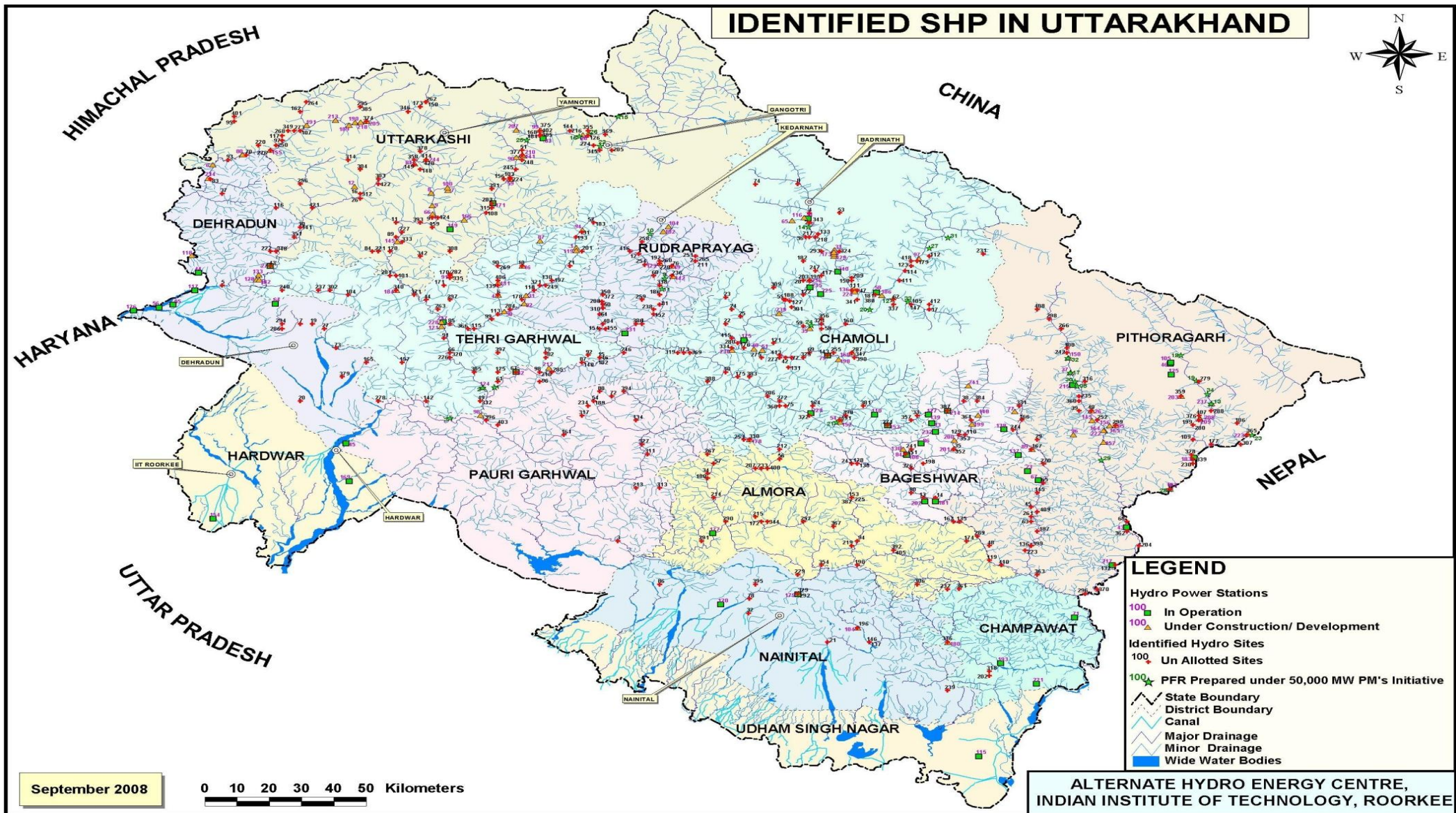


Map 2: The map shows density of large dams across the Himalayas, penetrating and affecting the forest cover. Source: Grumbine and Pandit (2012:1063).

Hydro Electric Projects on River Ganga



Map 3: Map shows the hydropower projects in different stages on the river Ganga, on rivers forming Ganga, Alaknanda, Bhagirathi, Mandakini, Bhilangana, Pindar, Assiganga, Nandakini, Dhauliganga, Kaliganga, Rishiganga, Birahiganga. The projects that are discussed here and are on Ganga, are highlighted. Source: www.sandrp.in



Map 4: Showing small hydropower projects in Uttarakhand. Many are proposed or have been approved, even when the specific sites are not allotted. Source: AHEC, IIT Roorkee.

According to Shrivastava (2013), for the purposes of hydropower projects alone, at least 5,500 ha of forest lands have been diverted, majorly after the formation of the state. The associated infrastructure of transmission lines and roads took another 3,100 and 9,500 hectares each. The maximum forest area for hydropower projects, roads and transmission lines has been diverted in the districts of Chamoli, Rudraprayag, Uttarkashi and Pithoragarh in Uttarakhand. As I will discuss later, these very districts were the worst affected areas during the 2013 disaster in Uttarakhand that was characterized by sudden flash floods and landslides, causing widespread destruction to lives and property. Activists in Uttarakhand have pointed out that due to the sole focus on hydropower projects, the good practices which could be worked on further, like the *gharats* (the traditional water mills) or small projects, with a different social and mechanical design, have got neglected and even the ones existing are now weathering away and are adversely affected (Agarwal, R. 2001, Roy 2008). Also, exclusive focus on one use of the river - electricity generation, takes away the focus from multiple meanings and uses of river and its water that forms an integral part of the local, mountain people's way of life.

India, due to its high population density and deep everlasting commitment to infrastructure development, including dams, has already the second highest number of displaced people in the world. Estimates suggest that the numbers are around 40 million, next only to China (Grumbine and Pandit 2013:36). The RoR projects that are said to be built in Uttarakhand, presently claim to be causing little direct displacement. They are not held responsible for dispossession in the form of large scale deforestation, drying up of springs and streams and ceding of houses, fields and orchards and cracks in houses due to the heavy blasting. Forced migration is not also recognized as a consequence of the RoR projects. People do not have any way to 'prove' the link between the projects and the impacts on their lives. Their claims are brushed aside by the government and the companies and are not supported by any 'scientific study' undertaken by a credible and recognized institution till now. The disastrous results are either blamed upon nature or god, they get termed as *devi apdaa* by the project companies when the people demand compensation. The compensation when provided comes under the scheme of natural disasters, which is much lesser than the amount of compensation due to displacement caused by development projects. The dispossession is also not a one-time affair; it is a consistent process in

relation to RoRs in mountain specific conditions, which at times gets brushed aside lightly as ‘collateral damage’.

The access to the land and water that the companies have is also leading to the local people’s exclusion from access to these resources. It works as a means for further appropriation of resources by companies and increases their control over the local economy. The process of ‘accumulation by dispossession’ (Harvey 2003) is evident in the case of hydropower projects in Uttarakhand. The commons like rivers and forests are getting appropriated by the private companies in the name of public purpose and development, with the aid of the Uttarakhand state and as a side effect; the local people who are dependent on these natural resources often lose their livelihoods. It is not just the enclosing of commons alone, there is a broader dispossession that occurs through the control over access to resources by the state and private companies. This appropriation is justified in name of bringing employment, water and electricity to the mountain people. However, this remains an elusive promise, excluding the local people both as producers and as consumers. At times, companies barricade the only path that lead to villages uphill and at times, stretches of rivers, in order to guard their sprawling powerhouses, townships and guesthouses. The mountain ways look like war zones, ripped apart, scarred, where one feels constantly under surveillance. The company hoardings ‘welcome’ people in the mountains, as if the mountains are in their possession.

The laws and their implementation remain weak. The policies overlook the risks of the series of projects. Environment Impact Assessment (EIA)¹ process for mandatory environmental clearance from the Ministry of Environment, Forests and

¹ The Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) process has its origins in the 1992 Rio Earth Summit, during which over 170 countries committed to balancing environmental concerns and economic needs. The EIA, also known as the environment clearance process, was a tool to do this and was introduced in India in 1994. As a law, it mandates that detailed studies be carried out before implementing projects that carry social risks and which can damage the environment. Recently, there have been attempts to dilute it. According to Menon and Kohli (2016), it is the only official recourse available to people to assert that land and water are not merely resources to be exploited for hydropower etc. and at present EIA is being diluted to “regularise corporate irregularities”.

Environment Impact Assessment of a hydropower project includes in addition to impact on the socio-cultural and socio-economic environment; adverse impacts of the project construction on land stability, catchment soil erosion, reservoir sedimentation and spring flows. The influence on these by road construction or widening activities, reservoir interference with the in-flowing streams and blasting for tunnels etc. is assessed. Under the Environment Protection Act, any false information provided at the time of appraisal process is punishable. Providing poor or false information however is a rule, rather than an exception, according to activists. However, no reported case exists when action was taken against any company that provide incorrect information.

Climate Change, has even proved to be inadequate for addressing the cumulative impacts of a single dam (Grumbine & Pandit 2013: 36). In the Himalayas, there will be cascades of projects in every single river basin, and no cumulative effects analysis has been asked for in EIAs, even when according to the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) Report (2010), the cumulative effects of many projects would prove to be devastating. Any serious mishap at one project would impact the series of projects downstream. National Water Policy is silent about hydropower in the Himalayas. Central Water Commission, India's technical organisation under the Union Ministry of Water Resources², publishes National Register of Large Dams (NRLD), the key document that provides information about large dams in India. A significant number of large dams built for hydropower projects in Himalayas do not even figure in this list. In case of the majority of projects, even the sites or the rivers on which they are to be built are not specified (Thakkar 2013:30).

On the one hand, the colossal projects like Tehri (photos below) are not working up to their claimed capacity and present a consistent and grave threat to the local people. The displaced people from on Damodar Valley or Hirakud project of the 1950s and from the Tehri project of 1990s have not still got proper rehabilitation (Nayak 2010). On the other hand, water conflicts in all parts of the country are increasing day by day (Joy et al. 2008). Still, there seems to be a mad rush to get as many projects approved as possible, without any thought towards even the feasibility of the project. The central Himalayan belt is comparatively young and thus fragile and presents many risks to the projects like heavy silt loads, earthquakes and floods. Even if the project does not itself workout, the construction work involved in it not only benefits the company, which gets the monetary funds for the construction, but also the many contractors, officials and other mediators whose businesses are involved in the development process. The corruption involved in the whole process of approval and construction of the project is evident. The theme of corruption comes again and again during my field work, it manifests in post disaster work, in the building of projects, in daily lives of villagers, in environment impact assessment process and so on.

² Now the name is changed to Ministry of Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation, to include the 'crucial' 'river development' aspect officially, which also manifests in the form of hydropower projects. In the name of Ganga rejuvenation, 20,000 crore rupees are sanctioned, but what is ignored is the fact that Ganga cannot remain clean when most of the river flows inside tunnels after its descent and only 5% of it is released onto the river bed by companies (Malhotra 2016).



The colossal structure of the Tehri dam at 260 m. Photo taken from the top of the dam (2.12.14), as the road from the dam swirls down. The 60 km long lake behind it has inundated the best agricultural land along the banks of the river Bhagirathi, and is leading to the ceding of close to 30-40 villages.

In relation to the hydropower projects, one question that arises is, how are we looking at our rivers? Ganga, with all the reverence attached to it, the talks of *aviral dhara*, *nirmal dhara* (uninterrupted/regular flow and clean flow) and crores and crores of funds marked for its cleaning, and a whole Ministry dedicated to it, is actually running in tunnels for many kilometers (250 kms of Alaknanda alone, 112 km of Bhagirathi as per CAG report of 2010:31, this the report term as a ‘conservative estimate’). Religious and business interests are deliberating on e-flows, i.e. how much water a river should have, so that it could mimic being a river. Through RoRs, we are talking about the rivers that need not flow in their bed, but in tunnels bored out in mountains, desilted, with changed turbidity, temperature and altered and managed rhythms and flows, so that the companies could get a large head to produce electricity. We are talking of minimum flow that the river needs to retain the identity of being itself, and more importantly to keep up its role of serving us. There is a larger acceptability for the discourse that stands for the rivers being owned and conquered.

RoR is said to be a green, sustainable and at times, small-scale technology, but considering the ecology of the Himalayas, the RoRs in practice do not live up to their image. Instead of boring machines for taking out earth and tunneling that projects claim to involve, heavy explosives are being used to tunnel the mountains. Instead of responsible muck dumping at approved sites, muck is dumped in the rivers or in the forests. Says Yogendra Singh Negi, a 42 year old previous Pradhan of Dharkot village

in Tehri, *every development in pahar is for destruction. We have four parallel roads running here in Madannegi, as interests of contractors lies in getting more and more roads. Each involves blasting, that is very irresponsibly done. Boring is expensive and blasting cord comes only in about 25-50 Rs. One cord could demolish a rock of the size of a house.*

Both the impacts of the hydropower project and the responses of people are regulated by and are specific to the mountain geography. Reputed geologists from mountains, like K. S. Valdiya (1996), are of the opinion that the Uttarakhand state's Himalayan segment is in a critically stressed state, the dam reservoirs can lead to induced seismicity, landslides and increased severity of natural hazards. Landslides have become more common all over Uttarakhand, destroying in one go the fields and the groves that people prepared for step farming taking years. Mostly the elderly and the women inhabit the villages, surviving on cattle or on meagre cultivation, whereas men/boys go out to work, in search mostly for irregular low paid jobs. The construction process of the projects, such as construction of roads for the project work, shows a complete disregard for the environment and for the safety of the people. Development here is getting spelled out as disaster. The irresponsible use of technologies has disturbed the fragile mountains. The places at which the projects are coming up have had a history, in terms of proneness to disasters, and in terms of active socio-political action. All this is overlooked when the projects are announced. For example, after the China war, the roads were laid in a hurry with heavy blasting and dense oak forests were felled in Dharchula in Pithoragarh district, leading to landslides and death of forty people in the villages of Khela and Shakuri. Now at the same site of Tawaghat, NHPC's Dhauliganaga project has come up and has lead to further ceding of the land and fields, forcing people to migrate away from the region in order to save their lives and livelihoods (photos below). The same is true for the Niti Valley in Chamoli District. Here, Reini village, the focal point of the Chipko movement is also the focal point of hydropower projects. (*Indradhanush Udas Hai* 2013)



When the mountains subside helplessly: Landslide in Khela grazing ground since February 2009, known as *Chetual Dhaar* and landsink in Ela *tok* of Shakuri Village due to tunnel leakage in Dhauliganga project (pictures dated 21.12.13), both in Dharchula district.

Development gimmick is such that the *Pahari*³ or mountain people are declared as backward by the media, government, tourists, business organizations from outside and they feel backward. In the process of becoming developed, they are discarding their coarse grains and cultivated knowledge. They wish for development that is there in the plains, but in the process they tend to lose the basis of their very existence. People ask the government for development, employment, roads, schools, health centres for themselves and their animals, albeit the development that suits their mountain conditions, and which is regionally appropriate. But this request is not heard in the presumed hurry of ‘serving’ them and in name of development they are given hydropower projects, that comes with the promise of jobs (menial and temporary) in exchange for their homes, land and rivers. The companies with their promise of development get the trust of the people, at least initially. Garhwali people generally take pride in being patriots, *desh bhakt* and will not try to stop anything that comes as development and especially development that is in the Indian nations’ interest, *vikas*

³ The term *Pahari* is used for that which belongs to or comes from the mountains. It refers in my thesis to the people of the hill districts of Uttarakhand, the districts of Nainital, Pithoragarh, Almora, Bageshwar, Champawat, Tehri, Chamoli, Pauri, Uttarkashi and Rudraprayag. The districts of Dehradun, Haridwar and Udham Singh Nagar are plain districts. The term ‘plains’ refer to the non hilly areas, as one comes down from pahar or the mountain districts. When we talk of a unified Uttarakhandi identity, then *Pahari* will mean all people of Uttarakhand and ‘plains’ and ‘outsiders’ will refer to the people belonging to other states of India. But in context of migration, plains also stand for the plain districts of Uttarakhand.

karya or *desh hit karya*. If the companies however, do not get the easy acceptance from the local inhabitants around their project's sites, they often threaten the villagers. The villagers are told that the land belongs to the state, and that they are just the caretakers, if they will not give the land, it will be snatched away from them and in the process, they will not even get the compensation which the company is so benevolently giving them. It is not clear to the people, whom they should approach for help, justice, hold responsible for their condition, or ask for compensation- the Indian state or private companies that build the hydropower projects?

These processes of the arrival and impacts of the hydropower projects are studied in detail in the following chapters, along with the underlying conceptions of modernity which sanctify such development.

Uttarakhand: The Site of Enquiry

Kakh lagan chuin, kaima lagan chuin, where do we begin the discussion of the hills of Kumaun and Garhwal, in this song given below, written and sung in 1992, Narender Singh Negi⁴, the most popular singer of Uttarakhand, talks of how when the people were fleeing Uttarakhand, the mountains seemed to be eroding downwards, the natural resources were out of reach of the people and whatever was traditional, was crumbling and development was elusive. His song is appropriate for present times as well. In this song, he describes the villager's pain due to migration, water scarcity, alcoholism, natural adversities and unfulfilled aspirations. The only solution provided to them by the government is a new development policy or committee.

<i>kakh lagan chui, kaima lagan chui</i>	where do we begin the discussion
<i>ye pahad ki, kumon garhwal ki</i>	of the hills of kumaun and garhwal?
<i>reeta kudon ki, teesa bhaando ki</i>	of empty homes and thirsty pots
<i>bhagda mankhyon ki, rarda daandon ki</i>	of men fleeing away and hills
	wearing away
<i>kakh lagan chui, kaima lagan chui</i>	where do we take our problems?

⁴ Narender Singh Negi is the most popular and respected composer and singer along the length and breadth of Uttarakhand and he is popular also among the migrants from Uttarakhand. He has sensitively given voice to many concerns of the mountains. He is known for connecting with all and at the same time preserving the cultural and literary sensitivity. He has been vocal in raising issues of the plight of common men that manifest from increasing migration, inflation, drawbacks of development and he also highlights the unequally heavy work load that falls on women. He has composed songs related to the Chipko, Tehri and Uttarakhand social movements and on the present dilemmas of the region.

<i>sarg teri aasa, kab aalu chaumasa</i>	we pray to heavens for the monsoon rains
<i>ganga-jamuna ji ka mulak</i>	in the land of ganga and yamuna
<i>mankhi goru pyasa</i>	man and cattle go thirsty
<i>kya ruydi kya hyund</i>	be it heat or cold
<i>paani ni ch bund</i>	not a drop of water
<i>phir bani ch yojna bal</i>	but another plan/policy has come up
<i>dekha aab kya hyund</i>	let's see what happens now
<i>baig dubya daaru man</i>	man drown in liquor
<i>nouna tunn yaarun man</i>	boys in the poor company
<i>kajyani andolan chalani</i>	women lead the social action
<i>daftar bajarun man</i>	in the offices and bazaars
<i>kudi tutni thes maan</i>	huts can disintegrate at a mere touch
<i>chipadaya laagya race man</i>	lizards run races on the walls
<i>bhitar musa birala basyan</i>	cats and mice have made home inside
<i>mankhi bhyar des man</i>	but men are all out in plains
<i>na bhitar na bhair</i>	inside or out
<i>kakhi bhi ni ch khair</i>	there is no place with kindness
<i>din man gijyun bagh</i>	there is a fear of men eating leopards
<i>raat bhyunchala ki dair</i>	in the day and of earthquakes in the night
<i>jungle ghair-baad maan</i>	jungles are all fenced up
<i>kheti baadi tyaad maan</i>	and fields are sharecropped
<i>saari khai bandarun na</i>	the monkeys have eaten the crops
<i>sagadi gaye ujaad maan</i>	and domestic animals have eaten the garden
<i>karj gaadi painchu</i>	debt was taken for a buffalo
<i>failu maan alji bhainsu</i>	that has also got entangled in files
<i>por dubya baad maan</i>	last year a flood came
<i>sukhu padyun aisun</i>	this year it is too dry

The struggle for autonomy, for formation of a new state, where 'own' people will bring development suitable for the mountain conditions, has not materialised. The situation of the region is devolving after state formation. There is decreasing agricultural land, increasing unemployment and migration and disturbed ecological balance. According to S. Pathak (2012), there are about 20 lakh educated unemployed youth in the region. More than forty lakh natives have shifted out of the state. There are thousands of 'ghost villages', at least three thousand villages are such where not

even a soul is living and many which are partially empty (Aswal 2016). One of the reasons for this migration is that agricultural land has reduced substantially due to different 'development' initiatives. After the state formation, thousands of acres of agricultural land of the valley areas of Dehradun, Haridwar and Uddhamsingh Nagar were marked for industries and Government offices. People migrating towards these towns also established their residences and shops on agricultural land (Joshi, M. 2012). Now there is also a talk of establishing smart cities. All these new constructions are inevitably on lands that are classified as agricultural or forest under the Indian government's land use regulations. Land, mining and timber mafia work in tandem, further affecting agriculture. Some districts in Uttarakhand like Bageshwar and Haridwar are dominated by mining mafia and some like Nainital by land mafia.

The mafia is strong and the demand for land high. The dominant, elite, politicians and religious sects, each wish a piece of the mountains and of nature for themselves. For this 'mountain view' or a luxurious holiday home, the local people are tempted or often compelled to sell their land. This is more common in the case of places which are in close proximity to Delhi, where people can travel over weekends. The youth wish to access the promises of modernity and force their old parents to sell the lands. The land mafia at times brings monkeys and set them free in strategic locations in order to destroy standing crops and force the distress sale of land by the farmers (Mishra 2015). Some locals have become mediators and contractors, and the seller normally does not even get a proper market price. For example, from what B. Singh (2015) has to say, it appears that the whole Nainital District is on sale, with luxury lodgings and resorts (many belonging to religious gurus as well) all over the place, and the locals eventually become labourers on their own land. The lack of abundance of law in relation to the land ceiling laws in India, worsen the situation. Uttarakhand is the only Himalayan state where land can be freely purchased, and without any limit. The other states like Himachal Pradesh have strict laws related to land sales. At times, whole hills are sold off. Ramgarh in Nainital, known as the fruit bowl of Kumaon, with orchards of peach, apricots, pears and apples, is fast on the way of becoming a concrete jungle, soaking up the local water as well. Horticulture and tourism related work is also getting appropriated by 'outsiders' who come from other states in India. Hoardings like the one below are a common sight.



Uttarakhand for sale? As the mountains open up moving from Bhawali towards Ramgarh in the Nainital district, hoardings like this one greets at roadsides, even at trees, this one is for sale of land between 2 to 150 nallis.

Uttarakhand has little land as private property in the form of agricultural land. This region primarily has an agro-pastoral subsistence economy. Mostly the land is scattered over a wide region, making agriculture more difficult and unsupportive of subsistence needs. It is becoming more difficult as the wild animals, monkeys and boars destroy the crops. The wild animals have increased due to heavy deforestation. The severe changes in weather conditions have also impacted the crops adversely. Weather has changed so drastically that people exclaim repeatedly mountains are no longer like mountains (*pahar ab pahar nahi raha*), seeing the uncertainty of rains and increased temperatures. Currently the regions where oranges used to grow, mangoes are growing (*jahan santra hota tha wahan ab aam ho raha hai*). At many places, Nepali tenants work on the land, of either the families who are not able to work themselves due to migration or other reasons, or as hired labourers when agriculture is prosperous enough, as it is in the rare case of the Yamuna valley. Total agricultural land is only thirteen percent of the Uttarakhand state's entire land area. Only seven percent of the mountain region constitutes agricultural land, and the rest is in the plain. Average land ownership is about one acre. Ninety-two percent of the farmers are marginal farmers (Chopra et al. 2014:26). The border areas have still less agricultural land. Sixty five percent of the region belongs to forests (Pathak, S. 2012: 23). Only a small part of the land in the form of *panghats*, *van panchayats*, and

grazing lands belongs to the local community. There is very little land with Tribals and Dalits. The state has till now not even implemented the 'The Scheduled Tribe and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act 2006' (Pathak, S. 2012: 23), which can provide essential rights and livelihood opportunities to people. Although Uttarakhand is conceptualised as a hill state, the maximum 'development' is focussed in the plains and urban areas of Dehradun, Haridwar, Rishikesh, Kotdwar, Haldwani and Vikasnagar.

As most of the land 'belongs' to the state government of Uttarakhand, it is easier for the project authorities to acquire land. For all these projects, land is acquired at a minimum cost, and most of the electricity is supplied to outside states. In addition to the projects, in this small state there are six national parks, six wildlife sanctuaries and two conservation reserves, the 10 km area surrounding these reserves/sanctuaries is proposed to be declared as an eco-sensitive zone, restricting the natives' livelihood and other infrastructure development like roads. Twenty-one percent of the forest land has been converted to conserved zone (Joshi, M. 2013), barring the native residents from accessing the natural resources on which they depend, often for their very survival, in the name of the greater good, just as it is in the case of dams.

The repeated disasters in Uttarakhand have failed to sensitize the administrators and policy makers towards fragile mountain environment. The construction of projects is going on in full swing, and these constitute a chief strategy for bringing development to the new mountain state. Simultaneously, many people in Uttarakhand continue to see the 2013 disaster as a penance for the destruction of the rivers and the mountains. In people's mind the linkage of project construction with 2013 disaster is clear, but they are not able to hold the companies accountable, as is the case with the other impacts of the projects. I felt it was important to visit the disaster affected villages and to take their views. The 2013 disaster has drawn attention towards the destruction that the projects could cause, both in the minds of the local residents and of the outsiders from other parts of India. This is a step towards holding the companies accountable for the impacts of their projects for the first time. (Chopra et al. 2014, *Devi's Dilemma* 2015, Upadhyay 2014b)

Ecological concern in Uttarakhand can be estimated by the existence of forty thousand NGOs working on issues of environment, water sources and forest conservation, in 17,000 Uttarakhandi villages. An average of 3 NGOs per village (estimates by Tiwari 2012b). Many of these have taken up the issue of impacts of the projects on the rivers and the people. The overall impact of so many projects in one region also manifest in the formation of a new bureaucratic category and a new identity for people in the region - that of 'the displaced' (*visthapit*). Many are tired of hard lives of the mountains, made harder and unbearable by insensitivity of infrastructure development. The villages on the brink of Tehri reservoir are a case in point, and so are the villages affected by the RoRs.

Modes of Enquiry

While taking up and carrying out this research, I have been conscious of my own ideological stance that aligns with that of the activists of social movements like NBA in India. My conversations with villagers, activists, geologists, company officials, journalists, writers, teachers, local politicians, NGO workers and others could not be dispassionate. My interviews were conversations; I at times expressed my own frustration about why the situation was as it was, as there was an expectation on my part that resistances should take place. With company officials and other project officials and NGOs, conversations were difficult, as I had to stop myself from going into an argumentation mode and saying anything that may stop them from sharing their point of view. Undoubtedly I could connect better with the activists and villagers. It was not just me asking them, what you are doing in terms of response to the projects. But they were also asking me, what am I doing for them? Could I do something, I was asked in the villages, what solution could you provide? (*kya hal karenge?*) I could only say that I am writing in newspapers, and magazines. The thought that I was not contributing in any significant way, in order to rationalize my presence in the field, to make demands and have expectations from people stayed with me. I could only relate to them my experiences from the other regions and of other movements or help in drafting a letter or assist with some work in Delhi. It was difficult to explain what PhD is, and what research is. Local villagers in Uttarakhand are more familiar with NGOs, and I was asked repeatedly if I am from a NGO. With the families I stayed for longer periods, familial relations developed, and later

conversations over the phone also helped clear many doubts. However, it was difficult to get help in translation of songs from Garhwali and Kumauni languages since people are getting out of touch with the languages and with each other's dialects⁵, or they use a diluted version of these dialects and they found it difficult to tell me meaning of many words.⁶

Ethnographic work for this study was undertaken from the year 2012 to 2015, with five one to two month long stays and many shorter trips, few to attend meetings and discussions organised by local forums like Mahila Manch, Uttarakhand Lok Vahini and Uttarakhand Open University and IIT Roorkee, as well as organisations like Centre for Science and Environment, Delhi. As the protest sites and the concerned activists, groups, and intellectuals reside all over Uttarakhand, near and away from the project sites themselves, the best way to conduct fieldwork was multi sited ethnography. Also, by the time I started work there were not many ongoing resistances, though dissent brew everywhere, and it made little sense to do a long term study of one single social movement or resistance. I visited the villages affected by the Tehri dam reservoir, i.e. the villages of Dharmandal and Raika *patti*⁷ and the resettlement sites of displaced of Tehri dam near Haridwar and Dehradun.

I also spent time in the villages affected by hydropower projects around Joshimath in Chamoli district, as there is a cluster of large projects here and this area seemed significant as it has remained a centre of the Chipko movement (most commonly known as the *hug the trees* movement, to save the felling of trees by the state and the private contractors). Other than this, I also visited the villages affected by projects in Rudraprayag district and Uttarakashi district in Garhwal and Dharchula and Munsiyari in Pithoragarh district and Bageshwar district of Kumaun. Most of the

⁵ There are many dialects within both Garhwali and Kumauni languages, like Salan (Pauri), Jaunsari (Dehradun), Tehrali (Tehri), Rawaini (Uttarakashi), Chamoli (Chamoli and Rudraprayag) of Garhwal, and Johari (Johar), Danpuriya (Danpur), Askoti (Askot), Sirali, Soryali (Pithoragarh), Chaugarkhyali (Chaugarkha), Kumaiya (Champawat), Gangola (Gangolihat), Khasparjia (Almora), Phaldakotiya (Phaldakot), Pachhai (Ranikhet) and Rau-Chaubhaisi (Nainital) in Kumaun.

⁶ Folk songs are becoming less prevalent. However, in areas like Reini, that have been active in social movements, women readily break in songs. I was asking for folk songs in relation to rivers, but rivers are such an integral part that songs are not exclusively about the rivers but day to day interaction with nature in general. Mostly I found these songs to be religious.

⁷ *Patti* are administrative units prevalent from the time of Tehri *riyasat*. It is used for a group of 20-30 villages of an area, which can be seen as a unit due to their mutual dependence on common resources like a market or other such interaction networks.

projects in Joshimath, Rudraprayag, Tehri and Uttarakashi fall under the category of large and are coming up on the following rivers: Bhagirathi, Alaknanda and Mandakini, that are the main tributaries of Ganga. I also spent time in the villages affected by a smaller project on river Bhilangana in Tehri region, and on river Saryu in Bageshwar region, as they had remained centres of long social resistances against hydropower projects. I briefly crossed over from Dharchula, in Pithoragarh district to Darchula district of Nepal, to visit the small-scale projects that are successfully run by the villagers there. I also visited the cities of Dehradun, Almora, Nainital, Shrinagar, Haldwani and Gopeshwar to talk to the NGO people, activists, university professors and to collect material from the libraries, and newspaper and magazine offices. I tried to reach the distant villages affected by the projects, across Garhwal and Kumaun, though my longer stays were in and around Tehri and Joshimath. I tried to visit most of the villages that are affected by the projects and focused on incorporating as much diversity along varied criteria ranging from impacts of the projects, geographical location, activist histories, type of companies etc. as possible. There was only a rough idea in my mind of the projects and regions to visit on the basis of articles I had read, it was the activists and the villagers themselves who prompted me to visit the villages they thought were important.

In addition to the narratives of people, my main learning about Uttarakhand is through journeys on foot, *yatras*⁸. I was a part of the 2014 *Askot Arakot Abhiyan*, where I was walking with a team on foot to the interior villages of Uttarakhand for 30 days. In this *yatra* I could cover the length and breadth of Garhwal and meet many

⁸ *Yatra*, roughly translated as journey, is a common medium of mobilisation in Uttarakhand mountains. There are many *yatras* undertaken by many forums and banners in Uttarakhand. While Askot Arakot *yatra* is trek or an on-foot *yatra*, there are many activists and NGO people who do *yatras* in buses and jeeps, to go collectively to hold meetings in villages. It is difficult for people to gather at any common point and few such common points exist that are frequented by all unlike in most non Himalayan regions in India where social activists have usual protest places that are central and easy to approach by different villagers.

Yatra is also associated with search, seeking and exploration. It is important to go to the villages as some are so interior and inaccessible that the situation of those can be known and experienced in a better way by going there. After the Askot Arakot *yatra* I realised that it is more important to go on foot and to stay some time in a place, in order to imbibe the situation, as well as because some villages can only be approached on foot and the foot ways are what most of the people use themselves.

Although in Uttarakhand, '*yatra*' is also used for pilgrimage to religious places, my *yatra* was more of learning about the region and its people. Religious *yatras* have deep connection with rivers, some involve walking along the river, *parikrama*, as in case of Narmada. In Uttarakhand too, the concept of *yatra* to four sacred pilgrimage sites (*chaar dhaam*), previously had a close connection with the rivers and the villages, that has now changed to a more commercialised version.

activists, including cultural activists and villagers, who remain witnesses to and participated in earlier social movements in the region. I could also visit the smaller projects on Assiganga in Uttarakashi, and sites of proposed projects in Yamuna Valley. I also visited the villages in Kedar valley, which were affected by the 2013 disaster, and the detailed interactions made me understand how people link the projects with the disaster. Besides the villagers, the close interactions with the journalists and scholars participating in the *yatra* gave me rare insights. I also participated in a week long *yatra* of the project affected villages of Tehri and Rudraprayag, which was organised in 2013 by Matri Sadan, an ashram in Haridwar in collaboration with a right wing group *Ganga Avahan*.

Apart from these, in different areas, I travelled with local activists or otherwise on my own. For me, going to these villages and places myself was important as I could understand the specificity of issues by looking at the specific geographical location and the associated difficulties, which could not be imagined otherwise. For example, I could not have understood the changes in the landscape due to the Tehri reservoir or the post 2013 disaster, if I had not seen them, so much are they a result of the specific mountain environment. At the same time, associating with the activists was essential for my study as I was able to access many field sites through and with them which would have been impossible for me to cover otherwise. I have also used photography as a medium of exploration and relied much on photographs for better description of issues and to highlight the specificity of the Himalayan geography.

I have also looked at the local area specific magazines like *Yugvani* and Regional Reporter, and the magazine *Samyantar* (edited by a person of Uttarakhandi origin, it carries articles/stories of and from Uttarakhand) (from the year 2012 onwards), Journals like Pahar (People's Association for Himalaya Area Research), newspapers like Nainital Samachar and others dailies circulated within the region⁹. Especially with Nainital Samachar (since 1977), Pahar (since 1983) and Yugvani (since 2001), I have seen the older issues to understand the history of the earlier movements and associated discourses¹⁰. Other 'secondary' sources include journals like Sandrp (South Asia Network on Dams, Rivers and People, which covers wider

⁹ Uttarakhand has a rich tradition of publication of local magazines and newspapers and in each region the local people shared a few newspaper and magazine articles.

¹⁰ For this purpose, I also visited libraries in Nainital, Rudraprayag, New Tehri and Dehradun.

regions on this topic), documentary films, newspaper clippings, articles, books, stories, novels, songs, government reports, and studies done by voluntary organisations¹¹. I have specially looked at the songs of Narendra Singh Negi and Girish Tiwari Girda¹², for their songs are people's songs, not just in popularity, but due to their connections with social movements and people's concerns. Thus, I feel this mix of research techniques was useful for generating a spectrum of data from different sites, situations, ideological positions and contexts that compliment and contribute to a fuller understanding of the research concern.

When I had first started in March 2012 from Sonapani in Nainital district after attending a seminar, I hardly knew any place or person in Uttarakhand, but the warm and gracious welcome that I received and the public intellectuals willing to help in each region enabled me to take this *yatra* of the research. I started by taking contacts of few activists I could approach in an area, and they gave me further contacts. In my stays, it was rare that I had to put up in guest houses or hotels (which at times I chose as well to get some private time or while I was sick), it was mostly in *kasbas* and cities that people had a different approach – in villages I was received as a *yatri*, a guest, a traveller, in *kasbas* I was a tourist. Mostly I was welcomed, but at times people were reluctant to give space. In interior places, people welcomed me with open doors and warm hearts. Whatever belongs to them is shared, they do not discriminate in giving the best they have, ghee, food, milk, bedding. They insisted that I stay for a day, stay the night. They do not expect anything in return. I was seen as a guest, not as a liability. They were there to provide for me and not vice versa. Come to small towns, *kasbas* that form the market centres, the things are quite different. When I asked to use the bathroom (as *kasbas* are very crowded and going out is also not an option), people asked for money. I could also see clearly how the attitude of the

¹¹ In addition, there were piles of files with each activist and even with many villagers, as they have engaged in extensive paper work, sending applications and approaching everyone of influence. In addition they have press clippings and copies of court cases and petitions and counter petitions as most have either approached court for relief or are trapped in cases by the project companies. I could only glance through these.

¹² Both of them are said to be *jankavi/ jansanskriti karmi*, people's poets or artists or cultural activists. The singer, composer and leader Girish Tiwari Girda was active since the time of Chipko and had remained prominent in the Uttarakhand movement. His *hudka*, an hourglass-shaped pressure drum, a local musical instrument and his songs were motivations and rallying points behind many actions, especially in Kumaun.

people has changed in the areas which are frequented by the researchers and NGO people.

Most of the observations and conclusions are drawn on the basis of conversations with different people. I often called friends from Uttarakhand in order to cross-check information. But I feel that ultimately this is my version or construction, which may not be completely accurate as perhaps no version is, although I have tried to get a diversity of views. As Emerson (1995) notes, reflexivity recognizes that an account of reality may not simply mirror reality but can represent as real what it is describing.

Access and Connectivity

As I have said, many problems that people are facing and the adverse impacts of the projects get compounded due to the specific geography of the Himalayan mountains in Uttarakhand. I could feel for myself how difficult it is to reach a village in Dharmandal or Raika *patti* –the villages that are left behind the Tehri reservoir lake, opposite to the Tehri dam. It is especially because no efforts have been put to build new bridges and introduce proper and regular transportation facilities to cover the distance that has increased, there is a need to cover an additional 70-100 km of distance by the cut off rural regions. The trade centres, government offices and education and health facilities are all either in far off New Tehri, where also they remain dismal, for better option one has to go to Rishikesh or Dehradun. The direct bus towards these cut off villages of Dharmandal and Raika area leaves as early as 5.00-5.30 in the morning from Dehradun. Having missed that, there is no certainty of finding alternative modes of transport; one has to change buses first at Rishikesh, and then at Borari bus terminal (about four hours from Rishikesh). Most of the buses again are till Peepaldali, three hours of drive away in bus. The way seems to extend forever. It is dust ridden. Perhaps, the reason that the way seems so long is because there is no visible comfort to the eye, no river to travel alongside, and no greenery to soothe the eye, one tapers along the massive body of standing water of the Tehri lake.

But no public conveyance beyond Peepaldali towards Madannegi and beyond is available after 2.00-maximum 3.00 pm. Peepaldali is a connecting point of journeys, having few shops that shut by 7.00 pm, with no human habitation nearby. Only option is to book a taxi at what-so-ever price that is demanded. Even availability

of taxi is not certain. From there the villages I was headed for are some 22 km away, with roads that are in such a poor condition, that no vehicle can survive on them. Transportation is unreliable. I was sometimes forced to call my acquaintances from previous visit for help. I had to often take lift from trucks and taxis. I found that most middle-class people coming to their respective villages in Uttarakhand for rituals post marriage and death, would hire taxis from Delhi only, for the sake of convenience and to make sure that they reach in time.

The uncertainty, anxiety and lack of safety that travelling in Uttarakhand entail is unsettling. By safety I do not mean safety from men, unlike in cities like Delhi where this remains a concern. For women travelling alone Uttarakhand is exceptionally safe (despite the fact that many men are drunk by evening but the problem that this poses for a researcher is that it limits the working hours). People are trustworthy. There is no fear of theft in buses and elsewhere. By safety, I meant the inaccessibility and uncertainty with regard to transportation, accommodation, the badly cut roads, wild animals that frequently come out by evenings from the forest. Accessibility to places in Uttarakhand by public transport decreases by evening. I was told not to venture out in evenings and even late afternoons, as there are particular stretches for example in village Rayadi in Rudraprayag and in Hatt in Chamoli district, where leopards (*baagh*) have attacked people. The threat has increased in the recent years due to the disturbances induced by blasting, deforestation, decreasing human population in villages and lack of water sources in forests.

Prior to the filling of the Tehri lake, there were short cuts, mud paths and familiar villages and homes in the way-even when there were not many vehicles, and the distance to be covered was much less. Every village was approachable on foot. These homes and villages are under the lake now and as a result there is a detour of close to 100 kms, with buses that leave once in a day. It does not matter how many are travelling, all have to somehow fit inside the small buses. To reach to the villages that are still farther on the route separated by the lake water, boats are provided. The signboards like the one depicted in the picture below, are put up at many points, warning people that the water level in the Tehri lake keeps fluctuating, according to the needs of electricity production and the seasonal flow of the river, and the land surrounding the lake is swampy and hence one should approach it carefully. But the villagers have to cross such a path every day, in order to board the boats to cross the

lake and to reach the other side. Villagers are not allowed to run their own boats. They are provided by a company. With much struggle could the villagers influence the politicians to influence the company to start these. Mostly such demands are met at the times of elections, alternatively some temporary reliefs are extended, if BJP started boats, Congress will start a ropeway. The route that people have to take once they get off from boats consists of muck that is left behind as the lake recedes, and so it is slippery and one can fall directly in the lake if one missteps even once. So each slip on this way when I travelled in boats - seemed like a near death experience to me.



Uncertain paths The changing levels of lake, as this hoarding of THDC warns, leave behind uncertain swampy paths that the villagers and their cattle have to transverse daily (10.12.2014, Village Noutaad)

In places other than Tehri also, I had to start very early in the day to make sure that I reach somewhere to stay the night in time or before nightfall. At times, I remained stranded in places due to the absence of vehicles. At times, I would wait in the jeeps for hours, for them to fill up and then start. Public transportation is not provided from *kasbas* till the villages, only private jeeps ply. Transportation fares remain high. Inaccessibility has been a feature of life due to mountain conditions. But now it is becoming difficult, as new dimensions are attached to it. Due to the promises of roads, the old mud paths lie unattended and broken. Difficulty in access to places, also means difficulty in access to things, which is more problematic for people now as

they have become dependent on supplies of cereal etc. from outside as agricultural fields have either drowned or ceded or lie barren.

The lack of education and health facilities in villages are leading to fragmented families as some stay back in the village and some family members stay with children in urban centres. I had to always carry the necessary medicines with myself. In other aspects also, the complete neglect of essentials could be seen, for example, the bridges or irrigation channels that get broken in disaster or otherwise, are not built for years and people are just left to carry on their travel across rivers/*nallas* at grave risks. While providing people access to energy, irrigation water and employment opportunities remain an important pretext for the promotion of hydropower projects. However, the projects also lead to more access and opening up of new areas for business interests. The previously remote areas have opened up due to the building of new access roads. This leads to excessive cutting of forests in remote areas and buying of valuable land, for example, from along the rim of the Tehri reservoir by industrialists from cities.

In Uttarakhand, access is related to demand for essentials such as health facilities for a few and for a few people unlimited access itself has become a measure of status, simply because they can afford it. It excludes others, creating and reinforcing social and economic status hierarchies. For example, unlimited supply of electricity can be accessed by those who have the money to purchase it (according to the National Tariff Policy). The powerful contractors capture most of the contracts and other benefits extended by the projects due to their access to officials in the companies and to the politicians. Few powerful businessmen and politicians have launched their companies and building projects themselves. Also, simply having access to things, that are available and affordable, may not lead to the ability to use them as well due to variations in quality and knowledge needed for using things. For example, there are hospitals at places like Madannegi village in Tehri, but often there are no medicines or doctors here. Most supplies in terms of food that reach villages in remote mountain terrains are either poor in quality or beyond the expiry date.

Experiences as a Researcher

It is neither possible nor desirable as a researcher in Uttarakhand to take a position in support or confirmation of one particular party out of the protestors. Each

claims to be more authentic. Each wants one to be 'loyal' to them, in order to extend help in the research. 'Right' was sceptical of me as I belonged to JNU, a university that is known for its left ideological positions. A 'leftist/sarvodayi activist' got sceptical when I told him that I went to the Matri Sadan Yatra, of the right leaning group *Ganga Avahan*. He wished that I do not give his 'contacts' in the field to anyone else, else they come and appropriate the village level 'workers'. At some points, belonging to JNU helped and gave legitimacy. I did not talk to a few senior activists till the end stage on purpose, because their viewpoint always gets highlighted and has come in literature repeatedly. I wished to understand the issues first for myself, talking to villagers directly.

Initially meeting project officials did not seem that important to me, as they for me remained the perpetrators of dispossession, and I felt that people need more and rightful focus. It took me some time to realise that the conversation with the officials were also important and the meetings later provided me with insights into how they think about the projects and the people. Also, always the officials were not 'outsiders' taking advantage of the 'locals'. In Tehri Hydro Development Corporation Ltd. (henceforth THDC, the corporation that runs Tehri dam) especially, there are many locals, who knowing the psyche of the mountain people, and are able to influence resistances more easily. Mostly in Vishugaad Pipalkoti project of THDC, the people working are displaced from the Tehri dam.

I needed to talk to project officials, and at times I also stayed in the guest houses of companies, not finding any other accommodation, but I felt guilty about this, since for activists this remains a marker of partiality for the company that might involve a reciprocal exchange of favours. Entertaining people during travel and providing accommodation facility is a usual mode by which companies influence governmental and other assessment groups. I went empty handed to the villages initially, and during later visits I tried my best to take something to homes I was staying in for a longer time. But there was nothing much that I could do to somehow ease the burden that I was putting on the local people as an unexpected guest, except to take some vegetables and fruits, which are increasingly becoming rare in mountain diets, as kitchen gardens are increasingly non-functional. Most people cook *daal* or potatoes. For me, at times they had to cook something 'vegetarian'. Sometimes it

could be a rushed potato *sabzi*, but mostly I got to taste the *Garhwali* and *Kumauni* delicacies. It is difficult to find such a warm and generous welcome in other regions.

In Uttarakhand, women do not maintain the *ghare baire* distinction strictly or of inside and outside of the home. They come out to talk to the outsiders, men and women alike, and guests are allowed inside in the intimate spaces of the kitchen etc. At times, women expressed how they are aware of this distinctive condition of veiling that is prevalent in the plains, and how outsiders like company people who ‘keep their women inside’, forget to show respect for any such boundaries in mountain homes. In Pathri resettlement site, women were conscious that outsiders tend to take advantage of them due to their fairly liberal cultural norms regarding the segregation of inside-outside space. Sitting with the women in the kitchen and cooking together, and at times helping in collecting leaves for the cattle, helped me understand the milieu better and also enabled me to learn some skills like cooking on the *chulha*. How well I could do this was always a matter of speculation for them.

People have also become used to outsiders coming to their villages, as researchers, NGO people, CSR workers, company officials and expert committee teams frequent the area. The NGO and company culture has ingrained this thought that something can be gained by showing the impoverishment. Unemployment being the main worry, people does not hesitate in asking for work from a perfect stranger. As a researcher, it took another dimension in Tehri area. Even when they are getting pensions and the adult sons of the family are working in the army, people said that they are barely managing to survive. They wanted me to click each crack in their house, hoping that they will get something if the photos reach the right authorities. They even offered me money if I could get their home included in ‘for compensation’. Women cried, men expressed anger, after assessing my ability to respond to their ‘plight’. Many of these villagers have taken some contractual work from the companies operating the hydropower projects. Many were far from being naïve, but nevertheless, they were often helpless.

Often the people see me with a notebook and pen, and with a camera and assess what I could do for them, can I take their voices to the powers that be? Do I have the ability to get their home included in the list of people to be rehabilitated? They answered accordingly. People have become strategic due to exposure to the visits of many researchers, activists, journalists, and officials. This has to an extent

also made villagers cynical and disheartened. It has almost given the problems and protests a tragic quality of spectacle that they have to present before numerous people coming to their place, as the demand for rehabilitation lingers on for years. So when I approached the village Chanthi in Tehri, on the bank of the Tehri reservoir lake, the men took a break from their game of cards, and angrily recounted their problems, the doors they have knocked to get rehabilitation, I was shown each and every home and every crack in the homes and was asked to take photos of every home. Homes had deep cracks. Behind the doors, the walls and roof had ceded. However, as soon as I took the turn back to the downwards path, the men resumed their play as if nothing, no interruption, has happened. The very fact that this appeared spectacle to me had nothing to do with insincerity of the anger and protest, it is due to the apparent normalisation, a routinisation of protest, the attitude of “pragmatic resignation” or an indicator of “resistance fatigue” (Scott 1985:325-338), as life has to go on. On the one hand, the people are facing such stark difficulties and danger due to the Tehri project, and on the other hand they have also “benefitted” by selling their agricultural land for the Dobra Chanthi bridge that is coming up below their village. This is just one example of the compromise by the people. To come in this position of compromise and negotiation with the neoliberal state and private capital, collective resistance are likely to enable people, but increasingly the resistances are seen as merely a tool to come to the position of compromises.

People asked me, what I was writing. They tried to read my notebook. They wished to know what I wrote about them. They wanted me to be answerable to them, asked if I will be doing something for them. After all, they said you will get a good salary and job afterwards. They asked me how much I earn, not believing that I am going to interior villages out of my volition, not directed by anyone or working under anyone. I felt almost ashamed in telling the actual amount of my scholarship, which is more than their three to four months of income. They asked if the report will be sent to Delhi or Dehradun, *kya baat delhi/dehradun pahunchegi?, report delhi bhi bhejhna*, or to the Chief Minister, or Prime Minister, so that something comes out of it. They said people come and write reports, but nobody comes back to show them, *bahut aate hain, puchtaach karke le jate hain*. A man in Chaen village in Joshimath, insisted that I write his address and mail him the copy of whatever I write about them.

Frequent visit of researchers (for example, in areas of Chipko movement) have also impacted the region. Many greeted me with extreme anger, asking why I was bothering them when no one has done anything till now. The style of working of foreign researchers includes hiring assistants for money, separate funds for ‘gifts’ for ‘respondents’ or paying well for accommodation etc. Their maintenance may become a liability, at least this is the reason that I was given in the village Reini (Chamoli district, this village has remained virtually ‘bombarded’ with researchers due to the fame of Gaura devi as Chipko *netri*, leader), where I was refused at first any place, saying that a foreign researcher had fallen sick and had to be lifted through a helicopter for medical attention. A CPI leader Dhan Singh Rana from Lata (Chamoli district) told me, how he had let an Indian scholar stay in his home for a week, and she asked the family to wash her clothes in return for money¹³.

It is not just the researcher observing the field, but the people in the field observing the researcher as well. The researcher is seen as the one who has greater power, but is it always so? I have the power to visit the people in my field as per my wish, for the duration that I wish and selectively note what I find striking. I could write whatever I interpret, without their sanction, but they also form views of me, without taking my agreement on those. I may feel sorry for the cracks in their homes, and the barren fields, but in turn they also wondered how a girl of a certain age could still be unmarried, be without work and a ‘home’. They were sorry that I had to travel alone and be dependent on people entirely for food and shelter. More than once I felt that the people looked down upon my clothes which the youth of their village would not have liked to wear (they mostly wear synthetic clothes) since they presumably looked less fashionable as they were dull in colours, faded at times and of cotton.

Notion of what comprises work for local people often differed from mine. When I expressed that I was feeling tired or afraid that the rains might slow the work, they gently rebuked me saying that I do not have to work in the agricultural fields, and so there is no need to get anxious about the weather. My speed of treading uphill was commented upon often, as I was slower than most of the Paharis. Teens at places

¹³ Dhan Singh Rana had other stories about researchers as well. I also came across satirical pieces in local magazines on researchers. Research is becoming an issue of satire in Uttarakhand as many ‘project’ based researches, both by Universities and NGOs are going on.

Gaura Devi is said to have become fed up with researchers, who she had to feed as well as spend time with, leaving behind her work, as her son shared.

however claimed that they get as tired as me in scaling heights as they do not stay there in the mountain villages; they stay in plains for education and come home only in holidays. At times, I was told that for carrying heavy loads from road till home, hired labourers from Nepal (*Nepalis*) are employed, who also work in the fields, as it is considered not appropriate for the women to carry heavy loads. But these were exceptions of rich 'sanskritised' homes. When I offered to share the load of an old woman, she would joke, you carry your own, and that would be enough. Indeed in their broken *chappals*, the elderly were far more comfortable than me in my Adidas shoes, carrying the sacks of cereals to their uphill villages. These moments of easy intimacy were relaxing and insightful, as they took place while slowly climbing the mountains or while taking shelter in a home due to bad weather or sitting near the hearths in the cold.

Who is more knowledgeable, whom should I interview? This question came to my mind, but I have not selected any specific villagers for communication. It was always better to stay with more active people like a woman who had worked with women's groups like *Mahila Samkhaya* or the *pradhans* who were working for their villages, as these stays gave deeper insights and enabled better communication. But I talked to whoever I could meet and who was ready to talk, and whoever was suggested by the villagers themselves. I inevitably found more women and elderly persons in the villages, and mostly the youth had migrated away from the villages.

Organisation of the Chapters

Chapter one titled, *At Crossroads: Ideologies and Practices of Development*, traces the genealogy of the concept of ideology to make sense of how the concept is used by the development projects and the practices that this entails. It also looks at the aspects of modernity that sanctify development in the form of hydropower projects. It is then seen how the hydropower projects have been promoted in independent India and have got a renewed push as neoliberal projects. The counter ideologies and practices that contend the dominant notion of development are described. The many modernities that are taking shape in Uttarakhand are then looked into. This chapter clarifies the concepts and arguments that form a basis for the following chapters.

Chapter two, *Uttarakhand: At the Rift of Dreams and Reality, Abundance and Scarcity, Pahar and Plains*, looks at the historical, political and cultural milieu of the state. It is divided into two parts. The first part looks at the history of social movements in this Himalayan state and the issues addressed through these movements. The second part presents the current socio-political situation, drawing upon debates on development and environment historically and in the context of the social movements. The chapter contextualises the taking up of hydropower projects as main strategy of development, which is discussed in chapter three and serves as a backdrop for understanding the responses of the local people and other actors to the hydropower projects that are discussed in chapter four.

Chapter three, *Murky Energy, Trapped Rivers and Internal Colonies: Dominion of the Hydropower Sarkar in Uttarakhand*, provides a backdrop of how the state and project companies imagine, formulate and implement hydropower projects as development, simultaneously providing the counter claims. It is analysed how the language of alternatives developed by the social movements over the years get appropriated by the new phenomenon of the RoRs. Put to question is the way with which different interest groups are looking at the natural ‘resource’, the rivers, through the specific case of Ganga river. The link between the 2013 disaster and the hydropower projects is drawn on the basis of interaction with the people affected by them. The hydropower project companies’ practices and the impact thereof on the people and the environment are analysed.

Chapter four is titled *Bin Lade Kuch Bhi Nahi Milta Yahan Ye Jaan Kar?: Responses to Hydropower projects in Uttarakhand*. “*bin lade kuch bhi nahi milta yahan ye jaan kar, ab ladai lad rahe hain log mere gaon ke*”, this is a popular song of Uttarakhandi poet and activist Balli Singh Cheema, stating that people have now realised that without struggle nothing can be achieved. Have people really realised it? Has this realisation led to struggles? Are struggles only for getting out something? The chapter seeks to understand the processes, politics and structural conditions that are shaping the people’s collective and individual resistances and their responses to the hydropower projects in Uttarakhand. It analyses the responses and the ideological positions that often influence them. In Uttarakhand, there is also a counter resistance, an opposition of the resistance against the hydropower projects, whose basis is analysed. The different cultural expressions that provide the major resistance to the

projects are described. The notion of alternatives emerges in the folk common sense and in the practices, which is brought forward.

Conclusion is a reflection on the main themes discussed in these chapters.

CHAPTER ONE

At Crossroads: The Ideologies and Practices of Development

“Water throughout history has been perceived as the stuff which radiates purity: H₂O is the new stuff, on whose purification human survival now depends. H₂O and water have become opposites: H₂O is a social creation of modern times, a resource that is scarce and that calls for technical management. It is an observed fluid that has lost the ability to mirror the water of dreams. The city child has no opportunities to come in touch with living water. Water can no more be observed; it can only be imagined, by reflecting on an occasional drop or a humble puddle.”

Ivan Illich (1985:75-76)

“I began by confronting the unconscious routine of everyday life and readjusting my level of conscious awareness. I had to reorient myself. I had to look but see differently, to hear but listen to the meanings embedded in cultural territories that were hidden or marginalised...I found myself encountering the nature of ‘difference’. I had to... develop empathy for different forms of contextual and universal wisdom...I had to...adjust my thoughts to the nuances of the social and cultural realities I encountered. I had to be mindful and connected with my context, which was connected to other contexts...ad infinitum”

M. Nadarajah (2013:25 footnote)

The most common view on Uttarakhand mountain roadsides are the dust ridden packets of *Lays* in the display racks of the shops. Dust covers the leaves and trees and much else in lives of people and places where large scale construction activities like the hydropower projects are taking place. The mountain there appears ravaged and stripped. Tourists need not feel ‘out of place’ though, as the brands and urban facilities have all reached here at the peaks of Uttarakhand. No need is felt to have a *Kumauni* or a *Garhwali thaali* in the hotels. It is not a must to learn *Kumauni* or *Garhwali* language to do field work in Uttarakhand, as many even feel hesitant to speak the language¹. At many sites, agriculture has become unsustainable, and the cereals are now coming from the different states, in villages which used to be self-reliant. The pride Uttarakhandi took in being self-reliant and the insistence that this is the place they belong to and will return, is slowly diluting. Discarded liquor bottles are seen in the poorest of the homes, whose land and livelihoods have been affected

¹ Kumaoni has been recognised as a ‘vulnerable’ language by UNESCO’s Atlas of World Languages in Danger (Kapur 2015).

by the hydropower projects. Water scarcity is acute in many villages. One wonders, if water cannot be delivered, why is it taken away by building hydropower projects? In Uttarakhand, wherever the hydropower projects are coming up, water sources are drying up in the surrounding areas of up to fifteen kilometres (Tiwari 2012b). At places decent paths for walking are not laid, or else roads are constructed using unsuitable technology in the sensitive areas, leading to increased landslides. Schools, health facilities and introduction and promotion of mountain specific employment and work opportunities were never paid any attention to, less so after the formation of the state. A teacher Kailash Maityani of village Makku Math, the biggest Panchayat of Uttarakhand, in Gopeshwar, district Chamoli, wondered, *America ki pepsi Everest tak pahunch gayi, par hamara malta devprayag se neeche nahi jata*. America's pepsi has reached Everest, but our *malta*s cannot reach beyond Devprayag. It is from such a scenario in Uttarakhand, that I am looking at the dynamics of promotion and workings of hydropower projects in the Himalayan region.

In the play *Mukt dhara*, written in the year 1922 by Tagore, the engineer Bibhuti dams the spring and thus water to the downstream village, to hand over more authority to the king over the downstream subjects. He expresses his aim in damming as “to make man triumphant over the sands and water and stones”, which “conspired against” man. He did not wish to feel troubled by “what would happen to some wretched maize fields of some wretched cultivator in some place or other”, as his mind was “occupied with the contemplation of the majesty of the Machine”, with which he could attain the glory of creation. The machine that was so big in size that it had covered the sun, and working on which had claimed lives of many. Ultimately Abhijit (the name perhaps indicates conqueror in the real sense) breaks the dam to free the flow that to him had a motherly quality of creation and merger.

The play provides a sharp critique of the construction of the development projects like dams based on the tenets of modernity, science as domination over nature, seeing the earth as a machine and the urge to control nature in order to bring to men material well being and control over other men. A critique like this of the dams thus, looks at the ideologies about nature that regulate the nature-culture relationship. It also questions the politics that lead to a particular technological choice. It requires an understanding of dominating worldview to make a plea for alternative and sustainable choices.

Taking my cue from the above discussion, in this chapter I briefly trace the trajectory of the understanding of the concept of ideology to clarify how it has been used in the present study. I then look at the basic tenets of modernity on which certain worldviews of nature and particular choices of technology reside, namely the instrumental logic, cult of quantification and measurement and unilinear notion of time and progress, leading to an ideology of unilinear development. I also see how these tenets get implicated in the notions like wastage, scarcity and certainty that provide the justification for development projects like dams. The ambiguities inherent in the educational and religious practices are delineated with respect to hydropower projects. I then briefly give the history and politics of the promotion of dams in India, first explaining the neoliberal push for these. Then I see the counter ideologies and practices to the dominant discourse of development. This provides a backdrop to the development related ambiguities and aspirations in Uttarakhand, which I briefly introduce here and a detailed discussion from the perspective of the movements and people of the region comes in the next chapter.

Trajectory of the Concept of Ideology

Stuart Hall (1986:29) provides a very broad definition of ideology. By ideology, he means “*the mental frameworks - the languages, the concepts, categories, imagery of thought, and the systems of representation - which different classes and social groups deploy in order to make sense of, define, figure out and render intelligible the way society works.*” He meant by ideology both the “practical as well as the theoretical knowledges” which enable people to understand society and “within whose categories and discourses we “live out” and “experience” our objective positioning in social relations” (p. 30). However, some knowledges tend to dominate others. We will discuss ideology to see what makes the domination of a given set of ideas possible. This helps in looking for the new forms of consciousness and new conceptions to counter the dominant ideology that tends to be exploitative. However, at different points of time ideology has been understood in different ways.

Ideology has remained an elusive and contested notion. The concept itself is less than 200 years old. Its emergence is closely related to the political practices and development of science. It is closely linked to the critical attitude of modern thought that sought to overcome the religious approach holding supreme men’s own reason

and dominion of nature (Larrain 1986:16-18). The social, political and intellectual churning of Industrial Revolution with the spread of democratic ideals and politics of mass movement led to various conceptions of ideology (McLellan 1998:1-2).

Larrain (1986: 22-28) and McLellan (1998:3-5), trace the concept from Machiavelli onwards, who linked ideology with notion of power. Scientific approach towards the knowledge of nature started getting highlighted with the disintegration of medieval society in Europe. Bacon came to pronounce that the true conception of nature was masked by certain irrational factors of mind, the idols of mind. The idols of religion, feelings and emotions, were seen as standing in opposition to science. Ideology thus was seen as the irrational aspects of mind, which interfered with scientific understanding. With French Enlightenment, religion came to be seen as the source of all false conceptions. The term 'ideology' was used for the first time by De Tracy, for what he propagated as science of ideas which could overcome religious prejudices. Napoleon gave the term a derogatory sense by pronouncing his philosophical opponents as ideologists.

With Bacon, De Tracy and Napoleon, ideology was considered as a psychological distortion, a problem at the level of cognition, with Marx it got connected to historically relative social contradictions and social classes. Marx forwarded a general concept of ideology (Larrain 1986:33-34, McLellan 1998:17-18), taking the notion of materialism from Feurbach and idealism from Hegel. Not only was ideology seen by him as a collective consciousness, as opposed to individual, but also it was shown to be historically embedded and hence with a critical element. The value of practice was also highlighted, as according to Marx (1970:47), "*consciousness can never be anything else than conscious existence, and the existence of men in their actual life-process.*" He emphasised how it was defined by material relations, "*men, developing their material production and their material intercourse, alter, along with their real existence, their thinking and the products of their thinking. Life is not determined by consciousness, but consciousness by life*". Marx proposed that the ruling class represents its own interests as the common interests of all members of the society (p. 65). To make opaque the underlying class contradictions, it creates ideology, distorted representations of the material relations, so that the social relations of domination and subordination get legitimised and can be explained away, enabling the undisrupted carrying out of reproductive practices (Larrain 1986:47).

The ideas of bourgeoisie tend to be the ideas that ruled, consolidating the rule at the level of ideology. These contradictions can be overcome by revolutionary practice, not just by acting at the mental level, but in a practical movement (Marx 1970:61, 95). However, as we will discuss in context of Uttarakhand, cultural consciousness forming the basis of resistances, rather than class consciousness is a thesis that emerges.

Marx also talks of ideological consciousness which remains fixed to the external appearances obscuring the inverted social relations. Ideology negates the inverted character of social relations and gives appearances an autonomy and independence they do not possess. In this sense, ideology fetishizes the world of appearance, by separating it from its real connections (Larrain 1986:58). Wages and profits remain the hard fact; the nature and origin of these remain concealed as the surplus labour remains invisible. Under the appearance of development and projections of common good and shared benefits, for example promises of jobs, the underlying unequal relations manifested by the hydropower projects remain invisible. Technology creates fetishism, which according to Marx, is based on the “*western ideology of objects (that) renders invisible the social relations from which technology arises and in which any technology is vitally embedded*” (Pfaffenberger 1988:242). This kind of obscuring of vision behind the technological spectacle is well evident in case of dams. As a technological marvel, they obscure the affected lives and livelihoods.

Gramsci (1971) distinguished between the sphere of ideology and the sphere of coercion. He conceived the idea of ideological hegemony, that is, how domination is achieved by ideology. State in addition of coercion, is increasingly fighting ideological battles; say in form of promotion of a particular kind of lifestyle, particular cultural form and notion of development. It leads to a government with the consent of the governed, with what Althusser (1970) would say the Ideological State Apparatuses, that reproduce the relations of production and domination by their practices, for example, the schools, the courts etc. According to Gramsci, contestation for dominant position get materialised through ideological hegemony, as a particular worldview becomes “common sense” and comes to dominate the social thinking of a group. Gramsci (1971:377) saw ideology as a way to “*organise' human masses, and create the terrain on which men move, acquire consciousness of their position,*

struggle, etc". A group gets organised from the inside and establishes domination over the society, which has to be countered with new conceptions. Ideology thus represents a terrain of struggle and ideological struggles are important for social struggles (Hall 1986: 29). As a terrain of struggle against the hegemony of domination of state, it is difficult then to bifurcate the struggles into dichotomy of resistance or collaboration (Gupta 1995:393-394). Most of the responses to the hydropower projects also fall in the in-between range of cultural struggle.

For Gramsci (1971: 324), the subject of common sense remains composed of contradictory ideological formations, capable to hold at a given time simultaneously the "*Stone Age elements and principles of a more advanced science, prejudices from all past phases of history at the local level and intuitions of a future philosophy which will be that of a human race united the world over.*" Hall (1986:42) explains with this quote of Gramsci, how common sense is historically evolved and remains "fragmented, disjointed and episodic" and it is over the terrain of common sense that the ideological struggles are conducted as it represents the practical thinking for the masses. The struggle however, according to Gramsci, is not to displace a whole mode of thought by "another wholly formed system of ideas", but a struggle over many associated ideas (Hall 1986:41). Thus, the opposition to development is mostly not to displace it altogether as a discourse, but its constituent commonsensical ideas are put to question, for example, how consumption levels become a marker of development.

Hegemony itself is not a finished or monolithic concept but remains contested. It is also penetrated and demystified by the subordinate classes, especially at the level of ideology, as that is more affordable, has fewer repercussions than practice, and has firm support of folk sensibilities (Scott 1985: 318-319). Based on the explanation of the Gramscian conception of politics that remain open-ended and in which forces of domination need constant work to remain so, Moore (1999:659), concludes that development is not to be seen as a single discursive formation operating from the outside on the rural landscapes, but as produced by the "historically contingent cultural politics". It can be thus said that the hegemony of development is not absolute, but it gets reshaped and appropriated by the people. The notion of 'alternatives' questions the hegemony of development. The notion of alternatives also question the concept of hegemony itself, as the alternatives remain context specific and locale rooted.

The spontaneous consent is as much a matter of hegemony of the other group as also the creation of a 'subject' out of a person. Althusser gives a notion of interpellation or hailing to explain this. The one who is hailed and who answers realises that the hailing was addressed at him, which makes him subjective to the ideology (Althusser 1970:15-45). Althusser's revisions to the theory of ideology, according to Stuart Hall (1986:32), "*sponsored a decisive move away from the 'distorted ideas' and 'false consciousness' approach to ideology. It opened the gate to a more linguistic or 'discursive' conception of ideology. It put on the agenda the whole neglected issue of how ideology becomes internalized, how we come to speak 'spontaneously'*". As a subject of the ideology of development, the person instead of seeing himself as a victim or the opponent of the development, come to see oneself as a participant in the process. There are multiple subjectivities that a person lives, formed by the influence of the culture and by the discourses of development and environment ("environmental subjectivities" according to Agrawal (2005)), which define a person's response to manifestation of these discourses.

Mannheim (1968:2-3, 52-76) distinguishes between the particular and total conceptions of ideology. Whereas particular conception operates at the psychological level of an individual, the total conception operates at the sociological level taking in account the whole outlook of a social group. Marx's conception of ideology as belonging to the ruling class was a step towards the total conception of ideology. Mannheim however, saw ideology not as an exclusive privilege of one class only. He proposed a 'general formulation' of ideology, which included in its analysis all points of view, including one's own. This gives a relational notion to ideology as opposed to an absolutist notion. Marxism was also thus, identified as an ideology. It was thus explained that ideology cannot be used selectively and in a monopolistic way by one group or party (Mannheim 1968:65). 'Development' thus is not '*the*' ideology, while all the conceptions challenging its dominance, gets tagged as '*anti*'.

With the general formulation of the total conception of ideology, the theory of ideology develops in sociology of knowledge. The concept of ideology thus saw a change (Larrain 1986:109) as, with sociology of knowledge is attached the realisation that the human thought arises and operates not in social vacuum but in a definite social and historical milieu. "*So it is not the men in general who think, or even isolated individuals who do the thinking, but men in certain groups who have*

developed a particular style of thought in an endless series of responses to certain typical situations characterizing their common position” (Mannheim 1968:3). With this understanding, a socio-historical and cultural legacy of Uttarakhand is traced in the next chapter, to understand how the development concerns get shaped there and affect the responses of people towards the hydropower projects.

Various social groups whose outlooks are in contradiction to each other experience reality in different ways. They see the same object differently. This context dependent nature of perspective or the manifold nature of truth (*anekantvaad*) is also captured by the Indian parable of the elephant and the blind men or the ‘rashomon effect’. According to Mannheim, this multiplicity of perspectives further enriches the knowledge. The knowledge becomes more comprehensive by assimilating divergent perspectives, and transcending their particularity (Larrain 1986:114). This thought challenges the claims of a single superior worldview that is to be imitated and imbibed by all. It also highlights the multiple contexts and multiple interpretations that a movement addresses and invites.

Mannheim also brings forth the notion of utopia. He defines it as, “*only those orientation transcending reality will be referred...as utopian which, when they pass over into conduct, tend to shatter, wither partially or wholly, the order of things prevailing at the time*” (1968:173). The state of mind that is not in concurrence with social reality is utopian. He distinguishes ideology from utopia thus, “*ideas which later turned out to have only distorted representations of a past or potential social order were ideological, while those which were adequately realised in the succeeding social order were relative utopias*” (1968:184). This distinction remains limited to the past. Who decides what is utopia for the present order? There is an importance that Mannheim gives to the realisation of utopias, but what if the utopian vision cannot be realised? There is thus an inherent hope and belief in the possibility of realisation, in the very concept of utopia. The notion thus provides a sharp critique to the dictum of *There Is No Alternative*, TINA. Utopias form a basis of struggles against such dictums.

With ideology is associated the role of intellectuals, who can create a counter ideology, counter hegemony. The ‘socially unattached’ intellectuals of Mannheim could be understood as intellectuals who have transcended their social classes. They have the social sensibility that attunes them to the dynamics of contradictory forces

that may lie outside their own social strata. They grasp the larger situation to attempt a broad synthesis. They get to be the ‘watchmen in what otherwise would be a pitch-black night’ (Mannheim 1968:136-146). We however observe that transcendence is possible not only after assuming distance but even when the intellectuals are organically linked to their roots. In the context of the study, we will use the concept of ‘socially unattached’ intellectuals for the intellectuals who primarily see themselves as professionals and experts. Many of the contemporary intellectuals have come to equate non attachment with more professionalism, objectivity and limited role confined to universities, laboratories, research and projects. Their ‘social unattachment’ brings them nearer to the power structures and makes them worthy of political and corporate support and favours. They signify in that sense the connection between power and knowledge (Pathak, A. 1998:39).

Mannheim’s unattached intellectuals are more akin to the traditional intellectuals of Gramsci, who remain autonomous and independent of their social group. Contrary to this, the concept of organic intellectual forwarded by Gramsci (1971:1-13) is of an intellectual who are deeply embedded in their group and articulate the collective consciousness or the ideology of their group. Thus it is important for the subordinate groups to have their own organic intellectuals to create a counter hegemony. The organic intellectuals are active participants in the life of the group they belong to, as “constructor, organiser, and permanent persuader”. They are not mere experts, but active political participants. They are also the creators of art, science and literature. They have the sense of history that the group carries. They are thus the critical thinkers of the group, deriving their legitimacy from the faith inherent in belonging to the group. We will see how the organic intellectuals of Uttarakhand, whom I also call as public intellectuals, bring forward the concerns of their region. According to A. Pathak (1998:38), the concept of organic intellectual provides the scope of “dialogue, communication and radical practice”. Precisely because the intellectuals seek to reach out to others outside their group, it is felt that it is then not correct to hold that they are the only people who have legitimacy to speak and think about their group, and not the ‘outsiders’, the argument that forms the basis of regional chauvinism. For, each radical practice tries to identify with and reach out to similar thinking. Movements put to question the ‘insider-outsider’ perspective that

form a basis of traditional and organic intellectuals, as they do not restrict participation in these terms.

The discussion so far is not to highlight any particular notion of ideology, but to discuss the nuances and meanings of the concept. I will draw from these in the subsequent discussion, not limiting to any one thinker or interpretation or perspective. The following discussion is mainly to question the modern worldview, the ideology that propagates a separation from nature and thus urges for its domination. That negates the holistic concept of well being. It is to look for the counter ideologies that refuse to live in this “state of homelessness” (Berger et al. 1974), that colonises the life world, making “indoctrination and submission a way of life” (Marcuse 2002:14). This ideology of modernity, the development and the technocratic consciousness that it espouses, affects the search for human emancipation (Habermas 1972).

Whereas understanding of development as an ideology helps in highlighting the dominating aspects of it, it also shows that there are loopholes in it, it is contested and does not get completely authoritarian and totalitarian as a discourse. Sivaramakrishnan and Agrawal (2003:48) show how development gets influenced and produced by multiple vocalities and processes, “*in the everyday world of livelihood and identity, social struggles and state making, signifiers of modernity are drawn very quickly into contentious debates and contested practices.*” It is useful to understand the ideological dimensions of development and its projects here, as these have impacted the people and movements in Uttarakhand that are discussed in next chapters.

Different ideologies affect the responses of the people to the hydropower projects. The activists identify themselves with their ideology and tend to evoke resistances both to the ideology and practices of the development projects. They draw from different ideologies, as well as larger concerns of development and environment. Hindutava (assertion of Hindu nationalism) ideology tends to overshadow the resistances and the NGOs become the ideological tool of the development projects. The tenets of an ideology like modernity that has come to be seen as the new common sense, stand challenged by the cultural sensibilities.

Modernity and its Developmental Model

Nature as 'resource'

Enlightenment onwards the modern world has had a distinctive 'engineering attitude' towards nature and towards itself (Bauman 1989:70). Modernity seeks a solid order with a drive to scuttle the 'haphazard' and the 'spontaneous', using science as an instrument of power (Pathak, A. 1998:26). Capra (1988:40-60) explains how since Bacon, the use of science has been as a knowledge that can be used to dominate and control nature, and not to understand and live in harmony with it. The 'ancient concept of the earth as a nurturing mother' got radically transformed in the writings of Bacon; he sought a nature that had to be 'bound in service' and made a 'slave'. It had to be 'deprived of the power of resistance', 'de-spiritualised', 'de-animated', denied the capacity of the subject. Then Descartes declared, *I think, therefore I exist*, equating identity with rational mind. Retreat into the minds, meant not to 'think' with our bodies, it led to a duality of body and mind, spirit and nature, mind and matter, cutting us from natural environment. Capra further contends that this led to fragmentation in our general thinking and attitude of reductionism in science. It also led to a view of the universe being a mechanical system, a machine, with no purpose, life or spirituality. Nature began to be seen as working according to mechanical law. This gave a 'scientific sanction' to the manipulation and exploitation of nature and a hostility towards the unprocessed world (Bauman 1992:x-xi).

The 'Baconian urge to equate knowledge with power' to dominate and the Cartesian body-mind duality paved the way for an instrumental orientation towards nature and culture or a 'utilitarian discourse' of modernity (Pathak, A. 2004:34). It focuses on appropriation of nature for human use, zeroing in on only those aspects of it which can be used. Left to itself the world has no meaning, human design alone could inject it with a purpose. Hence the term nature gets replaced by the term 'natural resources', trees which can be used become timber and which are of no use are termed underbush, water as per different uses could be termed as energy, water way or solvent of waste (Bauman 1992: xi, Scott 1995:192-193). Nature as resources thus, could be managed, administered, controlled, saved and spent (Steinberg 1993:408). In the incarnation of ores, wood and waste disposal, under their distinct

and distant functions and purposes, the pristine links between earth, forest and water could be neglected (Bauman 1992:xi).² Domination of nature itself gets to be seen as emancipatory, as a freedom from scarcity and the ‘arbitrariness’ of natural calamities (Scott 1998:96).

According to Adorno and Horkheimer (Worster 1983:169-170), nature thus is presented in a disenchanted, meaningless, valueless form, bereft of its beauty and mystery. The conquest over it becomes both intellectual and technological. It is seen as a commodity that has to be used thoroughly and totally. Anything remaining unused or not used in the manner set by a particular conception of development is equated as going waste. The end of this pursuit as claimed is not to satisfy the needs of people, which may not even require such a conquest, but the end is domination itself, to reduce nature in a ‘monolithic unity’ over which a totalitarian rule could be set up. There is a ‘crusading urge’ to exploit, manipulate and subdue as the calculating minds of experts and engineers replace the sacredness attached with nature (Steinberg 1993:404).

The scientific method which leads to the ever more effective domination of nature also provides the concepts as well as the instrumentalities for the domination of man over man. Domination perpetuates and extends itself not only *through* technology but *as* technology. Technological development provides the great legitimation to the expanding political power and absorption of the cultural spaces (Marcuse 2002: 162). Few who are directly involved in the conquest, either intellectually or technologically, like the corporations, scientists, engineers, bureaucrats and state representatives gain more power over other humans in the process. Humans are also then seen through the lens of instrumental rationality; they also came to become like timber and water ways rather than like forests and lakes,

² There is a poem of *Nagaarjun* named *Dharti*, depicting the crucial difference between two worldviews, that sees earth as a resource and that see earth as earth, crucial to human existence. Few initial lines of this long poem are:

*Dharti, dharti hai, panhai hui gaen nahi,
ki jhat se duh lo kantiya bhar doodh
dharti dharti hai, chawal ya gaenhu ka dhaer nahi,
ki kurk kara ke utha le jao, baech do mandiyon mein ja kar
dharti dharti hai, nahi hai wah automobile,
ki switch daba kar drive karoge,
chodd doge le ja kar....*

Earth is earth, not a cow of your shed
that you could milk instantaneously
Earth is earth, not a heap of wheat or
rice,
that you could seize to sell in the
markets
Earth is earth, not your automobile
that you would just switch on and drive
and leave at any place.

legitimizing the domination over people's lives, a domination of 'wilful subjects' over 'will-less subjects' (Bauman 1992: xi).

Adas (1989:213-221) explains that the capacity of extraction of nature increased with industrialisation and the idea of extracting for improving the quality of life got firmly grounded. The technocratic capacity to dominate over the nature and other human beings became a marker of capability, progress and 'civilised development'. Different thinkers pronounced development as an 'honourable' struggle against 'brute matter'. An engineer's designs and machines extracting the earth's resources were termed as the highest form of human expression, that eludes the 'primitives', 'savages', who remain unworthy to be seen as fellow human beings.

This instrumental logic is well evident in the building of dams on rivers. Rivers cannot be allowed free to roar, but tamed by building dams. The wilderness and irrationality has to be curbed to make them into a docile body. The free flow has to be replaced by a 'self conscious', arrogant artifice. Such an idea of nature is desired that comes with controlled sights and sounds, sanitised, without any bothersome behaviour, with its social problems invisibilised. It is through machines then that at times, that such an appearance of nature is produced (Cronon 1995:39-46). This thought comes out well in the advertisement below:



Taming the rivers: Advertisement of Ambuja Cement, on the barricades used by Uttarakhand police department, depicting how dams symbolizes the aspirations of 'super humans' to tame nature (Picture taken on 2.11.15 in Gopeshwar, District Chamoli)

Cult of Quantification and Measurement

The drive for measurement and quantification provided further tools to control nature for the use of humans. Scott (1995:197-228, 1998:1-8) explains how the ‘State simplifications’ such as maps, censuses, and other standard units of measurement enabled categorisation of otherwise complex, chaotic, disorderly, constantly changing and varied social and natural reality, facilitating ease of administrative control. No ‘proper’ and full usage of resources was possible with the local forms of measurements that varied geographically and temporally, as no effective central monitoring or manipulation could be possible without standard, fixed units of measurement. Statist forms of measurement thus facilitated a reordering of the nature and large scale social engineering. The quantification of the qualities of the population, also lead to a notion of the ‘people’ and enabled governance of them (Agrawal 2005:219). Human reality gets cast ‘as a perpetually unfinished project, in need of critical scrutiny, constant revision and improvement’ (Bauman 1989:229).

Such overconfident programs for ‘improvement’ in name of development exclude the local knowledge’ and know how. The bureaucratic and engineering approach to the ‘development of river’ sidelines the “fluvial wisdom” of communities (D’Souza 2008). The ‘intimate knowledge’, the personal relations get translated into distanced objective approach of knowledge of a number, emphasizing objectivity (Norberg Hodge 1991:164). The ‘natural’ hierarchy that gets formed as humans relate and depend on each other, got translated as ‘abstract quantifiable qualities’ as units of labour power, labour calculated in units of time (Marcuse 2002:150, 160-161). The resultant efforts to control and discipline bodily operations was thus, seen as a key factor in the dominance over less controlled, less well organised and less goal-oriented people (Adas 1989: 251-256).

The emergence of modern categories of time and space also led to uniformity in measurement across locales. The linear notion of time in western thought is alien to most traditional schools of thought. Adas (1989: 216-217, 262) gives the examples of the Africans and the Chinese. The refusal of Africans to lay straight paths, and twist and turn the paths around trees rather than cutting the trees and to remain unanxious about passing time was rooted in their fundamentally different perception of time and space. The Chinese measure of time was variable as per the space, weather conditions and situation of sun; a mile would be considered shorter on a highway and longer on a

mountain path. In mountains in Uttarakhand still, 'just around the corner' could well mean a long distance and time is still very relative, which appeared irritating to my modern sensibility of time. At times, when villagers will say that one can reach the place easily by sunset, one may get to see the first light of a distant home well past midnight. This is very useful strategy however to effectively cover long distances in mountains, without getting tired by thinking about the distances and time. Such ambiguity and 'wastage' seems difficult to be tolerated in modern times. Time is strictly managed by clocks and calendar. The fixed time duration schemes like five year plans structures the bureaucratic and technological activities (Berger et al. 1974:149-151).

The delinking of time and space, led to a worldwide standardisation of calendars and of time across regions. This formation of standardised 'empty' dimensions of space and time 'cut through the connections between social activity'. The institutions get 'disembedded' and thus free to break from the restraints of local practices and immediacies of context (Giddens 1990:17-20). The cultures that are closely attuned to the cycles of nature get disrupted. Local practices come to be seen as an inability to rise above and reshape nature for human purposes. Not having time pieces gets equated as a lack for mathematical and scientific aptitude (Adas 1989:247).

According to David Harvey (Urry 1992:5-6) the "time-space compression", that is the formulation of time as labour-time has resulted in transformations in space and has led to a perception of likeness of spaces. This has become a basis of consumerist culture, as the products, fashions, ideas and values are seen as ephemeral leading to increased consumerism. There is an emphasis on "instantaneity and disposability" of values, lifestyles, relationships and attachments to a place. Short-term takes over the long-term concerns. Images become important than the original. This is readily observed in the "tourist gaze" with which most of us go to mountains equipped with camera, absorbed in visual consumption. The place itself loses its sanctity.

Unilinear notion of progress

A standardised dating system that is universally accepted also provides for an 'appropriation of a unitary past'. Human history thus is seen as having 'an overall

direction', told as a 'storyline', imposing an order upon the otherwise jumbled human happenings (Giddens 1990:5, 21). This storyline appears as evolutionary theories like that of Comte, culminating into a modern positivistic era. From Comte to Marx the notion of modernity remains associated with the notion of unilinear progress and superiority of rational thinking. One historical end for all is envisaged, and thus a historical origin of forms of life gets postulated. Progress gets justified in the name of unlimited future of man (Bauman 1992:4, xxvi). Not only does this notion of progress give a status of superiority to modernity (Berger et al. 1974, Marcuse 2002:6), but it only gets equated with changes that are brought on by modernisation, not making any distinction with the process of evolution (Norberg Hodge 1991: 2-3). The moral, ethical and spiritual notions of well-being are ignored, as development gets measured only as economic progress. The changes can only have one direction, towards the western culture, there is no other way, that is the only 'normal way'. That is the standard against which the development of other societies is measured and they get graded as more or less advanced and developed. This continuum presented by Rostow's theory of modernisation is problematised by dependency and world systems school of A.G. Frank and Immanuel Wallerstein.

Bauman (1992:xii, 8-13) declares that modernity as a cultural ideology tends to be "legislative". It does not approve of particularism or relativity, but stands for universality. One form of life has been forced to be imitated, disrupting the existence of plural forms, leading to the emergence of the nature culture divide. According to him, the diversity of forms of life itself is seen as an artificial man-made phenomenon, so that uniformisation could be enforced. Locally administered ways of life are seen as an imperfect intermediate stage in the pursuit of development and a true, superior, universal way of life. The enlightened order of elite comes to be collective teachers in addition to be collective rulers as knowledge become power. Modernity has thus implicated that we can learn from modern only by throwing away the traditional. Tradition then comes to be seen as a burden. This leads to the peculiar condition in which people seek benefits of development, but the overall impact of is experienced as exploitative on the people as well as on nature.

The rational thinking on which such unilinear notions are based tends to be 'anti-ecological'. The rational knowledge dissects and tends to be fragmented. Its conception of growth as linear is based on a premise of unlimitedness. Ecology on the

other hand is based on cycles and fluctuations. To understand it thus, the linear notions prove to be inadequate (Capra 1988:37-41). Rational thinking can see rivers as just the flow of water, and not as an inseparable whole. A river cannot be explained away by its constituents as it is defined by its movement. One cannot say what it consists of, as one cannot stop the flow and examine it. All is present in the movement (Norberg Hodge 1991:74).

Implications of the Tenets of Modernity

One dimensional river

We can see how the dams turn over the multidimensional truth of the rivers to give it one-dimensionality. From a 'braided eco-system', rivers get turned into straight lines. The damming and consequent erosion of river bed by the hungry silt-less waters, leads to turning of wide braided multi-channels into straight channels affecting diversity of its flora and fauna (McCully 1998:38). Dams assume that a river has fixed course. Not only do they take away from a river its mystery and aesthetics, but also other day to day contributions that are crucial for human lives residing and working by its banks, to channelize the uses to more powerful and to those who can 'afford' the limitless use of water and electricity, by putting to measures its flow. The multiple uses of river are not valued over the uniform, technocratic, consumptive uses of it. The spiritual notions of connection and well being associated with the rivers like Ganga are completely overlooked as a single use dominates.

The development sensibility that remains fragmented, abstracted and quantified, as described above, leads to seeing river not as a flow, but as a measure of cubic meter per second or electricity that can be derived out of it in watts. The downstream of the river can be divided from the upstream, a particular stretch of river separately considered for 'development', cut away from its whole basin. The 'affected' can be bracketed from unaffected and numbered, real people asked to sacrifice in the name of the abstracted 'people' (Klingensmith 2007:281). However, the reliability of quantification often gets short-changed. Water levels of submergence are marked, even when these are often not fixed or easy to assess, especially in plain areas, and miscalculation means exclusion of many from rehabilitation. This also does not take in account the ceding of mountains and levels thus changed, as by the impact of Tehri reservoir. This also means allotment of a

project 'site' to a company administratively, without the company being aware of actual surroundings and locale of the site and often misrepresenting it for the profits inherent in project construction. Once numbers replace people, then they are often played with to downplay the effects and to promote the projects. For example, the numbers of affected villages are not properly documented in detailed project reports (DPRs). In case of the project on the Bhilangana river near Phalenda village, Tehri, entire forests, five villages and six hundred families were made invisible in the DPR, claiming no population resides there. Many dams are promoted on the basis of unreliable hydrological data. The annual flows are overestimated and peak floods underestimated (McCully 1998:116).

Notions of waste and scarcity

Notions of waste and scarcity are used to promote the projects like dams. Controlling waste in the development sensibility remains important. It is about controlling underuse and extracting as much as possible. Preventing the river water from going waste, an inappropriate and insufficient use by locals, becomes a rallying point for dam construction. Whereas Hodge (1991) talks about a traditional Ladakhi society in which every waste has a use, a value, in a sense nothing is considered waste as such; modernity as per Bauman (2004) is about deriving what all could be derived in the process of consumption, to use and throw. It is an extractive process, to take out what is useful for you and throw the rest, redundant for and after your use.

Scarcity has been an accepted fact that encouraged the frugal use of resources (in fact scarcity was often earlier experienced due to the frugal use of resources). Norberg Hodge (1991:34-35) depicts that even in the scarcity of resources many societies could enjoy more than mere subsistence using their small technologies and tools like ploughs, looms and watermills. According to A. Baviskar (2008:9) and Goldman (1993:55), scarcity has now been aggravated as a crisis, inviting anxieties, overproduction and interventions that further increase the social differences. Scarcity of water is at times produced through intensive private extraction and wastage and then this induced scarcity is used as an excuse for building dams. There is now a widespread acceptance of the belief that the Third World War will be for water. Such beliefs legitimise the intervention of international bodies in the area of water. Similar

conception of scarcity in relation to energy also provides a push for hydropower projects.

A search for certainty

Modernity is also a search for certainty. Ambivalence, indeterminacy and undecidability remain enemies of modernity. Scepticism thus is seen as ignorance or ill will (Bauman 1992: xii -xiv). It is the absolute claim to truth made by modernity, that post modern theories rejected. But they in-turn absolutized differences. Instead, to be conscious of the different contexts, also leads to an opening for relativism, for finding space for cross cultural communication (Pathak, A. 1998:27).

In context of mountains, the first thing one observes and learns is that uncertainty is the rule. Distance, time, measurement, weather loses the fixedness, become more mystic. Every turn offers a new view, blocks some other view. New routes appear when dead end looms ahead. Steady walking, the mountaineers believe could measure any height. So one sees them zigzagging on uncertain paths, a unilinear path gets more tiresome on slopes. What will unfold next can never be predicted. People accept things as they come and see nature as larger than one. People have acute sensitivity towards the nuances and variations of their surroundings and of weather. People consider it quite natural for the river to flood and to change its course. They know rivers, they watch them closely and know their moods and changes, that is, if these are not induced, for example, by the water released by the dam at one go. Floods are not only perceived differently by people, from the government, it also hold different meanings, it 'comes' differently (Umamaheshwari 2015:229). They have accepted and learned to live with this kind of change and uncertainty. For example, they would not build homes close to the river bed in valleys but on uphill slopes. For them, the dense tree cover was to be the natural dam to minimise the impacts of flood (Bahuguna, S.L. 2007:11). Flood thus, while still uncertain, was expected. Rain was still uncertain, but reliable.

Now with the promises of flood control by the dams, the control of the 'unpredictability of rivers', it is becoming common to build on the river bed. The dams though have led to more grave extremities and it is this induced uncertainty which people are finding difficult to cope with, it comes with a sense of insecurity, the floods that came 'abnormally' in the month of June before the advent of monsoons

like in 2013 or whose damaging capacity gets increased to disastrous due to irresponsible interventions in form of dams. The extreme weather conditions induced by the heavy interventions that disturb the natural balance means that not only is agriculture impacted, the uncertainty has even confused the flowering, *buraansh* (rhododendron) blooms confused before or after its usual season of flowering. The notion of risks forwarded by Giddens (1990) and Beck (2006) questions the claims of certainty of modernity. The uncertainty of the not so modern is welcome, it has an element of surprise and not dread and helplessness, as in the uncertainty and unpredictability of the global risks of modernity (Beck 2006:338).

In form of a river, past continues in psyche of the people as events associated with rivers stay in consciousness. In Tehri, people still have deep memories associated with the Bhagirathi. Past is not completely past, and history manifested in the river flow constantly change, the geological history, the ecological history and the social history associated with the flow. The sensibility behind the infrastructure projects looks at a river or the earth as fixed finite containable entity; not in constant process of formation. Such big interventions necessarily involve uncertainties and risks at every step. So many dimensions of intervention are involved in construction of a dam, engineering, technical, hydrological, economic, social, environmental, and financial. This means that in all these parameters the company works with 'probabilistic assumptions', highlighting minimum uncertainty (Dwivedi 1998:163). It is the task of the people and the movements then to uncover these assumptions.

Educational Institutions and Their Socio-Cultural Unattachment

The local scientific institutions are cut off from the mountain conditions, in addition to the development planning. According to the advocate Sanjay Parikh, who argues in the Tehri dam related case in the Supreme Court, the dam never received approval on grounds of environmental impacts, the main push for construction was the backing of IIT scientists and the administrative appraisals. The professors of IIT Roorkee³ in Uttarakhand are in literal sense the 'socially unattached' intellectuals,

³ IIT Roorkee is the first engineering college of India, and possibly Asia. It was established by Britishers in the year 1847, in recognition of the successful construction of a 200 km long canal that the locals built with their own knowledge, technological skill and local material to address the drought conditions then. This canal is still operational (Mishra 2006:254). The institute now has nothing to do with traditional technological knowledge.

quite contrary to the spirit in which Mannheim explained the concept. For the IIT professors, it is not free and critical spirit that makes them unattached with the social and political pressures, but they remain unattached to social and environmental concerns to seek political institutional support.

IIT Roorkee is one of the main institutions that provide a push forward to the hydro projects in the region, by helping them get clearances, as it becomes the part of EIA process, the institution's members hold seminars and become part of different expert bodies constituted by ministries highlighting the positives of these projects and deliberating on e-flows. It participates in programs like *Namami Gange*, in association with National Institute of Hydrology, a society under the Union Ministry of Water Resources, located within the IIT campus. Prof. R.D. Singh, Director, National Institute of Hydrology (NIH), when spoken to, had arguments like, *self purifying capacity of rivers increase as the water comes out at high speed in tunnels*. Prof. Arun Kumar, Chair, Alternative Hydro Energy Centre, IIT (previously Director of NHPC, a major project agency) said in a conversation, *due to the absence of sunlight and oxygen in tunnels, pathogens get killed. There is no adverse impact of the projects as such; it is tunnel excavating that is not conducted properly. Cracks in homes happen, as the homes are not constructed properly or else if blasting is not done properly. There is no problem at the level of technology. Implementation is not done properly. If the country is to be run, energy is needed, I need my ACs, washing machines, and I cannot survive without them*. Prof. Sharad Jain (Department of Water Resources Development and Management), when asked if there are any issues with the way tunnels are being built in the fragile Himalayas, asks back, *tunnels are getting excavated in Delhi as well, for metro. Why are people not protesting there? More powerful tectonic activities are happening inside earth, compared to them blasting is impact-less*.

Technological control appears to these professors the very embodiment of reason, it has only got benefits, and all other contradictions appear irrational and need not be discussed. My presentation of impacts of hydropower projects on the homes of people irritated them, they were not ready to listen, saying that 'there is nothing new in all this', and 'this will happen if development has to happen'. Whereas I was asking them repeatedly if any study has been conducted to see the difference in water quality and impact on mountains due to tunnelling, which they have not conducted, I realised

it later that as experts their interests does not lay in conducting such studies. Here the experts are technocrats with goals, jobs, tasks and not scientists seeking to explore the vistas of knowledge.

As ideas of hegemony show, the ideas that are sanctified in name of scientific body of knowledge and that are dominant get inculcated in education. The expert knowledge that proclaims the ‘religion of mystique of modernity’ gets legitimised by the educational institutions (Berger et al. 1974:146-147). Perhaps for this reason, the main focus under the THDC CSR scheme in the Tehri dam area is to run a ‘THDC Institute of Hydropower Engineering and Technology’ in Bhagirathi Puram, in an area of 20 acres. The said purpose is a goodwill measure for the children of oustees and affected amongst other Uttarakhand youth. It is another matter that the local children cannot clear the entrance examination due to the poor educational base. The intention perhaps is to prepare citizens with a pro outlook towards such projects, to further train youth to take their legacy forward. The professors at Garhwal University⁴, the Central University of Uttarakhand at Shrinagar, are running the CSR initiatives of hydropower companies. THDC ‘Sewa’, the CSR initiative of THDC has given funding to Prof. Mohansingh Panwar, Geography Department, to conduct its activities.

Religion, Secularism and Science

Before independence, there were notions of building a nation, so that it could play its part in the tale of collective human progress by contributing its own culture to the sum of human culture. This Indian culture was not meant to be based on the distinction of the sacred and profane, religious and material culture, philosophy and science (Coomaraswamy 1981:2,104). However, the post independent India has had ambivalent and at times paradoxical relations between secularism and religion. The legal constitutional secularism that we tend to practice does not have much space for religious belief. Religion seems as a blockade for secular and critical mind. In techno economic development, secular rationality and creation of a scientific mind, Nehru

⁴ Even when a big project has come up in the Shrinagar city itself, where the campus of the university lies, I could not find much research work on the hydropower projects, out of few I found most were on Tehri project.

saw a way to integrate the fragmented nation and form a pan Indian identity (Pathak, A. 1998:59).

Nehru wrote in the *Discovery of India* (1983:50) that he was not sure he fully understood India and that he, “*approached her almost as an alien critic, full of dislike for the present as well as for many of the relics of the past that I saw. To some extent, I came to her via the west, and looked at her as a friendly western might have done.*” Yet he was eager to change it. “*I was eager and anxious to change her outlook and appearance and give her the garb of modernity..there was a great deal that must be scrapped*”. An identity was sought to be carved out from the western construct of nationalism. A unique Indian modernity was sought, whose point of distinction was said to be the culture and tradition that otherwise was seen as shackling the progress of the nation. “*India must break with much of its past*” (p. 509), and religion, “*checks the tendency to change and progress inherent in human society*” (p.511).⁵

In post independence India, many ambiguities can be observed in the assertion of rational and secular from the start. Even if Nehru gave modernity and science a sacrosanct stature and proclaimed the dams as temples of modern India, in his *Will* (Nehru 2015 [1954]), he asks his ashes to be thrown in the river Ganga, for it is “*a symbol of India’s age-long culture and civilisation*”, it reminded him of “*history and myth and tradition and song and story that have become attached to them (Ganga and Jamuna) through the long ages and become part of their flowing waters*”. He is careful to declare that this wish has no religious significance, the attachment is cultural. There is an attempt to separate the fields of culture, tradition and religion, that otherwise tend to overlap. He wishes to discard the past tradition that constrains India, and at the same time he takes pride in the inheritance of India. The rest of the part of his ashes he wished to be scattered in the village fields, to be mixed with the dust and soil where people toiled, but which for him remains marker of backwardness and poverty.

When religion becomes an ideology, the ceremonial ritualistic aspects of the religion are accepted as they are not contradictory to the status quo, they can be easily

⁵ It is not that Nehru did not see the strength of the ancient civilisation. But he was not rooted in tradition like Gandhi. Gandhi, as we will discuss, sought to make the tradition more critical and living, not replace it with modern. He drew his political tools and vision of India from the religious and cultural ideals. Unlike him, Nehru accepted the inevitability of modernity and readied India to play its role in the global system of modernity.

digested (Marcuse 2002:16). With the selective usage of these, religion also gets appropriated by the Hindutava forces, which remain more concerned with religious symbols and propaganda for political effects, than the real essence of it. So saving of Ganga is highlighted and funds allotted, but the efforts remain fragmented, no efforts to save or clean Ganga materialise. It was in the year 1916, that leaders of Indian Independence Movement, led by Madan Mohan Malviya, supported by the religious leaders, nationalists, intellectuals and elite, had opposed the colonial Irrigation Department of the United Provinces to stop the partial diversion of Ganga to agricultural fields of north India. Religious symbols of purity and unobstructed flow were invoked, but to bring religious and nationalist leaders at a common platform to serve the political movement. After this resistance at the turn of the century, no other 'concerted efforts' have evolved afterwards to respond to the interventions with the flow of Ganga (Alley 2015: 276-295). Ganga's flow is said to account for its purifying power, but the claimers to this purity, do not make any mention of dams and other obstructions.

In the case of hydropower projects, not only are the rivers that are considered sacred getting profaned, but the profane is injected with sacred symbols to get legitimacy. So even if Ganga is considered an epitome of sacredness, it can be tortured endlessly by tunnelling its waters and polluting it. The world view of the people gets appropriated by the experts to seek legitimacy. Science in this sense is as much about priest craft as religion tends to be. Belief in one does not stop people from having a ritualistic practice of other, though both tend to restrict the openness of mind. The scientific view is considered to be the only view that is objective, verifiable, and reliable. The other ways of thinking and practice are just marked as inferior or immaterial in comparison to scientific view and ways. Science is often not believed to be present in what the common people practice, and in how they regulate their water sources, and manage their *kuhls* (canals to irrigate the fields, taken out from the streams and rivers, also called *guls*), how they relate with the forests. Even when the dams have been experienced as a failure in the so-called developed states, still developing nations keep building more dams. Yet the projects draw legitimacy from the same sacredness that they are exploiting. The project officials do not hesitate or are not even conscious or do not see that their projects are destroying and using the same cultural symbols. The THDC magazine, *Gangavatarnam* (1995) (literally

meaning the descent of Ganga on earth) applauds the engineers for their *bhagirath prayas* of building the huge dam, a feat comparable to the very act of Bhagirath bringing Ganga to the earth.

Every power house and entry of tunnels have a temple (most often of Vishwakarma), perhaps to provide a sense of security to the labour. The picture below is of a tunnel of a project in construction phase over Saryu river in Bageshwar (24.10.15).



Trivilisation in name of religion and sacred is done by the politicians and expert committees as well. As Tripathi reports (2009) in an article, a ‘high level expert committee’ argued that as Ganga is referred to as ‘*vidyut vahini*’ (carrier of energy), it can be used to produce electricity. Better still, they demanded one more name ‘*tunnel vahini*’ should be added to the thousand of names it is known with, ‘in keeping with the times’. Then, there was the statement of our honourable Minister for Water Resources, ‘River Development’ and Ganga Rejuvenation, that the ‘underlying’ cause of 2013 Kedarnath disaster was ‘defecation near the shrine by non-believers’ (Singh, P. 2014). Many with rightist inclination, including Bharti, also held that the relocation of Dhaari Devi temple that came to be submerged by the Shrinagar Project in Pauri Garhwal, as cause of the disaster. Yet after coming in power, Uma Bharti and others have remained silent about hydropower projects. They stand for its *aviralta*, the unobstructed flow, but do not get disturbed by obstructions by dams (Chauhan 2014). Leeladhar Jagudi, a pro project poet, equated the dams with the pot *kamandal* of *brahma*, saying today’s *kamandal* is the dam which will safely keep the Ganga. The opportunist usage of religious symbols is evident in the pictures below. The Jaypee

company tried to downplay its own role in the disaster of 2013, by ‘acknowledging’ that there are afterall superior powers than its own engineering abilities, for which earlier *no dream (was) too big*.



Accepting the might of nature? The picture above show Jaypee hoarding at the Vishuprayag Project in Joshimath- before the disaster of 2013 (photo taken on 29.3.2012) and post disaster (photo taken on 15.6.2014).



Politics of Hydropower Projects' Promotion

Neoliberalism as an Ideology

In the project of neo-liberalisation, the state does away with its welfare role and aligns with corporations. There is a restructuring of its relations with civil society. Rather than playing a ‘strategic-interventionist’ role, it starts providing infrastructural facilities and preserving private property rights and institutions of the market (Vanaik

2001:1-28). There is a ‘schizophrenic’ view about the capabilities of state, denying its developmental and distributive roles but using it to promote the reach of multinational corporations through measures like privatization (Bhaduri 2009:161). Neoliberal economic development cannot be hindered by concerns of the poor or the ecological issues. Resources like water are sought to be privatised. Even when they do not get completely privatised, profit is extracted from them through, say water related projects (Baviskar A. 2007:3).

People in Uttarakhand do not know for sure who is responsible for dispossessing them, the state or any corporation or company. In addition to these bodies that are present in the area as project agency, the villagers do not know of the involvement of the ministries and global financiers. And who are the consumers is also not clear; as it is pleaded that more and more power is needed to run the nation. The NGOs that are implementing CSR projects of the project companies are both consumers and ‘activists’. State remains an invisible player, it was a remote entity for mountain villages, but now the responsibility and promise of ‘bringing development’ is increasingly pronounced by companies. Even during 2013 disaster; it was the companies that were taking aid, mobile health services and tent-schools to the villages and thus, advertising their CSR benign-ness. However, the importance of state in people’s lives is no less in the neoliberal times, state is still sought out for most issues.

In Uttarakhand, land and water is increasingly getting in domination of corporations on various pretexts. A price tag seems to be attached to all ‘resources’, land, water and forests. Accumulation by hydropower companies gets legal sanctity and the EIAs prove to be a cloak to cover the irregularities. Hydropower projects become a pretext to acquire land at cheap rates and inevitably an excuse for over acquisition. The access rights to water- from streams, gadheras to rivers, are given to the companies. As Franco et al. (2003:1668), highlights it is not mere access, but ‘grabbing’ of resources, controlling and deciding how they will be used⁶.

The grabbing of resources of land and water resonate with the process of accumulation by dispossession, which Harvey (2003:145-181) explains as the marker of neo-liberalisation. He describes it as the enclosure of common lands. However, Hall et al. (2013) emphasis that process of grabbing of land also includes the land that

⁶ In NBA and other peoples’ movement, the term that is commonly used is *kabza*, for grabbing.

falls under informal and customary rights. Similarly, in context of hydropower projects, what gets in company control is not only the common resource river, but also the local people's (as well as downstream people's) customary rights over the use of rivers. Fairhead et al. (2012) explain how grabbing also invokes the use of 'green credentials' to commodify and stake claims on nature by creating 'green markets'. This involves new discourses of 'carbon trading', 'enclosures for bio-diversity' and 'payment for ecosystem services'. There is a 'new growth economy of repair', that is, the unsustainable use at one place is assumed to be repaired by sustainable practices at another place. This is what is happening in the name of Clean Development Mechanism as hydropower projects are promoted in developing countries to compensate the unsustainable practices of developed nations.

Fairhead et al. (2012:238-243), explains the process of grabbing through Harvey's processes of privatisation, financialization, creation and management of crises, and changing role of state in redistributions. Privatisation involves handing over of public assets in its safeguard to private companies, for example, rivers to hydropower companies. In Bageshwar, I was told that a stretch of the river Saryu has been transferred in the name of an industrialist who is building projects in partnership with different companies. Even when the ownership rights are extended to the poor, they are compelled to sell these under pressure of law or market, as the Tehri displaced have been compelled to sell their resettlement plots in Dehradun and elsewhere.

Financialization includes bringing into the financial ambit, those aspects that exists outside it. Not just nature now has being provided a financial value, but even the 'direct and indirect products and services' associated with nature are brought in financial ambit (p. 243). For example, the recreational use of the reservoir lake or the fishing rights that now belongs to the THDC. Ecology is reconceptualised to emphasis not the interconnection but fragmentation in form of ecosystem 'services' and thus sold as resources or for aesthetic dimensions (p.244). New discourses about the indigenous people are developed, who are either termed as destructor of the nature or its custodians (p.251). People already distressed by the agrarian difficulties are forced to leave the land due to such grabbing, leading to a double dispossession. The cultures and histories associated to landscapes are overlooked, as new narratives about nature and the culture are constructed and histories ignored. For example, forest will be seen

as an eco-sensitive zone, a carbon sink, an environmental paradise, and not as home of people. This legitimizes the enclosing of forests in name of conservation (Hall et al. 2013).

Fairhead et al. (2012:245) explains how the global environmental and economic crises feed into each other pressurizing the indebted developing nations to sell their nature. The profits incurred out of created crises can be seen at local level as well, crisis like the Tehri reservoir are created, that has led to ceding of villages on its brink and other associated problems the villages are facing, and then more business opportunities are generated out of it, like water games in the reservoir lake or distress sale of land. State policies favour those who can invest, providing them with all assets like land. In the case of Bageshwar as I mentioned before, hectares of forest land have been given on lease of thirty years to the project company. For hydropower companies not only funds are made available but other 'hurdles' in form of environment and forest clearances and people's resistances are tackled by the state.

Along with neoliberal projects and globalisation, the number of migrants in India has increased manifold. The hydropower projects have also contributed to forced migrations away from the Himalayas and displacements. Migrants and the displaced are seen as the 'surplus population' or the 'collateral damage' of globalisation (Bauman 2004). Whereas the communal living could absorb and support their newly born, the opening to global market has made that living unviable, thus creating a surplus population, which is forced to migrate.

Along with the rise of neo-liberalism, one also observes the increased number of NGOs in late 20th century India. Transnational NGOs working in fields of environment and development increased tremendously in the decade of 1983 to 1993 (Nayak 210:78). NGOs have become major participants in the project of development. Their overall social structure tends to get defined and controlled by the corporations and the state. The top officials contribute in various ways in formulating government policies, whereby they incorporate their donor's approach in the policies. They produce knowledge as required by the donors, while often not using local knowledge (Padel & Das 2012:497-505). International agencies prefer to deal through them and the programs like Joint Forest Management of the World Bank have NGOs as implementers. The issue of foreign funding and huge expenditure on salaries and

infrastructure raises questions in terms of the autonomy and integrity of the NGOs (Baviskar, B.S. 2001:4-8).

In the neo-liberal India, Hindutava forces have asserted themselves not just in name of cultural nationalism, but also seeking legitimacy in their promise of development. In the name of economic and cultural nationalism, favours are extended to corporate. Hydropower projects exist comfortably with the religiosity of ‘*Namami Gange*’. In fact both sanctify each other (picture below), reinforce each other.



The board by the temple at the entry of Rishi Ganga Power Project powerhouse, in Reini, Chamoli District, claims the project to be Rakesh Mehra's dream project (8.1.15).

Hydropower Projects in India

Large dams are a part of the larger developmental process that tends to be demand based, demand multiplying, technology driven and growth oriented. It is based on a belief that civilisation is rooted in multiplication and refinement of wants (Ramaswamy 1990:63). As a result of this, many great rivers all over the world are now just staircases of reservoirs. Geologists have estimated that the collective weight of reservoirs on the earth crust has now come to have a measurable impact on even the speed of the rotation of earth (McCully 1998:7). There have been world- wide discussions and movements against dams, but in neo-liberal era we see a renewed push for building of dams in the Himalayan region in India and in other countries. Dams are still very much a part of the discourse of development and modernity and thus, of the counter discourses of alternatives. They continue to affect lives,

livelihoods, and environment. They are increasingly attracting private companies and continue to engage activists.

The push for the dams despite all the critique and protests appears to be due to the global forces behind their promotion and the alliance of private and state interests and scientific expertise, leading to a rule of 'interlocking hierarchies' (Worster 1983: 172). Promotion of dams can be understood as taking place at three levels, global interests across nation state boundaries, national interests inherent in urban- rural dichotomy and the regional interests. The projects have the sanction of the international and national construction and engineering companies; international development banks (like Asian Development Bank and World Bank) and NGOs and well connected experts from social and economic fields who are involved in planning, in environmental consultancies and in assessing environmental impacts. The aspirations of the project agencies do not get bound by national boundaries, they get funds from international funding agencies, get labour from Nepal and from Bihar, seek expertise and support from all over the world and are aiming to build the hydropower projects in the neighboring Himalayan countries as well. The local politicians and the villagers with some power and connections turn into contractors or providers of residential and office space, labour and vehicles to the project companies.

Many projects even when economically or technically unfeasible are constructed as there are political and economic gains in the construction process itself. The accountability of the bureaucrats and consultants is difficult to be fixed (Hall et al. 2013:138, McCully 1998:112, 261). Often it is the other technologies that lead to the promotion of one technology, for example, green revolution with the use of chemical fertilizers required more water for irrigation and thus, justified more dams. Electricity is said to be needed for more and more industrialisation and thus more dams are sought. The real impacts remain not in focus when needs of irrigation and flood control are highlighted as inevitable. For example, according to the World Commission on Dams, the contribution of the dam based irrigation system towards the increase in produce of food grains is as small as about 10 % since Independence, the primary source of irrigation remains ground water that gets greatly recharged by a flowing river (Klingensmith 2007:18, Jolly 2016). Further, a single Tehri project has drowned close to 1.5 % of agricultural land of Uttarakhand, the primary necessity to grow grains being land.

D'Souza (2007:270-272) shows how the coalition of the interests of the state and the elite to construct the hydropower projects had started before independence. Multipurpose schemes on Damodar, Sone and Mahanadi were initiated before independence in the years of 1944, 1945 and 1946. These projects were taken by the colonial state in joint venture and interests with the Indian capitalist class to neutralise the potential threats from popular mobilisations. There was a need also to utilise the excess wartime production of steel and cement. The engineers, planners and other scientific and technical staff associated with the corporations and 'successful' projects like the Tennessee Valley Authority of America, were called to seek their expertise and advice in India. Thus, the pre-packaged projects of USA acted as models to be emulated in India.

Indian modernity asserted itself through such emulations. State remained "an embodiment of technics", with science as its dominating ideology. In achieving mastery over nature with the power of reason and technics, India was thought to become capable in casting off its narrow outlook. It could be a part of global economy by playing its role of modern transformations at the national level (Prakash 2000: 6-12, 207-208). Post independent state thus, carried the same 'ideological designs' on which dams were constructed in the colonial period. The first plan declared the unutilised natural resources as a characteristic of underdeveloped economy and pressed the need for the community to learn how to get from its resources, 'a larger output of commodities and services' (GoI 1954:7).

There was a belief that benefits of science and technology and thus industrialisation were must, the attached westernisation effects could be combated by the nationalist government. Nationalism for Nehru, did not mean negation of colonial configurations of territory and the people, but a reconfiguration of it under the authority of science, to be able to use own resources for own development, but on a similar model, claiming science and technology as own. It was thought that the machines would not cause unemployment under socialism (Zachariah 2001:3691). Socialism for Nehru however, remained a plan based mixed economy, with the same model of development and exploitation of nature as practiced by western societies (Nadarajah 2013:7).

Although Nehru gets highlighted as the architect of this kind of development and 'modernist nationalism', in the making of dams, approval of other 'modern

citizens' was also crucial. These 'worshippers' 'gazing in reverence' towards the modern temples built by the 'priests of science and engineering' included amongst others, B. R. Ambedkar (as Minister of Labour), Meghnad Saha, Sudhir Sen and Kanwar Sain (Klingensmith 2007:268-269). The larger public remained unaware of these projects. Political interests of managerial and technocratic elite, the emerging middle class and wealthy land owning farmers merged in the building of projects, as they were used as sources of control and patronage (Werner 2015:3-5, 51-52).

Modernists like Meghnad Saha and P. C. Mahalanobis promoted a scientific approach towards problems of development and national progress, like damming Damodar to contain its flooding. Zachariah (2001:3693) brings out portions of their Journal 'Science and Culture' which made claims like, *for the country to progress, its young have to cut off from medieval ideas of religion, philosophy, custom, tradition and history. Civilisation is to seen in material terms.* The belief in capacities of applied science to change existing conditions was built on a conception that it was the use of technology which marks out the advanced from the backward, less use of motor cars indicated low index of civilised life. Nehru also writes in the journal saying, *science alone can solve the problems of hunger, poverty, resources running to waste, insanitation, illiteracy.*

Since independence the hydropower projects have represented the victory of technology and centralized government over petty local authorities, ignorance, backwardness, superstition, standing for the salvation of the nation through rationality and strength. Though Nehru (1958:3) described damming as a friendly way of controlling River Satluj, it marked a significant shift in scale of water use from local to total 'domination' of river systems. Projects like Bhakhra-Nangal have remained the spectacle of India's modernity and icons of national self identification and 'potency' (Klingensmith 2007:276). It is evident from this well known speech of Nehru (1958:2-4):

"What a stupendous, magnificent work-a work which only that nation can take up which has faith and boldness!...it has become the symbol of nation's will to march forward with strength, determination and courage...As I walked around the site I thought that these days the biggest temple and mosque and gurudwara is a place where man works for the good of mankind. Which place can be greater than this, this Bhakra-Nangal, where thousands and lakhs of men have worked, have shed their blood and sweat and laid down their lives as well? Where can be a greater and holier place than this, which we can regard as higher?...When we see big works our stature grows with them, and our mind open out a little."

The same glory of creation that Bibhuti of *Mukt Dhara* felt must have let Nehru term the project as a temple. Nehru was seeking legitimation of such development efforts possibly by drawing from religious symbols, but he also believed according to Klingensmith (2007:272), that claims of modern science and technology will not easily find legitimacy with most of the population as they were simply not capable of it being backward and uneducated. Till they reach that understanding, authority of the state was needed to legitimate development. This belief must have led Morarji Desai to address the people to be affected by the Pong Dam in the 1961 thus, *if you move* (when the dam comes up), *it will be good, otherwise we shall release the waters and drown you all*' (McCully 1998:72). Following this path, by the mid-1980s India was amongst the top five dam builders in the World and with the year 2000, it had completed 2000 large dams (McCully 1998:2-3, Klingensmith 2007:212). And similar threats were issued to the people to be submerged by the dams on the river Narmada.

Dams not only incorporate political claims of modernity, but as architectural artifacts they embody the aesthetics of modernity (Werner 2015:3), equating efficiency and size with aesthetics.⁷ The spectacle of dam also created tourist spots like the sites in the photograph below. The photo shows the excess flow that carries with it the silt out of the 8 km long tunnel of the 90 MW Maneri Bhali Project I of Uttarakhand Jal Vidyut Nigam in Uttarkashi. The river bed after the dam structure is completely dry; while some water comes out at this point, where tourist buses stop by to take in the view. Above this point, the village *Jamak* has sunk in. Similarly the Tehri lake and the dam itself have become huge tourist attraction, so many visitors come to admire the Tehri lake and the colossal structure and the multi-storey power house. They are told how successful the structure is, how much electricity and money it is making. The tourists are given a tour of the lake. The villagers getting affected by it remain excluded and out of sight.

⁷Colopy (2012:14), travelling to sympathetically document the situation of the rivers, notes as she first encounters Tehri dam, it seemed an '*unimpressive structure, with no particular grace or symmetry*'. She could not help but compare it to "*some of the rather handsome dams that dot the Western United States, yielding irrigation water to make the desert green and electricity to make it glow. The Tehri dam looks like a plug in the river; but it's tall, the largest earthen dam in Asia...Why in this land of color and so much beauty did they not build a graceful dam here on a major tributary of the great mother Ganga?*" Grace and beauty attached with the size must have let Schumacher to declare "small is beautiful".



Elite and unconcerned tourism. Photograph (taken on 29.6.2014) shows the excess flow from tunnel of Maneri Bhali I project that has become a tourist spot for people.

As a spectacle the dams have deep influence on people as well. Many in Tehri area told me they worry of the dams' security; there should be more forces to guard it. There is in a sense internalization of the importance of dams. People do not doubt the benefits that dam will provide to the nation and at times, take pride in the 'national dams'. They only resent that they do not get anything in the process. The negative features remain more or less inevitable by-products, the other side of the story of growth and progress. There is a tolerance and at times celebration of the spectacle.

Major focus of hydropower projects remains on cost benefit analysis. The benefits are shown to be so high that not doing the 'little sacrifice' by people for the common good comes to be seen as selfish. Normally the process of dam building involves promises of development to the local people, initial benefits are extended to few, once the project starts and there is any resistance as people get information slowly about the project, then the argument is forwarded that 'so much money has been invested already in the project'. The discourse then gets focused majorly about getting whatever compensation people can get from the agency. This dispossession by the projects is assumed to be inevitable and accepted as a social cost of development. The cost-benefit view however, overlooks the prevalent social inequalities and reinstates them.

Once a project is planned, it has a long shelf life, it may get stalled and stopped, but it keeps lurking with a threat of recommencing any time. In Uttarakhand

although Loharinagpala, Pala Maneri (in Uttarakashi district) and Pancheshwar⁸ dams are stalled for different reasons, the local people are never sure if they will return or not, as different announcements of such effects take place by politicians and the project agency. Increasingly there is a view that the effects of the projects can be mitigated by building wild life sanctuaries and eco sensitive zones, further displacing and debarring many from the resources. Also, there is a nexus which the simple hill people find difficult to fight. The private companies after taking charge of rivers and land also accept bids for mining. So sand mafia extends support to the hydro power projects. There is a move to build more projects to support the already dysfunctional projects. Once clearances are received, then there is no mechanism to check the impacts of the projects, there are no post assessments. Approach now is to talk alongside about both exploitation and life of a river, both development and *aastha* (faith).

Counter Ideologies

Beyond Sustainable Development

The ideology of development is based on the notions of well-being, a good life, unlimited consumption, national good and being modern. Inherent in the implications of these are the costs of development, cultural and moral damage, loss of nature, loss of memories and heritage. Thus, the other notions of living and alternative sources for well-being have been highlighted by the new social movements, through folklores, local knowledge and music in different regions.

A powerful critique of the dominant development has come from the post development theorists. The power of development according to them lies in the way it has been internalised and imbibed, in the 'regime of development'. According to Escobar (1995:53), the system of power act "not by repression but by normalisation, not by ignorance but by controlled knowledge". He explains further that people who were once simply the objects of development are trained to see and define themselves in its terms, through the use of apparatuses of knowledge and intervention of international bodies. A 'whole new political economy of truth' is created (p.24). Esteva (1987:144-145) explains how development presents people's skills as lacks,

⁸ It is a transnational project, constituting Champawat and Pithoragrah districts of India and also region in Nepal, on the Kali river. It is supposed to be bigger than the Tehri dam.

commons are converted to resources, wisdom is said to be ignorance, and autonomy becomes dependence. Development thus, according to him forces the “sacrifice of environment, solidarities, traditional interpretations, and customs”.

Ferguson (1994) pronounce development as an anti-politics machine that depoliticise the questions of land, resources, jobs and wages, by framing them as technical problems which need technical intervention, expanding simultaneously the bureaucratic state power. However, A. Baviskar (2007:287), Moore (1999) and Scott (1985) differ, saying that development is more like a site of contestation, where different groups struggle. Often the struggle is for their livelihoods, at times invoking the same vocabulary of progress to stake claims upon the government and at other times challenging the state through acts of resistance. Relations of domination and resistance are not the only relations; there are many varied and complex relations and practices. Moore (1999: 656) uses the metaphor of the “crucible of cultural politics” to depict the material and symbolic struggles, which not only confront development but also rework and reshape it. The machine thus does not encounter docile bodies but “situated cultural practices and sedimented histories of people and place” (p. 658).

Post development discourse provides meaningful sensibilities but do not profess any future programme (Nederveen Pieterse 1998:345). The local knowledge and social movements in this discourse are presented as the seats of counter-discourse of development. The focus on the local is an attempt to disengage it from external dependency, to break the link between knowledge and power, between development, capital and science (p. 352-363). However, in highlighting the local, it is ignored that many are seeking access to development, more participation in development and renegotiating development, rather than discarding it. Local itself is not a coherent unit but has multiple contexts and cultural capitals within.

Other critique of the development process came from the notions of sustainable development and alternative development. The values of equity, participation, environmental sustainability that form part of sustainable development discourse are concerned with the ‘aspirations’ of development and not with its redefinition. These get co-opted in the mainstream development discourse with the intervention of the NGOs, United Nations and World Bank (Nederveen Pieterse 1998:352). In the “global ecosystem”, all are held equally responsible for the environmental degradation, ignoring the inequalities in resource use between

countries. Sustainable development blames the poor farmers and Adivasis who already are pushed to the brink by the development process itself, for ‘degrading’ nature, and the blatant violations by multinationals remains invisible. Nature sees a “symbolic death” as it becomes an appendage to ‘environment’, a definition of nature that remains limited to the relevance to urban-industrial functions (Escobar 1995: 194-196).

According to Patel (2015), the technocratic indicators of sustainability remain limited to resource management and efficiency. A market has been created for ‘green and efficient technologies’ in name of sustainability, which in fact contribute to the development goals. Ishenhour et al. (2015: 6-13) elucidate that the concept of sustainable development shares with modernity, its “scientific rationale”, the idea of “stewardship of future humans”, and its obsession of technology and urban planning, privileging a western system of environmental knowledge. Such a concept acts as a ‘naturalised idea’ for promotion of neoliberal projects like hydropower. Underlying assumption in such a concept is that the environmental concerns could be tackled with managerial and technical interventions and the social concerns can be ignored as individual responsibilities.

This view of sustainable development leads to an approach in which minor and compensatory changes are done, and only economic and technological fixes are sought, but the problem itself remains unaddressed. Or best, it is address in a fragmentary mechanical way. For example, while addressing the issue of one portion of the river, there will be harnessing of another river or another part of the same river in the similar way. The present hydro-power projects are being taken up in the name of sustainable development and green energy. Taking this recourse has led the permission of projects granted in seismically and ecologically very sensitive zones as well. At times, the projects are constructed on paraglacial sediment matter as in the case of Vishuprayag Project of the Jaypee company in the Chamoli District. Another project nearby in the same district, constructed by NTPC in Tapovan, is affecting the famous hot water springs in the area, as is also mentioned in the projects’ EIA report (clippings below). The project company however, can choose to ignore the cautions of geological surveys or guidelines of Forest Department. They are building the project at the same site (photo below). The shifting is not also possible because they have one

more project planned directly upstream this one, which falls in the protected area of Nandadevi Biosphere Reserve.

Alternate barrage sites

In the Geo-technical Report on Tapovan Vishnugad Hydel Scheme for field studies conducted from 1981 to 1984, Geological Survey of India (GSI) suggested an alternative site for barrage about 2.88 km downstream of the present proposed location. This alternative site is located 640 m south-east of village Charmi. The shifting of barrage site has been suggested by GSI on the basis of further investigations. About 1.2 km upstream of the present proposed barrage site, hot water springs have been encountered during this drilling. On the basis of this occurrence, apprehension of encountering hot water springs during driving of tunnel in the initial reach has been expressed by GSI and a suggestion has been made for shifting the barrage 2.88 km downstream. This will result in loss of head by only 25 m which too can be utilized in Tapovan Hydel Scheme would be only 84.50 MU. Thus there will be a loss of 107.7 MU annually by shifting barrage 2.88 km downstream as suggested by GSI. Moreover there is no certainty of avoiding hot water springs even with the shifted site. In the circumstances, the barrage has not been shifted and provision has been made for refrigeration plant in the cost estimate to take care of any eventuality of encountering hot water springs while driving power tunnel.

Clippings of the EIA report of the NTPC Tapovan Vishnugaad Project



Diverting the River: Cofferdam of NTPC project on Dhauliganga river at Tapovan, can be seen as diverting the river. Also evident is the change in the landscape.

Run of the river projects like the NTPC projects are claimed to be the alternatives. We will discuss in chapter three how they are appropriating the language of alternatives. Activists claim that alternative already existed in the form of traditional structure of *gharats*, the watermills on the small streams and rivers. Gharats are not always used for electricity production, but mostly as mills. However, these can be upgraded as small projects of electricity generation, so that the pressure for fuelwood on forests decreases, as also the workload on women and the villages get electricity. It is essential because only a small percentage of village population depends on LPG cylinders or kerosene. These gharats and micro and mini projects are

much more sustainable than the hydropower projects. However, the small projects that are taken up in Uttarakhand are by private companies built on the same destructive design of tunnelling the rivers. They are said to be renewable sources of energy, the tag that excuse the need of EIAs, but in fact the rivers are impacted in a significant and irreversible ways.

The resistances and responses have grown more complex and varied with the evocation of sustainable development, green energy and environment. The language of alternatives and movements is emulated by the development projects. Few such subjectivities are thus created, which start identifying their interests with the companies. Chief amongst these are the NGOs working in the name of environment. The ‘green’ tag attached with the projects also make it “easy to dismiss resistance as individual, isolated opposition: not as valid social mobilization, but anachronistic holding-out against a common-sense green tide” (Fairhead et al. 2012:253).

There is a need to understand sustainability in a broader, deeper way and to recognise that sustainability of nature cannot be maintained without associating it with culture, the lived dimensions of social life. For Nadarajah (2013: 11-61), sustainability is best understood as a way of life that is based on interconnectedness, “*as a being that chooses to be sustainable, one consciously acts as a part of the whole universe*”. It is to accept and live with a concept of balance and limits. It is to see the insensitivity manifested in the ‘everydayness’ of inequality and injustice of the consumerist world. He talks of sustainability in the way Asian cultures that he studied, related with their nature, the world and the cosmos. Their social world overlapped with natural and the sacred overlapped with the profane. It is not to look for an “ideal type” of village that is sustainable, but a general orientation of harmony and balance (p. 91).

Sustainability has been in many ways part of local life and faith. Environment related metaphors and meanings are often embedded in local history and religion. It develops as a process in which over time people try out different innovations and have attempted to exploit environment in different ways, and through trial and error, realised their limits. The practices thus found to be sustainable were codified into religious belief (Agarwal, A. 2001: 171-172). At times, though these beliefs might also cloud the sensitivity if the engagement remains uncritical. He cites a discrepancy in Hindu belief in which the focus remain on the private sphere and self cleanliness,

and not conduct in public spaces. This leads to the dichotomy that manifest when people take bath in Ganga to purify themselves and then flush their wastes in the same river.

It was the religious moral beliefs, which led a man like Gandhi to shape his life in a way that was in sustainable balance with nature. Lal (2001:184-206), explains the ecological basis of his thoughts. His belief of non-violence is essentially a belief in the oneness of all life. He emphasised the relationship with self is to be improved, in order to improve relationship with nature. For example, walking represented to him a ‘different symbolic and cultural order of being’. In a sense, *“his entire life functioned like an ecosystem...in which every minute act, emotion, or thought was not without its place: the brevity of Gandhi’s enormous writings, his small meals of nuts and fruits, his morning ablutions and everyday bodily practices, his periodic observances of silence, his morning walks, his cultivation of the small as much as of the big, his abhorrence of waste, his resort to fasting-all these point to the manner in which the symphony was orchestrated”* (p. 206).

Much of his philosophy can be seen as manifested in the symbol of the spinning wheel. It represented an intermediate technology that provides work to people at the place where they live, produces something that is beneficial for the people and hence leads to self-reliance. For Gandhi, swaraj was implicit in the relationship between the individual and the village, *“an oceanic circle whose centre will be the individual, always ready to perish for the circle of villages till at last the whole becomes one life”* (Shinn 2001:229). He did not seek centralisation in the state but oceanic circles of self rule. A state of “enlightened anarchy” in which ‘national life’ will become self-regulated (Narayan 1968:342).

Gandhi implored for a decolonising of the mind and the consciousness that could not be achieved only by political freedom. For any genuine critique of modernity one had to stand outside of the modern thought. Gandhi condemned modern civilisation, not distinguishing it from western. He condemned the idea of moral superiority of one culture over other that enabled its ruling mentality and instead sought liberation from the history and psychology of colonialism (Nandy 1983:49, 111). His challenge to the logic of modernity is evident in how he questioned the notion of deterministic unilinear history. His notion of time was more

dynamic, emphasising on the present and with a history that could be intervened in through dynamic myths and memories (pp. 56-62).

His critique of modernity had a strong moralist basis that was needed for the people of India at that time as they sought self-respect and identity. His tradition was critical and living (Pathak, A. 1998:52-53). He asked people to develop their soul force by refusing to do things that are not justified by one's consciousness. Civilisation as per him is manifested in the morality through which the mind and passion are mastered. He talked of harmonic and peaceful living as opposed to aggressive and competitive consumerism (Gandhi 2014 [1910]:49-51). His village signified cooperation, a home, kinship and affect, not brute force, not conflicts and competition of modern state. He stood for plural conceptions and traditions of science and technology (Prakash 2000:214-219).

It was important here to discuss the vision of Gandhi as most of the movements and activists in Uttarakhand identify themselves with Gandhian ways. Generally, the movements like NBA have also drawn much from him. There are active Gandhians and Gandhian ashrams in Uttarakhand who apply his principles to the present problems. According to Biharilalji, who is running a Gandhian ashram in Budhakedar, Tehri, migration in the region will stop only when the burden on one's back will decrease. For this, experiments are needed in area of natural sources of power generation and these needs to be taught through basic education, *palayan tabhi rukega jab peeth ka bojh kam hoga. prakratik shakti sroto main prayog karne honge, aur basic education dwara inhe sikhana hoga*. He has developed a mini hydel project as a model to be emulated in other villages and to teach the technology to villagers, as he believes that projects can be run only when people learn how to run them, otherwise many UREDA (Uttaranchal Renewable Energy Development Agency) built projects are lying defunct. The projects are to be built in harmony with the community life, in contrast, project companies comes as an intruder, *hydel ka aana ek ghuspaith ki tarah hota hai*.

Studying Gandhi brings forth the important realisation that it is important to fight not just the outside hegemony, but the hegemony of the inside as well, and then only the soul force could grow, as opposed to brute force manifested in indulgences. For resisting an order, one had to overcome the internalisation of its logic. He questioned the linear notion of modernity and could allow it only when it interacted

favourably with 'Indian civilisation'. Similarly, tradition also was not seen to be insulated but open to different trends. He wished people not to be passive receivers of modernity but reflexive and active choosers of the aspects of science and modernity. The idea of sustainability that he professes is rooted in a strong community consciousness and practices that enable the continuation of the lived dimensions of social life through diverse pathways. It is rooted in a shared culture, a sense of belonging and participation, an unambiguous attachment to the sacred. It is the growth that comes out of critical traditionalism. This kind of community consciousness and rootedness in radical tradition can also challenge its degeneration into communalism (Pathak, A. 1991:54-58). We will see how an imagination of such a community led to the different movements in Uttarakhand and guided the role of the organic intellectuals of the region.

Meanings of Resistance

The movements that emerged by 1970s can be termed as the new social movements in India. Much of the old movements were present in the new and vice versa, as is well evident in Uttarakhand movements like Chipko (Nilsen 2007: 273). Many movements in this period came about to question the dominant ideology of development (Parajuli 1991, Nilsen 2007:275). They reinvented the idioms of legitimacy, articulated 'counter-expertise' (Nilsen 2007:280) and sought to reclaim the life-world disillusioned by increased modernity (Baviskar A. 2010:383). These movements, which Kothari (1983:609) terms as 'non-party political formations', sought to strengthen the democratic process and open up new political spaces in which the people themselves are enabled to make decisions collectively on issues directly concerning their lives. Parallel to the globalised development system, the movements build their own alliances to combat it (Nilsen 2007:285).

An important marker of these struggles can be seen as the evocation of the folk tales, poems and songs as they combined the aesthetic imagination with the seeking of better development. Use of these cultural resources according to Parajuli (1991: 184-186) may not be 'liberating' in a 'clear-cut fashion', may even be partial and contradictory, but they bring attention to the most 'intimate and long-lasting' basis of the struggle, that is, how the meanings and knowledge are contested in areas of agriculture, forestry and water conservation. Also, he says, making use of these

resources and thus falling back on the local language, idioms and inherent sensibilities, leads to a regeneration of social spaces. The task of the movement then is to make this folkloric commonsensical knowledge relevant to the contemporary struggles.

Resistances mostly are found to seek something tangible; people look forward to relief and at times ask simply not to be disturbed in their normal living when interventions like hydropower projects are involved. A broad vision for themselves or for the society at large is not that evident. At times, the struggles lost their steam and mobilisation as they enter in negotiations with the state administration or seek judicial intervention. At times they depended much on individual charismatic leaders and spontaneous mobilisation, without much of a long strategy. Few had local middle class educated leadership, but this tends to become top down. Few emerged after rigorous discussions and had an informal organization building. The resistances mediated by NGOs remain more unorganised and short termed. Social movements like NBA take pains to distinguish themselves from NGOs, although a lot of support is gained and sought from NGOs. Further, they themselves are termed as NGO by many.

Most of the dissent in these times is either repressed brutally, or is not engaged with at all, as the state and the project company can wait for the protests to subside over time, as people get back to survival issues and cannot continue struggles for long or they develop resistance fatigue (Scott 1985). At times in Uttarakhand I saw the company lingers on, finding the gaps within the dissent and capitalising on them. As long as the company stays, there is always a threat and a feeling that is generated that ultimately the project has to come up, only thing that can be done is to enter in negotiations. The persons with better visibility and connections will get better in negotiations as well, putting a question mark on their leadership in people's mind. The resistances here are often not as organised as they 'ought to be'. Few remain as spontaneous short term actions. Scott (1985:xv) asks about such actions, will we only identify movements as movements if they have specific names, banners, tables of organisation and formal leadership and if they affect large scale or structural change? Mostly subordinate classes cannot afford the 'luxury' of 'open and organised' political activity due to the danger involved in it for them. They are also not interested in changing larger structures of the state, but to work around these to get some

advantage or to get minimally affected by these. Should it be concluded then that these struggles are a political nullity unless organised and led by outsiders/middle class intellectuals?

Scott (1985) further clarifies that even when there are no organised struggles, does not mean that people have become complicit in their exploitation. They resist in their own manner. They talk about and think what is going on around them. This is an essential part of small scale resistance, as it implicates solidarity, a potentiality of organisation and also that the dominant narratives are not digested straight without chewing. The small clashes may not take shape of full scale uprising, as both sides have stakes that prevent this from happening.

In Uttarakhand, there are a range of responses to the projects, from individual negotiations to spontaneous actions to informal dissent to organised resistances. There are a range of negotiations, manoeuvring and compromises between the bureaucrats, project agency, the people and the environmental NGOs, depending on the everyday life and the cultural practices of the people (Li 1999:314-315). Parajuli (1991:176-177) agrees, saying that the movements use the strategies of 'collaboration' and 'resistance' both, they are not devoid of tensions and contradictions, there is not a strict code of 'do's' and 'don'ts' or predetermined visions that they follow. There is a simultaneous effort to grasp the available opportunity, participate, seek identity and autonomy.

People often seek selective benefits of development projects in the form of roads, schools, etc. These negotiations and compromises for Moore (1999:673), Scott (1985:319) and Li (1998) remains not false consciousness but active assertion of agency. However, it is rare that the people are aware of the repercussions of such compromises. According to Li (1998:316), compromises are enabled due to the intimate knowledge of the state. However there are only few who are in better position of such knowledge and connections and thus to enter in such compromises. These negotiations according to her "*implies an understanding of hegemony not as consent, nor as the project of a singular and coherent state, but as a terrain of struggle and, more prosaically, as the routine and intimate compromises through which relations of domination and subordination are lived*".

According to A. Baviskar (2008: 1-7), an understanding of the dynamics of the people's relation to development and hence their responses to it, will be better if the people are not seen as belonging to "a pre-formed fixed identity of class, gender or ethnicity". It will be more wholesome if the action of a person is understood as coming from that person's varied cultural identities and interests, a 'criss-cross' of affiliations that a person lives. For example, natural resources in addition to material value also hold symbolic value, social value and representative value for the collective. Practices of a person thus, according to her, can be better understood through understanding the variety of contradictory lived experiences.

In the context of environmental movements of Uttarakhand, Sinha et al. (1997:83-86) criticise what is termed as 'the new traditionalist discourse of environmentalism'. This discourse present the past as traditionally harmonious and balanced in its relations with nature, naturalize locals as nurtures of nature and thus seek a revalorization of traditional society. The movements like Chipko were thus seen as a 'civilisational response' to the dominant development discourse by Shiva and Bandopadhyay (2007:23). Shiva overlooked the development aspirations of locals, their demands for access to forest based extraction and for the improvement in social and economic infrastructure. The women were shown to not care for economic gains but only for conservation, whereas they were finding sustenance difficult within the "geographies of their everyday life" (Rangan 2000:34, 182). A fetishied notion of Himalayan ecology was presented as a globalised "eco-cultural commodity", an objectified sample of pristine nature or an ecological museum to be preserved (p. 183). We will discuss in Chapter two how a single environmental discourse was imposed on the multiple perspectives and on the livelihood demands of the people, more 'pure', 'ideational' movement was created by intellectuals, which though thus gained global attention, but bred dissatisfaction amongst the locals.

Whereas there is no denying of the 'contextual adequacy' of the place based situational knowledge (Werner 2015:212), the need is not to 'museumize' or idealize it, but to make it more contextual for the present. This is especially important as the present practices and policies are carrying forward the colonial legacy of "unmarked, disembodied, unmediated, universal knowledge" of development, unlike the situated knowledge that is locatable in time and space is participatory in process and is accountable to the knower (Parajuli 1991:185). People are not for and cannot afford

what A. Agarwal (2001) calls ‘protectionist conservationalism’. But they are more akin to ‘utilitarian conservationalism’, that is, conserving those aspects of nature which are crucial for their survival and livelihoods. There is reverence and respect, and there is also fear and a humbleness that seeks nature’s cooperation. But people’s practices may not materialise always in sustainability as they have to consider their livelihood demands. People in their daily lives have differential relationships with nature, at times instrumental, at times conservationist and at times destructive. A fixed categorization makes the relationship essentialised and distanced. They are not distanced from the forest; they live in and with the forests (Linkenbach 2007:10-11, 298-299).

When a movement discourse banks too much on cultural nationalism and an idealized past as bearer of the future, there is also a threat of its being appropriated by Rightist forces, as has happened in the case of Shiva’s work (Mawdsley 2006:385). Sharma (2009:35-42), describes how the Tehri movement in its later part saw a merger of green and saffron. With the involvement of VHP, Ganga was made a symbol of unity of nation and dams were projected as the vulnerable points for attack by the Muslim or Communist nation and thus a threat to the nation and its *devbhumi* (literally god-earth or the Hindu idea of Indian land as earth of the Gods). This undermined ‘complex issues of democracy, social justice and sustainable development’ and sidelined many stakeholders and diverse perceptions of development. It gave ‘creditability’ to the Right and showed that with its political discourse, it had ‘the power to absorb, co-opt, and alter the views of an environmental movement’. The questions of corporate interests, development agendas, increasing consumption levels were sidelined as they were not appealing to the middle class supporters of Hindutava (Mawdsley 2006:386).

The movements seem to fall into the “reflexive development” mode, a term forwarded by Pieterse (1998), taken from the works of Giddens (1990) and Beck (2006). They are asking for access to a more generous, more humble development, critiquing the exploitative aspects while also exploring alternative possibilities of development. There are thoughts of *nirmaan* along with the *virodh*, reconstruction with the critiques, as is evident in the work on microhydel and watershed management, of the movements like NBA and similar efforts in Uttarakhand. The reflexivity can be seen not only in movements but also otherwise in ‘lay public’. They

may not be expressing their criticism and dissent publically, but they do have their own methods of articulation. They also feel alienation and mistrust for the institutions which are supposed to be in control, but they depend on the same institutions.

The idea of reflexivity means that the ‘risks’ and ‘crises’ of the development process will be known to people. It will work better in conjunction with the concept of ‘public sphere’ in which people from all walks of life could come together and have the space and freedom to discuss matters that concerns them and take decisions about what works best for the society (Nadarajah 2013:23, Pathak, A. 1998:28). This opportunity of dialogue and reflexivity is not otherwise available in the process of development. In fact the only time that any communication is to be established and information is to be given by the company to the people of the affected area where the project is scheduled to come is through mandatory public meetings and permission of *pradhans* to undertake the project. These are regularly flouted as public meetings are not seriously held and people remain unaware of these, unless informed by educated activists or NGOs. Whatever semblance of public sphere we have in India remains unequal, hegemonic and hostile to a wide section of people.

The resistances are an attempt to create such public spheres, “*small social spaces, decentralised forms of interaction and de-specialised activities, simple interaction and non-differentiated public spheres...(to) promote the revitalisation of buried possibilities of expression and communication*”(Habermas 1981). A vibrant public sphere can enable a more responsive development. What is sought to make the modernity and development more ‘humble’ is thus a possibility of communication with the people and acknowledgment of other schools of thought and knowledges. That is, the discourse that remains at crossroads of ideas of many different thinkers.

Gandhi’s notion of oceanic circles and of enlightened anarchy and Nadarajah’s concept of being alive to how we are connected to many contexts, contexts ad infinitum, with which we started, puts to question a single template, domination of a single worldview. Even when we talk of sustainability and of alternatives, it is not to present a single voice to be emulated, but a context specific sustainability of living cultures. Gandhi’s notion of tradition makes it clear that the imagination for future cannot depend on a museumised notion of tradition, but a critical tradition and a confluence of different trends.

‘Regional Modernities’ and Development in Uttarakhand

Even as the alternative and post development discourse and most of the activists are pinning for locals to provide the counter discourse to development, local perceptions are changing fast. Many different interactions with modernity coexist in Uttarakhand. At places, with increased exposure due to out-migration and tourism and ‘money-order economy’, the symbols of prosperity have changed from subsistence to affluence. The earlier symbols of prosperity, the aesthetically built *kothars* (storehouses) in regions like Rawain in Garhwal are standing as mere relics (photo below). Mostly educated males of the village Nandgaon of Rawain region (Uttarakashi district, Yamuna-Tons river valleys), are in services and are living outside with families, in the nearby *kasba* of Barkot or elsewhere. Those in village have built the usual cement houses, whereas the two storey wooden houses lay vacant (photo below).

The reason of migration in this particular village is not out of compulsion. There is a set prevalence for it; as educated wish for better services of towns and cities. Otherwise, elsewhere in this region migration is least due to economic reasons as there is agricultural soundness. Migration to towns and cities means that most of the population is getting concentrated in the towns of Dehradun and Nainital districts whereas the hill districts are getting less and less populated and hence reducing in ‘political significance’. The modern towns are not without the associated symbols of ‘modernity’ like heaps of waste. Cities like Almora experience severe water scarcity as old springs, *naulas*, and *dharas* that supplied water vanished slowly as they remain unattended. Instead now there is piped water, which remained unreliable, and limited to few.



Changing meanings of prosperity. *Kothars* were a symbol of prosperity. These wooden store houses for food grains were artfully constructed and in the agriculturally sound regions used to be always full. They were built in courtyards of the two storey wooden houses like the picture below. Now both stand empty



The homes in Uttarakhand earlier were made of stones and wood, using a lock technique that gave them more stability. The architecture and aesthetics was unique (photo below). Now brick and cement made houses are prevalent. They are said to be increasing the temperature of the region, besides proving unable to withstand earthquakes. The skill set of building old houses is fading away. The homes earlier were built far from the river beds uphill, recognising that it is the nature of the river to flood and change courses. Now multi-storey *dharamshalas* and hotels stand right at the riverbank, making the mountain sites as crowded as any other city. The flouting of limits and of *maryada* (rules) (Krishak 2013) is due to increased assurance of scientific interventions, loss of traditional memories and knowledge and due to tourism related business purposes. Leeladhar Jagudi, a renowned poet from Uttarakhand has built his hotel twice on the Bhagirathi river bank in Uttarakashi, and

twice it has been washed off in the floods. This has made him an ardent follower of the logic of controlling rivers and he actively mobilise for building hydropower projects, despite his many sensitive poems being on rivers, emphasising the free flow and multiple relations that people have with rivers. A famous line of his poem is: *nadiyan kabhi bhi nagrik nahi hoti*. A river is not to be treated (controlled or limited) as a citizen. In another poem he says about the small river of his region: *jo meri nason mein bahti hai, pahad agar pita hai to uski badi betiyan saare mulk ke saath bayah di gayi hain, jabki choti betiyon ka raasta pita ke chahre ki ek-ek jhurri se ho kar hai*. The small river of my place runs through my veins. If the mountain is the father of the rivers, then his elder daughters (bigger rivers) can be seen as wedded to the whole country, whereas the younger daughters (small rivers) cross each and every crease of his face.



Traditional art, architecture and technology (Picture taken on 30.10.2015 in the village Arkhund in district Rudraprayag) Here the doors and windows have retained the traditional touch; the rest of the structure uses both the traditional and modern art and technology.

People in most parts are becoming more and more conscious about their clothes and appearance. Rather than home spun cotton or wool clothes that were earlier donned, they dress in the so-called ‘modern’ attire. The traditional dresses were seen in some interior bhotiya villages or on old people only (photo below, here

also there is a mix of traditional and otherwise). Usually not only in towns, but in villages as well, the 'usual modern' dresses are worn, irrespective of the other differentiations of mountain and plain areas, work and caste-ethnicity. Education is sought as a way to attain employment and monthly salary and thus security, as a route away from the dependence on agriculture. In fact in many senses the 'commonly held notions' about what 'villagers' are like, are broken when one finds an educated, well aware, well versed person in 'interiors' of Chamoli or Tehri. The facilities that one associates with modern living, the 'developed' living, the kind of bedding, modern toilets, refrigerator, dish antennas and induction appliances have reached in villages. The people who have had more exposure of the world, the people who have retired working in army and otherwise worked outside are considered more knowledgeable. The retired and the migrants bring the outside lifestyle back to the villages.



An old couple in the village Reini, Chamoli (dated 8.11.2015)

Geographical conditions play an important role in mountains. The development activities and geography are connected in people's and politicians minds. People said that the mountain geographical conditions are such that with development, disaster is inevitable, *bhogolik stithi hi aisi hai ki vikas ke saath vinash hai*. The border areas in the Niti valley near Joshimath had to bear the brunt of policy decisions that stopped the Indo-Tibet trade. No positive interventions are done in such rural centres though. It is common lament of people that development in the new state

has remained centred in and planned in Dehradun. It is the headquarters of most governmental and nongovernmental organisations. Gangadhar Semwal, a Uttarakhand Kranti Dal (UKD, a regional party) leader of Guptakashi, Rudraprayag, complained that the budget is spent in the plains districts and for mountain districts inappropriate plans of installing handpumps and tubewells are sanctioned. One apt Garhwali song written by Virendra Panwar, depicts that the ‘development’ and disaster relief reaches only till the foot of mountains, even when the best from Pahar is taken down. This song also brings in focus the discontentment of Paharis with Dehradun as the capital; as it is completely cut off from the difficulties and realities of Pahari life. People resent that it takes them two to three days travel time to reach the capital of their state.

<i>sabbi dhaani dehradun</i>	everything is for dehradun
<i>hweni khaani dehradun</i>	all the development is for dehradun
<i>chwada padyo ghor-gon</i>	o paharis, leave your homes and villages
<i>mara taani dehradun</i>	and run for dehradun
<i>sera gouma bajyena</i>	as the irrigated land in village lies fallow
<i>biswa laani dehradun</i>	dehradun will yearn for handful of cereal
<i>chanch chalveye paado man</i>	only the skimmed buttermilk is for villages
<i>ghyu ki maani dehradun</i>	as the ghee containers are for dehradun
<i>daandu tuti uttarakashi</i>	the pahar is crumbling in Uttarakashi
<i>tambu taani dehradun</i>	but they have put up their tents in dehradun

Certain development initiatives were defunct in Uttarakhand due to the terrain of mountains and absence of supportive infrastructure. For example, the green revolution had no significance for this region, as the landholdings are fragmented and spread over a wide area. Most initiatives have remained cut off with the mountain geography and people’s concerns. Forest Policies deny the small scale extraction of forest produces which the villagers need and promoted commercial forestry. This has remained the basis of many resistances in the region. The *baanj* (oak) trees have a capacity to soak more water that lead to many water springs, and to bind the earth, acting as a barrier to floods. Instead the commercial forestry depends on pine trees for their wood and resin, which do not allow propagation of other trees, have less soil binding and water soaking capacity and become instrumental in fire spreads in forests. At places schools are present, but it is difficult for the teachers coming from far off to reach there or at times even for the students to reach, if connecting bridges are absent.

Mahipal Singh Negi, a journalist working earlier in Purani Tehri, now in New Tehri, makes a pertinent point about modern ways that are not organically imbibed. He says that development in due course would have happened in Purani Tehri as well, people would have got the symbols of modernity, that is, car and mobile phones and so on, but the basis of lifestyle and livelihood would have been river still, it would not have changed as drastically as by resettlement. Now an artificially induced modern lifestyle has been imposed in artificially put together New Tehri. The markers of this modernity according to him include, high house rents, unavailability of local fruits, pricing high the food. The irrigated land is also used to grow *chara*, fodder, as traditional livelihoods have been disrupted.

‘Modern ways’ have been imbibed in the interior most villages. In one of the village Kharsari in Uttarakashi district, in the late evening there was a birthday party on the same pattern of cake, cocktail and DJ, where the whole village was invited. Such ways of cities are aspired for and replace traditional song and dance in certain ceremonies. However, in the same village the girls and women sang the *rupai* songs, the songs sung with sowing rice. There are ‘festivals’ which have become popularised by TV shows, like *karva chauth*, which are beginning to be ‘celebrated’ in the same fashion. As I was told in Rindol village of Tehri, the more educated daughter-in-law, who has also lived in Delhi, and hence considered more ‘modern’, will throw a get together and a ‘kirtan party’ and other other women will come to their home in the same way as shown in the shows. These festivals lack the spontaneity of folk celebrations. Women in general are hooked to some ‘popular’ TV serials and work around them in the evening. This seemed to be more prevalent in the homes where men are working outside.

Many girls like Sushma of Rindol village in Tehri aspire to get married in plain areas of Dehradun, Haridwar and Hrishikesh. This is despite the fact that they live in small houses working on small jobs in the plains. Kiran, in her home in Pathri resettlement site near Dehradun, has a washing machine and other domestic appliances given as part of her dowry, but she does not use them for the want of electricity and water. These are simply kept as artefacts and status symbols to be protected if not used. There is not a single decent school in the Tehri villages of Dharmandal Patti, but the parents complain of children getting ‘education’ through facebook and whatsapp, as the smart phones are present with most.

I felt that the villages that are still untouched by ‘development’ are still better off in some senses, the traditional bonds and base has not thinned. At places people have lost the traditional and the modern eludes them too. Ayurveda is sold in same pattern and in same package of consumption, in the land from where most medicinal plants and ‘raw material’ come. People have Ramdev’s Ayurveda medicines, in the land of herbs, as the know-how is disappearing. Amla or aloe-vera that gets promoted in the packaged products is rarely used directly.⁹ Modern medicines have not become available till now in villages, or at best low quality expired medicines are available with the health centres. These are often taken in absence of proper prescriptions. The traditional dishes made with mustard oil culled locally, are now made with Adani’s refined oil, like *rotana*. People apologise when they serve *mandwa* (raagi) *rotis*, not knowing how this has become a health fad in cities. The coarse grains are slowly getting neglected. Sunita from Rindol village in Tehri, told me how her husband will discourage her from using the bhimal *chaal* (bark) that is said to be beneficial for hair and used for washing clothes and is daily cut for cattle fodder, saying the use of *ghaas phus* (useless grass) is below standard when soaps and shampoos can be afforded. A woman near Bhawali in Nainital District told me that her toddler would not eat anything other than Maggi. Chowmein is the most commonly available food in small hotels, dhabas and in marriage functions¹⁰. Mostly the junk food like noodles and other items like soap etc are available in duplicate low quality brands, with slight change of ‘famous’ brand names.

The use of alcohol, junk food and loss of the local agricultural quality products is posing a threat to the health of people. The nutrients which the communities used to get from domestic cultivation and wild fruits, roots, stems and flowers are increasingly getting absent from diets as most of these species are lost or are not available. The diets are increasingly getting influenced by public policy and the free market. The low quality PDS cereals imported from other states have increasingly

⁹Traditional, household knowledge about the medicinal herbs was not seen much in Garhwal villages, possibly also because the forests are increasingly dwindling. In Kumaun there is still more vegetation left and thus connect with the local herb related knowledge was observed. Of course there is specialised herb collection as well, especially by Bhotiya villages. But the day to day use of this knowledge is not seen in homes. The herbs that villagers collect in the high mountains are to be sold for money to mediators at low rates.

¹⁰ Junk food has not entered in kitchens mostly, but the culture of eating out and junk in youth has progressed. In functions like that of marriages, the place of traditional food is slowly taken over by what are considered more ‘in’, ‘paneer’ delicacies.

substituted for whole grains and traditional foods of the region. Own agriculture appears uneconomical as subsidized food can be gained at PDS shops, as Norberg Hodge (1991:119) also observes in the case of Ladakh. However, it is not just this reason, agriculture has become difficult due to increased wild animals that ruin the yields and there is increased unreliability of rains. In places where hydropower projects are coming, the agricultural lands have ceded and it is not possible to work in such fields. PDS in mountains is neither a sustainable approach to the food availability, nor is it reliable. Especially in monsoon months and otherwise as well, the regularity of supply remains dismal. The PDS cereals are never enough for the whole family for the whole month, and thus people buy the expensive but low quality cereal as the ration ends. People are also conscious of these cereals being ‘inorganic’ as most of the agriculture they practice is organic. A man in Padiya village, Tehri told me how much percentage of their food is organic now (the local *saag* and tomatoes) and how much is inorganic (rice). No assistance or program has been initiated to tackle these agricultural issues affecting the state. More stress is on MNREGA, which more and more people are turning to in Uttarakhand, especially in areas like Tehri, making them dependent on Government policies for survival.

Claims to seek modernisation and laments of dependency coexist in Uttarakhand. At one hand, the mountain state sees itself as backward and wish to come out of it by modernising. At another hand, it blames the plains development model to increase the backwardness of the region. The discontent with development practices is more about the fact that these are not benefitting the locals in any way, the environmental aspect comes later. Some places have become the hub of investments, which get declared as to be developed as tourist and recreation spots. According to Kanhaiya Prasad Bhatt of Gadoli village in Tehri, investors are taking advantage of people by buying land at low rates, as villagers sell off their land easily once a local mediator gets involved, to repay loans for their daughter’s marriage or son’s education, or as they are drunkards. Together when they get so much money they are not able to refuse. People in mountains have rarely dealt with money and thus get duped easily. The land for outsiders remains cheap and is thought to be lucrative for investments.

Outmigration has been a constant phenomenon in Uttarakhand, having both economic and cultural connotations. It provides employment opportunities, and an

economic support for families back home, but it also leads to further deterioration of social conditions and increased burden on women. Moving out is considered as an achievement amongst many. People outside live in a stage of nostalgia, but do not move back to hills. Many are also troubled with the hardships of living in mountains, which have only increased with time and despite many movements like Chipko, Nasha Nahi Rozgar Do and autonomy movement, and seek any option to get to move to valley area. Thus, most are willing to get 'displaced'. Many will move to other areas provided they get good compensation. Yogendra Negi of Dharkot village in Tehri told me that this feeling is so strong in some people that they even start demanding that their area be declared as a sanctuary under the CSR measure of THDC, so that they get rehabilitation in plains. He said that the people value those who are working abroad in hotel industry, even at small jobs, rather than staying back and struggling in their own place. He says, *"only 10% Paharis now have emotional bonds with the mountains. People like me will never leave our place, whatever amount of money is given to us. But such people are less."*

Employment and education are not present in villages, leading to an exodus of youth from the villages. Especially in such conditions, the freedom and urbanisation proves tempting. They also wish to visit the 'five star hotels' and experience the luxuries of city. But this is also leading in simultaneous decline of villages and their culture. The migration of people from the region puts to question the development initiatives in name of sustainability. Can the place itself remain sustainable if the people are forced to move out? Will the mountains stand only to showcase the technological ingenuity and development, as "sterile monuments bereft of people who trodded on them lightly" (Berreman 1983:229-230)? What will happen to the forests, the animals? A very simple illustration of this sustainable relation was provided by this explanation by a Kumauni person working in Delhi, *as we have left the villages, fields remain unploughed. It is when ploughing is done that the water seeps inside the rocky earth in mountains. Now the water tables have declined in absence of such daily activities and any other initiative to address the issue.*

Still, there are glimpses in Uttarakhand of a culture that puts relationship between humans and nature as central, culture that has its basis as interconnectedness. Practices like sacred groves and *jagwal*, that is, village protected and managed forests, depict that both preservation and regeneration of nature has remained in people's

consciousness. They knew that the forests are to be used in limits that the community defined itself, taking into account the individual's and family's needs. Groves and forests are often found in temple areas, like Jageshwar having deodar forest, religion providing a protection. The traditions, religious practices and folk tales are also a way devised by the people consciously to save nature, to devise a *laxman rekha*, beyond which they will not yield to its exploitation for their need, so that it continues to exist for them, and for itself. Often fodder trees like *Bhimal* are planted near every home, and few vegetable patches are grown, as was experienced in Tehri villages. Unusual care and effort is seen in tending the cows and buffaloes¹¹. The cattle dung is thrown in these patches and fields surrounding the homes. Planting trees that will not bear fruits in one's lifetime, and will not prove to be of quick value like pine timber, can in itself be seen as a practice with an ecological sensibility. The forests in Uttarakhand have regenerated manifold despite the heavy deforestation due to the development projects, precisely because of the community work (Shrivastava 2013). Shared labour is a way of life, especially amongst women. The symbol of togetherness and provider, thus, forest is considered to be the maternal home, *maika*, as women in Reini said and sang. However, it is also true that all these practices are on decline due to government policies, migration and increased development aspirations.

There are also talks now of preserving the culture as 'touristic culture', by promoting practices as 'homestays' that fudge the boundary between homes and hotels and put culture in a showcase. Further they are majorly arranged and mediated by NGOs. The threat is of making the environment, place and people as "tourist objects" (Urry 1992:23). Equally contradictory is the 'spirituality' that is sold in name of institutional religion and faith that remains demonstrative, to the spirituality, faith and harmony that exist in everyday relationships between people and nature. Urry describes the contradictory condition in which the search of free and unpolluted landscape lead to travel to these places in large numbers and thus, increased demands of infrastructure and commercialised services, leading to environmental and aesthetic loss. Tourism is an important source of livelihood in Uttarakhand and such demands are raised not just to tourists but also the pilgrims and trekkers. If the travel however, become simple, responsible and connected (but intrusive) with the place and its

¹¹ Illustrations of this affect are also mentioned in the novels based on the movements in the region, two of them being *Dawanal* (N. Joshi 2008) and *Hey Bwari* (Chauhan 2014) and in many folk stories (Upreti 2013).

culture, it could lead to addressing wider concerns and an “environmental consciousness” leading to better interventions for the environment (Urry 1992:14).

One can discern what it means by the popular exclamation heard in Uttarakhand, *vikas nahi vinash ka prayay hai*, it is not development, but stands for destruction. Why this destruction is still going on, is as much due to the commitment to profit making as due to the weakening of resistances and extension of everyone’s aspirations for the same kind of development. We will see in the next chapter how the aspirations and hopes in Uttarakhand are shaped by the development ideology and razed by its practices by tracing a history of the movements there and the discourses they engaged in and describing the present life in villages and situation of people of Uttarakhand.

Conclusion

The dominant notion of development is based on the tenets of modernity that form the basis of nature-culture divide. Development that is practiced is not an engaged or critical or organically evolved notion of development. There is a derived/assumed consent as worldview of development is presented as worldview of progress sought by all. The hydropower projects seek to tame the rivers, seeing them as resource, reducing them to quantified units, for the purpose of unilinear progress. However, this conception of development is countered by the folk sensibilities, cultural practices and new social movements, which seek development that is contextual to the culture, reflexive and based on a deeper notion of sustainability.

The political maneuvering and different cultural embeddings that a person lives manifest in range of responses to the dominant development, from resistance to collaboration to negotiations. Tradition could prove to be a utopia for these responses, but it gets to be the tradition that remains critical and living. The hydropower projects involve many interests and voices, processes and practices (like that of corruption) impacting the people. Practices of development thus form an important marker of this study, as we discuss in Chapter three.

Certain notions of dominant development have seeped in the consciousness of people, like that of the waste and scarcity or quantification and national interests, but these are not identified by people themselves as a dominating ideology. People’s

responses are more to the practices of development, than the ideologies of development, although the responses provide ideological and practical challenges to the projects. Both the practices and responses of people to the dominant development are impacted by the culture and political economy of the region, which we are discussing in the next chapter.

CHAPTER TWO

Uttarakhand: At the Rift of Dreams and Reality, Abundance and Scarcity, Pahar and Plains

Anyone who has climbed the steep high Uttarakhand mountains on foot will know; it is a difficult climb, we stop for breath every few steps, the entire being churns with the effort. Perhaps that's why the fruit of this labour is the encounter with abundance. Everything opens before us, the sky, the peaks, the slopes, the green and the doors of the Pahari people. But can 'we' respect this spread? Are we ready to receive it humbly, in the manner of companionship? Is our vision equal to our sight? A 'free' spread that is not staked by anyone (or anyone who 'matters') could either inspire a sense of fulfilment and contentment and we could take a mouthful to quench our thirst. Or we could try to grab it all before anyone else could, not even bothering if it will stop existing for itself and for others. The lament of Pahari's is that either development, afraid of this trek, does not come up, or in case it comes, then it wishes to come as an outsider, most likely in helicopters and vehicles, an outsider who clamours to grab the 'freely available' abundance, at times even pushing the Pahari's away.

Then again, the trek downwards is not that easy as it appears, it takes a heavy toll on knees (especially when ways are heavily uneven and uncertain, and one is without support of sticks etc; one could be reduced to temporary disability). It is now in every Paharis mind, to have a base outside in plains of India or Himalayan foothills, where one could move in search of work, better schools, health facilities, proximity with roads or away from the hardships of mountain life. What the mountain people usually end up with, are menial jobs in hotel industry, *dhabas*, messes, in homes as helps, security guards, and at best in army (it being a government job). This migration is often not wilful and enabling, or empowering but one, that comes out of compulsion. Development projects like those in the sectors of hydropower are adding to such compulsions. People otherwise migrating for economic reasons; wish to keep the home intact in the villages or wait till they can build a decent abode in plains. However, the advent of hydropower projects does not give that choice and comes with

the fear that the very roots of their being may cease to exist, even as they strain to find an anchor outside the mountains. This fear of loss of roots can take a heavy toll on them, their culture, and their existence.

Adventurous people go to the mountains for trekking, for the thrill of achieving the difficult, for conquering one more peak, the intellectual mostly go there for that necessary relief from the mundane, to soak oneself in the poetry of the nature, tourists go there for either religious purposes, or for ticking against the one-more 'must go' places, or for spending some luxury time in the mist, academicians may go for studies and so on¹. Mountains however, as the Paharis point out, are more than just peaks to be trekked, rivers to be taken a dip in, and beauty of nature to be soaked in. They are not merely an escape from the city life, where one wishes to stay away from the 'social' worries. They also have a social life, a cultural life, own issues and problems, which the people of this region have been raising through their movements. Mountains are also home of numerous people, their aspirations and needs. The people who are slowly forgetting what it was like being self-sufficient, who feel that their issues are either been neglected or misconstrued and who are getting alienated from their homes. This manufactured alienation, experiences of scarcity and feeling of backwardness remains in a perpetual rift with the greenery of the dreams of Paharis.

Being in mountains is also about being in the moment. To be present in the unhurried moment, to feel the stillness of it, whether one is cooking in sun in the winter morning, or in a bus meandering on the roads by the river, or talking on the rooftop with an old women, or listening to the songs of girls sowing in their fields. There is no alienation with the journey and its mystery; journey being so revealing that the worry of reaching the destination takes a backseat. There has been a feeling of certainty of access based on one's labour, the assurance that one could have enough if one laboured, one could cover the distances, if one kept walking. But what is being done now with the unceasing tempering with the fragile balance of nature, the

¹ Uttarakhand has attracted many religious, cultural, social, political and literary figures, like Adi Shankaracharya, Guru Nanak, Vivekanand, Dayanand Saraswati, Rabindra Nath Tagore, Mahadevi Varma, Sarla Behn, Mira Behn, Ruskin Bond, Uday Shankar, Ravi Shankar, Swami Manmanthan, Rahul Sanskritayan, who either visited, stayed or settled there. There is a saying that Tagore wrote Geetanjali in Ramgarh when he was visiting the region with his ailing daughter. Vivekanand had stayed in Almora and he established an ashram in Lohaghat.

However, most have come to Uttarakhand as tourists or explorers and their role in social life of Uttarakhand is not evident, notes Girda & Pathak (2013).

continuing unconcern with the people living there, and the construction of concrete mountains and artificial lakes, is taking away this sense of ease, this delicate understanding and relationship with the nature and the adaptation to the rhythms of uncertainty. As imposed uncertainty assumes fatal dimensions, stillness is giving way to fear, paths are caving in, destinations get drowned and destroyed. The assurance and confidence in one's labour and land is giving way to a fleeing mind.² And when one knows, that if any disaster strikes, they are on their own, help does not reach in time, nobody may come to ask if they have food, if they lost any loved ones, how much injured are they, what kind of estrangement will that be?³

What makes it important to study this land, which when explored a little, comes to seem as being sold to the interests of politicians, contractors, mafia, water barons, private hydropower companies, lofty tourism, religious brokers, environmental agencies, cement factories and so on, and so on? What is taking place in name of development is not only treating the region as an 'internal colony' (Chandola 1994b:4, Joshi, P.C. 1995:43, Pathak, S. 1997:908), but also making the existing life difficult by pitting nature against the humans. Roads are built in such a way that it shakes the foundation of the villages. Blasting for different purposes makes the mountains slide over and under the people. Mining makes the rivers and *gaad gaderas* (streams) their enemy as they start eroding their lands. Their forests are declared out of bounds for them. People thank the development initially in form of mining and hydropower projects, as they came in with the impression of providing them much needed work in their own villages. By the time they recognise the true face of it, its roots are already firmly grounded.

I think what makes it important to study this land is the seed of social action that this region contains, which has emerged numerous times in form of the movements against liquor, government and contractors' control over forests, alienation of people from their resources, against mining, and for statehood. It is the public intellectuals, artists, singers and activists strewn all over the region. It is the culture of *goshtis*, public meetings, discussions and the *jan-geets*. It is the belief, good

² Hodge (1991) observes similar attitude in context of Ladakh as a consequence of 'development' there.

³ Such a scenario was well evident after the 2013 disaster. These feelings were expressed by the villages affected by the disaster when I visited there in June 2014 and were also described in numerous articles in local magazines, for example the issue of August 2013 of Regional Reporter.

will and innocence that have still not eluded the Pahari. It is the toothless smile of an old woman sitting on her porch, blessing the random passer-by with her raised hands. It is the warmth that is served with a cup of tea to an unknown 'guest' in the adverse weather conditions. It is the utopia that is reflected in this warmth, of still maintaining a home in the mountains, of still finding the roots in the culture and community, of finding a balance with the natural resources around and getting a respectable life and livelihood from these.

Repeatedly, these people, feeling betrayed by the development initiatives and marginalised as an internal colony, have risen up. The movements have remained so common that *andolan* has become an often repeated word. Given the sparse population and geographical distances however, the 'mass base' of movement here has to be understood in terms of shared concerns and consciousness and not as huge congregations. The *andolans* have not been always under a united banner and carried out in pre-decided modes, but as actions in different regions, that were seen as collated movement and depicted with multiple perspectives. Nevertheless, an organisation, connection with people's concerns and a broader vision is found to be important to sustain a movement, in absence of which spontaneous actions remain short term, short sighted and die down easily, leaving behind residues of resentment.

Recounting the multiple perspectives that constitute the movements, this chapter aims to introduce the social, political, economic, cultural and developmental aspects of Uttarakhand. It is divided in two parts. In the first part, tracing the resistances that the region has seen, I have tried to see mainly how the people, activists and organic intellectuals of the region recollect their struggles. According to Moose (2007), the stories that people have about their past depict the sense that they have made about it, which gets reflected in their present ideas and ideologies and consequent action. The second part describes the social, political and economic situation of Uttarakhand based on observations, conversations with people and on the basis of secondary literature, again with an attempt to understand the region, in order to understand the responses that emanate out of it to the prevalent development projects.

Legacy of Resistances

Uttarakhand region has seen uprisings against the rule of Kings (in Tehri) and the British rule. The commercial extraction of minerals, resin and wood was started by Britishers, and so were the practices of *kuli begar*⁴. The local economy was in parts agrarian, pastoral and had barter trade with people having open access to natural resources. With the coming of colonial rule, this basis of economy was disrupted and people started losing access to forests and had to seek migration and work in the army (Pathak, S. 1997). The movements were not only against the exploitation of labour and forests by the Britishers and the King, but also against the social discrimination practices in the villages. The *Begar Andolan* (movement against unpaid labour, 1878-80, 1903-04), *Van Andolan* (Forests related movement 1911-1917, 1916-1930), *Shilpkar* (a local term adopted by the people as against harijan and other such terms) *andolan* (movement of the lower castes against discrimination, 1913-1941), had started earlier at the local level and later merged and evolved along with the national freedom movement (Pathak, S. 1986b:97).

Tehri saw the martyrdom of Shri Dev Suman (1944) (the force behind the *prajamandal* movement, the movement for democratic rights in the princely states) after an 84 day fast in the king's jail and also the farmers struggling against the rules of the kingdom (1939-49). Another symbol of Garhwali resistance, who is remembered in addition to Suman, is Chandra Singh Garhwali. In 1930, who during the freedom struggle, as *hawaldar* of Garhwal Rifles, he refused to open fire at the protesting juloos of fellow Indians in Peshawar. The skills gained through army recruitment (at times used to showcase the patriotism of Garhwalis, considered to be a 'martial race' from British time), were used to promote local resistances. Soldiers of *Azad Hind Fauz* and who fought in the Second World War played an active role in the movement in Tehri (S. Pathak & Guha 1989:210). The important role that intellectuals and newspapers played during the freedom struggle shows a legacy of public intellectualism. The *kasba* based intellectuals took the freedom struggle to people and the many farmer leaders provided the movement the much needed aggression. Many local newspapers brought by the intellectuals played an active role

⁴ A labour system, in which male members of the hills were forced to provide a certain number of hours of manual labour without any payment, to transport British people and goods across the mountain ranges.

of uniting the various local struggles, like *Almora Akhbaar*, *Garhwali*, *Shakti*, *Karambhumi* and *Yugvani* (pp. 208-209).

It is important here to talk briefly about the history of resistances with forests at centre, as one can glean certain continuity in struggles over local resources like forests, with them being at the centre of existence.⁵ Present struggles, activists and intellectuals draw from the historic events of such struggles. Indian Forest Act of the year 1878 classified the forests; the common forests as reserved, the uncultivated or *benap* land under customary rights as protected and the rest as village forests, establishing a colonial monopoly over forests, restricting villagers' rights over the first two categories. The forests consequently were majorly exploited for military purposes, supply of resin and timber and for building railway sleepers etc. Natives were made unpaid labourers to transfer the wood. The years 1916 and 1921 saw major protests against these forest rules. Forests mainly of pine were put to fire, trees were cut in large numbers and rules were flouted. The protests led to reclassification of forests in the year 1931, and a part of forests were provided under village management, which came to be known as *van panchayats* (Guha 1986, Linkenbach 2007:127-128). These protests later became part of larger national movement against Britishers. Such protests were also evident against the Tehri King of that period who leased the forests to a private entrepreneur Wilson and later to the Britishers and applied the same British classification in Tehri forests. One of the most brutal repression and a much remembered and referred point of struggle and sacrifice occurred in form of the *Tilari* meeting in Rawain region in the year 1930. It is often equated to the Jalianwala-baag Massacre. The Kings' forces open fired on a

⁵ Guha (1986) describes a balanced and prosperous past of Uttarakhand people and their relationship with forests. Due to absence of inequalities in land ownership, personal relations were strong. The agricultural conditions were ideal till 1910 in high mountains, as there were dense forests and grazing lands by the side of fields and plenty of water sources. The livestock were well taken care of as people migrated temporarily to forests and grazing lands every year and they provided for the manure along with the leaf mulch from the forests. The lower areas used pine forests as grazing areas. Britishers could not promote initiatives like tea plantation as farmers opposed changes in their traditional lifestyles. Forests were communal and in Garhwal, practice of *vani* was prevalent, which meant keeping forests within the village boundaries and taking care of them (Yogendra Negi talks about such practices today as well).

Forests still hold a crucial role in mountain life. Most people depend on forests for fuel wood. A large area of good quality of forest is needed to support agriculture on a sustainable basis. Forests also reallocate water over seasons by absorbing excess water during the rainy season and releasing it later.

protestors' meet circling them from three sides, killing many. Many jumped and drowned in the well thereby in order to escape the bullets.

In Post-independent India, the region saw movements for forest rights in form of Chipko (1970s), for establishment of universities (1970s), against alcoholism (1980s), for statehood (1990s), agricultural reforms (1980s till present), against the extractive activities like mining and hydropower projects like the Tehri Dam (1980s-1990s till present), against conservation in the name of enclosures (1980s till present), and many others. These movements reflect the social, political, ecological and cultural importance of the region. Many of the activists of the movements post 1970s phase are involved in resistances or counter-resistances in the case of present phase of construction of hydropower projects. There are other points of interlinkages. For example, the village Reini, near Joshimath in Chamoli District, the main center of the Chipko movement, is now also a center of hydropower-projects. So is Bhyundar valley. The demands of people remain similar and similar is the development model practiced.

The movements in the region have had a common thread of demands and issues, also shared by the present resistance against hydropower projects, that is, lack of control over local resources, access to traditional rights, access to commercial opportunities, a critique of development (un) planned for hills, precedence of national interests over local interests, and environmental concerns as they affect day to day life. People were asking for access to development and were not rejecting it in toto as was claimed by certain intellectuals like Shiva while writing about Chipko. People have sought the intervention of state to ensure access to potential benefits of development (Sinha et al. 1997). They were fighting against their political and economic marginalization (Rangan 1996:206) and to retrieve their lost agency (Pathak, A. 1994:6). For them, 'sustainable' development meant participatory, region sensitive and decentralized model and not representative, 'national' and state centric model of development politics (Pathak, A. 1994:5). What was sought was swaraj, an ability to determine their way of life, by themselves (Chandola 1994a, Joshi, P.C. 1995), a model of development based on the philosophy of 'oceanic circles' of Gandhi, in which the individual and regional circles are protected and not subsumed by the outer circles (Joshi, P.C. 1995).

National interest mattered but local interests were also urgent for people, and attempts were made to create a language of association and bridge between the two, to let the voice of movement be audible. In name of abstract universality of the politics of modernity, it was not possible to ignore the immediate livelihood issues and the community consciousness (Pathak, A. 1994:5). In Chipko movement, Sundarlal Bahuguna and Chandi Prasad Bhatt⁶ presented the needs of national integrity, defense, development and democracy with symbolic acts of popular protests for local livelihood issues (Rangan 2000:159). What has happened in case of most of the movements in the Uttarakhand is that the discourse gets so co-opted that the local interests get buried under the national interests or the struggle gets captured by Machiavellian political interests. A powerful depiction of the gaps between what people wished from the movement and how it gets projected and the consequent betrayal that the locals feel, is captured in the novel *Dawanal* in the case of Chipko movement (Joshi, N. 2008). The people involved in the movements live multiple identities and cultural contexts and the movement itself remains influenced by many issues, from issues of identity, to outmigration to development, and multiple perspectives about the movement that the people carry. I have delineated with these multiple perspectives of the earlier movements that occurred in the region in the following section.

⁶ Sundarlal Bahuguna and Chandi Prasad Bhatt are sarvodayi activists in the Uttarakhand who have been working with various movements in the region. Sundarlal Bahuguna from Tehri remained influenced by Shridev Suman from his teen age and was active in Congress during the independence movement. Vimla Bahuguna who had been a well known sarvodayi associated with Laxmi Ashram (with her brother Vidya Sagar Nautiyal being a well known CPI leader and literary figure) married him with a condition that both will devote their lives to village based work. Both of them participated in the Chipko movement, anti-liquor movement and anti-Tehri dam movement. By the time I met Sundarlal Bahuguna in 2012 and later in 2015, he was not in a condition to speak for long and primarily Vimla Bahuguna engaged with me in a conversation.

Chandi Prasad Bhatt from Gopeshwar, gave up his job of a clerk in a transport agency to set-up the Dasholi Gram Sawarajya Sangh (later Mandal, known as DGSM), to promote small scale forest based industry and labour cooperatives. He remained influenced by JP movement and sarvodayis like Bahuguna. He was active with the Chipko movement, anti-liquor movement, and also sought action against the Vishuprayag hydropower project in Chamoli.

Both are considered to be well-known 'environmentalists', have spent their lives working on social issues and have received numerous awards. Whereas Bahuguna has received Padma Shri, Padma Vibhushan, Right Livelihood Award, Jannalal Bajaj Award for his work, Bhatt has received Padma Shri, Padma Bhushan, Magsaysay Award and Gandhi Peace Prize.

Chipko Movement

Chipko movement as is recounted by the many actors involved in it, can be understood as a collation of many incidences and actions, undertaken by different villages under different circumstances and with different reasons. As the activists recounted their involvement in the movement, the events in which they were involved assume the central position and become the locus of the movement. The slogans of the movement ‘*chipko ki ye lalkar, panchayat ko van adhikar* (chipko calls for rights over forests to panchayat); *himputriyo ki lalkar, van niti badle sarkar* (mountain people call for change in the forest policy); *van jage, vanvasi jage* (awaken forests, awaken forest dwellers); *vano ki raksha, desh ki raksha* (security of nation lies in security of forests); *kya hain jungle ke upkar: mitti, pani aur bayar*’ (what does the forest give: soil, water and air); reflects the different demands that the villagers raised. These included rights of locals over forests, ban on export of raw material, restriction of the contractor system, allotment of forest related work to unemployed in villages through the panchayats, afforestation of suitable trees and increased wages of workers. Actions involved largely sarvodayi leaders (main being Bahuguna and Bhatt) but also unaffiliated (to any defined ideology) women, differently affiliated (to many ideologies) students (Uttarakhand Sangharsh Vahini⁷) and communists (like Govind Singh Rawat in Reini Village) and remained largely non-violent.

Dasoli Gram Swarajaya Sangh founded by Chandi Prasad Bhatt was working with local forest based cottage industries in Gopeshwar in Chamoli district. There was a conflict of interest between the local and outside contractors over forest exploitation and discontentment was brewing. In the year 1973, the local cottage industry of

⁷ Uttarakhand Sangharsh Vahini was an organisation of students of Kumaun University, mainly of Almora and Nainital campuses, which was founded in 1977. It remained active in movements related to forest (they called the Chipko related actions as Van Andolan), anti-liquor movement and statehood movement. This organisation is said to have provided a radical thrust to the milder sarvodayi campaigns. It involved Shemsher Singh Bisht (who later became the head of Uttarakhand Lok Vahini), P.C. Tiwari (who later started his own political party Uttarakhand Parivartan Party), Shekhar Pathak (who later started the journal Pahar), Rajiv Lochan Sah (who later became the editor of Nainital Samachar), Girish Tiwari Girda and many others who remain active in their respective fields and are considered to be the organic intellectuals of the region.

Though the organisation remained very active, all the members did not share a common ideology, they remained differently influenced by the sarvodaya, left and socialist ideologies. The organisation had taken a stand not to be involved in electoral politics, which led to many members breaking to enter mainstream politics. Later in 2001, Uttarakhand Lok Vahini was floated out of the organisation for electoral purposes.

Mandal village was refused access to few ash trees for making agricultural tools. Instead the contract for felling trees was given to a sports company Symonds. The sangh decided to protest this felling by coming in between the axe and trees. However, Chipko or the *garhwali* word *angwaltha* (embracing a loved one) was mainly a symbol and a concept. It remains claimed by many. As has been popularized, people did not face the need to actually embrace the trees according to Bhatt; only the threat was enough. Felling was stopped in Mandal in Chamoli, and the people of Phata Rampur (Ukhimath, Rudraprayag district) were alerted that the company was coming there next (Pahari 1989:133).

In Reini (Chamoli district) in the year 1974, about 200 labourers, officials and contractor had reached, when the women got to know about it. The men were out to collect compensation of their land diverted for defense purposes in 1960s. The area had already seen the disastrous flood of Alaknanda River in the year 1970. The ash trees that were to be cut were important for building agricultural equipments, as the ash wood is light and sturdy. Gaura Devi, and other Mahila Mangal Dal women appealed to the labourers to leave the forest that they considered holy and collect herbs, fruits and vegetables from, that was like a maternal place to them, and cutting which would not only bring devastation to their area, but also plains of Haridwar (from where the contractor had come). They appealed to laborers that the way they tend to their families with difficulties, Reini people's life was similarly difficult. The women were able to drive them away from the forests (Bhatt, C.P. 1992: 245-246). Events like that of Reini were presented as eco-feminist manifestation of Chipko movement, drawing natural and biological affinities of women with nature, ignoring their historical and cultural dependence on forests and their agency and any aspirations of overcoming the traditional agricultural obligations (Mawdsley 1998:46-48).

The protests continued in other areas. In 1980, women of Dungri-Paintoli protested against the forest department's decision and their men's acceptance to divert the nearby oak forest to a national park, as they depended on it for fodder and fuelwood (Pahari 1989:134). Chandi Prasad Bhatt said in a conversation that the movement became successful as there were many struggles, and the local leaders came out strongly. Everywhere people came forward with their issues and their own understanding of the issues. The influence of the Chipko movement was increased by the

cultural activists like Ghanshyam Sailani and the efforts of a number of activists like Dhoom Singh Negi, Alam Singh Bisht, Vijay Jardhari, Kedar Singh Rawat and many others.

Sundarlal Bahuguna carried forward the movement in the Tehri area from 1977 onwards and also popularized it outside the region by writing extensively about it and carrying out extensive *padyatras*. He had been undertaking yatras in Uttarakhand villages from earlier as well, though not under the banner of Chipko. His call for village development had united the Gandhi's village improvement and Nehru's stress on resource mobilization as he stressed the local forest related enterprises (Linkenbach 2007:144). Later however, he became a conservationist after coming in contact with a British Forester (Mitra 1993) and took a stand against green felling in totality saying *ecology is permanent economy*. Vimla Bahuguna, when talked to, felt that the movement in Henwal Ghati in Tehri was primarily about environment. Involvement of Bahuguna (and other intellectuals) gave a turn to the movement from livelihood related struggle to a struggle for conservation. Later Bhatt was also focusing more on afforestation and organizing environmental camps.

In Kumaun, the student activists stalled the forest auctions in Nainital in 1974 and afterwards on many other occasions in Nainital, Ramnagar and Kotdwar. Rajiv Lochan Sah, editor of Nainital Samachar, recounts the major event that occurred in the year 1977, when the police open fired on the crowd protesting against the forest auction and the venue Nainital Club was set ablaze. The activists like Shemsher Singh Bisht demanded that the locals be given forests related contracts, as they saw the outsider contractors taking out trucks full of forest wood. The movement was seeking funds for afforestation, good support prices were sought for forest products made by cooperatives, initiatives for reforming local agriculture, creating new market links and opening space for women in local institutions like van panchayats (Sinha et al. 1997:82-85). However it was claimed by few intellectuals that the movement was not a “‘*narrow conflict*’ over local or non-local distribution of forest resources, like timber or resin...not for a bigger share for the local people in the immediate commercial benefits” (Shiva & Bandyopadhyay 1986:140).

The movement so shaped in the intellectual arena, generated such a volume of literature that many concerns of the locals got buried. According to Mitra (1993), interacting with ‘global environmental consciousnesses, Chipko assumed a ‘deep conservationist bearing’ and the local concerns vanished. Its ‘utilitarian and

developmental stance' was steadily eroded. It was attached with feminism in an essentialist way. The arguments for 'local control', 'self-determination and self-management of resources' were drowned, to the bitterness and dismay of many activists. Cults were manufactured, contestation for awards started. Separate camps of Bahuguna and Bhatt and intellectuals promoting them were formed and rest of the activists took sides. Funds, publicity and seminars ensued. In the laudation of Chipko by media and intellectuals, activists complain, other movements like the one against alcoholism were overlooked. There now seems to be competition in Uttarakhand amongst the activists as to who is a bigger '*paryavarn-vid*', environmentalist (Upreti 2013).

Interpretation of the Chipko movement as an ecological movement helped in establishment of hegemonic discourse of ecology in the region as well as in India (Linkenbach 2007:90). Chipko was favoured in a way that suited the Indira Gandhi Government's drive for nationalisation and public sector expansion (Mitra 1993). Neglecting the peoples' institutions, the Forest Conservation Act of 1980 and Environment Ministry were set up. In Uttarakhand, Forest Corporation was formed in 1975 to provide employment opportunities to cooperatives, but the commercial extraction consequently became dominated by merchants and traders from outside the region with more capital (Rangan 1996:214). In 1976, the Kumaun Van Panchayat Rules were revised reducing the authority of the van panchayat and the entitlements over village forests (Sarin 2007:488). In 1980 a ban was put on felling of green trees at an altitude above 1000 m in the Himalayan region. Any development work like construction of road, bridges or electrification could not be undertaken without the permission of Ministry of Environment⁸, stalling all such works in the state. The ban on felling trees provided a convenient space for a 'timber mafia' that controlled a "diversified portfolio of illegal activities such as production and sale of locally brewed liquor" (Rangan 1996:219). According to Ramesh Pahari (1989), a Chipko activist and editor of *Aniket*, the Forest Corporation, that was formed to end the *contractor pratha* (practice) and exploitation of labourers, had itself taken shape of powerful government contractor. It engaged in 'scientific forestry' that manifested as planting pine trees inside the oak forests. In this manner, "*no demand of Chipko was*

⁸ However, the large projects like Hydropower projects get permissions on basis of their lobbying. Similarly in forests, commercial extraction continues on large scale even when people are excluded from their rights.

fulfilled. What has happened is that, whatever was done in a straight way is now done by slight twist of the hand”.

The conditions are so made that the centres of Chipko are in bad shape. A woman in Reini asked, *Gauradevi got fame, Baaladevi went to Durban, what did we get? Nobody listens to us. We do not have ration at times. The forest department is not bothered about us; they are concerned about the animals only.* Their rights over forests have been taken after declaration of area as Nandadevi National Park. *We are not allowed to enter the park, but the government has called the dam builders even here, so that this area could be destructed in every manner possible. What else has happened here, except that a gate in Gaura Devi’s name came up?* The educated from the border bhotiya⁹ villages have migrated as they got employment under reservation meant for tribals, but the other livelihood opportunities ended due to the declaration of the area as protected area. Mitra (1993) also writes about the a woman of Reini who pronounced that she has come to hate the word *pariyavaran* (environment), (because of which) she cannot even pick herbs to treat a stomach ache.

The Response to the ‘Success’ of Chipko: Jhapto Cheeno

The consciousness that was generated out of the Chipko movement continued to influence many further struggles. Many of the Chipko activists spent their lives as activists, associated with different movements. Although Chipko led to a reduction in the commercial exploitation of forests during its heydays, the locals were not happy with this presumed ‘success’, as they in fact were facing increased alienation and disempowerment due to the reduced rights over forests. About the forest bill introduced after the Chipko movement in the year 1980, Girda says in a song, *bangle mein jangla lag jaye, jungle mein bangla lag jaye, van-bill aisa lagu hoga, maren bhale vanwaasi, paani bich meen pyasi*, that the forest bill make sure that the homes of people will become jungles, but *bunglows* will come up in the jungles, it makes it difficult for the people to live in the villages, like a fish that remains thirsty inside the water. Uttarakhand Kranti Dal (UKD), is a political party (formed by few activists of Uttarakhand Sangharsh Vahini) that remained active in statehood movement. In 1988-89, its activists felled trees in hundreds of places under a *Paed Kato Andolan*

⁹ Bhotiya tribe inhabit high Himalayas, the trans-himalaya in pockets of Chamoli and Pithoragarh districts and have distinct language and culture.

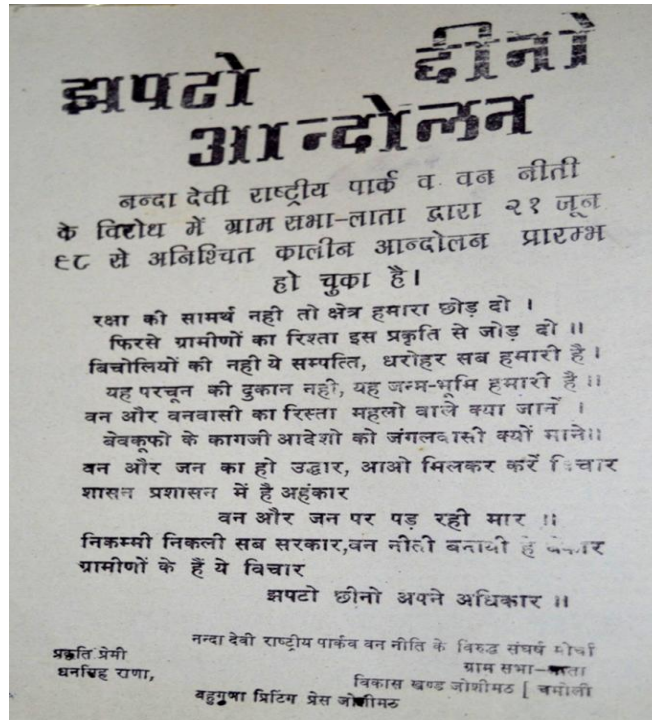
(movement to fell trees), to oppose the 4,500 development schemes like road or water pipelines, that were held up in the region due to delays in environmental clearance (Mitra 1993).

According to Dhan Singh Rana, a CPI M comrade of Lata village adjacent to Reini, *Chipko had a vision for future generation and came out of a caring for the place, with the concern that if trees are felled, then how will the homes be built or fire for cooking will be lit; even when it was for a selfish interest, it was the interest of community. The protection came out of a feeling of belongingness; it was not the thinking of World Bank* (that led to a different notion of protection), under which an ‘alien concept’ of conservation was forced in the region in form of declaration of Nanda Devi National Park, constituting the remote regions from the border districts of Chamoli and Pithoragarh districts in the year 1982. After the United Nations declared it as part of international heritage, the park was converted to biosphere reserve in 1988. Dhan Singh feels that this transformed the people from owners to beneficiaries, *logon ko maalik se labharthi bana kar rakh diya.*

The area saw constant curbing of livelihood base, first their prosperous business with Tibet was stopped (after the Indo-China war), *then in name of development and conservation, highlands crucial for survival, grazing lands, shelters made in grazing lands (kharak or chaan¹⁰), cultural practices and their gods were snatched away from us*, and now many hydropower project are coming up in the region. With the declaration of Park, he recounts, people were declared as destructive to the forests, whereas it was the people who had protected the space till then and the animals. Even as the bears attacked the villagers and their cattle, they were told that the wild life needs to be protected and no action can be taken against it. People were liable for compensation only when the *baagh* kills the cattle, and not the bear. *We used to do jhum cultivation but the forests never caught fire. Now, after 1982, forests are getting burned, corporation is taking away trees, even when we are not allowed to take them, and it is said that the forests are catching fire due to our bidis...this is a conspiracy, the forests and the animals were conserved by us, their seeds were not*

¹⁰ Villagers migrate to subalpines (2900-3500 m) and alpine pastures (*bugyals*, above 3200 m to snowline) with their cattle for few months of summers, for which temporary or permanent dwelling on these widely scattered agricultural and grazing lands called chaans or kharaks are built. The main animals that are reared are hardy mountain bred cows, buffaloes, sheep, goats, and donkeys. This also provides a space for regeneration of lowlands. The sanctity of the fragile ecology of these places is maintained.

sent by the World Bank. Most families worked as guide or kulis for the trekking camps in the high mountain region, but trekking in the biosphere was debarred. In addition, it became difficult for the people to rear sheep that they traditionally did, and the woollen handicraft work that was practiced in each home is getting lost.



A pamphlet of Jhapto Cheeno Andolan, calling to restore the relationship of villagers with nature

Against this ‘consequence of Chipko’, Jhapto Cheeno andolan was undertaken, as a ‘practical aspect’ of Chipko in the year 1987. It was a symbolic trek by the villagers inside the reserve area, to claim the space as their own and challenge the restrictions on them. People protested against the idea that even when they were not allowed to enter the forests, the poaching increased leading to reduction in wild life. Rare herbs were also being smuggled (Rana 1999). Govind Singh Rawat, a CPI party member is said to be the motivational force behind the Chipko and Jhapto Cheeno andolan in the villages of Lata and Reini in the Niti valley.

Diminishing Agricultural Land: Protest against Enclosures

In addition to Nandadevi National Park, residents of other protected zones like of Askot and Binsar Sanctuary are also struggling for their rights from two-three decades. There are oppositions to the declaration of more eco sensitive zones and

protected areas, further taking away from people, their forests and lands. Declaration of protected areas has disenfranchised the nomadic *van gujjars* living in the national parks like Rajajji sanctuary. The villagers live in constant fear of attack by wild animals on the crops and domestic animals. Inside the Binsar sanctuary, the electricity, road and drinking water related schemes to the villages have remained stalled over the years. Villagers were refused the wood of their customary rights, *haq ki lakdi*, women were penalised for collecting fodder and fuelwood. They are even charged entry fee to the sanctuary like other visitors. Contrary to these ‘conservation steps’ hotels and resorts are coming up inside, flouting all conditions. Roads are laid to cater to these resorts. Illegal trade of timber continues inside the protected area under the aegis of Forest Department. The villagers have been fighting against this disempowerment, both through social actions and through court cases (Joshi, M. 2013).

Conservation through declaration of protected areas is as cut off from local lives as development through hydropower projects. Large part of population falling under the conservation zone becomes dependent on the employment opportunities from outside. Conservation has provided legitimacy to the change of land use, thus easing the capture of enclosures by religious groups, dams and hotels. Protected areas dispossess in the same way as the dams, they take away from people access to their resources and the customary rights in the name of environment and for a greater common good (Hall et al. 2013:78). While in the case of dams the argument goes that the people are not capable of using the river resource to the fullest and this is going waste, in case of protected areas, the natives are blamed for exploitation of commons like forests, from whom the forests are to be preserved, on the lines of ‘tragedy of the commons’ thesis of Garrett Hardin. It implies that the commons tends to get exploited more by individual interests and hence it is better to hand them over to the market or to the state. It is a hegemonic conception of conservation and sustainability, in which the local systems are termed unsustainable (Robbins 2004:150).

Conservation thus, aims to ‘preserve’ people-less landscapes, adopting myths of pristine wilderness, thus becoming a form of cultural imperialism meant to marginalise and disenfranchise the native people (Cronon 1995:82, Robbins 2004:12). It ignores the collective regulatory systems over the *commons* that the locals have evolved over the years, their folk wisdom and relationship with their immediate

environment that remain crucial for their survival. These traditional systems in fact negate the ‘tragedy of the commons’ argument. Not only are the protected areas forcing more migration from the region, but even the resources in absence of the relationship with natives and continuing exploitation within the protected areas, are in fact depleting and stand more unprotected (Goldman 1993). The traditional regulatory systems come out of mutual trust and relationship over a long period of time and follow strong informal norms. State imposed conservation measures displace and shatter traditional restraints, leading to reckless extraction (Robbins 2004:151). Natives like Dhan Singh Rana feel that they are serving the crucial purpose of protecting the forests from logging and deforestation, not for own gain but for the goodwill of present and future generation. Contrary to all conservation claims, more and more hydropower projects are announced in the protected regions (Chopra et al. 2014).

Extension of Chipko: Beej Bachao Andolan

Chipko activists see their later involvement in other movements as extension of Chipko. The activists like Vijay Jardhari, who were involved in the Chipko movement in the Henwal Ghati in Tehri, went on to start the Beej Bachao Andolan (save the seeds movement) in the 1980s. According to Jardhari (1997), the movement started with the belief that cash crops and machine based agriculture was not suited for the mountain conditions, where agriculture is mutually dependent on animal husbandry and based on rich seed diversity. It was undertaken as a step against the introduction of chemical fertilizers and imported seeds, which were distributed for free to the farmers at the time of green revolution. It remains an attempt to preserve the traditional crops like millets *koda* and *jhingora* of the region and the practices like that of *baranaja*, that is, multi-cropping based on symbiosis and crop rotation that provides wholesome nutrition. The *andolan* has these slogans, *kheti par kiski maar? jangli janwar, mausam aur sarkar* (who damages the crops? wild animals, weather and government); *mitti, pani, beej aur khet: band karo tum isse chaed* (stop tempering with the soil, water, seeds and fields). The coarse grains are considered to be more nutritive and hardy to take the weather fluctuations and thus, more trustworthy for all the labour that goes in farming. It is also an attempt to preserve the hundreds of

traditional variety of seeds in the region. The movement still continues and is also currently utilising the present urban market for organic products at small scale.

Many individual and collective campaigns like *Dalyun ka Dagdaya* or *Meiti Andolan* for afforestation, continued over the years and are at times presented as part of Chipko or as a result of the consciousness generated due to Chipko. *Dalyun ka Dagdaya*, meaning Friends of Trees, involved planting and taking care of fruit trees and *baanj*, *buransh*, *devdaar* varieties in Pauri district as against the pines, to check landslides. This was later co-opted by the NGOs. Meiti andolan started in the Pindar valley around 1995 by a teacher Kalyan Singh Rawat with his students. It is women based campaign, all the unwed girls of a village develop a forest and every girl of the village plants a tree at the time of her wedding as a measure of her good wishes for her native village, *the maika* or *maet*. It is practised in many villages (Martolaya 1997). Meiti andolan has now been included as an UNDP program.



Dry Kuhls Photos taken on 24.3.2012 in Rudraprayag, first shows the how the *Kuhl* water is used for irrigation in the Augustmuni town, second photo is of a kuhl running dry in Rayadi village. Most Kuhls are running dry now as the rivers have been diverted or choked due to muck dumped in rivers by hydropower projects.

Another agriculture related andolan and demand that continues in Uttarakhand, in addition to Beej Bachao, is that of consolidation of land holdings, the *chakbandi andolan*. The main voice behind it since last three decades, is Ganesh Singh Negi. Uttarakhand has a complex technology of terrace agriculture and irrigation through *kuhls* in mountains (photo above). However, the land due to generations of divisions has become unproductive for agriculture, leading to more migration. The holdings were always small, and they remain scattered. Unlike plains,

the farmers do not have plots of agricultural land in one place, but small chunks of land at different places, making the agriculture difficult. Irrigation facilities remain poor. Thus, agriculture does not give the production as per the labour that it takes. Not much innovation has happened in the agricultural practices over the years (despite a G.B. Pant University of Agriculture and Technology established since 1960). The crops remain seriously impacted by the wild animals and changed climate. Increasingly it has become difficult to even get subsistence yields with the holdings. Consolidation will mean that options like horticulture and herb cultivation can be carried out. It is in absence of suitable agricultural and other livelihood opportunities that people are more inclined to sell their lands to the hydropower companies.

Movement against Tehri¹¹ Dam

The NBA struggle had started with the opposition to dams and slowly emerged as a struggle for furthering a process of ensuring better rehabilitation. The rallying point became the rehabilitation policy, which is said to be one of the better ones as compared to other state policies. However, in the case of Tehri, the policy came much later and the demand for a better policy does not appear to be central to the movement. The movement could not retain enough strength till the last to ensure that it could regulate the extent of fulfilment of policy directives. V.K. Gupta, DGM of THDC Rehabilitation Cell, told me in a conversation, in the case of Tehri that there was no policy of rehabilitation, *nobody knew what rehabilitation was. Problems came up, we passed orders. All these orders complied up to form a policy much later.* Villages were considered separately, selectively and unequally, not just resulting in poor and differential rehabilitation but also affecting the strength of the movement.

Mahipal Singh Negi (a journalist working in Purani Tehri earlier and now in New Tehri who remained active in the struggle and still is fighting the court cases. He has most extensive literature related to Tehri town and its struggle) expressed that the movement occurred in phases and spurts, at any given point of time there was no joint struggle of villages and Purani Tehri town. Sometimes the villages rose in action and sometimes the town people. The rehabilitation was provided in pieces and demands were also raised separately. According to him, the first phase of the movement was

¹¹ Tehri is a corrupt form of 'Trihari' which stands for a place that washes away all the three types of sins, namely sins born out of thought, word and deed.

when in the year 1978-79, the Athur *patti* villages were displaced. They had agitated for proper rehabilitation. Seeing the condition of earlier rehabilitation, the Tehri town people agitated for an appropriate increase in compensation. Virendra Dutt Saklani, a veteran freedom fighter, who also became the chairperson of *Tehri Baandh Virodhi Sangharsh Samiti*, took the case in the court and fought it on 'scientific basis' (notes Penyuli 1986:66). By the time Bahuguna came to Tehri in 1989, the work of dam had gathered momentum.

It appears that movement was not so unified so as to overcome the divisions, misconceptions and the myths that the THDC successfully introduced. THDC circulated that only issue of the struggle is compensation and once that is provided, opposition will stop. The environmental concerns were brushed aside. Gupta says, *there were no protests as we met with all demands. Bahuguna opposed only on technical grounds like safety of dam. He was made fully satisfied by appointing committees. He did not oppose for rehabilitation.* Mahipal Negi feels that there was a cobweb of committees, *committee ka makadjaal*, around the protests. Photos of prosperity of the rehabilitated were circulated (Penyuli 1986:66-67). The DGM also showed me such pictures of prosperity in the rehabilitation sites. According to S. Pathak (2005:3638), the dream of settling in plains made many corrupt and insensitive. The longer history of outmigration has made the natives less rooted. The project remained a '*kaamdheni* (a cow of plenty)' for the contractors, transporters, politicians, businessmen, journalists, industrialists, and some locals.

Although many feel that the movement was not as much for the opposition of dam, through the opposition, it was an attempt to assert for better rehabilitation. Gupta says, *initially we were successful in convincing people that we are shifting them to a much better place. Tomorrow is bright for them. People had this feeling that they are doing something for their nation. People were innocent earlier. By the time they understood about rehabilitation, they became very clever. They started asking for specific lands for rehabilitation. The national interest took a backseat.* Yogendra Singh Negi, Dharkot village feels that most people were not committed to the opposition of the dam as they led a difficult life. There were problems of wild animals and water scarcity. Rains were irregular. It was not easy to walk always to Purani Tehri for all the work. Dam came with the promise of development and good life in plains. Some felt that the '*progressive outsiders*' who came from delhi and bombay,

did not wish that development could come to their place (there were many metropolitan supporters of Bahuguna, who became less active later and he himself started travelling a lot outside to speak on the issue (Pathak, S. 2005:3638). Negi also highlights that most of the natives and villagers had only small makeshift shops in Purani Tehri, who did not get proper compensation as compared to big shopkeepers who were settlers from outside.¹²

Whereas a perception of good rehabilitation was created, in reality the one getting displaced, did not even ensure which piece of land was actually allotted to him, whether it fell under a forest area or a tea estate, or if irrigation was possible at all. Pictures of hand pumps were shown but there was no water. According to Penyuli (1986), such cases were rampant when threats, false promises, bulldozers and imminent displacement were used as 'reasons' to force villagers to sign on documents accepting displacement. There were people whose homes were demolished giving assurances of compensation, but they kept on waiting for it. Even in the cases people were paid well, lot of it had to be invested in paying associated taxes, registry money and such deals. Many kilometres of roads were submerged and to build new ones, more homes, agriculture, *gaushalas* were demolished. Those, whose partial land got submerged, did not get much. The notices related to displacement, compensation etc were put up in Tehri town offices, of which people did not get to know. The only way available for an illiterate poor villager to question these practices was to place objection in the Court, which remained out of their reach.

The uncertainty about the coming up of project, stalls people's lives for years. The land prices in the neighbourhood soar in expectation, making it difficult for people to seek land themselves. Government finds it easier to provide compensation rather than searching lands for the huge affected population. In Tehri, the practice of *Santwara* was prevalent, which was the transfer of land orally, as legally the right of transfer did not rest with people in the princely state. The mutual trust was enough earlier, but at the time of rehabilitation, many lost in absence of legal claims. Many were forced to migrate with compensation cheques as low as Rs. 46.60 and Rs. 88.20 for their homes in the Purani Tehri (Chandola 2002). Adult sons were not given

¹² This concern about the natives in the present generation is also to be understood not just by continued marginalisation of paharis, but also steps after the formation of state of Uttarakhand to identify even the recent settlers as natives.

compensation separately, resulting in divisions between many in the family of the meagre compensation (Chandola 2003:267).

As the villages and people kept leaving, the movement had weakened by 1990s. The other strong leaders like Virendra Dutt Saklani, Vidya Sagar Nautiyal, Dhoom Singh Negi, Kunwar Prasun and Vijay Jardhari had withdrawn and the movement became Bahuguna centric (Pathak, S. 2005:3638). Local leaders like Mahipal Negi feel that persons like him remained doubly at disadvantage due to their participation in the struggle. They did not get due recognition as a leader, and still due to their involvement in the movement, they were not given proper rehabilitation. According to Shemsher Singh Bisht, two events further weakened whatever united resolve that was gathered, spiked by the highlighting of risks by the earthquake of the year 1991. In March 1992, a bus full of campaigners fell down the hills and 16 people died. This was said to be intentional accident caused by the company to incite fear in the protesters' mind. The second incident according to Bisht, is acceptance of a huge *Kothi* by Bahuguna as compensation.

Sunderlal Banuguna sat for many long hunger strikes, forcing the formation of several committees, which slowed the pace of the work. One fast that lasted for 74 days in the year 1996, led to the formation of Hanumantha Rao Committee, to review the rehabilitation aspects of the project. However, people complain that the implementation of the recommendations submitted by the committee was not insisted on, as he stuck to a rigid position to opposing the dam due to environmental reasons. For people who were getting displaced, negotiation for better compensation mattered more. The huge *kothi* that Bahuguna accepted as compensation, right at the bank of the lake, has become a symbol of widely shared perception of corruption and resentment in the people. It is a mute point though that the people who are resentful now, may or may not have supported the movement then.

In his attempt of seeking support from political parties, Bahuguna also collaborated with the VHP, the later; finding a common ground with the 'seeds of conservatism' in the 'environmental movement' that included arguments of maintaining purity of Ganga and focussed on hindu beliefs. Parallels were drawn between the dam and the babri masjid and mobilisation was sought in similar ways as in ayodhya with *rath yatras* and myths related to the dam, fear and conspiracy of international attacks and loss of hindu culture and increased cultural pollution

(Sharma 2001:40-41). Although the VHP then could not find a foothold in the region, it has been making its presence felt in the ongoing struggles against the RoR projects.

Although Bahuguna brought name to the movement, he does not have deep roots in the daily discourse or memory of villages behind the lake. Sunita Raturi of Rindol, otherwise very alert and knowledgeable and with both her maternal and in-laws place near Purani Tehri, was not aware about Bahuguna. The villagers on the rim of the lake do not remember any visit to their villages of the leaders of the movement. The people who have been left behind the reservoir are left with a sense of defeat and dejection. Mansaram Silwal, Pradhan of Jalwalgaon, said that as they have lost once in the movement, so now they have less say.

The wide-scale perception in these villagers about the leader's corruption maybe seen as a residue of the maligning and rumours by the company that were circulated over the years as well as the resentment of people as being left out of rehabilitation. The complains of people that the leader got name and fame and they did not get anything may also can be understood as an impact of individual-centric struggles, which seeks more of hero worship rather than encourage broadening of the vision of masses. Pathak, S. (2005:3639) feels, even when the Tehri movement was not successful and a silence dominated after it, it cannot be seen as a cultural defeat of the people. It provides a reminder for the other movements to design themselves to act as catalyst for social and political change.

Tehri is also a symbol of drowned aching memories and nostalgia. The 185 year old Tehri town was the centre of the life of the surrounding villages, and its drowning has symbolic, economic and political manifestation for these villages. People feel they are broken after its submergence, *jab se purani tihri gayi, tut gaye hum*. People remember fondly the *melas* in Purani Tehri at *basant panchami* and *makar sankranti*. They remember the delicacies, the sweets, the spices, the fruit trees, the schools and colleges. They say that everyone could go there unaided, the women and the old. The sick people were tied on chairs and brought to the town to get medical attention. The buildings were beautiful and the town inspired poets, artists and saints. All kinds of people lived together. All could survive, be it rich or poor, '*sab ki purti ho jaati thi, ameer ki bhi gareeb ki bhi*'.

The song on the Tehri dam, *daam*¹³ *ka khaatir*, written by Narendra Singh Negi from the perspective of an old man calling back his son from outside, to see Tehri for the last time, gives words to that painful situation when the anchor of one's memories cease to exist. Submergence of Tehri town had also become a spectacle, as nobody could imagine till then, that such a big town could be drowned. Many came from far to bid goodbye to the place and to preserve the memories related to it.

<p><i>abaari dan tu lambi chutti leki aieyi</i> <i>aige bagat aakhir</i> <i>tiri duban lagun cha beta</i> <i>daam ka khaatir</i> <i>bhentija yun gaula gavindo jouma</i></p>	<p>this time take a long leave and come these are the last breaths tehri is now drowning because of the dam the courtyards that you measured on your knees where you grew up playing the corridors that you walked on the paths that you treaded back and forth</p>
<p><i>kheliki sayanu hwe tu</i> <i>gwaya lageni jein dandyaali je chouk</i> <i>joun baanto aanu jaanu re tu</i></p>	<p>where will you again get the <i>darshan</i> of your motherland tehri is drowning..</p>
<p><i>kakhan daykhan lathyala</i> <i>twain jalam bhumi ya phir</i> <i>tiri duban...</i></p>	<p>the kitchen gardens of onion and garlic the homes built by ancestors in the water all is drowning the irrigated and cultivated lands all this will remain floating before our eyes tehri is drowning</p>
<p><i>lasan pyaze ki baadi</i></p> <p><i>sangodi sera dokhri pangudi</i> <i>dubi jaali paani ma bhola</i> <i>bab-daado ki kudi</i> <i>aankhun man rigani rali sadani</i> <i>hamari tibari satir</i> <i>tiri duban...</i></p>	<p>the village made habitable by our ancestors, the forest that we tended how to leave behind , the water springs and <i>naulas</i>, the cowsheds and courtyards every now and then the heart comes to mouth, the inside churns do come and provide us some solace tehri is drowning</p>
<p><i>pitrun ku basayun goun, satyu palyu ban</i></p> <p><i>dhara-mangaara guthyar chauk,</i> <i>kanukvaik chodan</i></p> <p><i>kanth bharik aound umaal,</i></p> <p><i>o baandhoja dheer</i> <i>tiri duban..</i></p>	<p>hey <i>nagraja</i>, hey <i>bhairav</i>, what all have we lost o speaking <i>badri</i> (the king of Tehri) where have you hidden your face passive and indifferent are the temples of gods tehri is drowning..</p>
<p><i>he nagraja he bhairon tumaru,</i> <i>hamun kyaji khwai</i> <i>he bolanda badri twain,</i> <i>kakh muk lukai</i> <i>he bidhata kan ruthini hamuku</i> <i>dyabaton ka mandir</i> <i>tiri duban</i></p>	<p>hey <i>nagraja</i>, hey <i>bhairav</i>, what all have we lost o speaking <i>badri</i> (the king of Tehri) where have you hidden your face passive and indifferent are the temples of gods tehri is drowning..</p>

¹³ In Garhwali, *daam* means to cauterise by a hot iron rod. In another song Negi says, *Uttarakhand ki dharti yun daamun daamyeli ji*, that Uttarakhand has been cauterised by the dams.

rajaku darbar ghantaghar,

*aamu ka bagwaan
kanu dubolo yo titi bazar
singoriyun ki dukan
samlonya re jaali bhol*

*sankyu purani jaagir
tiri duban*

*samjhede apidi sarkar,
dwi chaar din their jawa
bujhen dya yun daani aankhun,*

*budh-budhyan sani man dyawa
jyundi aankun kanukwe daykhan,
parlayki tasbeer
tiri duban...*

the courts of kings and the
ghantaghar, clock tower
the mangoes groves
what sight will that be, when the
bazaar, the singori shop will drown
these will remain in memories
merely
the old heritage of ours
tehri is drowning

someone go and reason with the
government, to stop for few days
let the light of these old eyes
extinguish
let the old people die
how will we see with open eyes
the picture of *pralay*, doom itself
tehri is drowning.

Nasha Nahi Rozgaar Do Andolan

The efforts to oppose liquor were continuing from 1960s and 70s by the sarvodayi leaders Bahuguna and Bhatt and Sarla Behn (who established the Laxmi Ashram in Kausani). The opposition as a movement, *Nasha Nahi Rozgaar Do Andolan* (give us employment, not intoxication) swept Uttarakhand in 1980s. Distillation of country liquor had come to become the major ‘cottage industry’ in the hills (Pathak, S. 1985:1362), in absence of other employment and small enterprises. The bhotiyas, after the curtailment of their business with Tibet, took this as the main occupation. Not only was alcohol freely available to the numerous army personnel from the region or brewed locally, but also sold in illicit form of medicines like bio-tonics, tinctures, ashoka etc, with upto 80% alcohol content. Prevalence of alcohol has lead to the sayings like *garhwalis* get drunk as evening approaches, *surya ast, garhwali mast*. Increased alcoholism and crime was said to be impact of plains and their ‘luxury tourism’. The women came out strongly against this trend. A woman who burned the shop selling tinctures angered at the men roaming drunk in the day time, came to be known as *tincturi mai*. The youth started having serious health issues like TB and cirrhosis, most earnings were diverted to alcoholism devolving the economic conditions further, alcohol became a part of cultural ceremonies, a neo-rich class involved in this business emerged and the contractor system remained dominant in the business. A correspondent of newspaper Amar Ujala in Pauri district, Umesh

Dobhal was allegedly murdered by the liquor mafia in the year 1988, as he raised his voice against them. Uttarakhand Sangharsh Vahini took up the struggle, relating the issue to the larger socio-economic issues of the region. The movement involved cultural activism in form of *jagar* (singing ballads) performances and *nukkad nataks*. The close connections between the political parties and businessmen involved in liquor trade were revealed (pp. 1362-1363). In spurts agitations against alcoholism keep going now as well. Women complain that *sharab kabhi khatam nahi hoti*. It never ends. The liquor addiction is capitalised on by the hydropower companies, to gain intimacy and acceptance of the male population in the villages and this affects the ongoing resistances against the projects.

Opposition of the Extractive Activities

Like the movement against alcoholism, the movements related to issues of forests, mining and dams were also not seen in isolation, but were linked with regional and ideological issues. They were the symbols of ‘state commercialisation’ that was ‘draining away raw materials and bodily labour’ and represented the ‘deeper malaise of predatory capitalist development’ (Pathak, S. 1985). Lack of employment opportunities pushed the locals to look for work opportunities in mining, alcohol trade, dams or forest exploitation, which lead to further loss of subsistence basis. The contractor-politician-industrialist-bureaucrat-forest-officer nexus had more profit in pushing such projects to benefit the timber-liquor-resin-mining-land mafia (this concern is expressed by Shemsher Bisht as, *Uttarakhand has now become thekedaarkhand, eighty percent ministers are thekedaar, contractors*). This also meant neglect of village based small enterprises related to wool, bamboo, wood, stones, slate, iron, copper etc. Forest cutting, mining and hydropower projects all lead to erosion of soil, leading to agricultural problems. In Uttarakhand, there is a saying that the man has to go where the soil is going, *mitti ke peeche peeche jana aadmi ki niyati rahi hai*, meaning one is forced to migrate in absence of sustaining resources in hills.

There have been oppositions to extractive activities like mining that are disconnecting the people with their resources. With mining, the cases of landslide have increased. S. Pathak (1986a) writes of cement factories in the cities like Dehradun and Mussorie that usurped the drinking water and the springs like *sehastradhara* started disappearing. Mining also made the contractor lobby strong and

gave them increased access to villages. In Pithoragarh, Almora, Bageshwar and Haridwar districts mining (of sand, minerals like copper and magnesium, limestone, slate, silica, rock-phosphate, marble, soapstone, gypsum) pollutes the air, water and land and forests are disappearing. The erosion capacity of rivers increases due to sand mining increasing the chances of flood as the river bed stands scrapped of the sand and stones. According to Chauhan (2013b), the sand mining has direct links with the multi-storey buildings and ashrams coming up in the region and much of the minerals are exported. Extensive commercial mining also affect the livelihood of small scale sand extraction by locals on their donkeys. Gang wars have taken place over mining in the Gola river valley, in the Haldwani area, the entry to the Kumaun division. Lakhs of labour, dozens of stone crushers and dust and trucks covering the city mark the mining work here. The customary practice by the locals of taking *rait bajri* free of cost from the river banks after taking permission from the *pradhan*, has been made illegal. It is felt by the locals like Yogendra Negi that this is to benefit the contractors who earn money, as people are forced to buy from them. The hydropower companies also engage in large scale mining in order to build their structures. In addition, the exposed dry river beds due to the projects, lead to more mining.

Against mining, there have been many agitations and local struggles. Sadhu Nigmananda Sarawati of the Matri Ashram in Haridwar fasted unto death (allegedly poisoned, in the year 2011) against illegal mining in Haridwar, forcing the Government to ban it in the district. Maletha town in Pauri District, known for its intricate system of *kuhls* and the folklore of Madho Singh Bhandari (discussed in chapter four), fought and stopped the setting up of stone crushers in their area in the year 2014-2015. Sarvodaya leaders like Radha Bhatt (earlier Chair, Laxmi Ashram in Kausani and then Gandhi Peace Foundation in Delhi) have taken out *padyatras* to oppose sand mining from Kosi river.

Rivers, especially small rivers are crucial for the agricultural valleys which lay largely by their sides, for example the Someshwar valley by Kosi. Thus, extraction and manipulation in rivers has severe impact on these. Girja sings and writes *Meri Kosi Hare Ge Kosi*, to lament the situation of the river Kosi. The river emerges from Kausani, and flows in Almorah, Nainital and Ramnagar. He says how this playful free unbounded river has got reduced to a trickle of muddied water. The unregulated felling of *baanj* forests and large scale illegal mining has finished the river (activists

have been raising this issue of replacement of broad leaf trees with pines for commercial purposes, as destructive for the environment). There are big crushers all over Ramnagar, a small town in Nainital district, to extract *raet bazri*, sand and stones from the river bed. The women and men of Veerpur Lachchi village near Ramnagar, have agitated for long against the illegal mining, and also were brutally beaten up by sand mafia in the previous year. A cement factory has been announced. The beautiful green fields of Someshwar valley by the river side have been destroyed. He sings about this river, a song that shows how the women and men associate with the river:

aam bubu sunun chi
gadgadani un chi
ramnagar paunju chi
koshishke ki kun chi
pinath be un chi
meri kosi hare ge kosi
koshike ki kun chi
meri kosi hare ge kosi

Amma baba used to tell us
it used to come playfully
taking us to ramnagar
the river of *kaushik rishi*
it came from pinath
that kosi of mine is lost now
the river of the *kaushik rishi*
that kosi of mine is lost now

kya rope lahun chi
meri kosi hare ge kosi
kya syara chaju chi
meri kosi hare ge kosi

What unusual yield it gave
that kosi of mine is lost now
what beautiful fields it decked
that kosi of mine is lost now

ghat kula ridun khi

meri kosi hare ge kosi
kaas macha kahun chi
mori kosi hare ge kosi

The one which used to rotate the
windmills
that kosi of mine is lost now
oh, what delicious fish it gave
that kosi of mine is lost now

jatkala naun chi

meri kosi hare ge kosi
pitar tarun chi

meri kosi hare ge kosi

In which the mothers of new born
took bath (for purification)
that kosi of mine is lost now
the one in which dead ancestors,
pitar got salvation
that kosi of mine is lost now

pinath be unchi chi
ramnagar punjun chi
aanchui bharyu chi

main mukhedi dekhun chi
chail chute un chi
bhe mukhdi dekhun chi

It came from pinath
it took us to ramnagar
(the mountain girl married in
ramnagar says) I take it in my hands
and see my face in it
in the shadow of this clear water
I see the face of my brother (of my
near and dear ones)

*ab kucheli he ke
meri kosi hare ge kosi
tirduli je re ge*

*meri kosi hare ge kosi
hai paani-pani he ge*

meri kosi hare ge kosi

now it has become dirty though
that kosi of mine is lost now
It has reduced to a line as narrow as
the little finger
that kosi of mine is lost now
Oh, it has been reduced to waters
(ashamed and crying in pain)
that kosi of mine is lost now

Movement for Autonomy

Uttarakhand got the status of ‘Statehood’ after much struggle by its people in the year 2000, as the state was carved out from Uttar Pradesh. This movement saw a culmination of years of brewing discontent and pent up anger due to the ‘*thwarted hopes and aspirations*’, ‘*shattered dreams and betrayal of trust*’, ‘*deeply injured sense of dignity and self-respect*’ and ‘*dislocation of the very basis of secure livelihood and prosperous future*’ of its people (Joshi, P.C. 1995:21). Masses gathered at a call for action. Women came out on streets demanding for employment opportunities in the region during the busy months of harvesting. Students faced the repression of police. The formation of new state came to be seen as a solution to all the problems, an answer to all the questions (Dhasmana 1994). However, the situation has not changed much after the statehood; in fact the common sentiment now is of pessimism and dejection at not achieving what was sought. The direction that development planning and politics and the larger social and cultural life in Uttarakhand have taken after statehood leaves little scope for such strong actions in the present times.

There have been rich debates over regionalism and nationalism during the Uttarakhand movement¹⁴. P.C. Joshi (1995:26), felt that, “(there is) *alienation of the “nation” from the people...people cannot be put at the centre without giving the concept of “the region” its due place in our conception of “the nation”...to internalise the concept of the “region” at the philosophical level is the need of the hour. Without that there can be no breakthrough in terms of economic and political empowerment of the people, the majority of whom live their lives within the*

¹⁴ For example, issues of local newspaper *Parvatiya Times*, from March to June 1982 published a discussion and debates amongst many prominent Uttarakhand intellectuals and literary figures. An edited volume of articles related to these issues came out in the name of *Dhaad* in the year 1994.

framework of the region.” The community consciousness that the region provides was considered to be important to overcome the alienation the people had come to experience in the modern Indian nation state. As opposed to the impersonal and anonymous relationship between the citizens and the rational state, what was sought was more cultural and social proximity of the bureaucracy and politicians (Mawdsley 1999:109). In fact least possible bureaucratic structure and mainstream political rivalries were sought as more cooperative community structures symbolising self-dependence were imagined (Chandola 1995). The urgency of local issues, the critical questioning of the state-centred politics, and the demands for decentralisation were seen as a critique of politics of modernity, demanding a post-modern sensitivity (Pathak, A. 1994). Or, a Gandhian understanding, which had insisted that the nationalist movement in Uttarakhand should be rooted in local issues around forests and *begar* (Joshi, P.C. 1995:18).

In the difficult mountain conditions, identification with regional and local is more relevant and operative in the everyday life of the people. Even when people feel nationalists (due to many retired or working army personnel, most having migrant family members, the place that the region holds in the larger Hindu culture and the system of public education); region provides more intimate and necessary basis for survival. A sense of belonging and dependence on own and nearby villages is must for interior villages, where the knowledge of the ‘state’ is minimal. Shekhar Pathak, a reputed historian of the state, recounts a conversation he had with an old man in his initial Askot Arakot yatra (1970s-80s). When Pathak asked, *bubu* (as affectionately the old men are addressed, grandfather) do you know of the MLA of your area, he asked back, which new kind of vegetation is this MLA, that has managed to thrive in the bitter cold of his village? Amongst the bureaucracy, who was more familiar was *Patwari* (village level revenue staff, also with powers of police in many hill areas, locally known as Gandhi Police), who also remained a symbol of fear. State was largely invisible from everyday; hence the resentment that nothing was being done for people.¹⁵

¹⁵ Now however with the advent of ‘development’ through different projects like that of hydropower, and through discourses and practices of corruption and repression by the local administration associated with these, state is being felt and observed in “minute texture of everyday” (Gupta 1995).

Downplaying all differences, attempts were made to project a united *pahari* identity during the movement (Kumar 2000:42), and contrasted with the *plains*, simultaneously emphasising the patriotic spirit and loyalty to nation. However, there remained an ambiguity in the nature of Uttarakhand's regional identity, which led to its appropriation by the mainstream national parties (p. 181). The regional party UKD could not capitalise on the support it has received during the movement. Also, as P.C. Joshi (1995:20) points out, the mobilisation on local level alone was not sufficient as a national consensus was needed on a new model of development, which could respect the autonomy of regional economy that was envisioned and derived out of the specific geographical mountain conditions. For this, the acceptance of ideas of self government and a new conception of good life were must at a larger level. It was also important to simultaneously address the traditional oppressive systems of caste and patriarchy and mental attitudes dominated by *kulinta* (status superiority) that relied only on government jobs and not enterprises that involve manual labour and new orientation towards work (p. 48). The demands of movement remained more in economic and administrative domain and in the same standards of plains rather than to assert traditional standards and values of mountains (Berreman 1983:254).

P.C. Joshi (1995:38-48) recounts the various socio-economic changes that the region has underwent over the years, which led to the conditions of the movement for statehood. Uttarakhand's traditional economic, social and cultural relations were closer to the hill countries of Nepal and Tibet than the plains within India. Trans-himalayan trade earlier provided for consumables that were not available in the hill region. In addition, people made annual trip to the Tarai¹⁶ area to stock up on goods. Many were also accommodated and provided work in the Terai in the times of harsh winter. But post 1960s, consequent to the war with China, the trade with Tibet was banished. The prosperous border area communities like *bhotiyas* became poor as the Tarai also stopped providing the job opportunities. The settlement of refugees of the partition period in the plains area by the initiative of G.B. Pant, displacing the tribal communities (Tharu and Bhoksa, they were eventually reduced to landless labourers),

¹⁶ At the foot of the mountains are two strips of plains land, *bhabar* (barren and rocky) and *tarai* (low, swampy).

further severed the inter-dependent relations of hill people¹⁷. Huge amount of land and forests were transferred for defence purposes, limiting access rights of local communities. With heavy construction of roads for defence purposes, plains based traders setup their shops in hills, bartering and buying the local products and selling them at profit outside. Local contractors became important as they regulated prices and transported goods from interior villages to markets. Works like truck driving, bus driving, hotels, horticulture, business of dairy and vegetables, wood related business and shops, were majorly taken up by outsiders. These activities also put at disadvantage the traditional jobs of donkey owners and *kulis*. By 1980s and 1990s, the market economy expanded into local bazaars. However, in this economy, labour of hills lost due to absence of capital and skills and people from outside became dominant. At the same time, it became easier to take out the resources of the region, creating the belief amongst Paharis that the significance of the region was only as an internal colony. People '*suddenly began to feel like strangers in their native land*' (p. 41). The educated class largely migrated outside for better prospects. And uneducated had to migrate for work and livelihood. It was like an '*economic and social earthquake*' that destroyed the old system and cut away the people from their roots, forcing them to swing like a pendulum (p. 43).

Chandola (1994b:3) felt that the contribution of the region in form of their rivers and forests towards the plains does not get acknowledged.¹⁸ Such feelings along

¹⁷ The migrant settlers to the Tarai area, now the Udham Singh Nagar District (so named by Mayawati to appease the Sikh population) cleared its forests and got large tracts of land unlike the small fragmented farms of hills, and became prosperous farmers. P.C. Joshi (in Robinson 2001) recounts how the Sikhs and Hindu Punjabis kept coming to this region and well to do amongst them acquired vast tracts of farm land. Many high profile people including film stars, industrialists, bureaucrats, retired army officers and politicians (including Prakash Singh Badal, then CM) came to own large quantities of land in the district, also using illegal means of bypassing the land ceiling laws, *benami* transfers, displacement of tribals, and occupation of government forests. The illegally held land flouting ceiling laws runs in lakhs of acres with individual farm houses possessing thousands of acres of land.

Deals were made with successive governments in Uttar Pradesh to prevent the enforcement of the land ceiling laws in this area. Thus, the district was reluctant to be a part of Uttarakhand and was assured by the leaders that ceiling act will not be enforced on them after statehood.

Due to the non-implementation of the land ceiling act, activists have been demanding for the section 371, as implemented in Himachal Pradesh, it makes it illegal for the outsiders to purchase land in the hills.

¹⁸ Such feelings have become the basis of demands like green bonus and oxygen royalty for taking care of the trees and the water sources that benefits the plains more than the hill people.

with migration, the biggest concern behind the movement, have led to sayings like *pahar ki jawani aur pahar ka paani, pahar ke kaam nahi aata*, meaning neither the youth of the hills, nor its water, stays in Pahar to benefit it with their presence. Migration and the consequent ‘money order economy’ support the families back home. Industries were established only in the plains, further increasing the misery of the region. Chandola further writes that the import of grains, cloth and utensils from the plains led to killing of the culture of the region, its rich crops of local grains, food habits, village industries of wool-carding, spinning, weaving, metal work etc. subsided. The neglect of the region was also due to its weak electoral strength. Officials were placed in the hills as a punishment or on probation and they never felt settled there (p. 4). The helping hand of the state in promotion of horticulture and other kinds of development initiatives remained missing, unlike Himachal Pradesh, it being a state with similar geographical conditions (Kumar 2000: 86). Says Yogendra Negi, for the powerful of Lucknow (capital of Uttar Pradesh), the region remained only a place of tourism and relaxation, *lucknow ke liye pahar sirf sair sapate ka sadhan thae*. To go to Lucknow for Paharis remained difficult, it was like a dream, stalling many of their works, *lucknow jana sapna jaisa tha, hamare chote chote kaam tang jate thae*.

The demand was for greater administrative and economic power over the region and reduced distances from the centre of power. The people fought for own state as they thought that when *Pahari* will be in-charge, they will understand the woes of *Pahari*. A cultural and geographical distance was also felt with the plains-based decision makers with their lack of knowledge about the hill region, its people and their needs.¹⁹ The ‘natural resources’ were ‘looted unmindfully’ (Sah 1977). The vision was for new kinds of small industries and enterprises, redistribution and reform of land holdings and more equal access to education. The smaller RoRs instead of mega dams were demanded (Nainital Samachar 1994b). As the activists thought about the possible economic activities that could sustain the region after statehood, hydropower came up prominently, as rivers remain the major resource in the region. For example, H. G. Pathak (1983:166) says that energy generated in the region, and its use remains an important index of development, in which Uttarakhand lags behind

¹⁹ For example, it is quite different to construct a building in the pahars than in plains, it costs more as transportation costs get added and knowledge of the mountain geography and territory is needed. Similarly the issues like drying up of springs that affect the day to day life can be understood and addressed only with a local sensitivity, felt Dhasmana (1994).

even when endowed with natural sites and conditions for electricity generation. However, the Tehri struggle had already started a debate about big versus small dams and a demand for RoRs. The projects like Pala Maneri, Loharinag Pala, Maneri Bhali (all in Uttarakashi), Vishuprayag (Chamoli district) and others were already underway.

The movement was at times claimed by the youth and at times by the government employees, but the future path was not clear to them. The movement was seen as an angry horse whose rein was in nobody's hands (Chandola 1994a:12, Nainital Samachar 1994a). The major political parties were not allowed to take part in the protests in the initial phase fearing they will hijack the *jan andolan* (Mawdsley 1999). The activists based UKD, a political party with the single point agenda of the creation of a hill state had come in being in 1979. However, it was the intellectuals and artists who remained in the central role in mobilisations and actions. Poets²⁰ composed songs and slogans in support of the movement and newspapers, both mainstream like Dainik Jagran and Amar Ujala and regional like Nainital Samachar, played an important role.

Molestations, rape and firing in Muzaffarnagar (October 1994) in Uttar Pradesh and firing and killings in Mussorie and Khatima (September 1994) in Uttarakhand, led to the added discontentment and anger of social-cultural discrimination and repression, to the mobilisation on the basis of lack of development. The legislation to provide 27 percent reservation for the OBCs was also imposed on the hill regions in the year 1994, when only 2 to 4 percent of the hill population fell in this category. This meant the precious few government jobs and seats in educational institutions could become inaccessible for majority of the population. This legislation acted as a spark for the movement, leading to the state formation in the year 2000. However, the state came in being as Uttaranchal instead of Uttarakhand, with a chief minister, and the ruling party that had no consideration for the aspirations of people behind the movement.

²⁰ Singer and activist Girda, in a song of the movement, presents his vision of Uttarakhand. The song *Kas Holo Uttarakhand* says, where the childhood will not be wasted in cleaning utensils in cities, in the local offices people will not be looted (by corruption), the mafia will be shown their place, a *mulk*, a country will be created where humans will have their homes and huts, cattle will have their shelter and ponds, *gouchar* and *pokhar*, and birds will have their green branches in the forests, a place which prospers with its forests and adjoining village land, a place which has water in taps, light in the bulbs, medicines in hospitals, where all are equal, where honesty resides, where life is not in constant threat.

Responses to Statehood Movement: Post-statehood Situation in Uttarakhand

The statehood seems to have led to more extractive activities, political Machiavellianism and manipulation of people's struggles and concerns. The general dejection within the 'own' state, is felt to be affecting the present struggles against hydropower projects and also leading to more 'compromises' of struggles, as we will discuss in chapter four. Most feel that after statehood, the situation has worsened. The neglect of the supposedly 'own' government for its people was well evident in responses to the 2013 disaster. Manglesh Dabral, a reputed hindi poet from Uttarakhand, expressed in a public meeting that the activists have been side-tracked in the new state. It appears to have come in existence only for MoUs, and not governance. The region has lost its identity as a hill region. Pankaj Bhisht, editor of magazine *Samyantar*, expressed the fall of high hopes with a satire, he says, we believed that we are going to make an integrated independent place which will be different within the larger political economy of India, *hum ek desh banane ja rahe hain*, thus proved to be false. Trepan Singh Chauhan²¹, feels that through and after the movement, petty politicians, corruption, illegal mafia have not only prospered but have come in leadership roles. Dogra (1994) had also noted that regionally chauvinistic and anti-dalit elements were active during the movement.

Mahavir Singh, an 80 year old man in Phalenda said, it does not seem that any interests of people are in Government's mind as they are sold to dam companies, *shaasan prashaan ko dam ne kharid rakha hai*. Further, the people of Phalenda resisting against the hydropower company in their area, faced the peculiar situation of repression by their own 'brothers' in police and administration, in the new state. They say, now that the power is located in Dehradun, it is more difficult to fight their own people, they are afraid of the administration and government that came like *yumdoot*, messenger of death, *ab laathi dehradun main hai, hamare andar ke logon se ladna mushkil hai, ab hum prashashan shashan dekh ke darr rahe hain*.

Many felt that new state has benefitted only politicians and bureaucracy. Dhan Singh Rana, feels that now the individual interests have taken over, as everyone thinks if they can get some contract, that is enough, *mera ho jaye ganimat hai*.

²¹ An activist of Chetna Andolan, a left group associated with movements of statehood and against the hydropower project in Phalenda.

Contractors are concerned only with the *bhawan nirman*, they construct school building, they are not bothered if there is no teacher. Gopal Singh Rana, village Bairangana, Tehri, a Chipko leader, says that to support the statehood movement they had conducted a *Shrimadbhagvat katha* and held sit-ins in the village, so that migration stops and people get employment, but what has happened is that all became 'politicians' now, and have no concern for people, *rajya banne par sab neta ho gaye*. Mansaram Silwal, Pradhan of Jalwalgaon, Tehri, said in the new state, there are no options for youth; they have become pessimists, *nirashavadi*. It has only been used for political gains by unqualified people, politics has entered each home, and those who were not fit to be Pradhans are now MLAs, *jinhe pradhan nahi banna tha, wo vidhayak ban gaye, rajneetik party ghar ghar pravesh kar gayi, sirf netaon ka fayada hua*. He feels a potential Switzerland has come to nothing. This increased political interference, according to Anil Kothiyal, Kathuli, Tehri an employee with State Power Corporation, forces them to pay bribes for everything.

Yogendra Negi said that in the new state, the bureaucrats have started some new trends to take away the identity and associated benefits from the natives. Like they have made compulsory the *sthai niwas praman patra* (certificate of permanent residence) rather than *mul niwasi prapan patra* (certificate for natives that is given only to those living there for four generations), favouring the people who are not natives, but are settled in Uttarakhand for only few years. There are attempts by Government to change the definition of *mul niwasi*, by declaring that all settled in Uttarakhand at the time of its formation, will be considered natives, thus, opening the region's resources more for the land mafia (Regional Reporter 2012:6).

The attitude now seems to be to capture whatever has become more accessible due to formation of a small state and proximity of political influence. To 'share' it with the 'activists' of the statehood movement, the government has started a scheme of distributing certificates to the activists, *andolankari* of the movement, which would enable them benefits like that of reservation and pension. All kinds of people have received these. Indresh Maikhuri, a CPI ML activist felt, it is like asking the activists to be certified by the Government. In the novel, *Hey Bwari*, based on the statehood movement and the conditions afterwards, the activist Yamuna feels betrayed by such initiatives and refuses to apply for this certificate, as she feels that a much better

reward is to build the state as they had dreamt, rather than doling individual favours and unregulated allocation of benefits to appease few.

Harishchandra Chandola, a reputed journalist (known for his national and international journalism), when spoken to about the situation in the state said, after statehood as well, people are forced to lose their long term economy of agricultural land for development projects. In the agriculture dominant state, there are no policies for farmers. In Joshimath (where he stays), even the vegetables are coming from Uttar Pradesh, there are no local vegetables due to poor cultivation. There is poor communication between people and the government. A person from Munsyari in Pithoragarh still needs three days to commute to Dehradun, the capital of the state, whereas the transportation and hotel accommodation prices have increased manifold. For fruits there are no processing factories, so they go waste. The ministers travel only in helicopters, so they do not get to know the poor condition of roads. In large numbers, the Nepalis are supporting now the agricultural and labour work, as most of the Uttarakhandi themselves go to plains for menial work. The traditional crops of *koda jhangora* are now left by the people (due to change in food habits and as these do not get any market price), even when they get ready in 3-4 months and need less water and hence are more sustainable.

The self-sustaining, self-reliant concept of hill state, where the local culture could thrive, has given way to open selling of Uttarakhand resources²². The inclusion of plains districts of Haridwar and Udham Singh Nagar meant that the same petty politics of pahar and plains is still playing. Inclusion of these districts also changed the caste and religious demography of the region, paving a way for related politics. The capital was established in plains, as opposed to the sustained demand of the capital in a central hill town, Gairsain. For the activists, declaring Dehradun as capital was a defeat of their philosophy of development. Shankar Dutt of Saling village in Bageshwar expresses this sense of betrayal thus, *Dehradun Nainital were already developed by the East India Company, after statehood the focus should have been development in villages*. The mainstream political parties BJP-Congress that came to

²² As in case of Nainisar in Ranikhet, Nainital District, where 356 Nalli or over 7 hectare land has been given to Jindal group to build an international school, without taking consent of the locals in the year 2015. The company has fenced the whole area and even extra land that villagers use, such as grasslands and has felled the forest, even when the process of transfer of land is still not complete (Samyantar 2015). Whereas the mobilisation is criminalised and discredited as Maoist action, leading to its violent curbing, the local administration and police protects the company instead.

'rule' the state remain neglectful of the hill concerns. Their internal politics means that the state has already seen eight chief ministers and also president rule in a span of fifteen years of the statehood. These parties have increasingly promoted hydropower projects as drivers of development in the region, ignoring the basic concerns of people. Regional parties remain lightweight. Due to increased migration to plains districts and their increased population, the electoral relevance of hills is slowly declining, as according to delimitation, the assembly seats are decided by population and not the geographical area. Total assembly seats of plains districts have become 36 as opposed to 34 of the hill districts.

Increasingly the land of the state has been diverted to private players. After formation of state, 60 thousand hectare of agricultural land has already been diverted (Punetha 2013). Companies affiliated to SIDCUL (State Industrial Development Corporation of Uttarakhand Limited, with a mandate to promote industrial development in the state), were provided vast fertile tarai land as well the Pantnagar University land, on the premise that it will bring employment for the people. The few jobs that the SIDCUL companies are providing are with wages as low as Rs.2500-3000 per month. With the projection of employment opportunities, the government has successfully implemented many resource exploitative development projects. In addition, the tourism is also not benefitting locals due to the hold of outsiders on it. Most of the lands from where the view of peaks can be seen have already been sold. The land around the Tehri lake is now being bought by big industrialists to develop luxury houses, *aishgah* around it (Punetha 2013).

Bureaucratic negligence and corruption prevalent in the region can be understood by two instances. As Harishchandra Chandola recounted, in the year 2004-05, the government promoted a swindler and prompted people to sell him their crops on credit. The trucks full of fruits worth ten million rupees were shown a green flag by a government representative in the Uttarakashi district. The man disappeared after handing over false cheques to the farmers and the government had not even ascertained his address before backing him with praise and huge loans. The government itself has not provided any marketing facilities in the region. Another instance from the same district, reported by Surat Singh Rawat (2012), editorial team of Amar Ujala, is about the two border tribal villages Nelang and Jadung, which were evicted from their villages 52 years back for defence purposes, but their land was not

acquired. When in 1989-90 Gangotri National Park was announced, covering these two villages as well, notices were pasted at the locked homes, which people obviously did not get to know about. Hence, their land was declared part of the park and they lost all rights over it, not getting any compensation in all this time. They have been filing applications and doing paper work all these years in the hope of some compensation. The day to day corruption in the state is such that for receiving cheques of Rs. 2000 for drought relief, *sukha rahaat*, every family in the Rindol village of Tehri in 2015, had to pay Rs. 200 cash in exchange to Patwari. In times of disaster, the middle men cut major share of *aapda* money, the compensation for impacts of a disaster.

Post statehood, the problems that led to different movements have stayed. UKD, the only regional party with electoral strength, has lost its pro-people face and mass base by opportunistic alliances with parties in power. Perhaps to avoid the BJP-Congress fix and related petty politics, the last *panchayat* elections of 2014 saw 90% unopposed selections. AAP in the years 2012-14, appealed greatly to activists, precisely because of their dissatisfaction with the corruption and selfish interests behind the development schemes of mainstream politics. The potential for cultural unity and political assertion however, has diminished due to overall lose of cultural identities, especially in places like Tehri, with the locus of unity drowned. This gets further weakened by the nationalist political party games, for example the way the opposition to the projects on Bhagirathi later became a contestation of political gain between BJP and Congress, neglecting the people's struggle. This discussion of socio-cultural, political and economic situation of Uttarakhand continues in the next section.

Travelling in Uttarakhand Villages: Getting to Know Uttarakhand

The day to day life of pahari remains difficult. In the song *kan kave chekhan ab bhaari gari hwe ge jindagi*, Narendra Negi says that now it is difficult to live for a mountain person, everything from the cooking oil to transport fare is so much out of reach that life has become a burden, it is difficult to drag it now. The life goes in pulling out the thrones from the clothes (while walking and collecting grass and fuel, it is usual to get small thrones all over in clothes, which trouble the women, as soon as they lie down to sleep). The government is in hands of extorters, profiteers and black

marketers. The ones in whom people had put their faith, have become cunning. The (spinning) wheel (*charkha*) of life is run by pension and money orders; no one listens to the plight of unemployed. The life that has been deceived by the promises of the political leaders, adorned with the medal of helplessness, it is now ready to hang itself. This section discusses such issues before people, that is, migration, employment, burden on women, education and health related amenities and the community and cultural life and practices.

Migration and the Rift between Pahar and Plains

Migration is in minds of most due to increased difficulties in agriculture and in general life conditions with scarcity of water and absence of basic facilities of health and education. Almost every family has someone living outside that acts as a pull factor. People wait and prepare for right opportunity, for better prospects. Earlier most wished to come back to the villages after a period of work outside or post retirement. For single women and old couples there were sustenance options inside the villages. However, increasingly migration is becoming permanent. According to the 2011 Census, population has declined in close to 1,100 villages, with many in a situation that their inhabitants can be counted on one hand, giving them the tag of *ghost villages* (Kapur 2015) (Aswal 2016 puts the figure to three thousand). This means that it even becomes difficult for the families that are left behind to stay back as the close knit network breaks.

Migration to plains does not mean only Delhi or Lucknow, but the plains district of Dehradun, Haridwar and Udham Singh Nagar and cities like Haldwani, Haridwar, Rishikesh etc. Development of local towns and cities resulting in urbanisation in the region has increased more in-migration. Now eighty eight percent mountainous region (seven district fully and four districts partly) have less than forty seven percent population and in twelve percent of Bhabar, Dun and Tarai area (two districts fully and four partly) more than fifty three percent population lives (Chopra et al. 2014:207). Hill districts of Pauri Garhwal and Almora have recorded negative population growth (the well-to-do do not even wish to stay in hill-towns like Shrinagar in Pauri, but build homes in Dehradun). Migration is also an indicator of the livelihood options that the youth are searching for, instead of the complete dependence on agriculture. Trepan Singh Chauhan, feels that the youth is now

disassociated with land. They wish to go to Dehradun, away from the difficulties and lack of facilities. They wish to maintain a status. This has also led to increased sale of land, as that is the only asset they have. Whereas the educated move to city areas for better jobs, the less educated seeks to move long distance as manual work is preferred far from home due to social status. Skills acquired outside are of little use in the villages. This also means that most of the labour work in Uttarakhand is now taken up by migrant *Nepalis* and load of agricultural work is solely on women. Villages remain bereft of young people. The major employers of youth remain the army and the hotel industry, not because of any particular charm or patriotic feelings, but due to the poor education standards, these two jobs remain more accessible.

Rajputs and Brahmins castes²³, the high castes of Uttarakhand are said to have emigrated from other regions of Himalaya or plains areas of other states like Maharashtra etc. and settled there. It is the *shilpkaars*, the oldest castes of Uttarakhand, who are said to have preserved the culture, folk identity and sense of belongingness, the *lok-thaat* of the region (Girda & Pathak 2013). For the elite educated class high caste people, migration also means a status symbol. They have always aspired for government jobs, staying away from laborious or business related work, there has been an aspiration of being in jobs only, *naukri ki sanskriti*. *Naukri* remains so much coveted in Pahar that according to Yogendra Negi, the parents will marry their daughter with an illiterate or unsuitable match with a job, rather than a better one with business or in *thekedaari*.

Migration and Fragmented lives

The lives remain fragmented, *bikhri hui zindiyani*, with few family members living on rent in *kasbas* and few in the village. Many old people feel that they are left back behind as a watchman, as *chaukidaar* there, as otherwise the homes are empty. P.C. Tiwari²⁴, felt that in Uttarakhand, village as a system, forest as a system and family as a system have broken. Everyone is alone now.

²³ They are long being known as *khassa* or *khasiya* and are thought to be the descendents of Aryan-speaking immigrants from Central Asia. Doms, the *pahari* service castes are said to be descendents of pre-aryan indigenes.

²⁴ Activist and president of regional Uttarakhand Parivartan Party, prominent for his role in Chipko and Nasha Nahi Rozgaar Do Andolan as part of Uttarakhand Sangharsh Vahini as well as in contemporary resistances like that of against the occupation of land in Nainisar in Ranikhet by Jindal company, as mentioned in introduction.



Increasingly the villages are depicted by locked homes, as development projects and other factors force people to vacate in search of lives and livelihood (29.3.12, Chaen village). Reduced villagers also mean closing of small village based shops.



The only paths for villages are so difficult and dangerous to transverse at places, that agnostic mind finds way to faith quickly. Above is a picture of a threadbare path from village Khela towards Shakuri in Dharchula (21.12.13) and in Chaen in Chamoli (29.3.12)

One of the major factors leading to the in-migration is to seek better education facilities in kasbas. Education is a priority with parents, as they wish for jobs for their children. Mohini Takuli in Loharkhet village in Bageshwar (who was active in a long struggle to keep out the hydropower company from the area) said, she had become so fed up with the endless work of grass and wood collection and agriculture that does not provide suitable return, that she is asking both her daughter-in-laws to study and work, one is an ANM and other is pursuing M.A. degree, both staying in nearby town of Kapkot.

Even when the literacy rate is considered good in Uttarakhand, the quality of education remains poor. Girls are sent to schools (girls' population is also high, which

is considered a matter of pride). Higher secondary schools are not available everywhere. At times children travel up to 20-30 kms for schools. There has been some programs like that of World Bank funded Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan and training programs of corporate founded bodies like that of Azim Premji Foundation, to improve education standards. But activists have speculated that these are leading to distrust in the community about the teachers as they remain engaged and out of school to take part in such trainings. Thus, most are forced to send their children in the costly private schools. It is also speculated that this may be a step towards privatization of education in the state (Chauhan 2013a). In the year 2014, 1500 government schools had closed in Uttarakhand. This was because of poor education status as well as increased migration out of the villages (Regional Reporter 2014).

Kumaun and Garhwal universities were created after an extended movement in 1970s. However, these universities have failed to provide quality education. There are many convent and prestigious schools like Sherwood school and Doon school in the state, but the education in these remain limited to the elite. The education certainly alienates people from village based work. Suitable job opportunities are not there for educated. As Chandi Prasad Bhatt remarked, *M.A., B.Ed. karke ladke hal to nahi lagaenge*. After graduation, the boys will not plough fields.

Other factors for migration include the health facilities and proximity to roads. As one moves to interior villages there is virtually no medical facility available. At places, vaccination programs do not reach. No facilities for surgeries etc are available. This has left women especially in poor health conditions. Mostly people are dependent on the *bengali doctors*, the quacks. Hydropower projects and consequent dispossession is also becoming a reason of forced migration. In Uttarakhand, villages are kinship based, the surname mostly comes from the name of the village. Whole villages are getting impacted here due to dams, which may lead to extinction of particular cultures.

Pahar and Plains

Migration is often inspired, and at times prevented by the ideas about plains that local people have. There is a constant comparison with outside as migrant relatives have different lives. For some, plains has an image of comfort and luxury, as Maya, a bhotiya girl in Dharchula said, *plains have comfortable lifestyle, with*

washing machines, cooking gas, english speaking, service class work. To be able to build a home in plains has come to be seen as an achievement. So the ones who migrated but could not gather resources given to displaced of the Tehri project, consider the later to be in better position, even when they had lost their homes and land in mountains. The displaced got high priced land in the plains district of Dehradun and Haridwar, which almost every Garhwali wishes to possess but is not able to. Migration in this sense is not just for economic reasons, but has status related and cultural connotation as well.

Plains have become more accessible as a result of displacement by the hydropower projects, or so is the impression amongst many. Anil Kothiyal, Kathuli village, Tehri, felt that displacement will lead to access to comforts and amenities, *palayan main hi fayada hai, saari suvidhane milegi*. Some feel plains is in reach of only few even after compensation. Avtarsingh Panwar of Asena, Tehri, felt it is not possible for them to struggle in plains as they only know about farming and buffaloes. In Silla Uppu in Tehri, the construction workers said that people in service class can afford to migrate, that's why they want compensation and leave the village. However, there are many misgivings about plains too. Yasoda Devi of Rindol village in Tehri felt that 'plains' are more dangerous, plains people cannot be trusted, one cannot stay there as free as in pahar, one has to stay locked up in the houses and there is a fear of thieves unlike pahar. The region downwards to Garhwal was considered to be heartless, *garhwal se neeche ki dharti nirdaya hai*, by Preamsingh Khiri of Patudi.

The plains people are as ashamed of pahari as pahari disapprove of them. Narendra Negi's song *Dehradun wala hun*, is a sharp satire on the aspiration of most Uttarakhandi to belong to plains and the sense of shame attached with being a pahari, once when one gets established in plains (here Dehradun). Plains remain a symbol of prosperity and modernity, an 'advanced place, not backward'. In this song, a young person tries to defy the curiosity of an old Pahari man, who is asking him his village of belonging. The youth defends his plains-ness by saying, I have never visited Pahars, have always lived in *des* (plains), never even tasted Pahari cereals *koda jhingora*, never drunk the water of springs or taken livestock for grazing or ever ploughed the land. I am a thorough townsperson, a Dehradun-wala, not a gullible illiterate Pahari (*ganwar*). How can you mistake me as Pahari, from which angle do I look like *garhwali*, when my language is *convent-wali*, clothes are like *sahebs*, I own

a bike, I am tall and fair like a hero (unlike a Pahari), why are you mistaking my jeans for a *salwar* (which Paharis wear), and insulting me by calling as a Pahari *bhula* (brother, way of addressing a younger boy), forgetting I am one with respect and dignity. The younger generation, which is born in plains to the migrated parents, does not identify with the Pahari food, lifestyle, dresses and innocence.

Community life



Kitchen gardens and plants in pots is a familiar site in mountains. People plant in whatever piece of land available, this adds to the nutrition basket as well (first photo of village Barola, 10.12.14). Water sources are considered sacred and the dharas are adorned with the mouths of lion or cow (second photo is of Papiyana Village, Gopeshwar, 16.1.14)

The village life is based on companionship that is part of everyday. At places the homes are joined with common *aangan*, courtyard, which are mostly also used as kitchen gardens. The companionship with nature can be seen in many aspects, like sacred groves tradition. The idea of sacred groves, that is, dedicating forests to deities, worshipping trees and water springs/rivers, not using leather shoes and not making noise in *bugyals* (alpines) and festivals related to nature, are all expressions of this companionship and traditional wisdom related to conserving the resources. The water sources like *dharas* and water harvesting structures like *naulas* (shaped like tank with steps) and *kunds* (covered pool of water) are considered more sacred than temples and kept clean and artfully carved (photo above). *Chaal-khaals* are small pits and ponds that are constructed to enable the animals to drink water and recharge groundwater. In many villages, there is a cultural practice of taking the new bride to the village stream, to be ‘introduced’ to it. She worships the stream with sounds of conch, to start a relationship with the stream (Hardnews 2009). This is how the water sources in

Uttarakhand have been valued and nourished. However, now these practices of water harvesting and conservation are on decline. In Almora, there were many *naulas*, which lie unattended now. Increasingly dependent on piped water supply, most villages and cities like Almora have acute water scarcity and do not have adequate and hygienic water supply.

Collectivity is also seen in dance forms and in collective *rupai*, that is, sowing paddy. In one of the village Kharsaari in Uttarakashi district, I saw that during the day all girls and women were in the fields, sowing *dhaan*, singing and joking around. The fields are sown one by one, according to the elevation and sowing is a collective venture. In the morning the *rupai halwa* is prepared and a short break is taken to have it. The *rupai* also involves playful *holi* with the mud.

The traditional mountain lifestyle has been based on frugality and satisfaction that comes from self-reliance and respect for the nature and mutual needs (Norberg Hodge 1991:ix). With dependence on nature for one's livelihood, it is harnessed only to an extent that does not damage it and in turn, turns it into a damager. The relationship is not romantic or based on a feeling of tolerance of a nuisance, but of acceptance. As the mystery and superiority of it is accepted, the hardships are taken with grace and composure, a balance is achieved with it. But living with it also means living with the ferocity of it, the whims of it. For example, rains for certain Uttarakhand villages also come with the fear of rocks crumbling from all sides. Increased dependence on the outside world and the advent of consumerism also means that a disconnect is coming with the fact that resources are limited, leading to increased exploitation of these (Hodge 1991).

Informal Governance Structures

There exists self-governance mechanisms in the region – be it *Van Panchayats* (Village Forest Councils) or *Mahila Mangal Dal* (Rural Women Councils) and the sustainable practice of tapping hydro-energy from the hill streams and rivers through *gharats* (watermills). Forest panchayats popularly known as Van Panchayats are operational in the Kumaun and Garhwal hills since 1931. Van panchayats are said to be the best known community forest institutions in India. The total number of van panchayats in Uttarakhand is said to be more than seven thousand (Farooquee &

Maikhuri 2007). The forests under the Van panchayats have been traditionally managed by the people with minimum interference by the state. More informal than these, are the '*lath panchayats*', which have no written rules. There are other traditions associated with forests, like that of '*dev van*' meaning god's land/ forest. A certain area or forest is dedicated to a god/goddess after which cutting of trees, encroachment in the forest land is not at all practiced.

Yogendra Singh Negi, speaking about his village Dharkot, said that the village has developed a system of protecting their forests, called *jagwal*. They do not take the budget meant for Van Panchayat, as then only the Sarpanch is held accountable and dealing with forest department introduces corruption and interference. Instead, out of the gram sabha money, and the village collections they manage the village forest. They have appointed a *chawidaar*, whom earlier they paid in kind (cereals), and now salary. They have fixed time periods when the villagers can enter for collecting dry grass, dry wood etc.²⁵ He however says that now-a-days many have stopped contributing to the collective funds as they have left the agricultural and animal husbandry work and increasingly depend on inductions or LPG for cooking.

Now under new rules introduced in the year 2001, there is an effort to dilute this community system of van panchayat, by the World Bank sponsored village forest joint management (VFJM) project, transforming the voluntary and autonomous initiatives to 'target driven' decisions of forest staff. Whereas the concerns for locals is to have more of oak forests, to replenish the groundwater and to meet the fuel and fodder needs, the project based management requires a bank balance that can come only with pine forests (Sarin 2007: 490-500). There is now increased alienation with forests; villagers do not bother when forests department-run forests catch fire. As conservation in protected area remains ineffective, the afforestation initiatives without people's involvement also do not succeed (Chopra et al. 2014:60).

Mahila Mangal Dals, though organised under a government initiative initially, have largely no interference of government, and are the village based women's informal groups. In the case of oppositions to the hydropower projects, these groups have come forward strongly, as they have also in all earlier movements.

²⁵ Sarin (2008: 496) talks about similar work done by Mahila Mangal Dals in Chipko villages of Pakhi and Jalgwad who decide when to open forests for grass, leaf, fire wood collection, depending on the agriculture work periods, so as to balance the work load of women.

Burden on women

The normal routine of a woman like Budha Devi of Rindol village in Tehri, who depends on selling milk for sustaining her family, goes like this. She gets up at about five in the morning to feed the buffalo. This includes *bhimal* leaves, as they are considered nutritious as well as grass, which are to be collected in large quantities as this activity of feeding is repeated every two hours. Lots of wood is also needed as primarily *chulha* is used for cooking food, heating water and milk, as cylinders are costly and difficult to get to the village on one's back. In between, the buffalo is given water and other kitchen leftovers, cooked together. As the *chai* simmers in the kettle and something is put on the *chulha* for breakfast, it is time for the buffalo to be given bath and milked and then this milk is to be distributed. Alongside some additional work is also taken, like being the *bhojan mata* for the local school, which includes cooking the mid day meal for the children (and the teacher *guruji*).

The fuel and fodder is collected from different points daily, either from nearby village forests or fields. This is also a time of bonding with other women. Simultaneously berries or leafy vegetables, if available are also picked. Mostly now vegetables are planted in small patches near homes due to threat of wild boars. She recounts that earlier all the grains, pulses, vegetables and herbs that are put in cooking were available in field only, now these are procured from local ration shops from time to time. Earlier the forest produce or herbs collected could also be bartered or sold. The mills to cull mustard oil and gharats to get the flour have stopped now. So life in all for the women was accessible in and around her agricultural field and home. Now the time that was earlier invested in one's own fields, is put in MNREGA related activities, as fields are getting destroyed by wild boars. Someone or other is always stopping by at her home throughout the day, for small chat and *chai*, or to accompany her on work. She chooses the location of collection of fuel depending on someone she wishes to meet or other works like collecting ration.

There are many folksongs related to the women's situation in Uttarakhand. In numerous *nyolis* women will complain of the endless work and their men being outside to work in plains. For example, in one such *nyoli*, the woman says I have spent my life in grazing and cutting grass, I run to the downhill *gharat* to get wheat flour and uphill *gharat* to get *jon-mandwa* flour (Pokhriyal 2005). The responsibility

of agriculture and looking after cattle has been completely on women, in addition to household work. Men helps only when it is time for ploughing. However, when men are not present then women (especially single women) have to do ploughing as well, at times without oxen, when it cannot be afforded or not available (pictures below).



. **Sisyphus or sustainers of mountains?** Women form the backbone of not just homes, but livelihoods and social actions in Uttarakhand. They are bound to carry on the unending work, irrespective of the health and weather conditions, they carry on their backs drinking water, ration, cylinders (picture, 25.12.14, Phalenda, Tehri), fodder (26.12.14, Gawani, Tehri) and fuel. |



A woman cooking in Noutaad village in Tehri (10.12.14) and ploughing without oxen in Pithoragarh.

Everywhere women have serious health issues, those related to uterus and backbone injuries happening due to the excessive workloads and felling from trees in effort of collecting fodder or fuel. Traditional basis of nutrition has gone down. Women usually appear much older than their age due to over work and sickness and lack of medical attention. In the song *preet ki kungli dor si chin ye, beti bwari pahadu*

ki beti bwari, Narendra Negi speaks of the mountains daughters and daughter-in-laws, who appear as fragile as the thread of love and are as strong as the mountain. On their shoulders is the responsibility of fields, forests and homes. It is their hard work that the fields are green; they sweat and strain in rains, piercing sunlight and even when they are sick. Their lips and cheeks are always dry, eyes are always looking for their men in the foreign land (*pardes*), they are never seen lying on the bed, as they are last to go to bed and the first to get up. It seems they are the ones who wake up the sun.

Livelihood in Uttarakhand Villages



Tradition woollen weaving in Dharchula (15.12.13) and the ringal (a dwarf bamboo) (26.6.14)



Breaking stones in absence of any other work, small dhaba to cater to tourists (29.6.14, Sangamchatti, Uttarakashi).

The common livelihood activities in the region include subsistence agriculture, animal husbandry, forestry, seasonal employment like pilgrimage related services, tourism related work like running small dhabas or hotels or working as labour in

these. Some rear donkeys, wherever road has not reached, donkeys are used to carry heavy loads, especially construction material. In Yamuna and Tons valley, where horticultural base is sound, facilities for marketing remain inappropriate unlike Himachal Pradesh (Bhatia 2010: 202). The villages like Bhutanu in Tons valley, if wishes to sell their apple in and through Uttarakhand, the nearest place for collection would be 90 km far in Naugaon. Farmers find it easier to go to Himachal Pradesh instead. Similar is the situation of red rice for which this valley is known. However, this rice is not sold as Uttarakhand rice, but as Himachal Pradesh rice. Tea is similarly not marketed with a Uttarakhand brand, in absence of such facilities in the region.

People are struggling to find work themselves, without any aid or organisation by the government as they like to readily share. The only self employment option is a small *dhaba*. Now NGO jobs are also proving attractive. The coarse grains of Uttarakhand like *koda*, *jhingora*, *gahat*, *mandwa* etc are sold at high prices in urban markets, but not encouraged as a rural enterprise. The risk of starting own enterprises is not taken much, in absence of marketing facilities, government support and lack of capital. Not much attention has been paid to start organised networks to market milk, dairy products, fruits and vegetables. The traditional crafts like weaving, bamboo crafts, metal work etc have not received suitable promotion. Even herb collection and other forest produce can provide a fruitful occupation to a large part of hill population if developed as small enterprises, activists point out. The enterprises and crafts can be attached to tourism they opine.

Now-a-days the whole *bhotiya* families spend months in the alpiners in higher mountains in search of a *keeda jadi*, a natural equivalent of Viagra that is found after the snow melts. All of this is exported illegally to Chinese market. High migration to alpiners for this purpose has disturbed the fragile ecology there. For this limited and difficult to find fungi, people put their lives on risk and no fixed price is ensured in return.

Spirituality and Religiosity

Religiosity is a matter of pride and way of life for Uttarakhandi people. Purity is associated with nature, religious places and the honest, virtuous, peace loving, straight forward, patriotic, helping and simple nature of people, all of which are

perceived to constitute the region as *devbhumi*. Women are considered to be safe there. Even telling a way to someone is considered to be an act of *punya*, *sahi rasta batana punya ka kaam hai*. The guests are mostly welcomed and not considered as a burden. A local deity like *golu devta* completes the picture of any village in the region. This spiritual/ cultural significance has a deep relationship with the wilderness of the region. Every peak, lake or mountain range is somehow or the other connected with some myth or the name of a god or goddess, ranging from the Hindu to the local gods. Apart from the *char-dham yatra*, the people have religion as part of their culture; they have their own *Jagars*, *Pandhav lilas* (singing and dance forms) and religious *melas* and *yatras* like the *Nanda Rajyat* (a pilgrimage every 12 years associated with Nanda devi) and *Uttarayani Mela* (in Bageshwar on occasion of *Makar Sakranti*). There are historical temples in many places, Jageshwar, Bageshwar, Gopeshwar etc and caves, peaks and passes, linked with different religious beliefs, like for Muslims (Piran Kaliar), Sikhs (Nanakmatta, Meetha Reetha and Hemkunt Saheb), Jains (as the Adinath went to Kailas) and Buddhists (due to Buddhist art and Huen Tsang trail).

The main pilgrimage centres like Gangotri, Yamunotri, Badrinath, Kedarnath and Hemkund Sahib are located in the alpine pasture zone above 3200 m upto 4000 m, making it a fragile area and thus raise concerns about heavy road construction (and hydropower projects and consequent blasting and muck dumping on slopes and in rivers), unregulated tourism in vehicles and helicopters and consequently increased insecurity and less work opportunities for the locals dependent on 'tourist season' for their annual livelihood.²⁶ There are major river systems in the region, i.e. the Ganga, the Yamuna and the Sharda river systems, with sixteen major and numerous minor tributaries. The major tributaries include Alaknanda, Bhagirathi, Yamuna, Tons, Pindar, Mandakini, Bhilangana, Naiyar, Kali, Dhauliganga, Goriganga, Saryu, Ramganga, Kosi and Gola rivers. All prayags or confluences of rivers are considered holy. The famous prayags include, the Ganesh prayag (Bhilangana-Bhagirathi) and Devprayag (Bhagirathi-Alaknanda) in Tehri, Karnprayag (Alaknanda-Pindar), Nandprayag, (Alaknanda-Nandakini) and Vishnuprayag (Alaknanda-Dhauliganga) in

²⁶ There are also plans for four lane roads in the yatra route. Even after the 2013 disaster, Gangadhar Semwal, a UKD leader complained, in one day helicopters lands at least 200 times in the sensitive Kedarnath area. There are nine private companies, whose helicopters take 40-45 flights in an hour. This not only has impacts on the stability of the region, but also on the livelihood of locals.

Chamoli and Rudraprayag (Alaknanda-Mandakini). Most of the rivers and many of these prayags, which are considered pilgrimage centres, have been affected by the advent of hydro-power projects, strategically built near prayas to harness more water.

Communalism has not been able to make inroads in the region even when majority of the population of Uttarakhand identify themselves as Hindus. The popular Hinduism practised by the mountain people is slowly moving towards the sanskritized, plains-based Hindu practices. The hill practices of animal sacrifice, bride price marriage, toleration of inter-caste marriage, widow remarriage, polygamy, consumption of meat and liquor, are coming to be seen as backward (Berreman 1983:236). Interior villages have 'less adulterated version' of their own culture, like freedom of women, participation in social and festive activities, virtual absence of crime, violence, communal and caste conflicts, less extremities of wealth (pp. 252-253).

Virtuousness of the region is also expressed by emphasising the lesser caste and economic inequalities. Though, at many places I felt such divisions. When I returned back from Dalit dominated Khola village to village Hatt (in Chamoli district) to the Brahmin family I was staying with, I was given cow urine to cleanse myself. The condition of SC hamlets and villages were noticeably not good. For example, the Dalit dominated Rama village was in deplorable conditions with no toilets, drinking water and in terms of education, in the otherwise agriculturally prosperous Ramasirai region (by the river Rama, sirai means the irrigated land by the river) in Uttarakashi. Mostly the first question I encountered was what is my caste, *by caste kya ho aap?* At times, I was not allowed in kitchen area. Yogendra Negi told me that during the army recruitment, a caste certificate is demanded to allot work according to caste. The high castes may not engage in atrocities but they have a paternalistic attitude towards low castes still. The social influence of high castes is evident in their prominence in the fields of academics, literature, culture and even activism.

However, class is not evident in homes and consumption patterns in villages; especially the interior villages. It is hard to know from appearance the financial situation of a family. General impression is also that despite poverty, food scarcity is not found in mountain villages. In the village Khola, I was told that even those who do not have agricultural land do not starve as they get something out of the forests. If nothing else, they break stones and sell them. But in the villages where people have

lost their land to the hydropower projects, food is an issue. Old women left behind in the village Saleng near Joshimath could be seen scraping to find something to eat in the *aangans* (kitchen gardens).

Religion, Tourism and Hydropower Projects

Hundreds of ashrams flog on acres of land in Uttarakhand. The *aastha* that they are propogating does not seem to be promoting genuine respect for the rivers, even towards Ganga which remains pivotal to running of these ashrams. This *aastha* talks about myths, about nature and culture, but remains somehow dissociated with the concerns of locals. It talks about culture in a very ritualistic, rudimentary sense; it is not the culture of the people, who have their own gods related to nature. It talks about nature in the fragmented sense of saving portions of the Ganga, and not the indispensable relationships between people and nature.

Local economy of course is dependent on the religious tourism, but a concern of the tourists and the religious bodies for locals is not that evident. In 2013 disaster entire villages serving to the *char dhaam yatra* pilgrims got destroyed, the destruction increased manifold due to the hydropower project infrastructure in the rivers and the unregulated tourism practices. The local economy dependent on seasonal yatras, lie shattered as the disaster has affrighted the tourists. Post disaster; there is no change in either politicians or religious bodies' orientation towards the projects or the yatra. Why is the *aastha* not troubled by the deadly cocktail of religion and luxurious tourism, of development threatening the very basis of these? The *aastha* is receiving most of the funds from big industrialists and tourists outside of the *devbhumi*. The ashrams have increasingly being linked to market, apart from donations received. Ramdev has merged the lines between business and religion. An ashram I visited in Jageshwar, grows medicinal plants to sell it to the *Dabur* company. Many ashrams are built on the lines of luxurious hotels equipped with modern facilities, adversely impacting the hotel business in the region (Bijalwan 2011). Activists point out to the fact that even while talking about purity of Ganga, the ashrams do not hesitate in

draining their sewer water in the river. They only get troubled by the diversions of the river by the hydropower projects when it impacts their ashrams (Bhatia 2010:58-60).²⁷

The aashta is also cashed by the joint collaborations of Government and private industries. India Post has started a new scheme of sending by speed post the bottled water of Godavari during the *Adi Pushkaram* celebrations in July in Andhra Pradesh in the year 2015. Along with the bottling company Sapphire, 75,000 litres of water was extracted daily. They have now initiated an agreement with the Uttarakhand Government to sell the bottled water of Ganga. BV Sudhakar, Chief Post Master General, believes that they are a business entity, and “*these things* (bottled river water) *are products and we just deliver whatever is it that people demand irrespective of sentiments attached with it*” (Jain, M. 2015).

The whole concept of religious tourism in the state has also changed. According to S. Pathak (Chopra et al. 2014:211), due to ‘captive and ugly big tourism’ demands, the roads are being constructed and widened excessively, causing massive landslides, damaging the mountains irreversibly. The earlier yatra routes were such that walking alongside the villages, yatris also got to know people of Uttarakhand, eat at their places and walk on paths they were walking. There was a collaborative *chatti* system as well, in which the villagers used to provide cereals etc and yatris used to cook their own food. One was supposed to undertake *yatra* or pilgrimage with minimum possessions, barefoot, depending on the hospitality of those who dwell by the river. But now till Badrinath temple, cars, buses and helicopters are going. People are going there as part of vacations and on honeymoon. The old *yatra* routes lie neglected.

In addition to religious tourism, the ‘non-extractive enterprises’ also depend on ‘naturalness’ of rivers, like adventure sports of rafting in Hrishikesh near Kaudiyala. It is proving to be financially profitable for the locals, as it generates close to 20 crore annually. Now however here as well, a hydropower project Kotli Bhel II is proposed (Theophilus 2014).

²⁷ However, this is not to suggest that all sadhus and ashrams have the similar ways and viewpoints. We have already discussed about Nigmanand Swami, who gave his life in order to save the Ganga from illegal mining.

Culture and Music of Mountains

Uttarakhand has imbibed from many cultural influences due to the tourism and migration that the region experiences. Due to the geographical diversity, there is a lot of regional and cultural diversity as well. Within one district much cultural diversity can be found, rich in folklores, songs, dances, festivals and artefacts. The attempts to safeguard the rich cultural legacy of Uttarakhand have not been undertaken by the government even after statehood. In fact the native Paharis are feeling more and more marginalised and slowly voices of ethnic regionalism can be heard now against the ‘cultural and political imperialism’ (like that of Bhatia 2010).

The cultural differences are also adding to the (physical) distance between mountain places. There are also misconceptions and lack of knowledge about each other in different areas, like between *garhwal* and *kumaun*. Regional divisions, distances and less connectivity affects the building of solidarity in between regions during struggles and mutual sensitivity and understanding of larger issues²⁸ (Upreti 1993). Misconceptions about the other areas are common. At times the ‘responsibility’ of resistances is also put on the other division or areas. For example, a Kumauni in Dharchula felt that Garhwali people have seen many movements, they are stronger politically and thus, resistances against hydropower projects ‘comes naturally to them’. A Garhwali woman in Tehri felt that Tehri people are not as educated as Pauri and Chamoli people, that is why they could not sustain their struggles.

Folklores and folk based artistic expressions are a part of Uttarakhandi life in many ways. Women while sowing engage in collective singing. Songs are a part of all festivities, festivals, rituals of marriage, work and worship. Then there are songs of movements, social actions and public meetings. Mobiles often remain useless for talking in absence of networks (and mostly in border areas, networks of Himachal Pradesh or Nepal are to be depended on), is principally used by men and women to listen to Garhwali and Kumauni (and even Nepali songs in adjoining areas) songs while walking on long paths, or when they visit forests to collect fodder and fuel. Jeeps and buses remain ablaze with music, perhaps to keep the driver awake and alert.

²⁸ Due to the influence of immigrants over the years and the political history comprising of different rulers, Garhwal-Kumaun difference and regional competitiveness have emerged, even when there are not much social differences.

Now dee-jays and *bhangra* have also made their way in the celebrations. There are traditional musician and drummers (usually low castes), struggling to exist with all this. Their place has been taken by recorded music industry and stage performances, mainly dominated by high castes. The folk element by many of the singers, Narendra Negi, Pritam Bhartwan, Hira Singh Rana, who are a part of this industry, is mixed with the modern instruments, folk songs with newly composed songs. Some singers like Girda, were recorded and sung in meetings and movements, but were not a part of the industry. Movements like Uttarakhand movement rallied around their songs. In fact when one enquires about the folk songs of the region, one is told to look for these songs of Narendra Negi and Girda on youtube (the lokgeets are getting disconnected with people's memory and recorded songs have taken their place. For activists, movement related songs remain more important). The huge popularity of these songs in both the rural and migrant people depicts the need for the community feeling, a tool to express their culture. The dance forms are a picture of collectivity, in which men or women link their arms behind others' back forming a circle, and bowing from waist, dance with synchronised footwork.



The writing was on the wall? Wall of Matli Ashram, Uttarakashi (3.4.12). The song says that the rivers are in crisis due to the advent of private companies. The rivers should be allowed to flow free as the voice of Kabir.

The cultural expressions and cultural activism remains important in even the protests against hydropower projects in Uttarakhand and reveal the anxieties and aspirations much more clearly than other accounts. The activists keep drawing from the old movement songs. One such song *aaj Himaal Tuman Ke Dhatnyu Cho, Jago Jago Ho Mayara Laal*, is of Girda, who calling out the people on loudspeakers during

the statehood movement, says that the Himalaya is calling its sons, to stop its auction, its slow painful death by beheading, *halal*. Whereas Uttarakhandis kept working in menial jobs, as *kulis, mistris, dhol bajane wale, kabadi*, the ‘rulers’ sold their stones and soil, forests, water and wind, and *nyoli, chanchari, jhvaad and chapeli* (musical forms, perhaps to signify the way the culture is also sold away in the sponsored cultural programs, *saanskritic karyakrams*). In 1994, when Mulayam Singh, the then CM, had flown specially to sign treaties handing over hydro power projects to private companies, amidst the Uttarakhand movement for autonomy, he sung (as a continuation of the *Himaal* song):

<p><i>dhundh becho, maat becho, bechi khae banjyani lis khopi khopi meri udhedi di khaal</i></p>	<p>sold are the stones, the soil, the green jungles of oak for money from tapping resin you have peeled away my skin</p>
<p><i>lakhno bae udi bambai puji bechi ae myor ardo paani, thandi bayal tabbe to chu maang hamri naani daab jae</i></p>	<p>you flew from lucknow to bombay, to sell everything my cold water, my cool breeze that’s why this small matchbox like demand of ours has raised our fighter sons will win this but keep this in mind, that the very people who are selling our bones</p>
<p><i>jae kaen hamaar jwaan ranjiti lyaal dhyan dhariya aaj pahad baechniya</i></p>	<p>will eye the ‘chair’ shamelessly this worry is troubling us now how will the movement proceed who will rein the excited horse who will take the people’s rising to its destination?</p>
<p><i>ubhat kae kursi ka dwaab lagi rwaal aiel fikar yo lae saban hai re cho aab yo andolan kathkai hun jaal ko dhaamlo aaj yeki lagyam ko yaekeni majal mein pujaal</i></p>	<p>will eye the ‘chair’ shamelessly this worry is troubling us now how will the movement proceed who will rein the excited horse who will take the people’s rising to its destination?</p>

The destination is still eluding Uttarakhand. But songs are still being sung.

Conclusion

Most of the activists of Chipko were also involved in the Tehri and later Statehood movement; they are like living histories of the region. Also, one can easily discern a common thread in the movements in terms of the demands and

discontentment. All of them were asking for local control over resources (traditional access as well as commercial opportunities), locale specific development policies and practices. They were asking for not prioritising national interests at cost of local interests, anxieties, livelihoods and safety issues (contract of forests, rivers, land to outsiders, water and electricity to plains when the hills remain devoid of it), and short term gains over long term sustainability. The people's expression of faith in democratic values, welfare, distributive justice and egalitarianism was contravened by the newly formed state pursuing an agenda of development garbed under the tenets of neo-liberalism. In particular, the state recognised hydropower as key potential for 'development', widely encouraging private sector participation. This is being discussed in the next chapter.

The history of movements in Uttarakhand is perceived by the organic intellectuals as the history of opposition to the exploitation of natural resources of the region. Increased extraction led to increased dependence on outside, and migration. Due to this, employment has become such an important issue that both led to movements like the statehood as well as became further justification of exploitation in the name of development projects like hydropower (as we discuss next). It is the combination of many issues that lead to mobilisation in a movement, which gives an impression of the region itself being in protest against the continued marginalisation and to regain its lost agency.

CHAPTER THREE

Murky Energy, Trapped Rivers and Internal Colonies: Dominion of the Hydropower Sarkar in Uttarakhand

Ganga, tum bahti ho kyun? It seems not just Bhupen Hazarika but everyone is asking this question to Ganga, and other Himalayan rivers. Hazarika used this oxymoron to give words to the deep sorrow of the river, whose *dharma* it is said, is to flow. He wondered why you are still flowing wordlessly, unabashed, despite of such obvious unworthiness of the society. And why are you not doing anything to inspire people out of rampant depravity? The hydropower companies however, take the question to another level, asking what is the need of you flowing so wastefully, when we can extract so much from you, when we are capable of trapping you in tunnels and to make gold sucking out the marrow of yours? And someone who sees the numerous dams on the rivers and the resultant dry riverbeds wonders if the question is even relevant any longer? Without their rhythm and flow, are rivers really alive after all?

This anxiety is now leading to attempts to define a river.¹ No longer are rivers seen in their natural state, so a need is felt to define and describe them, so that at least it could be insisted that look, these minimum features means that a river is still a river. Can rivers still considered to be flowing when the hydropower projects have reduced them to disconnected water bodies coming out of one tunnel and entering the other? Can the flow still be termed as ‘flow’ when it is bereft of the silt, nutrients, aquatic life, and oxygen and have artificially tempered temperature and turbidity? When rivers are not allowed to maintain their natural variations of flow? When at companies’ will and the demand for electricity, sometimes the riverbed is left completely dry and at other times a whole wall of water is sloshed down like in a

¹ For example, a week long discussion ‘India Rivers Week’ organised from 24-27 November in 2014, jointly by Yamuna Jiye Abhiyan, SANDRP, INTACH, Toxics Link, WWF etc. The task of the first session was kept to arrive at a definition of the river, for the participant organisations, academicians and activists working on rivers.

What makes a river, a living river? This thought is also reflected in the book *Living Rivers, Dying Rivers* by Ramaswamy R. Iyer, with the Centre for Policy Research in Delhi, that came up in the year 2015.

This question assumes greater importance due to diversion of rivers in tunnels by a cascade of projects, leading to discussions about allowing environmental flows, to have a part of the river flowing.

drain? Has the river become a mere tapped water source to be made available for urban bathrooms and to light up the malls? And thus, made unavailable to quench the thirst of animals and birds drinking freely from its bed? What about the aquatic life of the river? What about its banks and bed and vegetation and fishes and humans living on it? What about the histories, memories, heritages and sensibilities attached to it? Is it just a gush of water that is there to drain the filth? Can it remain in the grip of projects of modernity, only to be released to wash the pollution of our bodies, 'souls' and further aspirations of modernisation, the industries? Is there an imminent threat of rivers going extinct? Seldom have they roared, like they did in the year 2013, to maybe say they will find their way eventually as they have for centuries. If someone has to fear the repercussions, it is humans².

In case of Ganga, prayers and disrespect, reverence and negligence tend to exist simultaneously. It is considered a mother. Hindus go to it to mark the birth and death of near and dear ones, save it in bits in bottles, but a genuine concern to what is happening to its life is not that evident. With our modern sensibilities, there seems to be tendency to remain disconnected with the very acts we are engaging in. The sanctity of going to Ganga and its origin as pilgrimage, was earlier attached to the difficulty that was borne in doing it, the care and concern that was inherent for the rivers and mountains, the journey that was taken within. With relations that have become more ritualistic, utilitarian and commercial, the lower stretches of the river are polluted and then factories can be set up to get fresh packaged water near *gaumukh* instead.

Incessant and heavy blasting are done in the fragile mountain geography to build audacious 'mountains of concrete' to block the rivers, simultaneously hollowing out the 'natural' mountains. They are being cored out and subjected to pressures of huge reservoirs, soaking and thawing out their pith. Mountains, to which numerous tourists go for healing and to be inspired by their stillness, stand themselves scarred and mutilated, *khurd burd*, as the Uttarakhand people say. Rivers are made to be a piped water source, that can be switched on and off, pressure increased and decreased and flow diverted to meet demands as willed. And whose will, will that be? Can the river belong to few? Can they be made to obey the nation state's boundaries? When it is also said that rivers like Ganga do not even obey the boundaries of time, they are

² Comment of Anupam Mishra, who is with Gandhi Peace Foundation.

supposed to be flowing from time immemorial, a source of numerous organic myths. They which are seen as symbols of abundance and vastness by Hazarika, are being bounded and reduced to struggling and scraping for their own survival. The rhythms that sculpt the land with their steady flow are invoked by him to also carve the people dwelling by its banks, to enable them to conquer the self centeredness. The rhythms however, are themselves being conquered by the symbols of modernity.

In this chapter, in the first section, I discuss the justifications that are forwarded for this conquest by the hydropower projects, especially run of the river projects, as green energy, appropriate technology and sustainable development alternative. Hydropower projects are promoted as essential for the development of the nation and the mountains and for fulfillment of the ever increasing need of electricity in a 'sustainable' and 'environment friendly' way. I discuss the arguments of international bodies and neoliberal state in favour of hydropower projects, simultaneously presenting the counter views. In the next section, I discuss the arguments forwarded in support of run of the river projects appropriating the language of alternatives. The case of Ganga is discussed next as it remains central to Indian lives, livelihoods and faith and in its name 'river development' and 'rejuvenation' efforts are undergoing simultaneously, showing the self evident falsity of these claims. In the mountains specific scenario, hydropower projects are also associated with the disaster-proneness of the region, which will be discussed next. I then analyze the practices of the hydropower projects, which impact the social, political, economic and environmental lives of villagers. These impacts are discussed next. All these aspects influence and define the ideological and practical ambit of responses of the people to the projects.

Hydropower Projects and Arguments for Development

Thrust for more energy

World Bank declares power shortage as one of the greatest obstacles to India's development and its main business constraint. 'A growing economy like India is hungry for energy', it declares.³ A report of Asian Development Bank (ADB) on

³ *India: Hydropower Development*, URL: http://web.worldbank.org/archive/website01291/WEB/0__C-172.HTM

Hydropower Development in India (2007:9-28), depicts how India started off well in its race of modernisation, as Sidrapong project of 130 KW was set up a century ago in 1897 in the Darjeeling district of West Bengal, “almost in pace with the world’s first hydro-electric station in the United States.” However, after that India seems to have lagged behind, coming in active mode post-independence. In the year 1975, National Hydroelectric Power Corporation was established to bring technical and financial focus on building hydroelectric dams. A hydro wing of National Thermal Power Corporation was started in the year 2002. However, it was felt that the necessary developmental push could only be provided by the private sector.

Post 1991 was hoped to be a golden period of private initiatives, but private sector was not taking much interest in hydropower. So a Hydropower Development Policy was framed in 1998, which states that the central or state public sector units will take up the projects, do the investigations, prepare project reports, obtain clearances and after doing the pre construction work, ‘offer’ the projects to private companies. A ‘vision document’ was formulated by Central Electricity Authority in 2001, “in order to harness the entire remaining assessed hydropower potential of the country by 2025–2026”. Ranking was done for 400 schemes to attract private agencies. Further, the then Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee, announced a 50,000 MW hydro initiative in the year 2003 and prefeasibility reports of 162 new projects were prepared, mostly in Brahmaputra, Indus and Ganga basins, to harness the ‘hydro potential’ of the ‘backward’ Himalayan states. By the time of Hydropower Development Policy of 2008, this potential increased to 1,50,000 MW, identifying 845 schemes.

States like Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Assam, Arunachal Pradesh and Sikkim, took the cue and started “vigorously pursuing private sector participation” (ADB 2007: 28). This meant that many companies jumped in the wagon which did not have any experience of hydropower projects earlier. Rajiv Lochan Sah of Nainital Samachar, expressed it as, *steel banane se lekar kachcha bundy banane wali companiya bijli banane aa rahi hai*, companies ranging from steel manufacturing to undergarment manufactures are coming to produce electricity. Some of the registered names of these companies are like ‘Chandigarh Distillers and Bottlers’ and ‘Krishna Knitwear’. Other avenues as horticulture, agriculture, and handloom have not deserved much attention of development in these regions. The newly formed state of

Uttarakhand had the sole aim of building the region as *Urja Pradesh*. Similarly the North-east region is aiming to become the future powerhouse of India and minting *hydro-dollars*.

Further, there is high concentration of Hydropower projects in various phases of construction in Pakistan, Nepal, China and Bhutan. The aim is to transform the ‘water towers’ of Asia, the Himalayas, into ‘power towers’. Many projects are trans-boundary and each nation is attempting to have the ‘prior appropriation’ of the river than the neighbour, by encumbering them with prodigious concrete structures. A ‘win-win’ situation is promoted in which the private companies of ‘elder brother’ India will develop hydropower projects in Nepal and Bhutan, and then export power from them through connected power systems, “facilitating transnational power exchanges” (ADB 2007:3, 24).

This blind rush for energy is legitimised even by the ‘well meaning’ task forces meant to carry out environment related studies, for instance Planning Commission report discussing the problems of hill areas (2010:32). A proviso is always attached with any discernment; even when the projects are detached from local needs and environmental sensitivity, they are said to be *needed*, their coming up said to be inevitable as the nation needs more energy. Whereas there is no question mark to the sacred assumption that projects are needed, no study has been carried out about future energy requirements examining alternatives beyond hydropower (Grumbine & Pandit 2012:1069). Corporate interests being primary, questions like the existing projects not operating to their full capacity, and energy losses in transmission are not raised. For example, Maneri Bhali I of 90 MW has never generated more than 40 MW (Tripathi 2009). Further, in view of this unending need, the push for ‘clean green energy’ acquires a saintly aura.

Regional Development and National Good

The projects at times highlight the development of the region and at times national development. For example, according to the EIA report of the Tapovan Vishugaad Project of NTPC in Chamoli district, “*though the state is more or less sufficient in its energy generation to meet its own requirement, there is an urgent need to develop its huge untapped hydro power potential...for economic well being and growth of the people in the whole region.*” Dharmadhikary (2008:31), however points

that most of the revenue through the projects is earned by the companies and the international funding agencies and not the country. The Uttarakhand state gets little in terms of employment, revenue or electricity.

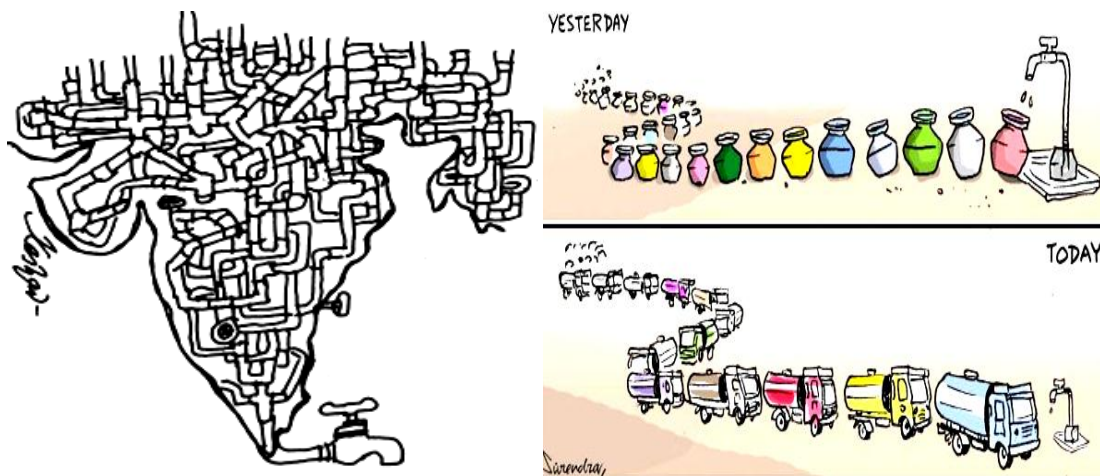
Most projects in Uttarakhand are actually owned by the Uttar Pradesh Government, as they started before the formation of the state and yet they remain the main focus of development in the state, citing that it gets 12% royalty by the companies. Many projects which are under construction have increased their capacities after formation of the new state, often without proper clearances, so that Uttarakhand could also share the 'benefit' of increased royalty. These projects however, are also deepening the prevalent inequalities and creating new conflicts between humans and between humans and animals, rather than providing any basis to affirm the livelihoods of people in close conjunction with nature. Shemsher Singh Bisht, an activist, asks what is actually reaching to locals. *In name of providing employment to 2000 people, two lakh are made bereft of their livelihood and lives, jeevan se unhe khatam kar denge.* The projects are promoted in Himalayan region as a regionally appropriate development measure, arguing that the huge water potential provide the ideal opportunity to harness it and develop the region, but the other specificities of the region, its fragility, seismic risks, ecological balance are ignored.

Also, when these projects are marked as that of 'national importance', the added weight of it, bury the need for compliance by the company to the environmental laws and lead to ignorance of the resisting social pressures. The resistances stand unjustified when the project work starts as a '*vikas karya*', a developmental work. In the name of benefitting the affected villages, the companies have started sewing and computer centres, across different Himalayan states. The women who are running the economy of Himalayas are asked to learn sewing instead after losing the agricultural base, the youth who stand to lose the resources it was about to inherit, is instead treated as a temporary labourer, thrown out of work as soon as the construction of project completes. Whereas for the development of one section the huge structures are constructed, the development of mountain people is assumed to be coming by the fact that they are able to buy a mobile now. Says T.N. Shrivastava, GM, NTPC, *our projects are bringing development in upper regions of Uttarakhand by taking the places on rent and providing jobs to people.* He felt that the projects have brought modernity in the area as *people are now well clothed. Even*

our drivers bought mobiles and started wearing jeans. They were looking developed now.

Multiple uses of projects

The ‘development potential’ of projects is increased by declaring them multipurpose schemes, a single structure with many purposes. The interlinking of needs is evident in the advertisement of THDC (in Regional Reporter, 2012, October) that says *pani se bujhe urja ki pyaas, urja se bujhe pani ki pyaas*, water will quench the thirst for energy and energy will quench the thirst of water. A new concept that is in pipeline using the multiple uses argument, is of interlinking the rivers. This scheme aims to redesign the nature flow of 37 major rivers through 3000 big dams and storage structures, submerging close to 104,000 hectares of land. This includes 14 major projects in the Himlayan rivers (Jolly 2016). The scheme itself is said to have come up, to transfer water across the lands and forests, from ‘water surplus’ to ‘water deficit’ river basins. The thinking behind the interlinking river project and fulfillment of water needs is well depicted by these two cartoons below⁴.



Rivers or pipes to be cut, twisted and welded? A cartoon on interlinking of rivers, The Hindu, 2.3.2012 and on justification of increasing needs, as tankers take the place of pots, The Hindu, 6.5.2016.

Benign needs attached with the projects like supplying water to people and ‘much needed additional renewable power for homes, hospitals, schools and

⁴ Romero (2015) shares the experiences of the wealthiest city of Brazil, Sao Paulo, which developed huge reservoirs to fulfil its water needs and as these nears depletion, the city faces the worst water scarcity, as the sources themselves, the rivers, forests and wetlands have been finished. The city dwellers faced with water supply cut for days, are ready to kill the governor for keeping them in dark about this possibility and failing to alert or inform them.

businesses', provide them more legitimacy.⁵ These claims however are not even upheld within the Uttarakhand state. Uttarakhand villages and cities, continue to face acute water scarcity despite huge projects like Tehri dam in the region. The projects are exporting the power outside the state, mainly to industries. The states cannot afford the high tariff of the electricity produced by the hydropower companies and instead prefer load shedding (The Hindu, 2012). Within the state, most of the energy is directed to the plains rather than mountain districts where the dams are located. The mountain districts in Uttarakhand consume barely 1.5% of the total power consumed in the state (Chopra et al. 2014:31) and 90 per cent of the state's energy requirements are being met from traditional fuels (Roy 2008: 19). Further, Agarwal (2001:2500) observes that the new state at the time of coming into being had more than 70,000 *gharats*, that could with little up-gradation, produce 5 KW each. Similarly, 90 % of micro-hydels upto 3 MW, which are lying dysfunctional, could be revived, as an alternative to the promotion of private hydropower projects. Even if these estimates may not be accurate, the argument that is forwarded stands.

Consumption as a Marker of Development

Often water and energy consumption is taken as a marker of development. Purohit (2000:336) felt that the rate of water and energy consumption at 30 units per person, stood much lower in Uttarakhand than rest of the country. According to him, this pointed to relatively lower economic activities in the area and hence less development. Even before the statehood, this thought of low energy consumption and under-usage of water resources as marker of under-development of region had taken roots. Harish Bahuguna, Director in Geological Survey of India, who has worked with many projects in Uttarakhand, opined that as per UNESCO standards, a person ought to consume 170 litres of water per day. The power projects like Tehri dam can fulfil these 'developmental needs' of the region.

Illich (1974:4-10), questions the tendency to measure the development in per capita usage of energy. According to him, if a society opts for a low energy policy, it can afford diverse kinds of life styles and cultures. In case the society opts for high

⁵ *A Hydropower Project Brings Development to Himalayan Villages*, URL: <http://www.worldbank.org/en/news/feature/2014/07/16/a-hydropower-project-brings-development-to-himalayan-villages>

energy consumption, only choice available before it is technocracy and a monopoly of industry. For him, the argument is not as much for environment friendly technologies or more efficient energy transformation, as much as for limiting the energy consumption. He terms high levels of consumption as ‘slavery’, as according to him, excessive use of energy enslaves a person psychically and also leads to high levels of inequity. The energy crisis as per him cannot be solved by more inputs, but by low energy technology, which he calls as ‘rational technology’ and limiting the consumption to a range that ‘separates enough from too much’.

Private Companies and the Renewable Energy Market

A renewed push to hydropower is provided by the development needs of the private companies in the neoliberal phase. In fact, no hydropower company is fully Government now, but a model of public private partnership, as the main agency employs many assisting private companies. For example, NTPC in Joshimath has given the tunnel excavation work to L&T and barrage construction to a Hrithvik company. The changed policy framework has introduced mechanisms that make it easier for private companies to take up hydropower projects. The National Hydro Power Policy 2008 sought to ‘insulate’ the project developers from the ‘problems’ of land acquisition and rehabilitation and specified that the responsibility with regard to land acquisition covering all kinds of land i.e. government, private and forest, lies with the state government. It simplified the procedure of clearances for projects, provided freedom to sell power on a profit basis and transferred the hydrological and environmental risks to the locals. Uttarakhand State in its hydropower policy has put the role of Uttarakhand Jal Vidyut Nigam Limited (UJVNL), a nodal agency to ‘speed up’ hydropower development, as *marketing the project sites to attract bidders* and assisting the project get necessary clearances. The state has not bothered with any regulation mandating environmental flows for projects that are up to 100 MW, meaning that they can fully divert the rivers. Such projects do not need any Environment Impact Assessment done, nor is there any R & R policy needed. Further, it proposes to allocate projects to private companies for long period of 45 years on a build-own-operate and transfer basis.

The international push for renewable energy has not only opened market for the private interests in hydro energy, but also in the areas of solar and wind energy.

Government declares lofty ambitions of reaching to some mark by the end of so and so many years, and then this created pressure, let it invite the private companies projecting that only they have the capability to achieve the high ambitions. Renewable energy is providing the sanctity to the companies and government to capture the rivers and land. Just because it is termed as renewable energy however, it is not free from the social and environmental costs. In fact, the said renewable sources like rivers are actually left in very alarming situations, raising doubts to their capacity to naturally renew and heal themselves. More importantly, there are better and effective ways of using renewable sources rather than these being handed over to business interests.

Bhat & Paul (2015) narrate this “*perfect story..that allows every participant to bask in the glory of sustainability*”. Solar and wind energy plants need huge tracts of land. The private companies do not wish to get in any unnecessary tussles with the people whose land are acquired, and who remain mere ‘hurdles’ and ‘encroachers’ on the ‘resources’ which ‘they do not know how to use to the full capacity’. To run solar projects, they also need water, so the capture of water sources is also wished. The Government eases their worries by acquiring the resources using the principle of eminent domain and handing them over to the companies. The regulations against acquisition of fertile agricultural land or to ensure that the land is in fact used for the purpose cited for acquisition does not exist. This often means over-acquisition and usage of land for completely different purposes (Ramanathan 1996). The companies also ask for assurances of buyers for the costly energy they produce. The ever benevolent government again steps in to ensure that the energy will be taken from them at whatever cost they wish to sell it.

This kind of approach is inevitably leading to lesser access of power to poor. After the advent of the private companies in power sector, number of people have lost access as tariffs have increased and subsidies are cut back (Dharmadhikary 2008:10). What is being indicated by private sector involvement is that, whoever will have the capacity to buy, can have unlimited access to electricity. According to the National Tariff Policy 2006, “Consumers, particularly those who are ready to pay a tariff which reflects efficient costs, have the right to get uninterrupted 24 hours supply of quality power.” Hydropower Policy 2008 allows the projects to sell 40% of the electricity directly to the consumers, on a ‘merchant basis’. In few years as the hydropower development company recovers the costs of construction and the generating costs falls

sharply, “allowing a private company to sell power in the open market can lead to windfall profits” (Dharmadhikary 2008: 16-19). Further, opening of distribution of electricity to the private sector could lead to an ‘enclave type formation’ in which the rich will produce costly electricity for consumption of rich only (p. 31).

Climate Change and Clean Green Energy

Hydro projects are also been projected as a means to control climate change and can be seen as an attempt to shift the responsibility to control climate change from the developed world to the developing countries, and in the similar manner that defeats the purpose itself. The national and international bodies are trying to establish the centrality of the concept of hydropower. Kyoto Protocol’s Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) Scheme recognizes hydropower as means of sustainable climate change mitigation. Majority of ‘CDM’ dams are been constructed in the Himalayan region, ten being in Uttarakhand. Promoted in the name of clean green energy and sustainable development, these do not have any difference from the non-CDM projects and have similar ecological and socio-economic consequences (Erlewein & Nüsser 2011: 293). Mechanisms like CDM however, have come to become a driver for the hydro projects, after decades of struggle against these. Such mechanisms ignore the studies like that of Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution⁶ that reveal how the natural river flow regulates the global carbon cycle and thus imply that the hydropower projects by not allowing this function of the river cannot be termed as clean green.

Even when the developed countries are decommissioning the hydropower projects themselves, given the severe environmental consequences experienced, they are feely promoting the same in developing countries. They give funds and in return get carbon credits to compensate for their high greenhouse gas emissions. The project building companies in developing countries not only get financial aid, but more importantly a legitimacy of building ‘sustainable’ and ‘clean green’ energy. They are also being projected as an ‘economic’ way of generating energy by utilizing the flow of the river, otherwise going ‘waste’, based on the tenets of modernity, seeing the nature as a resource to be conquered and defined in quantifiable entities of cumecs

⁶ *Study Reveals How Rivers Regulate Global Carbon Cycle*, URL: <https://www.whoi.edu/news-release/river-carbon>.

and megawatts. Their claims of sustainable, renewable, and clean green energy however, gets contested by the environmental, social and cultural costs they incur.

The hydropower project companies carry out heavy deforestation for laying out their infrastructure of access roads and transmission lines, and for land required for quarrying, project offices, housing colonies, warehouses, disposal of muck, powerhouse and for fuel by the labourers. According to Chandola (2013), they maintain a façade of environment conservation by giving money to forest department for afforestation. Even when more than 50 projects are in construction and operation phase in Uttarakhand, compensatory afforestation is not visible, neither have van panchayats received any money. For the Tehri project, the afforestation is done near Jhansi in Uttar Pradesh.

These ‘clean’ projects do emit greenhouse gases as huge lakes are even forming in RoR projects like the Shrinagar project. They do not engage in sustainable practices. For example, the many hydropower companies working in a valley, build their independent infrastructure including parallel transmission lines, own facility of construction material, road access etc. They do not opt for a large transmission line that could evacuate power from the entire valley with many projects (Erlewein 2013). Mahendra Kunwar, a geologist and a Chipko activist, says that during a study of the Vishuprayag project, they found out that it is designed on the basis of discharge data of recent years, whereas scientifically a project requires long term data. This is like deceiving science itself, he says, *ye to science to bhi thagna hua*.

Further, the assumption of uniformity of pattern of flows on which the projects are scientifically based, is challenged by the changing climate, in name of tackling which the projects are coming up. Many Himalayan glaciers are retreating faster than the world average. Glacial lake outbursts have caused much damage in Himalayan region. The rate of retreat for the Gangotri glacier quickened after 1971, according to a study of NASA. It has retreated more than 1,500 metres in the last 70 years.⁷ This means that there will be a subsequent increase and then decline in flows. The annual seasonal distribution of flows is also likely to undergo a shift. According to Dharmadhikary (2008:32-33), thus, the dams will be subjected to much higher flows, raising concerns of dam safety, increased flooding and submergence, or much lower

⁷ NASA Image, Retreat of Gangotri Glacier, URL: <http://earthobservatory.nasa.gov/IOTD/view.php?id=4594> and Upadhyay (2014a).

flows, affecting the performance of such huge investments. A changing seasonal balance in water flows could even eliminate the rationale for storage dams.

The sustainability of projects is also questioned by the specificity of Himalayan conditions. Kasniyal (2015) reports that the flow in Ganga has reduced drastically (1500 billion cusecs) due to destruction of vegetation. This will mean that the projected capacities of projects will only remain on papers, which indeed they have been. The central Himalayan belt is comparatively young and thus fragile and cannot take the constant pressure of blasting and tunnelling. The region presents many risks to the projects. Rivers descending from the Himalayas tend to have high sediment loads (as these are young mountains) that can render the projects dysfunctional. Even the big projects like Napha Jhakri of Himachal Pradesh lie dysfunctional in monsoon months (Roy 2008). Ecologies of Himalayan rivers are not so 'disciplined' and does not obey the scientific logics and plans as the 'green markets' assume them and believe them to be to run the projects. The decreasing water in rivers, the floods, the silt of Himalayan rivers that cut and erode the project equipment and the turbine blades keep posing challenges to the projects (Fairhead et al. 2012:254).

Then there are geological risks, as most of the Uttarakhand region falls in Zone IV and V, that is, there is high seismic risk in the region. According to National Geophysical Research Institute, Hyderabad, there is an active fault beneath the Tehri dam that may generate earthquake(s) and cause additional seismic risk in the already critically stressed Himalayan region. There has been an increase in seismicity after the filling of the dam. When the dam site was chosen in 1961, the plate tectonics theory was not very advanced and "researchers were not well-educated with the fundamental mechanism responsible for earthquakes in the Himalayas". Since then, "much has changed in the context of our theoretical understanding and observations related to the evolution of the Himalaya and the associated earthquake hazards" (Deccan Herald 2013). Not much has been changed in our development planning though. In the Pithoragarh district, an even bigger dam than Tehri is planned, the Pancheshwar dam.

Run of the River Projects: Appropriating the Language of Alternatives

The notion of alternatives emerges in relation to mainstream or dominant notion of development, seeking legitimacy to the concept of plurality and an

understanding of development and sustainability on the basis of a particular context. Movements like NBA over the years have resisted against the dams as the dominant notion of development and have provided alternative conceptions to it. However, in promoting and implementing the Run of the River (RoR) projects, the state has tried to appropriate the concept and arguments of ‘alternatives’ brought forth by movements against dams. The RoRs which the state is promoting is not like the RoRs that were projected as alternatives to dams.⁸

Hydropower projects in Uttarakhand include both storage dams and ‘run-of-the-river’ projects. The proponents of hydropower are now campaigning that the proposed projects in Himalayan Belt are only run-of-the-river and hence harmless. However, the activists point out that the projects proposed or under construction in name of RoR include building dams to divert the rivers in tunnels; so at best they can be called diversion dams rather than reservoir based dams. Technically RoR should be a project that uses the running water of the river for production of energy, with one part of the river channelled through penstocks, but not affecting the flow of river considerably and using the natural flow and elevations to generate electricity. The sites for such projects need perennial water flow and significant elevation drop. As these are available in only few sites, meaning only few can become party to the profit of power generation; the concept seems to have been transformed by introducing dam structures and tunnelling in the concept of RoR. Rather than a part of the rivers in Uttarakhand, the whole rivers are channelled into tunnels.

One of the features of hydropower that is promoted by World Bank and Policy for Hydro Power Development 2008 is that, it has the flexibility to ‘start up and shut down quickly and economically’, so that the fluctuations in demand, especially household demands, across seasons and at different times in a day can be responded to. For example, the peak demands of electricity in the evenings. To meet these demands, projects store water and release it at the time of peak demands, leading to huge variations in river flow downstream to the project. But a RoR by definition should not be storing water. Hence by their very concept, they cannot maintain the flows of the water to meet the peak demands of electricity, which most of the projects

⁸There has been a demand from the side of activists as well for RoR projects rather than large dams. In an open letter dated 9.5.1995, Sundarlal Bahuguna appealed to the Members of Parliament to convert Tehri dam to a ‘safe’ RoR project. This demand now stand appropriated to forward a very different design of RoR than what the activists had in mind. Only the terminology remains the same.

are in fact doing. The project in Shrinagar, which is said to be a RoR, has formed a storage lake from Shrinagar in Pauri district almost touching the Rudraprayag area (about 25 km). Similarly, the conception of RoR is not compatible with the concept of e-flows, as they are supposed not to disrupt the river flow. Hence, it is wrong to call most of the projects running in Himalayan region as RoR, according to Prof. Hardy, or to give them a ‘green card’.⁹

In response to the concerns raised about large projects, there is now also a stress on small hydro projects, that is, small RoRs. They are promoted as an ‘alternative’, an answer to the decades of protests over environmental and human costs of big dams. The promotion of small hydros as they are built in mountains, with the head of one touching the tail of another and tunnelling the mountains, indicates the difference in understanding of ‘alternatives’ depicted by these from what has been formulated by environmental movements over the years. These small (upto 25 MW) projects are run by private companies. The ‘small’ as it is imitating the design of the ‘large’ and built ‘bumper-to-bumper’ is not less disastrous in implications. In fact, it is said to create more diversion of river to get an appropriate ‘head’, that is, elevation drop to generate electricity.¹⁰ Small projects also prove to be more disastrous to mountains, as mountain villages settle by the small rivers and tributaries, rather than flood prone valley area. The small rivers play a central role in the lives of mountain villages, as the agricultural land is irrigated by the *kuhls* from these and the ground water sources get replenished. The diversion of small rivers thus have direct impact of people’s lives and has led to long resistances, for example, in case of Bhilangana river in Phalenda and of Saryu river in Bageshwar.

Projects at times are deliberately dividing themselves to fit in the category of ‘small’ that is, they develop more than one power house. This also helps them avoid the clearance procedure, as the capacity of the project is said to be the capacity of the powerhouse in India, which should come to be below 25 MW to be called ‘small’. The size is defined strategically here as being measured by the capacity of electricity

⁹ “*If Its Peaking, Its Not An RoR! Interview of Prof. Thomas Hardy, IAHR and Texas State University*, URL: <https://sandrp.wordpress.com/2014/07/01/if-its-peaking-its-not-an-ror-interview-with-dr-thomas-hardy-iahr-and-texas-state-university/>

¹⁰ According to a study of Centre for Science and Environment (2013), the ratio of the head in case of small hydro is approximately 18 times that of a large hydro project per MW of generation capacity. This leads to an increase in diversion length of the river by six times.

generation in watts, whereas according to Independent Commission on Dams, any project with a dam structure above 15 m is a large project. By this specification, most of the ‘small’ Indian projects will fall in category of large. In the concept of size in India, specifications about tunnels do not exist, which means that the ‘small’ projects are also freely tunnelling and do not even require EIA clearance for it.



Muckdumping by the small project of Phalenda in the forests, rendering them inaccessible for locals
(1. 04. 2012)

The present RoRs thus, not only suit the spirit of first world environmentalism, but also do not limit the third world’s attempts for ‘development’. The interests of green NGOs (which are now engaged in the discourse of ‘e-flows’, promoting small RoRs and demands like providing some electricity to villagers) and businesses are also served. All this is achieved by a slight difference in terminology of technology. Instead of dams, use RoR. Better still, term them small. A new vocabulary is adopted and legitimacy is sought through engaging NGOs, many of which are becoming the ideological apparatuses of the projects. Most green NGOs do not mind the design of small projects, as long as they get defined as ‘small’. They are satisfied with the involvement of environment ‘experts’ who bank on ‘good’ science in formulation of e-flows etc. They do not seek any transformative change, any radical challenge to these projects.

Unlike the conception of alternatives forwarded by the project promoters, the movements are not satisfied by only ‘benefit sharing’ in terms of provision of electricity, but stresses on the community ownership of the projects. The political struggles are not satisfied with the ‘smallness’ of the project, but question the design

and numbers of projects, which are bound to be ecologically destructive. Most importantly, they bring in question the 'resource' use and capture by these projects that is central to the lives of mountain villages. There is a crucial difference in understanding of the two with regards to the relationship of locals with the resources. One more important point that the movements have raised is that any measures for 'development' should be site specific, need based, local, depending on the fragility of mountain environment and geography and not a uniform 'module' (Scott 1998: 271) that can be emulated anywhere. Only such model can prove to be sustainable, according to them.

The concept of small that movements evoked was a concept that was forwarded by Schumacher. For Schumacher (1974:146-154), small meant not just small scale or a miniature version of large. By small, he meant initiatives that are decentralised, involve constructive action, simple methods and local consumption. He combined a regional approach to development with intermediate technology, similar to the Gandhi's concepts of oceanic circles and swaraj. Crucial to this conception is socio-economic, cultural and political context of the technology, whom will it benefit, whether the people know how it works, whether it is accepted by people, if they participate in it, and who stands to gain or lose. With small scale, the impact of an action is visible and thus, it comes with a sense of responsibility and accountability (Hodge 1991:50-51). Micro and small dams thus are presented as alternative with the view that they can use the accumulated silt locally, they require less investment and provide electricity to the villagers. They will lead to development of local expertise as opposed to the hold of experts and specialists on the technology. This is thus a 'sustainable' perspective, in which many small efforts are seen to be making a big difference.

In promotion of RoRs as alternatives, there is also an attempt to silence the demand for rehabilitation. The discourse of environmental movements, particularly in the case of dams, has been struggling to shift the focus from the cost-benefit analysis and the tendency to equate compensation with rehabilitation; to questions like for whom is development really meant for? These movements question the easy acceptance of displacement and dispossession of one section as social cost for the development of an abstract common good. They strive for a policy that separates development from displacement. They imagine a practice of development that

respects people's existing life world, values and rights to manage their own resources (Dwivedi 2002:730). However, the new RoR projects challenge the 'counter-expertise' (Nilsen 2007) generated by environmental struggles over the years. They are sidelining altogether the question of dispossession and displacement. In the area of knowledge as well as impacts, these projects are making false claims. RoR projects claim to have little direct displacement and no dispossession. The dispossession, disasters and forced migration, are either blamed on nature or god, terming these as *devi aapda* or dispossession that emerges due to mountain geography. Almost all officials I talked to, pointed out this fact that the disappearance of springs, ceding of homes and landslides are also happening in other areas of the mountain where the projects are not coming up. Harish Bahuguna, with GSI, felt that *it is merely a popular sentiment that water sources are drying, there is no scientific study*. Shrivastava, GM of NTPC said, *tunnelling and landsinks are separate activities, landsinks are happening in other places as well*. However, the officials overlook the fact that these impacts are necessarily taking place in all areas where the projects are coming up.

Rivers as Shared Lifelines or Rivers as Resources?

The Case of Ganga

In Bhagirathi, the hydropower projects are starting right from its origin. Eight projects are planned in the 60 km area after Gaumukh (including Karmoli (140 MW), Gangotri (55MW), Jadhganga (50 MW), Harsil (210 MW)), out of which work on three has been stalled (Bharonghati I and II (380 and 65 MW), Lorahinag Pala (600 MW), Pala Maneri Dam (480 MW)). Post this is Maneri Bhali I project, where for 14 km the Bhagirathi is not present with its natural flow (photos below). After that it is again trapped in 16 km long tunnel of 304 MW Maneri Bhali II project. Afterwards the Tehri Dam and the Koteshwar Dam are operating. Tehri lake starts barely at a distance of 2 km from the Maneri Bhali II powerhouse. Kotli Bhel 1A of 195MW, Kotli Bhel IB of 320 MW and then Kotli Bhel II of 530 MW are still under consideration. After these is the completed Chilla project of 144 MW. In all, 110 km of flow of Bhagirathi is disrupted due to these projects. Similarly 250 km of Alaknanda is visualised to be flowing in tunnels due to projects on it.



Lots of filth, no flow Bhagirathi, before and after the Maneri Bhali Phase I Project (4.4.2012)



The people wait at *ghaats* like Manikarnika in Uttarkashi for the Maneri Bhali project upstream to release water so as to perform *puja*. Sudden releases of water are always a source of tension for locals. The standing waters of Tehri reservoir are not considered *gangajal*, and for cremation, most people are forced to go to Haridwar. Sonadevi of Kansali village says, earlier we could freely take water from anywhere; all was *gangajal*, now we do not drink this water, *kahin se bhi pahle paani le lete the to gangajal tha, ab is paani ko nahi pite*. Dry river beds spell death for the fragile, diverse and unique range of himalayan ecosystems. Aquatic life habituated to pure and high oxygen level waters of Ganga, find it difficult to survive in storage water of reservoirs. The oxygen level in rivers begins to regain only after around 100 kms downstream of a dam (McCully 1998). Bactericidal and self purifying properties of Ganga water has reduced as sediments are captured by the Tehri dam, according to a

study by NEERI (2011). The water in Tehri lake is so filthy that people do not wish to touch it.

According to Basu (2013), Ganga with its length of 2525 kms (and more if we consider the tributaries), supports 450 million people living in its basin area. It has the catchment area of 10 lakh hectares, meaning the agriculture of such a vast area is depending on it. It harbours 100 cities and numerous villages. This implicates that it drains the waste of all these areas. It has been declared as one of the most polluted large rivers in the world. Not only does it carry thousands of tons of ash from cremated bodies per year, but millions of litres of liquid waste daily and the waste of hundreds of ‘grossly polluting’ industries. After adding so much waste, it is not even allowed to flow freely to at least perform its *duty* of draining this waste. How is it possible then to let it have its *nirmalta* (purity, cleanliness) and *aviralta* (uninterrupted flow), which is the mission of the ‘save the ganga’ and ‘namami gange’ and such government programs, despite spending crores? ‘River development’ that inevitably means more projects in the river, is put side by side to ‘rejuvenation’ of the river in the name of new ministry of water resources, largely intending a ‘re-engineering’ of the river instead (Iyer 2014).

Ganga is considered as the holiest river of India. But for communities living by river banks, every river is sacred; every river is like Ganga. Every river is considered a mother, more so the smaller rivers as they support the lives and livelihoods and people have deeper bonds with these. Reverence towards rivers comes out of spiritual, cultural or religious-ritual causes. For people dwelling by the river, the divinity in it is more because of its sustaining role in their lives. This relationship that people have with rivers, get the sanctity by the myths associated with these. This also restricts for them the abuse or over-exploitation of the river (and the related lives) (Jain, S. 2013). For example, the fishermen will not catch fish when it is their breeding season. Cultural intimacy with rivers thus, translates in the respect towards them. For most urban population however, as the organic link with rivers in their natural form becomes distant and get replaced with piped water, concern for rivers seems to have diminished considerably and has become ritualistic or based on only divinity. Cultural distance from the rivers comes then with a view of seeing Ganga as *nirmal* (sacred, pure) even when it is not clean (Alley 2015, Jain, S. 2013) and *aviral* even when it is the regulated water released by the upstream projects.

The myth of the descent of Ganga itself and thus, the cultural sentiments attached to it stands in contradiction to the developmental approach it is meted with. Eck (2003) describes Ganga's significance as not a myth that is narrative, but a creator of organic myths. Whereas narrative myths come and go, Ganga flows on and builds living traditions. *Her* worship is said to need no rites, she is not an image that needs invocation of divine, for *she herself contains what is holy, whatever is merciful, whatever is utterly auspicious* (p. 45). Ganga, according to her, thus symbolizes that *natural* is religious. In the myth of the decent of Ganga, the hero comes out to be not the king *Sagar* with his goal of world conquest, an arrogance that invites the wrath of sage *Kapil* and reduced his descendents to ashes. But the hero is *Bhagirath*, who through his persistence, humility, selflessness and inner conquest was able to bring Ganga to the earth to purify his ancestors' ashes. Thus, the myth emphasize that in the people's culture what is more important is self conquest and acceptance of towering presence of nature and not *Sagar* like conquest of environment (Padmanabhan 2013).

In people's culture the river is a living deity, as it 'comes' differently to them, as the flow variations are perceived differently. After the 'conquest' and 'development', it becomes a part of forced 'universal', providing for mono crops, water released at will and according to politics of usage and access (Umamaheswari 2015:228-230). In its development, river is seen as a resource that is to be owned, milked for profit and conquered. A river however, is not just a water body. In addition to sediments, organic matter, aquatic biodiversity, it is attached with people's sentiments, livelihoods, cultural beliefs and aesthetic senses. It is the dynamic relationship with the communities, their culture and histories that makes a river a *living river*. Seeing the river as living also means not seeing it as fragmented, but as a single continuous entity from origin down to the sea. It is an ecosystem that touches and balances many ecosystems till it reaches estuarine ecosystem. All life in river is influenced and determined by interactions with the terrain and atmosphere they flow through. The sediments they carry are based on the natural flow, and are crucial for the downstream agriculture and in preventing the sea from encroaching on the land. Most of the roles of the river and linkages between different ecosystems are not even known to us or can be fathomed.

What does the river become as it is stored in reservoirs, desilted, dropped under high pressure through tunnels, unexposed to sunlight and atmospheric

influences in tunnels, as its temperature and level of dissolved oxygen and turbidity changes? The state of the desilted river coming out of the cascade of projects, is of “hungry waters” that scours and erodes its own bed and banks, destabilising itself in order to regain the lost balance. How can the river still remain a river, if it is robbed of its essence, if its rhythms are decided by some company, its lows and peaks are managed? Can anyone own a flow? Is it a thing, or a living entity? Are rivers seen as shared lifelines of numerous people along its path? They no longer are open access resources or a common property. There are many institutions that govern the use and access of the river water, while people seem to have no role in governance. For Ganga, this includes not just the techno legal bodies like National Ganga River Basin Authority but also numerous religious institutions.

Our civilisations are said to have being developed on riversides. Now a whole civilisation lie buried deep under the huge Tehri lake, under the silenced stagnating water. Bereft of their culture, their music, their songs, their food, their *ghaats*, their neighbours, what will people become? Is it not a move towards making a whole civilisation rootless, valueless, brittle, perpetually dissatisfied, subdued and angry? Cultureless people, nature-less people, how will they be?

How much water should a river have?

The project companies do not wish to let any water go ‘waste’ in the rivers and divert the rivers fully to their tunnels, even when they are operating in the name of ‘run of the river’, which means free flow of river. This has led to discussions about allowing some flow in the riverbed. It is deliberated how much water should a river have to give the impression of it being a river, *mimic* being a river, 10%, 20%, 30%? Release of how many cumecs (cubic meters per second) will mean it is flowing? *Aviralta* is coming to be equated to maintaining e-flows. Now concepts like ‘minimum flow’ and terms like ‘river managers’ and ‘river training’ are also coming in government and companies’ parlance. Sometimes minimum flow is used interchangeably with environmental or ecological flow (e-flow), supposed to be higher than the minimum flow, and is defined as the amount of water a river needs to ‘*sustain its social, cultural and ecological functions*’. This flow is “recognised as a key to the maintenance of ecological integrity of the rivers, their associated ecosystems, and the goods and services provided by them”. How much flow is

needed, also “depends on what the *society wants a river to do* for them - to support culture and spirituality or livelihoods or biodiversity” (Keeffe et al. 2012:7).

Although when there is no water in the river, talks about allowing at least a minimum flow seem quite rational and well meaning. But how are we essentially seeing the rivers still? We are talking about the minimum flow that the river needs to retain the identity of being itself, and more importantly to keep up its role of serving us. The main concern remains, what is its use to us? How can that be maximized? No doubt, we depend on rivers for our survival, but the reason of their existence is not only their utility for us. Their fate cannot be decided by utilitarian politics. And the utility limited to cities or to humans only. Even if the utilitarian logic is used, then free river is much more useful for many more people, for a longer time. For, “*waterless river provides none of the benefits that a flowing river does*”. Increasingly, the very concept of letting it remain natural and flowing has become unnatural as “people want to make at least some use, and do not want to keep it entirely natural” (Keeffe et al. 2012:19-22). It is accepted and ‘given fact’ that dams will be there, only discussion that can happen now is how to let them release some water. Energy demands now appear more natural than the riverine valleys that have been chiselled over centuries. However, even the cost that the rivers are made to pay for the electricity and water made available to the cities is not always known to the consumers, which may lead to their more judicious use. It is not possible now to imagine the ‘civilisation’ without electricity, but can it be imagined without rivers?

Hydropower Projects and the Disasters in Uttarakhand

The 2013 Disaster

If not the cultural myths associated with the rivers like Ganga, then the history of disasters in the region, whose stories it is said is carved on the rocks, can indicate towards the way and extent of development that is suitable for mountain region (Mishra 2006). The fragile mountain geography remains prone to disasters like landslides, land sinks and floods. However, these disasters have increased after the project constructions in Uttarakhand, as the whole mountains have become more unstable, mainly due to heavy blasting for tunnelling and associated infrastructure like roads and powerhouse, deforestation and muck dumping in rivers. According to

numerous articles and reports that came in the wake of the 2013 disaster, the heavy interventions in the Uttarakhand Himalayas was a major cause behind it. According to Pandit (2013), large scale dam building in Uttarakhand has caused massive land use change, slope weakening, destabilisation and manipulation of rivers and their hydrology. He also points to the irresponsibility with which the companies' acted in the situation. They released large volumes of water to safeguard their structures, leading to extensive damage in the otherwise flood-free areas and even when the monsoon season had barely started.



The village Pulna under debris in the Bhyundar ganga valley in Chamoli. A 24 MW project near the village (within 10 Km from the protected area of Valley of Flowers) was under construction (Photo 4.11. 2015)

Projects like Jaypee Vishuprayag project in Chamoli are built in para-glacial zone, rendering them extremely hazardous (Chopra et al. 2014:182). This project structure first blocked the loose material of rock debris and sediment that comes in excess with rivers in such zones (with the intention of harnessing more electricity) and then released these at one go when it was realised that it may damage their structure, creating havoc in the downstream Alaknanda valley.¹¹ The tonnes of muck or *malba* that the projects have thrown in the river bed during their construction

¹¹ In Mandakini valley, the coffer dam of the Lanco company in Sitapur, stopped the water initially, making a 1.5 km long lake and then gave away increasing the devastating potential of the river Mandakini (again compounded by the same process by L&T project downstream) in the downstream areas of Augustmuni town in Rudraprayag.

process increased the devastation potential.¹² S.P. Sati, a geologist teaching in the Garhwal University, told me that more than a crore and forty lakh cubic meter of muck has already being thrown in rivers by the projects. This meant that the towns of Shrinagar in Pauri and villages like Pulna got buried under muck (photo above). Activists point out that the the relation of hydropower projects and the 2013 disaster is evident by the location of this disaster, be in Alaknanda, Dhauliganga (in Chamoli), Mandakini, Dhauliganga (in Dharchula) and Assiganga valleys, wherever the projects are coming up, the disaster was maximum, even without extensive rains.

The reports of Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, state that the extreme weather incidents will become more frequent with global warming (Chopra 2013). The projects make the rivers and mountains more vulnerable to these incidents. Few valleys, like the Alaknanda valley have had a history of landslides and floods, being more prone to extreme rainfall events (Bhatt, C.P. 2009, Joshi & Kumar 2006, Mishra 2006). Many a times, due to heavy rains and landslides, artificial lakes were formed, which breached to create flash floods downstream.¹³ Consequently the likelihood of disasters like that of 2013 cannot be neglected. But the disaster itself seems not to have provided any opportunity to reflect on the prevalent development model, as the roads were constructed in the same way after the disaster to resume the yatra and projects are being commissioned in the same way. Rather, like any other disaster, this also presented an opportunity to siphon off money in the name of victims, according to newspaper reports (for example, The Hindu 2015).

In the media frenzy, many intellectuals and project sympathisers started circulating that the dam structures had contained the intensity of the disaster. ‘Media management’ by ruling politicians was attempted, PR agencies were hired¹⁴. There were arguments if it was a natural or a god-sent disaster. One of the most widely used

¹² Muckdumping has increased level of river beds and decreased the width. In case of Tapovan Vishugaad project, people complain that the width of Dhauliganga has decreased from 100 m to 20 m. Harishchandra Chandola observed that due to the raised bed, the sound of the waves of Dhauliganga near his home have disappeared.

¹³ For example, in the year 1970, the Gauna lake formed in the Birahi river burst, leading to floods, washing out Shrinagar town. The example of Birahi river also points to the fact that even the smaller rivers in Himalayas have a tendency to carry with them large silt loads. In the disaster of 2013 as well, the silt loads carried by the Khirogaanga raised the flood potential of Alaknanda behind the Vishnuprayag project.

¹⁴ According to a report in Nainital Samachar (2013) media agencies were given worth Rs 23 crores in Uttarakhand to publish advertisements of work of Government in relation to disaster.

footage/image that I encountered was that of the river roaring past the shoulder of a Shiva statue, still intact. Similar observations were floated about Kedarnath temple being intact while everything else was destroyed. Shankrarchaya announced that all dead had gone straight to heaven. However, all this attention on the 2013 disaster was more due to the *chardham* pilgrims trapped there. In the religious angle of the disaster, the loss of lives and livelihoods of the villages remained neglected. Villagers like that of Kimana in Rudraprayag complain that *local logon ki laash tak nikaalne ki taqleef nahi ki gayi*. Nobody bothered to even take out the corpses of locals. The disaster had affected 4200 villages, with 300 severely affected and brought thousands of landslides. Uttarkashi and Yamuna valley had seen serious disaster in the year 2012 as well (photo below). More importantly, the projects are leading to everyday disasters (in form of dispossession) for the mountain villagers. No revision of the development planning though, as was anticipated, happened, on religious or other grounds.¹⁵



Power house of a project affected in Assiganga flood of 2012 of 2013 (Uttarakashi, 29.6.14)

Responses to 2013 Disaster

Many like Shekhar Pathak, a historian and public intellectual, saw the 2013 disaster as a penance or recompense, *bharpai, harzana*, for the kind of development that happened in form of hydropower projects. The destruction according to him happened to match the ‘speed’ with which ‘development’ happened. People said they

¹⁵In fact, within a week of this disaster, the then PM was inaugurating an 850 MW project in Jammu and Kashmir.

are afraid of even cloudy skies now as the cracks in their houses developed due to the blasting of projects, widened after the disaster. Many like the Byundar valley families were forced to live in tin sheds since the disaster. So the 'irresponsibility' of the company is resented. The women of village Pulna said, *Jaypee company ne apni gaadi vagerah bachayi, par gaon ko warning nahi di*. The company saved its vehicles etc, but the villages were not warned. Abhishek Panwar living in Joshimath town, informed that post disaster, Jaypee started buying dumping sites, to show that they have been dumping the muck there and not in the river.

Devastated villagers complained that they have no insurance, unlike the big project structures. The dhabas and shops that they had started with the lifetime's earnings disappeared all of a sudden. From village Kimana, near Ukhimath, Rudraprayag district, 17 men died in the disaster. It is affected by the L&T project. They had lodges and shops that depended fully on the yatra season. Although, projects are getting rebuilt at the same place, people are told not to build shops again. An old woman told that as her son's shop has got demolished, but he is not able to recover the buried material still, he stays at the shop, and in absence of any other source, is eating with the L&T people. Upstream, the Lanco company started a primary health centre in the village Phata, but the services remained erratic, although important in absence of any such services by the Government. Ramesh Chandra Jamloki, a reporter in Phata said, *company ko sab barbaad karne ki anumati hai, gaonwalon ko ek paed kaatne ki bhi nahi*. The company was allowed to destroy everything; when the villagers do not have permission to cut a single tree.

Disasters in mountains are often not a onetime affair and cannot be contained in limits of time, intensity and impact, often having a spiral or triggering effect by destabilising the balance. In the village Jamak affected by the project Maneri Bhali I project, whose pass way is over the dam, Uday Singh Rana, told that the disasters become more deadly as already the dam has shaken the homes. Moreover, there are 'routine' disasters, like when the project releases unregulated excess water, irrigated land of the village gets cut and eroded, as no support wall has been constructed, *koi tatband ya suraksha diwal nahi hai*. Varunarat Parbat in Uttarakashi has been throwing rocks on the city since a decade, and its 'treatment' has failed to stabilise it. It was impacted by the twenty years of blasting of Maneri Bhali project (Nautiyal 2003).

The Tehri area is doomed to face disasters, as the reservoir slowly weakens the roots of mountains on which hundreds of villages reside. People live in constant threat of impending disaster. Hukumsingh of Nautaad village showed the semicircular crack over the village, and it appears that the village could just break away and be immersed in the lake anytime. Especially monsoons are frightening times, as water seeps from above and below, *neeche se paani, upar se baarish*. Darshansingh Kharola of Gadoli said at times, there are huge waves in the lake, and mountain stones crumble in it with splashes, then we stay awake and keep out a watch with torches, *jheel main jab badi badi leharen uthti hain, paththar girne ki aawazen aati hain, tab hum raat raat bhar bahar hi torch le kar ghumte hain*. Another woman Sunita in Rindol said that incidences of cloudburst in Tehri have increased and after such an incidence in Ghansali in which a known family had died in 2014, she got so afraid of the rains in their area that she quickly packed few useful things and stood at the gate of her home, anticipating any dreadful happening.

Government's Response to Disasters: Another Environmental Report

The response that the government has engaged in after the disasters in the region, be it the ceding of villages in Tehri, or the disasters like that of 2013, is to constitute expert bodies. Most of the findings of their reports are brushed aside to let the projects come up. What is accepted are the reports of scientists hired by the companies, which put the blame of destruction in the villages on other factors like monsoon. In Tehri area, there were many three Geological surveys before the start of the project. Now affected sites of the reservoir were found to be 'highly vulnerable'. Post-filling of reservoir, almost every year expert committees were set up to assess the damage, which keep giving contrary reports and different recommendations. The draw down impact¹⁶ of the reservoir was forewarned by leading geologists. Still

¹⁶ Due to pressure of the reservoir, water is pushed in the available spaces and pores of the surrounding rocks, affecting their strength, destabilising even structures at great height from the reservoir levels. When water is drawn down as the water is released from the dam, the water is sucked out of the rock pores and along with it the soil, weakening the slopes and causing land sinks and slides. There is no knowing when the 'equilibrium will be reached' and as the water level will keep fluctuating 'the stable angle of repose may never be achieved' (Chopra et al. 2014:68).

The villagers explain this draw down effect even without any scientific knowledge (and communicated repeatedly, though I myself doubted their claims until I read it in the 'Experts' Report'). Villagers know that the conditions in the mountains are uncertain, and any calamity could occur in the construction of the huge infrastructures. Therefore, they "refuse to accept the veracity of "scientific reports" prepared by consultants hired by the developers" (p. 77).

hundreds of villages were rendered to a fate of perpetual disasters in form of landsinks and ceding of homes. The rehabilitation officer of the State Government said that *the rehabilitation work will continue till the time dam will produce electricity*, as the draw down impacts will continue.

A note of caution about the danger that the RoR project practices could bring was evident in the CAG report of 2010. Many committees have being commissioned to study the impacts of the projects in the Alaknanda and Bhagirathi basins, on the directions of the Supreme Court. First committee of Wildlife Institute of India, recommended stalling 24 projects in its report in the year 2012, solely on the basis of their adverse effects on biodiversity. After the 2013 disaster, the Ravi Chopra led expert body recommended stalling 23 out of 24 projects. However, MoEF constituted another panel that rejected only six projects out of 24. Then again a third expert body was constituted in June 2015, after removing those members who had expressed critical views about the dams (Sethi 2015).¹⁷

Company Practices

Lack of Information, Lack of Accountability

Not only does the arguments to promote the hydropower projects in the region raises question to their validity, but the practices that the companies engage in remain problematic. The entry of company is relatively easy in mountain villages, which are more open to outsiders. T.N. Shrivastava, GM, NTPC said that *people welcomed us, they gave us tea, lifted our luggage and instruments*. People are not informed about the project in a proper manner. They become aware of the project either indirectly (word of mouth) or from seeing the work of survey, road building etc. Susheela Bhandari in Rayadi village in Rudraprayag says that, she was working in her fields when someone came to take photographs of the fields and told her for the first time upon asking that a hydropower project is being planned. She asked him, will it be like Tehri, and then only could understand what was proposed. Typically, information is made available only after considerable public protest. In the case of Phalenda project

¹⁷ Similar is the case with e-flows, there have been different recommendations by the International Water Management Institute (2007), Committee of Ministry of Water Resources (2010), IIT Roorkee (2011), WII (2012), WWF (2013), Inter Ministerial Group (2013), CSE (2013), IIT Consortium (2013) and MoEF Expert Body (2014), but nothing is implemented still.

in Tehri, first people were told that the survey in their area was to find techniques of improving irrigation in their fields. When the villagers realised it is a hydropower project as they asked the local administration why so many jeeps were plying in the area and as construction started, they first approached the SDM (Sub Divisional Magistrate) asking about the project information, but SDM made them *run away*. Then they went to meet the Governor and requested to be provided for the DPR and EIA of the project. Receiving which, they discovered that the company had shown that the surrounding 10 km radius area was bereft of any population, whereas five villages and the Ghansali market all fall within a radius of five km of the project. 1000 families that were affected were not even mentioned in the documents. Further, even when environmental clearance was taken for 11 MW, 22.5 MW was proposed to be constructed. Similarly, the L& T project affecting Rayadi increased its capacity from 60 to 99 MW. Although officially it is said to be affecting only eight villages, after the increase in the capacity, more villages have come in its impact zone, but these are not included in the DPR. Since these villages are not even officially shown as affected, the company has accepted no accountability or responsibility towards these.

Neither in Rayadi, nor in Phalenda, were people informed about the project beforehand, no public meeting was held and at times false signatures of village representatives were shown to get clearances. NTPC in Tapovan Joshimath, approached the pradhans, with presents for their families, and got their signatures on papers which said that they had no objection to the construction of the project and they approve the environment impact assessment reports. On the basis of which, necessary clearances were obtained (Chandola 2008). Moreover, the so called participatory mechanisms like public meetings remain a façade. People either do not get to know of the public meetings or they are not held properly. In the public meeting held in Joshimath, *chandi ke glass*, glasses made of silver were distributed to the ‘eminent’ persons of the town, to let the proceeding go smooth. In Pipalkoti downstream, people did not even realize that a public meeting was conducted. When they enquired and realized they opposed, but they were told that it has already being ‘completed successfully’. At times, public meetings are held, when the people are not even present in the village, as bhotiya villages move en-mass in uphill areas in summer time. This was observed in Munsyari villages in Pithoragarh. If SDM or DM

is present in the meeting, the quorum is supposed to get fulfilled, even when the villagers are not present. This is how companies use the provisions for seeking consent which participatory development discourse have created.

However, at some places boycott of public meetings and non issue of no objection certificates by the village Pradhans has also delayed the work of the company. Pradhan Dharendra Nautiyal of the Thati village in Bhilangana valley feels that due to his resistance, and not signing on the no-objection certificate, Gunsola Hydro Power Generation Company had to shift its base.¹⁸ Further, there have been instances of project trading, which according to CAG (2010:9-16), are in clear violation of the Implementation Agreements with Government. The trading absolves the seller company of any irregularities carried out in clearances and payments as well as responsibilities towards the affected villagers. The Jaypee project in the Joshimath area is said to be sold to Reliance now, even when the affected village Chaen continues to fight for compensation for the damages to its homes.

Further the projects, due to the lax clearance procedure, do not even bother to carry out proper investigations. Mohan Singh Takuli in Bageshwar said that no geological survey was conducted in the region, but it is mentioned in the DPR as to be conducted by IIT Roorkee. Harish Bahuguna, a senior geologist, said that there were *zero geophysical investigations in case of Tapovan Vishnugaad Project in Joshimath*. This leads to not just increased vulnerability of the habitation in the region, but also wastage of crucial life supporting resources. The boring machine of the project got stuck inside the mountain below the Auli forest area, puncturing an aquifer, that is leaking since 4-5 years, discharging millions of litres of water daily, which must have accumulated through years under this oak forest.

Colonizing the Mountains?

Though the projects are projected for their potential for regional development and poverty alleviation, the manifest reality of these projects however, is that they are a part of the larger process of ‘accumulation by dispossession’. The project authorities in Uttarakhand through the hydropower projects have taken hold of the water available to the village through streams, their land, and their forests, and have

¹⁸ CAG (2010:20) reports that this change seems to be planned by the company to get leverage to use waters of two rivers, Balganga and Dharamganga.

adversely impacted their livelihood related to agriculture, horticulture, and tourism. The companies have taken over best places in mountains for their offices, guest houses, townships, with all the facilities required for city living. Jaypee and Thapar companies have illegally captured 15.76 ha and 2 ha respectively around the Tehri lake (Bhatia 2010: 126-127). Says Uday Singh Rana of Jamak village, *UJVNL has money to construct three guest houses, but no money to solve our problems. They took water for themselves diverting our natural source. When we protested, police came to stop us.* Similarly in Chaen, whereas the village water sources dried up, Jaypee catered to its township from the tunnel water. For the project construction, the companies freely take whatever they need from the river bed and also engage in illegal mining. GVK company in Shrinagar is alleged to have carried out illegal mining worth crores, in addition of flouting all other legal procedures (Maikhuri 2012). People in Tapovan Joshimath complained, the associated company L&T of the NTPC project, started an illegal factory of crushing stones, affecting the forest lands on which it is operating. Rivers for project companies have, thus become both means of accumulation and objects of accumulation.

Uttarakhand villages seem to have become the internal colonies of these companies. In addition to ‘grabbing’ their land and water, the companies in many places have huge gates on the ways leading to the villages (photo below). Many roads that the companies have built, they have then barricaded, in addition to stretches of rivers, to guard their sprawling powerhouses and townships. In many instances, these gated roads are the only way to go to the villages uphill and thus the way to reach some villages is literally policed by the company security. People even need permission to go to their *ghaats*. Jaypee cordoned off its powerhouse on the way to the village Chaen, and it became difficult for the people to approach the officials. In the case of Tehri project, the road over the dam is closed at random will of the company, giving security as the reason, increasing considerably the time and distance to be covered on the other rickety roads to reach the villages across the lake. The way over the dam is opened for short periods when resistance builds up, even when the linking bridges are not built in all these years. People are not allowed to fish or take water to irrigate or to run their boats in the lake, as the lake ‘belongs’ to the company. It is the company and the contractors and businessmen working in tandem, who will benefit from all the adventure sports planned in the lake. While fields are lying barren

all over Tehri area of Dharmandal and Raika Patti, THDC has readied its water and aero sports complex, that extends no jobs to the locals. More than 1000 nalli land around the lake has already been bought and kept by investors in anticipation of business opportunities. THDC has offered a 600 crore Rs. project to the Tatas, to attract tourists in the area. In all this planning, locals are conspicuously missing.



Whose land is it: Scarred and Mortgaged? The gated pass way of the Maneri Bhali I project (4.4.2012). This gate not only stops anyone with a camera, but is the only gate to the uphill village Jamak.

The ripped roads for construction of projects that come in a succession in a valley, the heavy vehicles and monstrous machinery, trucks, earth movers, both working and the wreckage of these abandoned on the roadside, and heavy blasting constitute a scene like that of a war zone. The mountain side has been left scarred and mutilated by the series of projects. It is a sight that incites fear in the villagers. As Diwan Ram said in Baanse village in Bageshwar, seeing the machines and the police, we were afraid, so we kept quiet, we did not oppose. The security guards (photo below) of the hydropower company instruct people to not use cameras around their gated structures. The security gates of the companies, the constant surveillance, the signboards and hoardings of the hydropower companies everywhere welcoming people to the (their?) region (photo below), notifying which project is coming up next, gives an impression that one is in an *‘occupied territory’*, one gets a sense of *‘being constantly watched. On a mountain highway, of all places’* (Theophilus 2014). The ‘presence’ of the company becomes stark and evident in small towns and markets of mountains, for example the number of jeeps that NTPC has hired make the small town market of Joshimath seem teeming with them, they seem to be all over the place, having the tags of the company.



Rigged mountains: Baanse village in Bageshwar (24.10.2015)



A THDC hoarding welcoming visitors in the area (5.01.2015)



The security arrangement at the adit tunnel of the LANCO project (21.6.2014) and the labourers' 'tin-shed' settlement in the Kapkot area of Bageshwar (24.10.2015)

Mountain people complain that the constant presence of so many security guards, the 'outsiders' in form of the officials and labourers have taken away their feeling of care-freeness. Sanwal (2006) feels that the presence of labourers affects the

mobility of women. He reports that the Jaypee labourers cut the forests near Pandukeshwar (a Chipko movement area) extensively as they needed fuel in the cold weather and also to build their huts and tools. The thousand of labourers not only add pressure to the meager resources, but also flush all the waste in the water sources as they have no other sanitation facilities, villagers complained. Susheela Bhandari was of the view that company deliberately keep outside labourers from Nepal, Bihar, as no account is kept of the safety of them, and many get washed away in the river or get buried in the tunnels. She says that the locals are not kept as they will get to know of the company secrets and start agitating if something happens to their own people. Not only this, people feel that their land has come to be *invaded*, as with the ‘outsiders’ comes the practices of alcoholism, prostitution and violence. At times, the labourers stay back. In villages like Hatt in Chamoli, they are tilling the land left by the villagers.

Poor Management and Corrupt Practices

The corruption and irresponsibility involved in running the projects has been highlighted in many places. In the case of Maneri Bhali project, Surat Singh Rawat has repeatedly reported in Amar Ujala¹⁹ about such practices. For example, the officials joined a cooling valve of a turbine by M Seal in the powerhouse. Once the intake got blocked with sand in the powerhouse, and the officials kept reporting fake readings, which could have led to collapsing of the tunnel if the powerhouse was not shut down in time. Negligence and low quality of material used in the repairs has led to landslides and leakages. Negligence in regulating water discharges meant that three women bathing on the ghaats were washed away.

In the case of Tehri, numerous cases of corruption were reported against the THDC officials during the rehabilitation process. It is said that the total money spent on Government construction in New Tehri for officer’s houses and other infrastructure was six times the money spent in the rehabilitation of people. All the Government officials shifted from Purani Tehri to New Tehri were considered displaced and given benefits in that name (Chandola 2002: 266). There were CBI inquiries against many officials (International Rivers Network Factsheet, October

¹⁹ Even as I take as basis the reports and arguments of certain newspapers and academicians, who have pointed out the corrupt or irregular practices of the companies, there are also then allegations on them being liaisoning and profiting from the company by say, providing them environmental consultancy.

2002). Jaiprakash, who started as the contractor in the Tehri project, came to build a 1300 crore company Jaypee Industries, as the Tehri project proceeded; observes Sundarlal Bahuguna, due to such practices (Kishwar 1992:7).

In Bagehwar, Mohan Singh Takuli, previous pradhan of Loharkhet village and a leader of the movement against the project in their area, told me that the company that is also building two other projects downstream, sends weekly allowance, *hafta* to the Tehsildaar, SDM and even to the Degree College, so that they do not object to the irregularities of the company, such as showing the non forest land as forest land to get it on lease (as the state can divert forest land easily). He said that in the downstream project in Baanse village, the contractors are not working properly; they sold most of the material, *loha, cement, concrete, petrol, diesel bech diya*. Not only this, even the journalists who were covering the movement against the projects, were also *bought*. A reporter of this area, who also runs a NGO, was initially covering the protests but later bargained with the company to take his land on yearly lease Rs 40,000 and also deployed his trucks for company work (Joshi, M. 2007).

The officials who are called after the resistances by the people, to check the irregularities of the projects are received by the project officials, they stay in the project company guest houses and travel by their vehicles, as I was told by the people of Phalenda and in Rayadi. The local politicians, MLAs etc are also 'obliged' by taking on rent their villas (for example, NTPC in Joshimath had its Guest House in the villa of then MLA, Kedar Singh Fonia). While I was in Bhagarathi Puram, which is the THDC officials' colony, an 'Operations Officer' of the World Bank was enjoying his holiday there with his family, in the best rooms in their guest house. 'Special' sightseeing of the dam and boating in the lake were arranged for them. As the Guest House Manager told me, such treatment is meted out to politicians and officials to 'oblige' them for other favours. The guest house remains very busy thus. World Bank is funding the upcoming project of THDC near Joshimath, the Vishnugaad Pipalkoti Project, which affects villages like Hatt.

Gifts are also distributed to the local administration, and jeeps full of such gifts were seen at the time of Diwali in Joshimath, to be distributed by NTPC. The 'cooperation' of district administration in the smooth functioning of the projects and in tackling the local resistances remains important. In case of Phalenda and in Rayadi, the administrative officers like DM (District Magistrate) and SDM, have been

instrumental in repressing the resistances. In Rayadi, women said that the local administrative officers whom they approach for help, would take bribes and start supporting the company; any new official appointed to the area would not take even a week to get *sold* to the company, *adhikari ko bikne mein ek gafte ka samay bhi nahi lagta*. Further, the involvement in construction of infrastructure provides opportunities of earning money to the mafia, contractors, politicians and bureaucrats. An evident symbol of this corruption is the Dobra Chanthi bridge (photo below). The work of the bridge compensated in the year 2006, but even after spending about 130 crores, it is nowhere near completion now.



Dobra Chanthi bridge, that is said to be lifeline for people who have been marroned on either side after formation of Tehri lake, has become a symbol of corruption (19.12.14).

The lives of the people in absence of a connecting bridge remain stalled, as the distance from the urban and official centres remain over 100 kms. The land has started sinking where the foundation of the bridge was laid. Villagers of Chanthi say it was evident from the start, as their own homes and fields are sinking badly due to the reservoir impact. These villagers are knocking all possible doors of rehabilitation department and THDC, as they say, ‘begging’ for rehabilaion, without being heard. Raising the demand for rehabilitation and describing their poor state of living with broken houses, has become a ‘routine’ and often repeated exercise, which meant that one moment the men were angrily recounting the tale of their dispossession and showing cracks in their homes and as soon as they finished, they resumed the game of cards they had left in between. However, as is the case with the other villages in this

area, few people have been provided contract work or compensation or their land was acquired for the bridge, so there are divided interests within the village.

Broken Families and Their Dilemmas

The companies have practices that has ensued corruption and conflicts in the Uttarakhand villages, and fragmentation of the village society. Few of the village youth are given some money or liquor or temporary job or contract, often with no associated work but to just sit idle and act as company agent in the villages, reporting about the resistances going inside the village community. Or benefits are extended to influential to keep them at company's side. It is complained that this has changed the attitude of youth, as they go for easy money. Theophilus (2014:61) cites the Environment Management Plan of the Alaknanda project, in which under the budget heads of 'habitat enhancement' and 'protection of wildlife', the company had put aside money to be given as rewards to the local youth, hired on daily wage, to play 'secret informers' about any 'poaching' in the area.

Market has entered in people's relations, as many vie to keep close relations with the company. Further, due to close kinship structures of these villages, it becomes difficult for others to resist if few are getting benefitted. It becomes difficult to withhold giving own land, when the neighbour gives it. Moreover, many are joint holders (*khaatedaar*). The relatively innocent and unaware *Pahari* often leave their home, field and forests in exchange of pennies. They do not demand for any written legal documents in exchange, which means that the rates given and process of acquisition may not be as per the legal processes. It is always difficult to counter 'own' people who joins the company. Often the migrants are more willing to give their lands as they welcome the cash compensation for the land which for them remains not of any other 'use'. This creates pressure for the rest of the villagers as well.

A *contractor raj* seems to be running the villages here, capitalising on the innocence and distress of the people (in addition to the land mafia). It is thus, not just relations that stop villagers from protest, but threats of violence as well. The youth is getting encouraged to take *contractor* work so that they could get immediate work. Or they ply their jeeps for company bought from compensation money. The thought that this is temporary work is not of immediate concern. Atul Sati, a CPI ML activist told

that company promotes the petty leaders. Even the Student Union President when approaches the company, is told to take packets of cement or truck full of *rait*. Many have built their houses like this. He said that the companies are producing *dalas*, brokers.

The company is also playing with the beliefs of mountain people. Even when villages like Chaen in Joshimath are sinking according to people, due to tunnelling or tunnel leakages, they are told there is no such proof to associate the two. The villagers understand mountains but this knowledge cannot be proved, or the company held accountable for the dispossession. In fact the people are beaten by their own beliefs, when the government announces that the sinking was a *devi aapda* and give the designated sum of money for that, rather than many more times legitimate compensation for their foregone rights. In the case of Chaen, even after huge damages to the village and wide reportage, Jaypee got out scot free after paying mere 80 lakhs to the district authority, from its CSR fund and distributing blankets in the village.

Temporary Jobs as Insurance for Future

Every project agency employs many different companies to carry out the different works, to construct barrage, tunnels, powerhouse etc. The company itself does not recruit people, it is the subsidiaries floated by it or assistant companies that provide jobs to the youth, so the jobs are essentially temporary, mainly meant for construction phase. For example, GVK company in Shrinagar first floated an associate company AHPC to recruit people in the different companies working for GVK. More than 2000 youth was provided with work. The company AHPC later was shut as the construction work finished and most people were expelled. The youth complain that they were never told that their job is only till construction phase (Bahuguna, S. 2016).

Deveshwari Devi Thapliyal of Dhaak village in Joshimath feels that there is no fixed basis on which company keeps a person in employment. If they are appeased they will keep the worker, otherwise will expel, *kripadrishti hai to naukari hai, varkrdrishti hai to hata diya*. For 10-12 hours of work, they give to boys Rs. 5000-8000. Her grandson, who is a B.Tech. was removed after three years of work. She complained that boys are made to even take care of the dogs of the officials. The youth of the Chaen village were employed as drivers etc, in the projects of Jaypee

running in Himachal Pradesh and Bhutan, but none of them continued due to poor work conditions. 40-50 youth who were given employment in Joshimath, were slowly expelled from Jaypee. However, in Tapovan, Ansuya Prasad Pant said that his sons are earning close to 20,000 as they are in good positions. He also added that he had the best land in the village, many nallis land on the bank of the river, which has been lost. In all, the village gave 1100 nalli fertile land and 1600 nalli van panchayat land to the project.

NTPC in this Tapovan project area have also acquired the inter college and school buildings but new buildings have not come up in the last 8-9 years. It has provided for insurances for houses, people have laminated and kept safely the insurance paper, but it only says insurance in case of fire and earthquakes, not any damage caused by blasting, which is the most potent danger. The company has devised its own unique system of evaluating the impact of blasting. It has pasted a strip of glass at the cracks, and told people that it will check after a period, if the glass breaks, that would mean that the blasting is impacting their homes (photo below, taken on 7.11.2015). Otherwise it would be proved that people are making false claims about the impact of blasting. As many said, never again did the company come to check the strips, and many have fallen on their own and people have plastered the gaps themselves.



Increased Dependence on the Company

After the 2013 disaster, people have become more dependent on the company work as the tourism related work has diminished. Atul Sati feels that now most have sent their children to study in cities outside and they have to maintain the other lifestyle accessories, so they welcome the work that company brings in the area. But

the company NTPC is not helping the local market economy, as its workers are catered to by a company canteen and it has built its own township and not taking spaces on rent any more. Since projects are coming up all over Uttarakhand, there are few like the Sarpanch of Saleng village in Joshimath, who think that once the youth learn the skills of contractor and running JCB machines, they can get employment at other places. Some contractors have become affluent by getting company work.

According to Harishchandra Chandola, without agricultural and pasture lands, people have no option but to sit idle in the houses. Whatever low rate that the people get for the land, is invested in buying vehicles, which are then plied to do the construction related work, or given on rent to the companies. After few years they become useless. The compensation is never enough to buy land anywhere else. Even when their grazing lands, forest and agricultural lands are taken, their homes are still left. They keep on living in the village; even when there is no source of livelihood left, as going anywhere else is not possible.

People say they were not given an option of not selling their land, they were told that the company has acquired the land, if the people wish they could take the amount decided by the company. Narmada Devi of Saleng said, we were told we are mere caretakers of the land, *tum sirf rakhwali ke liye ho*, it did not belong to us, but to the Government. Saleng, seemed to be in a particularly bad state as their agricultural and pasture land has been acquired completely. The main occupation was to sell milk, which has been lost. Rajendra Bisht said that SDM, DM forced them to sell the land, they willingly did not wish to sell it. Harishchandra Chandola said that the people were not given proper compensation. For rehabilitation only 30-40 families who also have lost their houses, were considered, but then instead *one time settlement* was done by giving compensation.

For the villages in particularly bad situation and which keep on resisting, the company announce that they have adopted the village. For example, for the Chaen village in Joshimath, Jaypee GM declared that the village has been adopted, *gaon ko god liya hua hai*, hence no harm can come to the village. In downstream village Helang, Mohan Singh Doungriyal said that when the company announced that they have adopted the village, the elders thought now they were safe, no problems will be faced now. The loss of lands and livelihood options, leaves people at the mercy of the company.

Manufacturing Consent? Gifts in Lieu of Rights

Instead of engaging in the language of rights and entitlement, the company tends to fulfil its responsibility by giving gifts and forwarding favours. The everyday relations that the officials establish in the villages lead to an ease with which the power is exercised and provides them more space for manoeuvring (Li 1999: 314-315). To enter into the Rayadi village, the L&T company distributed 'gifts' like sport items, repaired the roads and some elderly were assured of pension. In some areas like Tapovan, solar lamps were distributed (which seems ironical, as if a hydropower company is telling the villagers to remain happy with only solar lamps in absence of electricity. And that the responsibility of using 'sustainable' sources like solar lamps is on them only). The GVK company in Shrinagar sponsored the 'Environment Day' in the Garhwal University. The GVK project faced minimum resistance as the project owner doled money and gifts to the villagers, token money in girl's marriage, sewing machines, bus for school children, and money for fodder. The shopkeepers of the town were provided with glass doors to prevent dust from entering their shops. NTPC in Joshimath has proposed to do electrification of the Badrinath temple and put street lights in the area.

Shemsher Singh Bisht pointed out that the project builders readily give money for temples, *dharamshalas*, *ramleela* celebrations etc., as has been doing the mafia in the region. The company officials enter the intricate world of the families by attending marriages and other functions and giving 'cheques' as mark of their participation, and free supply of liquor as well as throwing drinking and *murga*, chicken party to the men. However, it is not just gifts that ease their way through the villages, but also the temporary addressal of essentials. They at times provide transportation for school children and construct stretches of roads (that are also required for their work). In the village Pulna in Bhyundar valley, people were supportive of the company as it built a road for which the locals were demanding for years, it was considered to be essential for the tourism in the area, on which they depend for their livelihood.

Creating the Identity of 'Displaced' and 'Affected'

The coming up of so many projects and the associated phenomenon of displacement and dispossession by these projects, are also creating an overarching identity for struggling people, that is of a 'displaced' or 'project affected'. Due to the

legitimacy and currency of the category of displaced, in Tehri, the villages which are still left behind, only wish to be ‘displaced’, to be made *visthapit* and do not ask for rehabilitation, *punarwaas*. The crucial difference between rehabilitation and displacement becomes blur, due to the more popular usage of displacement.²⁰ The ‘affected’ resent being merely left as affected, and not getting the ‘benefits’ of displaced, as their lives becomes more and more difficult as ‘affected’ of the Tehri reservoir. These categories promoted by the project authorities also divide people and prevent solidarities from forming. According to Yogendra Negi, there has been a big rift between the two (displaced and the affected), as the affected thought that all benefits were given to displaced, “*dushman jaisi rekha thi dono main, kyunki prabhavit ko lagta tha saari malai visthapit ko mil rahi hai*”.

Tehri, infact, forms a reference point for demands in other project areas, as people ask to be made *visthapit* as Tehri displaced, believing that could be the best rehabilitation. Due to wide spread destruction, the terms *prabhavit*, *visthapit*, *punarwaas* have become so common, and influence so wide spread, that at times, these get trivialised as well. For example, in New Tehri a man exclaimed that even *yatris* should also be considered ‘affected’, as they now have to travel more distance due to the lake. In case of RoR, the attempt is to bypass the term ‘affected’ altogether, with ambiguity attached to the impacts and thus affected are termed as ‘indirectly affected’.

The identity of geographical areas also completely changes. The villages which were best connected in Tehri, and used to meet *yatris*, artists and businessmen from all over the country flogging the *purani tehri*, have now become ‘interior’ and difficult to reach. Further, the original identity, significance and symbols attached with the particular places have changed. For instance, Maneri is not known now for its gorges or scenery or sacredness, but for Maneri Bhali Projects.

Corporate Social (Ir)responsibility

The CSR activities of the companies are mostly not oriented for the region. CSR activities of THDC of promoting agriculture and cattle rearing are ironical as the impact of the reservoir has made these very activities difficult due to land ceding and

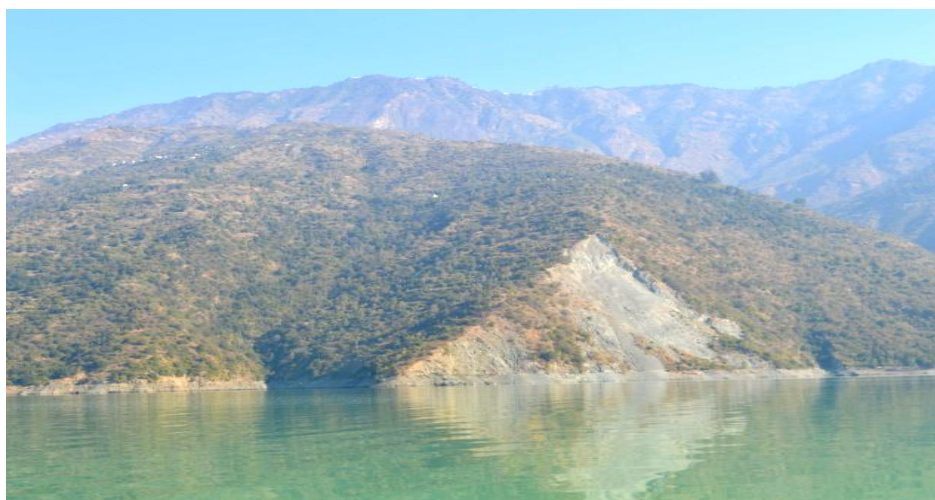
²⁰ In fact in English, resettlement, relocation and rehabilitation are also different, with resettlement more close to displacement. In hindi, resettlement comes to the same meaning as rehabilitation.

increased wild boars and monkeys. Women in Gadoli said that they have been doing for ages, what under CSR they have been asked to do, that is, rearing animals, planting grass, agricultural activities. The only difference is that one or two women got job under the initiative to supervise the activities. According to Yasoda Devi, who is such a supervisor, the involvement of a Garhwal University Professor has led to the innovative farming of organo in Kathuli. This offers only patch of green in the vicinity, as organo is not destroyed by monkeys and boars. However, people said they are only getting Rs. ten for a kilo of the yield. Yashoda Devi further said that at least in name of CSR, company is doing something, if they chose to not do even this; we won't be able to say anything, *ye bhi nahi karenge to hum kya kar lenge*. In CSR, there is apparently, no boundation to carry out the 'socially responsible' activities in the affected area, as I was told by the DGM V.K. Gupta of THDC company.

After lots of contestation and pressure, now the THDC has formulated a 'Collateral Damage Policy' for the villages at the rim of the reservoir, which are ceding due to its impact. It was evident to THDC from the beginning that Raika *patti* is not solid mountain, it was bound to sink, and with it the villages living over it (Chandola 2002: 265). Whereas they ensured the safety and strength of the dam, they ignored the mountain villages, making Sundarlal Bahuguna ask then and villagers wonder now, '*jab dam ki guarantee de sakte hain to hamari kyun nahi*', if they can take guarantee of the dam, why not of us as well? (Kishwar 1992:7) The recognition of these villages as not 'affected', but as a 'collateral damage', resolves the company from an accountability of rehabilitation as the other displaced. Compensation is provided citing disaster or *devi aapda* as a reason. If declared affected under the rehabilitation scheme for displaced, the company has to give more compensation, accept that dam related dispossession is still going on and take in account the thousands of such cases. Further, under the Collateral Damage Policy, only individual cases are considered, and not villages, as if the reservoir would selectively impact houses in a village.²¹ By taking only homes till a selective point, rifts ensue in the village, and the rehabilitation process gets delayed and diluted, with endless harassment of people as they approach different government and company departments. V. K. Gupta of THDC when talked to, kept holding Government

²¹ Bauman (2004:89) describes that under the concept of 'collateral damage', victims of the damage do not get the authority to resist or locate responsibility or demand compensation, as they are considered the 'waste', the side products of the processes of globalisation.

responsible for everything, *rehabilitation gaps are state's failure. They have no sincerity. They started a bridge in 2005 (Dobra Chanthi bridge), they have taken crores of rupees from us and now say that their design has failed. We give money, state government do nothing.* This blame game continues and so does the status quo.



The mountains are crumbling due to the Tehri reservoir (10.12.2014) and landslides are leading to loss of forests.

While the companies allege people of making myths about their dispossession, they themselves also engage in myth making. The rehabilitation officer of NTPC told me that the project does not have any impacts on the aquatic life, as the fishes do not exist at such a low temperature, in the strong current of Dhauliganga, they die themselves by crashing on the rocks. Gupta of THDC is of the view that people have wrong perceptions that the Tehri dam stops the flow of holy Ganga, *we did not block Ganga as the dam is releasing lots of water.* It is the stored water of reservoir that the dam releases after electricity formation. Shrivastava of NTPC felt that they are providing *handsome salaries* to people who are unskilled, who are not worth any work in the company, *koi kaam karne layak nahi.* *The prosperity of the affected villages is leading to demands from the other villages to acquire their lands.* Even when the people complain of heavy explosions, the company insist that they are not using explosives. However, in most places only explosives are used for tunnelling as boring machines are expensive and difficult to bring due to their huge size.

Resettlement Sites and Rehabilitation Process in Tehri

There appears to be an impression in minds of most of the Uttarakhand people that the rehabilitation in case of Tehri is good, especially because land was made

available in plains, an aspiration of most, which has been thoroughly used by companies to prompt people to give their lands. And so in different regions, I found people affected by different projects, to be asking rehabilitation as per the Tehri standard. The hardships of the people who were resettled from Tehri are not widely known.

The support of the commons and community, the fuel and fodder is not available in resettlement sites, mostly located at the outskirts of Dehradun and Haridwar. Shivanand Pande of Tehri Nagar, a resettlement colony in Dehradun, feels that when the displaced got the compensation money, they built good homes and *ate* it. Yogendra Negi said that the displaced, could not even do labour work to sustain themselves after that, as they had to maintain their status and the lifestyles changed. In plains, they did not have the option of cultivating vegetables or fishing. Many now have nothing to eat, *jaise taise chala rahe hain*. Only few who kept reinvesting their money in property are now wealthy. The situation of average household worsened. In the initial period, the displaced, especially the dalits and vulnerable, became the target of the land mafia and big businessmen. They were harassed and cajoled to sell their land at low prices. Many families, even when they had received substantial amount of land, are pauperised now after selling it (Gailora 2012:12).

Whereas in Tehri, community networks meant that the poor could also survive by informal loans, exchange of food, mutual help in farming and building homes, such networks could not be built in the rehabilitation sites, as the villagers are not together in one place. Widows and elderly women found it easier to survive in native villages; they had more freedom and autonomy (Asthana 2012:99). It is also a transition from the 'unlimited' land of mountains to the limited plot size of plains, bringing in worries for space for future generation.

At rehabilitation sites like Pathri near Haridwar, most of the land has been given to contractors to till, even if people wish they cannot cultivate the fields, as the agricultural practices are alien as well as unaffordable, needing water boring pumps, tractors and other machinery and increased amounts of fertilizers and pesticides. Water is scarce, even for drinking and household purposes, let alone for irrigation. Here, the buildings of post office, banks etc have been built, but the services have not started. People feel they do not have any political strength due to fragmented settlements. Public transportation, roads, health facilities remain in bad condition. For

hospital people have to go to Haridwar, more than 20 km away, arranging own vehicle as the bus goes to and fro only once in a day.

Gokul Kharola in Pathri said that they were just dumped at the relocation sites. In the starting they lived in tinsheds and contracted malaria and many died. Roads were built by the Gram Panchayat, not THDC. They were afraid of their safety as the police station came much later, and the relations with locals remain conflict prone. They were given meagre sums of 15,000-20,000 Rs. for constructing houses and the plots were allotted after years of giving this sum. It pinches them that whatever was freely available in the mountains, water, fuel, fodder are to be bought in resettlement sites, *pani bhi mol lena pad raha hai*, even water has to be bought, said Shakuntala Kharola. The land has been given to them on lease and not legally transferred, creating worries.

Livelihood remains an issue. Most in Pathri are working as labour, making soaps, shampoos etc. in factories of Anchor and Ramdev. Work hours extend till 12 hours, for which the daily wage is Rs 350. The educated do not have any work. There are few like Hukumsingh Rawat, who had means to buy tractors and borewell etc and hence capitalised on the situations in the resettlement area, have taken on contract, land of many and thus became a big farmer.

Many sold their land due to water scarcity in Bhaniawala and in Sumannagar. They have either taken lands in other resettlement sites or have gone back towards Tehri, inform Gokul Kharola. This double displacement is also seen in Raiwala, from where the families were again asked to shift, as it was 'realised' that it was an elephant corridor of Rajaji National Park (Bhatt, P. 2012b).

The new 'artificial' town formed for rehabilitation, New Tehri, is strikingly lifeless (Dogra 2009). There is no communitarian sense as no organic relationship exists with the place. *Prem sambandh bikhar gaye hain, log wohi hain, magar yahan ek dusre se milte nahi*, said the librarian Manoj Verma of Shridev Suman Library, the bonding is not the same even when the same people have come here as the relationships have broken. Purani Tehri was a town, the relation with which has inspired many poems and songs and memoirs. *In New Tehri, all problems of a city are present. Underground electricity transmission system worth crores failed here. Sewerage system is not good, parking is a problem. Moreover, the architecture and*

weather is not congenial of this 'staircase town'. It has its own local monsoon, excessive rains, due to the lake. The villages left behind on the rim of the lake have to spend considerable time and money in commuting to this main centre.

Taking Away Essentials: Socio-Environmental Impacts of the Hydropower Projects

Even when no rehabilitation plans for the villages located on the mountainside through which the tunnel passes are considered, they experience cracks in houses, ceding of houses and agricultural land and disappearance of water springs, as a result of the blasting activities (photos below). In villages like Shakuri in Dharchula, the leakage in tunnels has led to sinking of land and complete destruction of houses. Even the strong mountain like *haathi parvat* in Joshimath has ceded as the tunnel of the Jaypee project passes through it. 40 homes, fields and *gaushalas* ceded and about 1000 nalli land of the village Chaen was rendered unusable. Sinking of high tension electricity poles and wires, further caused destruction in the village.

Each project has main tunnels for carrying water to turbines, diversion tunnels, and multitudes of adit tunnels to reach till the main tunnel. Thus it is a web of tunnels that each project is excavating in the mountains. The powerhouses are also underground. Other than that, there is construction of barrage, network of roads and residential colonies. Thus, even a small project involves “*excessive tampering with the natural balance in a zone of very weakened rocks*” (Valdiya 2014:1663). The cumulative impacts of many projects are more drastic. Ram Singh of Khela village in Dharchula said that it is like taking out of intestines from a body, and thus rendering it weak, *jab paet se antadi nikal gayi to kya taaqat bachi?*

According to Valdiya (2014:1663), the tunnelling procedure is like opening an underground drainage and thus alters significantly the groundwater regimes of the mountains. This results in “*drastic lowering of groundwater table and attendant drying up of springs and dwindling of surface flow in streams*”. The local streams and springs are a lifeline for the mountain villages. In walking on the long mountains ways I felt how they are life giving. People depend on the springs not just for drinking water, but for household purposes as well. Streams in far away agricultural fields are only source to quench the thirst and for irrigation of fields. Now even mountain

people are forced to carry water in bottles, as the perennial springs and streams dry up all over Uttarakhand. The local people in mountains are already facing the problem of drinking water and summers are a difficult time for them.²²



Testimonies of Cracks: reminders of the vacuous mountains and lives: House after house has cracks; homes in the Village Chanthi in Tehri (19.12.14), the room behind the door have ceded.



²² According to a study in Kumaun, a decrease of 25% to 75% in the discharges in springs over the years was noticed due to the impacts of deforestation and destabilised and damaged hillslopes due to road construction. This was even before the advent of hydropower in the big way (Valdiya & Bartarya 1989:423).



A spring in Bageshwar, typically on a pedestrian pathway

Desilting of rivers are said to lead to erosion of riverbeds for several meters within a decade of the operation of the project, which affects groundwater tables and affects the intakes of irrigation channels (McCully 1998:38). Water related conflicts have started in the villages, as *kuhls* and streams dry up. NTPC in the area of Dhaak Tapovan villages has provided for temporary pipes for water supply as the springs have dried, that also few complained, is not clean and thus people are falling sick. At times for days there is no water. Women in Phalenda said, *na zinda ke liye paani hai, na murda ke liye* (there is no water for those who are living and no water to cremate the dead, as the company has to be requested to release water in canals irrigating land, and in riverbed to do the last rites). The rivers restricted movements of wild animals. They easily cross the dried beds and are increasingly attacking the villagers and their livestock.

Ram Singh, earlier Pradhan of Khela, further said, *pahle hariyali thi, ab sukha sa ho gaya hai. bahut blasting hui. baarish main kahin se bhi paani nikal jata hai. purane shrot sukh rahe hain. ek saal tak laagataar bhuskhalan hua, usme charai ki bhumi chali gayi*, Earlier there was more greenery. Now all is dry. Immense blasting took place. During rains, water leaks out of anywhere and everywhere. Old water sources are drying up. For an entire year, landslides continued, all the grazing land got destroyed in the process. The underground moisture that nourished forests and agriculture crops have drastically decreased, turning the areas into arid zones (Chandola 2008). In Tapovan in Joshimath, Girish Kumar said that their apple trees are not giving fruits now and the yield of potato and rajma etc have diminished from

15 to 20 quintals, to 3 to 5 quintals. In Chaen as well, many fruit bearing trees are reduced to *mere wood*. Pushkar Singh Rawat said that they could cultivate everything in Chaen, apples, oranges and malta, only requirement was of rains. Families had up to 100-150 goats, 2-3 buffaloes, which they cannot afford now.

As the springs are integral to lives of mountain people, so are the forests. The disappearance of forest cover has affected the climate and the local economy based on forest produces. Projects are also taking over the commons like *panghat*, *gauchar* and *van panchayats*. Women depend on it for fodder for cattle, fuel for home and other eatables and herbs. Destruction of nearby forests, mean they cannot rear cattle, meaning they will not have manure for their fields, leading to low cultivation. The cattle are also said to be affected. Shakuntala Pant in Tapovan said that the milking animals are giving less milk as the blasting powder on the grass is consumed by them. The pregnant cows get aborted.

There have been health problems due to air pollution by the muck, road construction and altered water conditions. Increasingly cases of respiratory problems and water related problems are seen as water is supplied from the reservoirs in towns like Shrinagar. Nutrition levels have decreased, as people do not have the vegetables and cereals they used to cultivate. Changes in the micro-climate are observed. The moisture in the air reduces when the river water flows through tunnels. The changes are more drastic in the case of reservoirs like in Tehri. In addition, the stagnant water of the lake is house to killer mosquitoes. Thousands of half burnt human corpses and dead cattle are finding place in these waters. In the village *Chondhaar* in the winters of 2015, a class twelfth boy had gone to take bath in the lake water. He was bitten by some mosquito and died.

Not all the impacts of the projects are immediately evident in the mountain geography. The evident impacts are forcing people for more and more migration. People with cracks in their homes are forced to build or repair these again without getting any compensation and get indebted in the process. The intrusion of political parties and NGOs have increased as they claim to help people out of the misery, to help them get some benefits. A culture of appeasement seems to have entered, as people approach who-ever comes to them, to do something to let them be included in

the 'list of the affected'.²³ Thus, the projects have eroded the character and identity of hill villages (Chandola 2008).

Conclusion

The hydropower projects in the Himalayan states like Uttarakhand are being promoted for development. However, the disaster proneness of the region, the practices of the project companies and the impacts of the projects, refute the developmental claims. Further, the projects are not sustainable or clean and green in the way they are leading to increased destruction of environment and dispossession of the people. Although the RoRs are said to be the alternatives to the large dams, they are found to be not different in their structures and in their conception of development from the dams. The hydrology of the Himalayan rivers and the fragility of mountains not only put the projects at risk, but the heavy interventions in the fragile conditions, puts the locals in a vulnerable situation. Further, the projects are rendering the mountain livelihoods redundant. Food insecurity has been introduced in many fertile valleys.

The mountainous villages are such that the implications of any disaster and thus the rehabilitation needs are multidimensional, interdependent and take time to unfold. It is not easy to see and assess at one go the impact on the mountains, the slow processes of landslips, the impact on forests, on the paths and the water sources. The mountain life being interdependent on many sources, even if one component out of the homes, fields, grazing grounds, forests gets affected, then the balance of life and livelihood gets lost. As the neoliberal state backs the profit-drive of the private projects, their practices tend to discard any concern for the locals.

²³ Even jokes are about this only now. In a village, women said that they will offer me tea and food, but I should also do something for them. When I said I am not from government, they said whoever will do something for them, is government/state for them, write such a paper so that we get something, give a photo in newspaper to show that this poor also has a house here, *jo hamara bhala karega wo hamare liye sarkar hai, aisa paper likalna jo hume kuch de. akhbaar mein photo de dena, ki is gareeb ka yahan makan hai*. A woman in a different area offered money if I could help her name included in the list. Another in still different area commented that I should take the photo of her home and produce a cheque of 10 lakh as payment.

CHAPTER FOUR

*Bin Lade Kuch Bhi Nahi Milta Yahan Ye Jaan Kar?*¹

Responses of People² to Hydropower Projects in Uttarakhand

Bridges have a lot of significance for the Uttarakhandi people as they link the mountain areas across the mighty rivers and high slopes. Bridges are so built as to fit well with the zigzag routes that mountain people take to cover and cross the steep *dhaars* (slopes) that are not possibly covered by straight path. A bridge can become the medium of many positive comings, of reaching out, of being connected. As a promise, as an option, as a means to access, a bridge signifies much. Bridge over a *nalla* or a river connects the interior with the outside, the villages with the town or market. It enables children to go to school, the ill to seek medication and the youth to go out looking for better livelihood and education prospects and a path to return back if they so wish. To my mind, the development discourse and the responses of the Uttarakhand people to the hydropower projects can, in a way be understood with this notion of a bridge. People are seeking a connection, they wish some things to come that elude them at their place, not so burdensome that they break the bridge, but which are enabling. They are seeking a way out, but not closing the way of coming back.

As a symbol, bridge signifies how technology designs and impacts society and how infrastructure enables certain things and not others. Breaking (or submergence) of bridge means the villages gets cut off from the rest of the region, people cannot reach out or help does not reach them even as they become dependent on outside help, or they are forced to flee in absence of sustenance options, and the ‘interior’ becomes isolated and marooned. Often it takes years and years for new bridges to come up or for the old ones to be repaired as they get flooded due to increased intervention in rivers. However, the state government makes exceptions for the hydropower companies, as it commits in its agreements that it will assist, construct itself or allow the company to construct or widen any bridges and roads that the company deems

¹“(Villagers) now know that nothing can be obtained without struggle”, proclaims this popular song of Uttarakhandi poet and activist Balli Singh Cheema. The song states that people have now realised that without social movements nothing can be achieved, hence they are coming forward for resistances.

² With ‘people’, I mean the villagers affected by the hydropower projects, the activists working in the region as well as from outside the region who come to support the struggles, the NGOs, the intellectuals, journalists, literary and cultural figures.

necessary. These associated ‘benefits’ of coming of a company, cannot be ignored or rejected by people, and influence their responses to the projects, as this is how they experience, at times for the first time in their lives, the advent of ‘development’.

The ‘development’ interventions like the Tehri dam have resulted in submergence of old wooden bridges. There were 28 *puls* around *Purani Tehri*, only two new bridges are built after submergence due to filling of the reservoir. The company initially kept putting temporary swinging bridges, *jhula puls* as lower bridges drowned, to give an impression that the people will be provided for and never giving a full impression of the *doob*, submergence. However, submergence of bridges has affected the lives of hundreds of villages left behind the reservoir. Much of the agitation in the region has been for the building of connecting bridges for this marooned island. People have ideas about the low cost and situation specific technologies that will work in making bridges, but there is this notion that they will not be allowed to undertake it, it is the work of THDC or the government, for whom low cost and workable technology is not appealing. Asks Yogendra Singh Negi of Dharkot village in Tehri, *why not build inexpensive bridges, the pontoon bridges over Tehri Lake? They will be flexible also, suitable as the lake level keeps changing. Pontoon is easy and low investment. But they (THDC and Irrigation Department) will not do it, as they will not get any margin unlike lofty schemes. They think they have to use hi-fi technology, otherwise they will be considered backward...Common men cannot do it, government can. If we start doing something like this, they will take us to jail saying we are encroaching on their property.* Nevertheless, a conception of alternatives to the high technology exists and there are many attempts at alternatives in the different areas.

Responses of people affected by hydropower projects in different regions of Uttarakhand vary from ambiguity, rejection, resistance to pragmatic resignation. Then again, the responses of people keep changing, as the project company comes with the hope and promises of development, and slowly people experience betrayal. Some get benefits out of the companies, some become homeless. The responses vary on the basis of project practices as well as the kind of politics and activism the local leaders are involved in. However, it is not possible to remain completely detached from the phenomenon. The structures are so colossal, be it Tehri (the traditional dam) or the Vishnuprayag Project of Joshimath (the so-called run-of-the-river scheme), the

process of construction is so destructive and intrusive and the impacts so many and sweeping that it is impossible for them to not impact the psyche and the life of the people.

In this chapter, I will discuss the responses of the people to the hydropower projects. Response is a term I use to encompass all kinds of responses. Resistance is used for the resistances and movements that the region has seen. First I am describing the region and project specific responses, which demands a brief description of the region and practices of project company. The responses are as much to the practices of the project authorities as to the overall development ideology they espouse. Further, the practices also help in understanding how the ambit of responses gets defined, how the complicities, compromises and other responses get built. Site specific protests are going on for some years. In some regions, the protests continue in spurts, in other regions people have withdrawn after continuing for some time. I am trying to recount the earlier struggles and trace the dynamics that lead to the present condition and the residues left behind. I realise that the perspectives of people at present have been formed due to the process of struggle and the related negotiations. I try and analyse whether '*bin lade kuch bhi nahi milta yahan ye jaan kar*, that nothing will be gained without struggle', has this realisation led to seeing struggle only as a means of achieving compromises or has it also led to a deepening of consciousness and vision in the people. The concept of 'people' as a collectivity with respect to the protests remains a misgiving, there are multiple actors and multiple agendas in a struggle. There is no straight jacketed ideology that is leading to these protests or ideological vision of development that define the 'goals'. The whole picture and the intricacies of it are described with the intention of finding these in the undercurrents and in the silent gaps in between.

The regions I include in my analysis are Tehri villages affected by Tehri dam (issues of Tehri are described in detail not only because of their complexity and the large area that is affected by these, but also because they are representative of the issues of other areas as well) and Phalenda village and neighbouring villages affected by the Swastic Hydropower Project, that are in Tehri District, by the rivers Bhagirathi and Bhilangana. Next will come the villages affected by projects in the Bageshwar district, by the Saryu River. Then the projects in a cascade in the Chamoli district, Jaypee's Vishnuprayag Project (Alaknanda River), NTPC's Lata Tapovan and

Tapovan Vishnugaaad Projects (Dhauliganga river), THDC's Vishnugaad Pipalkoti Project (Alaknanda). Then, L&T and LANCO Company projects on Mandakini River in Rudraprayag district.

There are many activists who reside in cities of Uttarakhand. They have been associated with the struggles and have influenced them decisively over time. At times they have been also involved in mobilising the people in the region, and at times they mobilise resources and support from outside for the struggles. I will discuss next set of responses with respect to these activists, their practices, modes and understandings of resistance, attempts at the formation of coalition and the larger ideological forces they adhere to which influence the resistances. Then the counter resistances are described, that is, the resistances in favour of hydropower projects and opposing those who are resisting against the projects. Uttarakhand has a rich cultural tradition. I will see how it becomes the part of and affects the resistances and other responses of people. The attempt at alternatives is discussed next.

The Resistances and Their Residues

Tehri Villages: The Present Situation and Unorganised Dissent

Tehri villagers were asked to make a sacrifice for the huge vehicle of modernisation, the Tehri Dam. Many villages made that sacrifice. They are submerged. But the water level in the Tehri reservoir is never fixed-it keeps on rising and falling-making the mountains unstable and creating terror for the hundreds of villages left behind, as their homes sink and slip. They were not supposed to be 'affected'. They were not told that they will have to make any sacrifice, so they remained silent during the earlier protests. They are now left with barren lands, homes with floors that are shifting and sinking under their feet, distant and poor health and education facilities, and far away government offices, which the villagers are forced to return back every few days, if they wish to get included in the list of 'affected'.

The Tehri villages that are on the hills near what was earlier the confluence of the Rivers Bhagirathi and Bhilangana, the *Ganesh prayag*, currently wake up to the sight of the huge structure of the Tehri dam which has drowned the *prayag*. Instead now, behind the dam, the dead waters stretch till one can see-motionless, bottomless,

and borderless. The *ganga* that was at their doorstep, the *gangajal* (sacred water of the Ganges River) that was so accessible, is available to them only after crossing Koteshwar dam downstream now. Besides the deadly aura of the Tehri reservoir lake, there are other things that are making the life impossibly difficult for the villagers who are left behind in this region affected by the dam and those who are living along the rim of the Tehri lake.

Loss of Old Ways

Purani Tehri town, that lies submerged now under the lake, was a central point and an economic base of all the hundred and fifty or so surrounding villages. Though not declared 'affected', their economy now is in tatters. Before the lake was formed, Buddha Devi³ from the Rindol village recalled, at the location of a trolley over lake now, there was a wooden *pul*. From that people and horses and donkeys used to cross over the wide rivers. They could reach Purani Tehri on foot to sell their milk, vegetables and *mattha* there. Every home had one or two buffaloes; she recalls that their village alone had about 250 buffaloes, only 20 are left now. Mostly all villagers recall the days of Purani Tehri with nostalgia as days of prosperity, difficulties and hard work but not scarcity, poverty, fear and dependence. Even when there was no great personal wealth, one could sustain one's family depending on one's labour, *apne haath pair par nirbhar thae*. Daily wage work was easy to find in Purani Tehri. People used to get good rates for their yields in the market. Some sold vegetables worth 40-50 thousand rupees over the year, *pahle purani tehri main chaalis pachaas hazar ki sabzi bik jaati thi ek aadmi ki, ab agar nai tehri jao to sau rupya ki sabzi bechne ke liye do sou rupya kiraya lag jata hai*. Now to go to find labour work or to sell vegetables worth Rs. 100 in New Tehri, requires a sum of 100 to 200 Rs. as transportation fare and then there is no place to stay back in the new town, unlike in the old town with its community spaces. The traditional works of carpenter, mason, running *gharat*, and other crafts have become irrelevant.

The region was known for its green vegetables, especially onions, garlic, potatoes, cucumber, turmeric, ginger, radish, tomatoes, beans, peas, green leafy vegetables as *paalak, rai, sarson, dhaniya*, pulses like *masur, gahat, tuar, soyabean*,

³ Buddha Devi was associated with Mahila Samakhya, a government run program under the MHRD, reputed for its efforts of 'empowerment of women'. She however, while recognising the confidence that the activities as community worker gave her, also recounted the corrupt practices that the organisation people engaged in the area, also during the mobilisation for Tehri movement.

cereals like *koda* (finger millet), *jhingora* (barnyard millet), *ramdana* (amaranthus), rice, wheat, and fruits like mangoes and *litchi*. They remember fondly in which season what all they used to cultivate, 'by this time our wheat would have been this big', '*aajkal tak to genhu itne itne bade ho jaate thae*'. Only greenery one sees in the villages now is just at the mouth of the lake. For people whose land is still left in high altitudes areas, agriculture is not possible, as after the formation of the reservoir (lake), the attacks from the population of wild boars and monkeys have significantly increased. They roam around freely like cattle, '*bhed bakri ki tarah suar ki toli aati hai*', destroying the fields and everything that is sown. Budha Devi says that she invested about Rs. 1400 in the ploughing of the fields, but the yield of pulses she got was not even worth Rs. 300. Vast tracks of fields can be seen lying barren. Some fields have become uncultivable as these have ceded or broken down due to landslips.

So it is a common sight to see women rushing to the ration shops when they get to know that cereals have arrived (over irregular periods) and carrying many kilograms on their backs, back to their home. They are forced to buy the stale vegetables at three times the price from the nearby shops, and they feel like beggars. The culture of buying from shops was not common till a decade or two ago, '*bhikhari jaise ho gaye, dukaan se la ke khaate hain*', or else they do not get vegetables in their meals for days and weeks, '*pandrah din, mahina bhar tak sabzi hi khaane ko nahi milti*'. Now, if they wish to buy fresher or less expensive vegetables and other commodities, they have to go to Pipaldaali or to New Tehri or better still to Rishikesh, Haridwar, as the transportation cost and time gets added to the price of the commodities as they reach there.

Many issues like these were raised repeatedly. Through the range of effects and their interpretations, experiences and responses of the people to these changed circumstances; I try and understand the dissent in this region, which remains largely unorganised. Every year the land is sinking and the houses are developing cracks. It is not that all these homes are new, some are very old. So the claims of the officials that people are making new homes to get compensation do not hold much ground. Dhanpal Bisht of Rolakot said, *if whole village is considered for resettlement, then nobody will again construct homes at the higher points where they have other land. Payment for the house is given only when we break the house, but without payment, how can one construct a new one?* Even if that is happening, it means that officials

and administration are also earning out of this corruption. When the THDC rehabilitation cell DGM, V.K. Gupta was asked if his company did not know of this ‘collateral damage’ earlier, he said that since it was their first project, they were not aware of such impacts. However, even before filling the reservoir lake there were studies that had predicted such draw down impacts. Now what the company does is to appoint ‘high power committees’ with all kinds of experts that visit the villages every six months to assess if the damages to houses are due to the monsoon or due to the impact of reservoir.



Budhadevi’s home in Madannegi on 6.4.2012 and on 6.12.2014. The usable things like windows were removed from the home slowly, as it was realised that it is not habitable.

Imposed Uncertainty

It is never clear to people and the ambiguity is maintained and it is actually difficult to ascertain what leads to cracks in their houses, the impacts of blasting during the project construction, or the draw down impact of the lake, the monsoon or the blasting for road constructions. A villager asks, ‘*agar ek saath do dande ki maar pade, to kaise pata chalega kis dande se aadmi mara gaya*’, If one is stricken by two calamities together, monsoon and reservoir, each increasing the impact of the other, how can one decide which killed the person? The decision taking power is completely in the ambit of the company. A series of homes in Madannegi village have collapsed. Whereas the committees declare the houses ceded due to irresponsible road construction, given the same calamity is experienced by whole region after filling of the reservoir, people feel it is due to the reservoir.

The uncertainty looming large on people's head has put a stop to their lives and plans. Dhanpal Bisht in Rolakot said, since the last 15-20 years this sword is hanging on them, when will we be displaced? We cannot even concentrate on work, *kaam dhande chod kar yahin par dhyan hai*. Even the villages that were recommended for rehabilitation by the committees are never considered as a unit for rehabilitation, but *only houses up to a particular reach*, a particular level of the lake are declared as affected and offered compensation not as affected by the reservoir, but as affected of the natural disaster. Gupta says, *people insist they want land and hence the process of rehabilitation gets delayed. People also want to earn profit by selling the land to industrialists. People can say anything, expert committees say that damages are not due to reservoir. Now people are educated. For everything, they will say it is due to dam. They say, displace me, so that I get two acres of land in Dehradun, as my neighbour has got, "mujhe rehabilitation main le lo, taaki mujhe dehradun main do acre jameen mil jaye, mere neighbour ko to mil gayi hai, mujhe bhi de do"*.

However, when I visited such a village *Nakot*, just at the edge of the lake that has been rehabilitated as per the company records, I found many, especially the old are still living in the village, although the homes have partially crumbled and are crumbling (photo below). There are many issues, some have been only given partial compensation and are waiting for the rest of it. Some old people do not wish to leave and some do not have any other place to go to. Some houses have not being considered for rehabilitation, leading to mutual resentment and conflicts between villagers. Between few families even dialogue has stopped. I met a couple, the woman now deaf and unable to cook and work, and her husband who are forced by their sons to live there, as the compensation has provided meagrely only for their families, they cannot sustain the old couple with them in the town. They were sitting in their courtyard, behind the closed doors of which, the rooms had crumbled.



Families rendered broken and helpless



Crumbling houses. The walls and roof of this house with the sign of 'welcome' are coming off, but still people keep living in it (Village Nakot, 19.12.14)

Breakdown of Collectivity

Generally when one or two families got compensation, they build their homes uphill to stay with the village. Some of them get in comparatively better condition than the others, whose homes are getting damaged now due to land sink, but who have not got any compensation. It has led to discontent within villages, when half of the village was displaced and the others left behind, not considered eligible for compensation, for example the village Uppu. In some cases, the entire village has shifted, only one or two homes are left behind, for example two homes of an old women (she was two daughters, one deserted and one disabled, so she cannot migrate) and an old men (three brothers got one piece of land, they sold it, with his share he could not afford to build home in plains) that were a part of *Bille Saud* earlier, shifted up, but now not considered part of even the upper village *Sandhna*. Strategic conflicts

are introduced within the villages. As mitigation measure committees are appointed by the project company, an impression is given that some action will be taken now. When some families get the claim and some not, without any evident difference in situations, conflicts arise. The selective and individual addressal of issues means that individuals rise up only when they feel the threat is now on their home, *jis pe jab naubat aayi, usne tab aawaz uthai*. Even the earlier displaced villagers continue to come back wherever they can, as they face difficulties in resettlement sites or they have not received the full compensation still and when they realise that they can still till their fields in the few months when the lake subsides. For example, the villagers of Asena prefer to stay in the risk prone zone and irrigate their lands (photo below).



Failed rehabilitation: photo taken on 20.12.2014, shows the villagers of Asena farming in their fields, right at the bank of the lake.

Favours, Not Rights

The language with which the company engages with people is of extending favours and not of rights. Even when villagers have lost their livelihood to the lake, they have not been given any rights over the lake to find any livelihood. The boats run by THDC do employ some villagers as drivers, but do not allow them to run their own boats. The initiatives taken under the corporate social responsibility scheme of *THDC Sewa* are superficial, but it does work as a safety valve and indicates the intricacy of companys' involvement in everyday. They provide material for marriages, *barats* (chairs, utensils, tents) in the village, provide token amounts in the marriages and provide money to the *Mahila Mangal Dals* for singing *kirtans* in marriages. NGOs have entered the region to implement the CSR programs. Many people expressed their

resentment at not being provided with free or subsidised electricity as they were initially promised by the THDC.

The Government services have been suspended in this ‘cut-off’ region. The ropeway is run by SIDCUL, a government enterprise meant to generate employment in any region, but not undertaking any such initiative. Budha Devi complained that even when the schools and hospitals of Purani Tehri were snatched away from them, nothing was provided as replacement. No teachers, doctors or other government officials wish to stay in these villages as they are cut off from the centres of government offices, trade and other facilities. The education status of children thus has degraded as teachers remain irregular, according to her. There is a hospital building in Madannegi village, but no medicine or good doctors are available, she says. The health facility is so bad that when Yogendra Negi went to New Tehri with four or five fractures in his arm, the doctor diagnosed only one and thus plastered it in a wrong way. Negi could afford to go there as he has a private vehicle; most cannot afford the arduous, long and expensive travel. An ambulance has been provided from Nandgaon village, still at a distance of about two hours. There have been many cases of pregnant women dying in the way in the recent years.

People are completely dependent on certain ‘facilities’ like boat that THDC has extended (employing few local drivers). Few who grow vegetables, like women in villages like *Noutaad* which are at the bank of the lake and have fertile irrigated land, rush with their vegetables in the morning to catch the boat to sell them in Koti colony, the colony that inhabits the officers of the THDC. The other villages remain out of reach, so they cannot sell it there. To go to the Koti colony is not considered good as many women of other villages remarked, it remains an act of shame as the women go to ‘outsiders’ for selling, but it does provide an earning source to women of villages near the lake (photo below). They sell quickly and at cheap rates the vegetables, milk and buttermilk to board back the boat in time. The boats ply between abstract points at the root of a cluster of two-three villages and Koti colony. To get to the boat the people have to cross the slippery muck that is left behind as the lake subsides. People who are living near the lake are forced to take this route- be it children, women going to sell vegetables, the ill and the people taking the last remains of the dead. It not only saves time, but hundreds of rupees that are required if one travels by buses.



From freedom to dependence: Women of Noutaad selling their vegetables to THDC colony staff (10.12.14)

Connectivity is a big issue, people feel trapped as mobility is not easy and as per their will. Whereas the distances have almost doubled, the bus service is not suitably available. Villagers said, we feel like we are in jail, in a cage, like we are animals trapped in a well of death, like we are living in darkness, like we have been sentenced the punishment of *'hara pani'* (the green water of lake) as earlier Britishers used to send for *'kala pani'*, *'yahan jail ki tarah ho gaya'*, *'kaid ho gaye yahan'*, *'maut ka kuan ho gaya aur hum jangli janwar jaise ho gaye'*, *'ek tarah se pinjare main band ho gaye'*, *'kala pani to suna hoga, hume hare pani ki saza hui hai'*, *'andhera ho gaya jheel banne se hamare liye'*.

Migration has increased immensely. Children and males from every home are compelled to migrate to nearby towns-New Tehri, Haridwar, Hrishikesh, Dehradun, Delhi-depending on their contacts and financial capability, in search of education and work. Most of them make it to the hotel industry at low profile jobs or limited to work in *dhabas*. Women say that the men and sons are forced to clean utensils and break stones for survival, *'ladka bartan manjta hai aadmi patthar fodte hai'*. Women, who were doing all the agricultural work, have become increasingly dependent on males. Those who have their cattle, make it by selling milk, most of them work in MNREGA related schemes that remain irregular. Only few have their sons in army and other government jobs like teaching, and hence are financially stable. Earlier there were more Government jobs like clerks etc, with all offices and education institutes in Purani Tehri. But the villages itself had more to give to them than the small jobs

outside and many preferred to return to their villages, as Nagendra Badri (Kathuli village) observed.

Adaptations and Struggles

People are forced to take room on rent in New Tehri, with one room costing Rs. 3000-4000. According to one estimate, 1200 families have taken room there in order to educate their children. Whereas New Tehri has now people of each village, migrated to it, in the villages itself, it is difficult to find people, only those are left behind, who do not have any means to go out, '*kisi bhi gaon main sau log ikkatha karna mushkil hai, gaon main wohi log hain jinke pass kuch nahi hai*'. Some homes have only old women left behind. So as all families are fragmented and on a lookout to move out, the priority is not to try for organised protests, but to get whatever is possible and build a way out. With lack of employment, and increased migration, more emphasis is on negotiations than on struggle. According to Negi, there are practical difficulties in long resistances now. The centre of struggle and collectively is lost. Earlier Purani Tehri was a common meeting point, where people would go for work as well as for other chores and meeting people. Now if they have to go to assemble to a common place, they first have to plan the travel, *we have to think if any vehicle will be available, how will we come back, ladies have problem in going so far. So no struggle is possible for long term.*

The inequality amongst people has increased and so have conflicts and comparisons. I found an old woman in Talla Uppu with a huge house as she got compensation as displaced (but she still stay there as the rest of the village is not taken as affected) and her sons has jobs in the THDC with their homes in Dehradun. She has given the home on rent to Inter college teachers, a source of further earning. In contrast another old woman I met in Sandhana, Pushpadevi's land was in name of her sons, though she used to work in them. The sons have moved out and she has stayed there with two daughters (one deserted and one disabled), with no source of livelihood.

The self-respect has been wounded. According to Surajsingh Rawat of Gadoli village, they are now under the *monopoly of the company* and the rehabilitation department. Ramprasad Raturi of Rindol village felt that the condition is so bad that the area should be declared as *backward* area and special subsidies be announced for

it (the words like monopoly and backward have entered in vocabulary⁴). They feel they have been denied their rights, like the right to take *rait - bajri* from the river bed. The river was theirs, lake is not. They cannot fish in it, cannot take out water for irrigation. Earlier it was easy for people to build homes as the construction material came from the river bed on donkey's back. Now trucks are required to get it from Hrishikesh or Haridwar, with the transportation cost of one truck of material as Rs. 2000-3000. The homes that few built with all their savings and labour have crumbled. Budha Devi said that now mediators have increased, earlier they could deal directly with the seller and the buyer, '*beech mein munafa khane wale nahi thae*'. The destruction of Purani Tehri market has only benefitted big shopkeepers, as now people are forced to buy from them, they have no other option of buying from roadside make shift shops of old tehri, '*pahle itni badi dukaane nahi thi, patri par sasta milta tha*', '*dukandaaro ki mauz ho gayi*', '*black main baechte hain*'.

The villagers do question the development that does not provide for them, but simultaneously also emphasis that they are not against the dam or the company. The discourse of dams as development and development as nationalism has penetrated the villages. Many as good citizens and patriots as *Garhwalis* believe themselves to be, and few as were retired Government 'servants', feel they cannot oppose the dam, as it is a means of development of the nation, its source of income, '*desh ki aay ke srot hain bandh*', '*desh ki sewa ho rahi hai*', for the national good they should not oppose, should make some sacrifice, but there is no denying that their lives have been affected '*desh-hit mein virodh nahi karna chahiye lekin logon ki zindagion par asar to padha hi hai*', '*kurbaani to deni padegi, kuch pane ke liye kuch khona padega*', Only thing they wish is that they should not have been completely neglected in the process, '*baandh ko banao par hamari samuchit vyavastha kar do*'. Some proclaimed, dam may have brought development for the nation, but for them it meant only destruction, *we cannot stay in the village; we cannot leave it as well, it is not possible to compensate for our loss*, '*Na hum idhar ke rahe, na udhar ke*', '*hamare nuksaan ki bharpaai nahi ho pa rahi hai*'. There is also a feeling that they gave for the nation their resources but the nation is not bothered about them. People are tired of the deafness of the government/company. Pushpadevi of Sandhna village wonders how is it that this issue never reaches their ears, *ye baat kahin pahunchti hi nahi?* The

⁴ The words like blasting, diversion, tunnelling, muck are common in Uttarakhand villages now.

desperation is such, that led to a teacher Dharamveer of the local school proclaim that only path left for them now is to take arms and go to the nearby China border, as the government is not listening at all. He asked, what is the use of a nation when it is not bothered for you at all? They question what the company is doing for them, when out of their resources it is earning crores per day.

The Earlier Movement against Tehri Dam

It is not that the people were fully aware of the impacts. Tehri dam was unfolding as a drama before them for three to four decades, for whole their lives they have been witnessing how the state and the company, politicians and activists, constructed and manipulated dissent during the entire Tehri Dam movement. Uncertainties prevailed, spectre and speculations continued, *'tamasha jaisa ho gaya tha hamare liye ye dekhna ki baandh banta hai ya nahi'*. The people of the villages now affected, remain indifferent to the earlier protests as they did not think they will be affected, many also believed that the dam will bring development opportunities to them and almost everyone said that they had no idea that the dam and the lake will be so huge, few feel they have been betrayed, *'logon ko andaza nahi tha dam ka kya asar hoga'*, *'hume pata nahi tha ki daam kya cheez hai, ye to peeth mein chura ghopne wali baat ho gayi'*, *'logon ne aisa socha nahi tha ki itni badi jheel banegi'*.

Initially people of the adjoining villages did not realise the impact that the dam could have or the shape that the lake could take. By the time they realised the threat to them, the earlier movement against the dam had grown weak. It is only few from the uphill villages who participated in the Tehri dam movement, the villages were not approached for collaboration, there were no meetings or *juloos* within their villages and the popular perception of the leader on whom the earlier struggle was centred is that of a corrupt leader.

Everyone in these villages wants to get displaced now, there is this feeling that only the displaced by the dam got something, the displaced got developed whereas they are merely left behind with nothing, *'visthapit hi chahiye humne'* *'jo visthapit hua, vikas usi ka hua, prabhavit ka nahi'*, *'jo doobe so ubhar gaye, jo rah gaya usse kuch nahi mila'*. The difference between 'displaced' and 'affected' is clear in people's mind from the start. They compare themselves with the resettled ones and think that

the later are still in better positions as they got good land in plains, and they also wish to be ‘displaced’ thus. This sense of betterment is also associated with the rate of land, as the displaced have got more expensive land in the plain areas. The rift between the affected and the displaced matters still, as many who have been formally displaced, continue to live in their villages. But actually people remain torn between the idea of getting displaced and staying back, as they are also aware of the difficulties that the displaced have faced.

Present Dynamics of Protests

There is a helplessness mixed with fear, compounded after the 2013 tragedy and consequent cloud bursts in nearby Ghansali region every year. Villagers remain in perpetual threat as monsoon approaches and the level of the lake rises⁵. The downwards villages near the lake feel they can sink anytime when the water level rises and with huge waves the rocks crumble in the lake. With this created uncertainty, has started an endless process of corruption, as the villagers are forced to engage with THDC officers and the state rehabilitation department to somehow get compensation. People vie to get close to the company officials for their ‘claims’ to be heard. The rehabilitation and grievance work has been segregated amongst many bodies, THDC, Irrigation Department and Grievance Redressal Cell (GRC). People often do not know which one to approach. The District Magistrate, the highest authority in local administration himself being the Rehabilitation officer, people feel who else can they complain to about the irregularities related to rehabilitation process. Also, amongst the THDC and the Government Departments a blame game keeps playing. The division of work between the company and administrative bodies, the unclear duties and responsibilities, has allowed more complication, laxity and corruption.

The local leaders had become more powerful since the Tehri movement, as the THDC negotiated with them in order to keep the work going. This was the way that the protests were ignored as well. Many of the perceptions about the earlier protests

⁵ Amar Ujala (2013) ‘Baarish ki Aahat Se Hi Badh Jati Hai Dhadkan’, 1 September, highlights this fear with a headlines that say that heartbeat stops as the first footstep of rains is heard. Rashtriya Sahara (2013) ‘‘Water Bam’ Na Ban Jaye Tehri Baandh’, 28 April, express the fear of the reservoir being a ticking water bomb.

against the Tehri dam, and the corrupt practices of the leaders (including that of Bahuguna), might have been circulated by the company and the local contractors which percolates and stays in people's perception, especially when the leaders are not closely associated with the people and when struggles are not based on a mass mobilisation and consciousness building but individualistic actions⁶. Another issue that people have with the earlier struggle is the emphasis on environment and not rehabilitation. Gupta reduced the protests as misguided and selfish; *people oppose company only to get something. More they get, more they become dissatisfied. The richer they get, the more their aspirations increase.*

This is not how everyone sees protests, there are many who are attached to the place, but they have been repeatedly betrayed by leaders who negotiate with the company on their behalf. Capitalising on the initial protests of the affected villages, many small time leaders like Vijay Singh Panwar, Phulsingh Bhisht, Vikram Negi rose to become MLAs from the area. Yogendra Negi said, *initially people came for protests, but later they realised that only political interests dominated the protests. The average villager has to go once in a while to New Tehri, so he thinks why he should bother about protests when the benefit is taken by others.* The villagers think they remain only a crowd, when the benefits are taken by the well-to-do. The local leaders are mostly attached to a political party, and raising the village issues for them is like *hitting two birds with one stone*, as Prem Dutt Juyal of Madannegi village, who is attached to BJP, had quipped. It makes leaders out of the self appointed representatives; they get political mileage as well as legitimacy to negotiate with THDC and Government for personal gains in business contracts. Most of the THDC schemes like putting up hoardings or providing the vehicles etc are then handed over to them, with the apparent understanding to keep dissent in check. People in a sense have handed over all their interests in the hands of these leaders, and hence they are only looking up to them to do something, or they keep feeling deceived about their not doing anything. The local politicians limit the politics to BJP-Congress parties, as Juyal said we only know government, what do we have to do with outsiders (THDC), *'hum to sarkar ko jaante hain baharwalon ke pass se humne kya milega'*. According to Yogendra Negi, *the political party leaders keep blaming each other for the*

⁶ On the basis of conversation with other activists who participated in the Tehri dam movement. This issue troubled me due to the aura that we in 'plains' have about Bahuguna and the anger that the people in Tehri have against him.

problems in the area, and not THDC. With THDC, the local politicians remain on good terms as they keep getting few bites from the profit that the company makes. Even if some raise their voice, it is to get attention and the contracts of schemes and work that the company might be investing in.

In 2001-02, a group of radical left attempted to work and organised the area. But such efforts of politicising people are resented. Few locals triumphantly proclaim, '*humne unhe bagha diya*', they were not allowed to get any hold in the area as the media had popularised them as Maoists. However, still many remember them and said they were doing good work. Most of the researchers like me and journalists are routed to the politicians, who have all the 'papers' and 'reports' with them. Prem Dutt Juyal claims he is selflessly fighting for the cause of people⁷. But one can see his affluence. He has a huge shop in the middle of the village, and everyone while visiting the market marks his or her attendance by meeting him. He goes out roaming with his dog in the evenings, a self styled elite amongst the villagers.⁸ Now his attention remains on the court case that has been filed on the behalf of a few villages. There are separate cases going on of different village belts and in GRCs and in courts. The court orders and petitions reflect the mutual blaming and tussle over rehabilitation between THDC and State Government, grievance petitions remain pending and the cases lingering. Whereas one body recommends the rehabilitation of the villages at the heights of the same ceding mountains, the other wishes to find space elsewhere.

Many people did not even show any interest in talking about protests. The approach is to seek what is possible, what can really happen, and what benefits can be procured, *when nothing will happen, then what is the point of talking?* The general attitude of the most who are influential now, as the *pradhans*, is now of a *contractor*, according to Negi. Preamsingh Khiri of Patudi feels that the people with approach and influence and voice are not allowing the protests to build up, *jo padhe likhe akalmand hain, wo beech mein hi khatam kar rahe hain*. People are also more prone to selling land in absence of livelihood opportunities. Business interests have become active in

⁷ He discouraged me many times from going to the villages, thinking it useless as he had all the records with him. He does have numerous files of documents related to different expert committees, demands and applications, communication between different departments and press cuttings. His version gets published in papers, get heard by lawyers and researchers.

⁸ He keep inviting 'big leaders' in the area once in a while to maintain his 'status', like Ashok Singhal came once to support the villagers in a sit-in to demand a bridge over the lake. However, he has not been able to win any seat in local elections in the area, reflecting that people do understand his politics.

the villages as THDC has announced its tourism related plans associated with the lake. One village Ganoli, has sold almost all of its land at throwaway prices to a Bombay based businessman. No one knows clearly who has bought it, as one non resident villager acted as mediator promising them a good price. The real estate people are buying the land cheap now and can build it when it settles and stabilises.

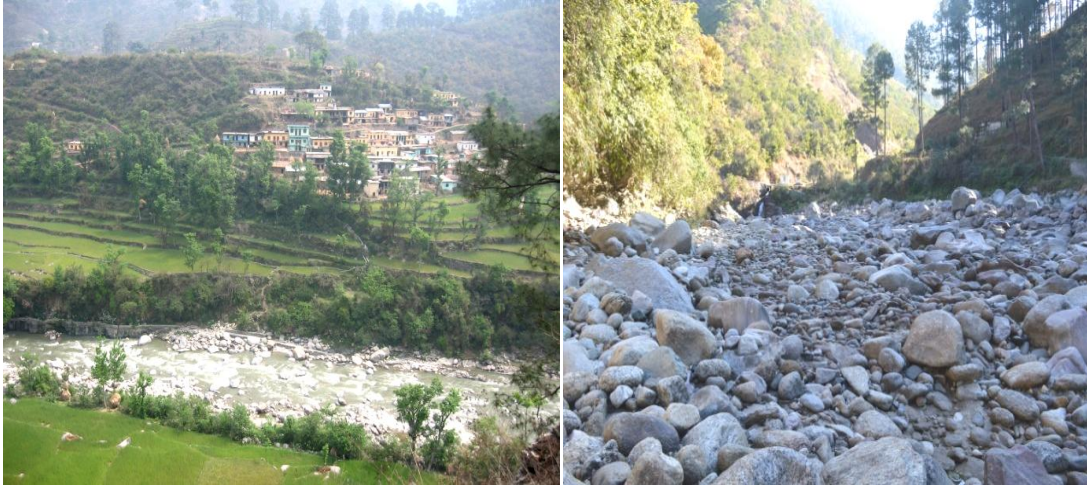
The protests are now for individual demands and individual villages and with the orientation of getting in position of negotiation and compromise. In Uppu, there were big protests for inclusion in rehabilitation, but people compromised with the money of house construction and stopped their agitation when they could have fought for complete rehabilitation, feels Maiji Jupla Rana (running an ashram in Uppu). Uncertainty makes people take what is available than to live with more uncertainty. It is felt that whatever is offered should be taken first, unless even that gets diverted to others as there are so many mediators and rehabilitation is not provided in a legally just and equal way.

Tehri people, who are now working in THDC, know of the irregularities and injustice in the process of rehabilitation, and they were eager to provide me minute details, but as employees, they are fully faithful to the company. They are now the officials and experts who do not hesitate in implementing similar projects in other regions.

Movements against the Small Projects: The Movement in Phalenda

Even the small projects like the Swasti Hydro project⁹ of 22.5 MW in Chamiyala, Ghansali in Tehri district are rendering the rivers like Bhilangana completely dry. I could cross the dry river bed after construction of the project on foot, and so can all kinds of wild animals, destroying the fields.

⁹ Its key associate Acres International being a firm blacklisted by the World Bank in 2004 on charges of corruption. However, World Bank was providing 80% of funds to the project (*Uttaranchal India* 2005).



Waterless Rivers: The first photo below of Bhilangana was taken on 1.04.2012, flowing by the Gawani village. Second photo is taken on 26.12.2014, standing in the same river bed.

The project is owned by an Andhra Pradesh based private company (the owner being the brother of then CM Rajshekhar Reddy of Andhra Pradesh). It is affecting five villages. However, villagers of Phalenda remained more active and vocal in struggles related to the project; it has come to be identified as Phalenda andolan. There were spontaneous protests in the region. The local organisation ‘Chetna Andolan’¹⁰ guided the collective resistance.

There were sustained protests and repressions for close to three years from 2004 onwards. The women remained at the forefront. In interaction with them, they claim that they had had no exposure to police earlier. But during this struggle, they spent many days in jail, were thrashed by police, and their clothes torn. They undertook unique methods of agitation as rally beating canisters, *kanastar bajao rally* (Amar Ujala 2004). An active woman Vimla Rana of the movement recalls that truck full of police personnel were sent in villages. People were kept literally under house arrests. Due to their repeated stints in jail, the children failed in exams and the cattle had to be sold, as when they are not milked regularly, they stop milking altogether. They took out rallies, dharnas. The struggle was repressed and broken by the active mediation of the district administration, especially one SDM Prakash Chandra Dumka, who according to Gyanchand, the previous *Pradhan*, took it as his personal responsibility to let the project work continue without ‘disruption’ and told the people

¹⁰ It is a left group, whose main activist, Trepan Singh Chauhan is also the son-in-law of the ‘village’ Phalenda.

that the project was inevitable¹¹. He took written statement from the youth and children that they will not participate in the protests to let them take their government school examinations. Women were asked to produce license for their sickles. *Prem se, daaru se, lada kar, dara kar toda gaon ko*, says Rana, that the unity of the village was broken by at times showing benevolence, at times supplying liquor, generating conflicts and giving threats. Forests were not only cut, the remaining was made inaccessible by throwing muck in them and in the grazing grounds.

Trepan Singh Chauhan, recalls that they did not take the leadership in the movement; they wished to support the movement from outside. They prompted the villagers to make their own organisation and chose a leader and seek information about the project. People demanded for the project documents and receiving them after considerable difficulties in 2004, found out that the region was shown as bereft of any habitation and forests. They demanded then for the documents to be revised. There was constant pressure on them by the administration to put forward their demands. They argued that they could extend any demands only when they are shown to be as living there. People thought that going by the legal process the company will not be able to construct the project. Instead, the repression started. With this repressive apparatus, simultaneous ideological claims of the regions' development through the project were also made. There were repeated claims by the DM in the newspapers that the villagers were misguided by the NGOs, and the project is RoR, not having any impact on their fields and canals or any other geological impact. The project will maintain an *aviral* flow, bringing employment and other facilities for the region and the state.

Many activists and forums like Mahila Manch and PUCL came to the villages to extend their solidarity. Eventually the prominent social activists mediated to get an agreement between the struggling people and the company as they felt that the company will not step back and argued that the people have become tired of the movement and their economic condition has worsened. The agreement was seen as a victory of the struggle as it mentioned that the first right over the river is of the villagers, so the water will be released in their canals first before being diverted for the project (Sah 2006). The administration had taken the responsibility to implement

¹¹ The local administration got further push in their promotion of the project when they realised that there were no protests at the time of filling of the Tehri lake as the last tunnel was closed, in the same time period (*Amar Ujala* (2005)).

the agreement which ensured a canal from upstream of the project to the agricultural fields, a convent school, road, provision of drinking water as well as share a part of its benefits by the company. Largely the implementation is still pending, save a small bus that ferries the children to the school in market area and some cash compensation for the damage to the yields. Whoever was given employment during construction, are now not required by the company and rendered workless. A court case about the increase in height of the project is pending in the High Court.

In a documentary film made in 2006, *Phir Subah Hogi*, women of this area are expressing how they have created the forests spending years and it is their *duty* to protect them, *hamari duty to issi jungle ki thi*. It is to save the forests, that they are being arrested as if thieves or dacoits. They declare that they will not allow the formation of one more Tehri. They clarify that for them development is not merely lighting a bulb in the house, but it also means the agricultural fields and livelihood as they could not live if they do not get water in the fields. What is this, development or business of their lives, *vikas hai ya hamari zindagi ka vyapar*, the women questioned. According to newspaper reports, the people demanded that such small projects should be constructed by the panchayat (*Dainik Jagran* 2006).

The discourse has changed now as the people assess what they got from the struggle. People wonder whether if they had entered in negotiations from the start, then they could have got more. Some villagers felt that the Chetna Andolan got recognition as the struggle became widely known, but the villagers did not get what they feel they were entitled for, *haasil kuch nahi hua*. Seema Ramola of Gawani feels the struggle became famous, but there was no gain, *andolan mashoor to hua par fayada na ke saman*. Saruna women felt that Phalenda got everything, they were left out, such inter village and intra village comparisons and conflicts have arisen. Ramprasad Rawat in Phalenda feels that they have been branded as anti-development. Afterwards, two more projects came up upstream, but did not face much resistance from the locals. They thought cooperation will be appreciated and compensated for, but they were eventually proved wrong.

The project authorities also capitalise on the different aspirations of the people, which have become evident with each ‘victory’ that the authorities have had in implementation of different projects and the active involvement of the Uttarakhandi bureaucracy with an ‘intimate knowledge’ of its people. This also allows some

villagers with cultural capital and political links to capitalise on the situation and many have earned a great deal out of the process. Generally whereas the old and women wish for the land to stay, the youth wish for employment. These different agendas are also reflected in struggles in other regions.

Movements against the Small Projects: The Movement in Bageshwar



Resisting to save a disaster: The people taking out a *juloos* against the project of Phase I (Source of first photo: Keshav Bhatt). The damage due to the adit tunnel of Phase II in Baanse village is visible in second.

In all the protests, if one could be said ‘successful’, that could not be compromised, it was that of few remote villages of Bageshwar. In the Bageshwar district of Uttarakhand Kumaun region, in the Kapkot Block on the Saryu River, three small projects of the Uttar Bharat Hydropower Ltd. company were to be built. The Kapkot area has turned more fragile due to the extensive mining activities. Loose rocks can be seen easily in the hills here. According to the locals, 25 km of river Saryu is in possession of a businessman Kashmiri Lal Agarwal of Ranikhet, who have entered in agreements with different companies to build these projects. One project is already operational in the Munar area upstream. Out of three to be built by Uttar Bharat company, the projects II and III have been undertaken, but the work for the Project I in Song village could not be initiated, due to the movement of the local people. Most well-to-do and educated have left the area for Bageshwar town, as this is an interior border area. The others have only the river and fields to survive on. Apart from agriculture, this area also draws its livelihood from facilitating trekking groups

to the Pindari, Sundardunga and Kafni glaciers on whose route these are the last villages, and here the road ends.

People sat on *dharna* and hunger strike against the project of phase I for close to eight months in the years 2007-2008 in the Song village. The main force behind the protests was the *Pradhan* Mohan Singh Taluki of the Loharkhet village, then a committed BJP local politician. During this movement he got disillusioned with BJP as the party MLA Bhagat Singh Koshiyari actively pushed the projects in the region (he being active in the promotion of Tehri dam as well). Takuli however, used his knowledge gathered due to his party work in guiding the struggle in his village. Takuli knew about the hydropower projects and their impacts as he has closely followed the media reports about resettlement in case of Tehri dam. Due to his extensive 'field work' for mobilisation for the party, he was well aware of the condition of villages in Uttarakhand and thought that they were in relatively better condition in their village. He had also worked as a contractor in the upstream hydropower project. So, he had the experience of the irregularities in the construction work of such projects. After construction of that project, their area had seen increase in landslides, so when the Uttar Bharat Company approached their village, he as the *Pradhan* of the village opposed the idea. The main reason he says is that as a landslide prone zone, they remain in perpetual fear of landslips in monsoon months. The village Loharkhet is already marked for rehabilitation as a sensitive area. Other people also opined that the area is so sensitive that even loud drums could lead to damage in the region. Any further blasting and tempering could prove disastrous. The company tried to negotiate on various points, like that they will not do blasting but will do boring, but the common sentiment was that rehabilitation for such a small population will not be considered when even the vast population of Tehri displaced could not be rehabilitated. Also, the people were more aware of manipulative tactics of the company.

A proper organisation of people was ensured in the Loharkhet village. Takuli recalls that frequent meetings were held with each and every member of the village to decide the course of action they wished to undertake and whether they were ready to struggle for a long time against the company. The villagers decided that whosoever will join the company, will be made outcast, *jo bika uska hukka pani band*. Then the meetings were held with the other villages of the area, Song, Saling, Suding and a

Sangharsh Samiti was formed, a struggle committee, wherein the other villages also came to support. It was named *Saryu Bachao Haq Hakuk Bachao Samiti*, thus, the work of committee was not only to save the river Saryu, but also to ensure the rights of the villagers related to it.

The machines of the company were not allowed to enter in the area. People sat on indefinite hunger strike and brought about rallies. They went to meet the Chief Minister and other politicians, but they were also aware of political involvement in promotion of the projects, as Thansingh in Munar observed, when the CM could sell Saryu, why will he hesitate in selling our homes, *jab CM saryu ka pani bech sakta hai, to hamare ghar bhi bech sakta hai*. They also visited the other villages where such protests were taking place. Takuli visited Chaen affected by Jaypee project in Joshimath and was also invited to a seminar¹² related to the ongoing struggles against hydropower projects. The area was united. Takuli says that women and men left their homes and cattle and sat on the *dharna* consistently. Takuli's wife, Mohini Takuli, then the Mahila Mangal Dal president and other women and the elderly of the region, remained a powerful force in the movement. Many also sat on the indefinite hunger strike. A *lokadesh*, an announcement-order by the people of the region, says that *without the society's approval the river cannot be given to any company, so we order the government that they cancel any such agreement with the company*.

Takuli clarifies that they are not *vikas virodhi*, anti-development, as they were termed by the politicians, but projects are not the way development can happen, as tunnelling the rivers means that the clean air and the greenery will cease to exist as tunnels soak up the moisture of the fields. People should be allowed to live as they are living, and if development has to be done then something constructive is to be thought, like tea plantations or work on the railway line connecting Bageshwar, or planting more fruit bearing trees. Also, as the project was private, neither the Government nor the villagers were getting anything. If the profit was going to the Government, sacrifice could be done, he feels. The company people had come with a car stuffed with money and had offered jobs for his son and a flat in Haldwani, but he refused as he was thinking of the region as a whole, his village as a whole and

¹² In which the expression of Susheela Bhandari that the region will not become a land of energy, but land of death, *ye urja pradesh in murda pradesh banne wala hai*, influenced him deeply and also the fact that Pahari women could come out so boldly.

wondered how he could alone get the benefits when the whole village stood to be destroyed.

Local politicians actively negotiated for the projects. The MLA of the area, Bhagat Singh Koshiyari announced in local meetings that even if his political base stands affected, he will make sure that the projects come up. Under his influence the protests in phase II and III of the projects could not sustain and the main leaders compromised. Even when the project company have suspended the project of phase I since 2008, the threat of company looms large on the villagers of Loharkhet. The project sympathisers within the village like the retired official from education Department, Darban Singh Takuli, are still harbouring dreams like starting a bottled water business on the local stream if he could receive the initial capital from the company. The company keeps to its attempts of tempting the youth, *dheere dheere ladkon ko fusla ke todne ki koshish karte hain ab bhi*. Takuli feels that the youth wishes for immediate money, benefits and jobs like driver, contractor in the company, *aajkal yuva yahi chah raha hai ki theka mila, driver banu, paisa kamaun, abhi aish karo, khao piyo*. But for the old, home means they can always come back even if they have to go out for earning, the loss of home for them means uprootedness, *ghar to ghar hi hua, jab tak ghar hai kha sakte hain, jaden khatam ho jayegi*. The older generation also thinks about the young and wonder how they will manage in a two room set in plains.

Media coverage mattered for the movement. Activist based newspapers like *Nainital Samachar* reported about the movement frequently, whose local contributor Keshav Bhatt, actively supporting the movement. Due to his efforts, the known activists joined in solidarity, like Rajendra Singh and Shamsher Singh Bisht. Takuli observed that during the movement, the well-known activists who came from outside for support, brought media attention which otherwise eluded the struggle, but the reports in media projected them as the force behind the movement. So everyone focussed on drawing something out of the struggle, *jo bhi aata hai wo kisi niji hit ke liye aata hai, uska fayada uthana chahta hai, image banana chahta hai*. Especially the local politicians projected themselves as leaders of the movement for political mileage, *netaon ne hamari badolat apni netagiri chamkayi, aage jake media ke samne apne ko project kiya, jaise ki duniya ko lage ki inhone hi andolan karaya*. Media captured these 'leaders' voice more who would come to join the *juloos* of the people

momentarily. Chandra Singh Takuli of Munar village (who is finding it difficult to get permission to run a gharat in the region), informs that the reporters covered the struggle for initial months, and then they also were ‘bought’ by the company.

Due to the increased disturbances and extensive blasting and flood in Saryu in the year 2010, the area was extensively damaged. 18 children had died as the wall of the school in Sumgarh had collapsed. The commodification and corruption had pained Mohan Takuli so much that he wrote a song during the movement that became popular. He says that *the money is making others unable to see our pain and self-respect; we are actually saving our mother, Saryu. Our pain is inherent in our songs*¹³:

sou dhaaron bae nikali mata	emerged from hundred springs
saryu tero nama	mother, you are named as saryu
hey saryu mata	hey mother saryu
teri mahima chu mahana	your glory is immense (as so many livelihoods depend on you)
tyar shudh paani chadulo	your pure water
tapt kund dhaama	purifies the <i>taptkund</i> and <i>baagnath dhaams</i>
baagnaath dhama	(the temples in Song and in Bageshwar)
jael teri shakti ni jaani	those who do not know of your power
un logon agyana	they are ignorant
twi bechan bhae gai	you are being sold mother
mata kalyuga insane	by the <i>kalyug</i> people
dwi paisa khaatir mata	for few pennies
bik gaya insana	people sell themselves
dwi boond paani lae mata	few drops of your mother
mainson mein uncho jana	revives the tired soul
tu alop hai jaali	if you disappear mother
mata tadfala insana	people will suffer
twe bachuna khaatir mata	to save you mother
dwi duyelo jana	we can give our lives

Due to phase II of the project, the water sources of Baanse village have dried. The village level leaders, who were protesting there, were given contract jobs by the

¹³ Connection with the river formed a powerful mobilising element of the struggle and most of the action started after visiting the Taptkund temple by the river.

The origin of Saryu is a natural water source names Sarmul, which with other water sources, springs and tributaries take the shape of the river. Like it even Kosi is not glacier fed and such rivers are declining in water levels every year.

Taptkund temple in Song village and the Bhaagnath temple in Bageshwar by Saryu are pilgrimage spots and big religious *melas* take place here.

company and they compromised. The women in the village said that that few 'wise' men took the decision and villagers were not asked, *kuch syano ne faisla kar diya, gaonwalon se pucha hi nahi*. The fields have dried and it is not possible now to have rice cultivation, *rupai nahi lagti ab*. Few men in this village justified the action by saying that the projects were inevitable as they have to use the money that the World Bank have given them.

Projects on Mandakini: The Appropriation of Activism



Protesting against intrusive control: The dharna site of the villages affected by L & T *Singoli Bhatwari* project in the village Arkhund (24.3.12)

From Kedarnath to Rudraprayag city, nine projects are proposed on the Mandakini River and its tributaries, out of which work is going on the L&T and LANCO projects. The L&T *Singoli-Bhatwari* project has an 18 km long tunnel, with its opening at a point Kund near Augustmuni town and the powerhouse in Guptkashi. The villagers of this project, along with the villagers affected by the LANCO company's *Phata Vyung* project, have formed *Kedar Ghati Bachao Sangharsh Samiti*, which is an organisation of 32 gram sabhas living by the Mandakini river. L& T affected villages like Rayadi and Arkhund, which remained at the forefront of struggles, were said to be *adarsh*, ideal villages, they had fertile lands and practiced collective farming. The villagers had developed wide areas of forests as Van Panchayats. The education status in Arkhund remained good with many post graduates and graduates. The migration from this area was less as livelihood is also provided by Kedarnath yatra season. The town of Augustmuni is also close.

The villages affected by the L&T project continued protesting against the company in the years after 2006. Different village level leaders emerged at different times. The most well known amongst them is Susheela Bhandari of Rayadi village. She as the Mahila Mangal Dal (village level women council) president, along with other women of the area opposed the survey of the company. The initial protests were spontaneous as the women were against the damage to the forests that they had painstakingly developed. A local CPI M member Gangadhar Nautiyal, who practices as a lawyer in the Rudraprayag court and is active in the region in various movements, was instrumental in the formation of the Sangharsh Samiti of all affected villages. For six months all the villages sat on a *dharna* on rotational basis and the work of the company was stopped.

The company started giving some contract work to some of the youth of the village and distributed gift items and extended the temptations of pensions. The villagers got divided, as the beneficiaries of these jobs and gifts started disrupting the protests at company's motivation. At one point of time, few persons also burned down the tin shed where women sat for the *dharna*. The company kept to the task of cutting forests and simultaneously filed many cases on the protesting people, on men, women and children, for damaging their property and disrupting their work. At times a single person had 10-12 cases pending against him, and the whole village had to go to court for appearance in the court or for bails.

However the women say that they continued their protests. The local politicians who came to mediate, gained influence and trust of the villagers, but often later negotiated with the company for bribes. Nadi Bachao Andolan was also active in that period and so was CPI M and with their efforts, the Samiti met many politicians including the Chief Minister. The then environment minister Jairam Ramesh was met with and expert committees sent to the site. By the time any action could be taken, the minister changed.

The company started building a bridge to approach the adit tunnels downhill to Arkhund and Rayadi villages, but the villagers broke the bridge repeatedly. Susheela Bhandari and Jagmohan Jinghwan (a retired army person) were taken to be jailed for a period of 65 days in the year 2011. Thousands of people took a *pradarshan* in the front of Collectorate in Rudraprayag demanding release of Susheela and Jagmohan (*Nainital Samachar* 2011). Susheela Bhandari was received with great pomp and

show, as villagers went in open jeeps and drums to get her back to the village. However, during this period the company got a stronger hold in the area. Most of the villagers started negotiating with the company for something or the other.

After her stint in jail and because of her zealous and committed protests, she became a known face and got recognised as a ‘leader’ as NGOs and different other platforms started calling her in their seminars and meetings. She has been “showcased”¹⁴ at different platforms. She is good orator, knows many bhajans by heart and remains out on *yatras*, even at the cost of her ‘household responsibilities’. I have met her at different points of time at leftist forums, in *yatras* of gandhian activists, and also welcoming rightist leaders with garlands, *phoolmalas*. She claims to know many high profile people including the Shankracharya, many politicians and activists. She is claimed and claim association with each, although the impact of the rightist forces is clearly more. The platforms get a symbol of struggle and she gets fame and publicity and a feeling of continuation towards the ‘cause’. Someone also maintains a facebook profile for her and she has received awards for her work ‘for the environment’, including the *Akhil Bhartiya Ojasvi Samman* by the Madhya Pradesh Government and the *Tarun Bharat Paryavaran Rakshan Samman* in Rajasthan (*Rashtriya Sahara* 2014).

A change could be seen in her language and approach due to this process. When heard in 2012 in a meeting on social movements, she came out to be fiery aggressive activist speaking on behalf of her community. Now the language has changed. Her account of the struggle period when recounted now is more personalised, in terms of what she feels about the project and who all she met and know now and possess the contact numbers of, and does not reflect any collective strategy or goal, mostly seeking the outside organisational support even when the struggle in the village is not continuing. She seemed to have learnt the language of a ‘selfless worker’ as she repeatedly said that she feels she has taken numerous births to save the mother Ganga and to save the earth. She has an aura now, bounded by an image of a distinguished activist, but an expansion in consciousness about a collective struggle is not evident.

¹⁴ A term used by Indresh Maikhuri, a CPI ML activist.

She does not wish to differentiate between different groups who are working against the projects and issues of environment, ganga, Himalaya, culture, temples, *jo ganga, himalaya, paryavaran, sanskriti, dharm, math, mandir ki baat karte hain unke saath chali jati hun*. She is willing to go to any such meeting, provided she is given the fare and other facilities, *aane jaane ka kharcha*. However, she has refused to join any political party despite such proposals. The activists like Nautiyal and others feel that she cannot be considered a leader of the struggle now as the people are not in support of her in the village. They disapprove of the culture of NGO funding for travel and other expenditures of activists. The organisations attached to Nadi Bachao Andolan had also started a monthly honorarium for her.

In the village Rayadi itself, speculations are rife and mutual distrust has crept in as each feels the other has taken something from the company. These speculations are more about people who are highlighted by the media and the NGOs. People told me even Susheela Bhandari's son is now working in the company. Due to such practices of company, the need to compensate fairly everyone gets avoided. Many who have not compromised with the company have sidestepped as they are fed up with the cases and hearings in which the company have trapped them, Fatehsingh Banguri of Rayadi said, let the village go to hell, we have nothing to do with it now, *bhaad mein jaye gaon, hume ab kuch lena dena nahi*. Some like Rajpal Singh Bhandari, a principal of local school, feels it will be 'injustice' to stop the project, *project ko rokna anyay hai*. Whereas in some cases, the company people extend heavy money as *shagun* in functions of marriage or child birth, in some cases they claim wrongly that they have already compensated people for the damages in their home due to the blasting.

Now the company is also putting up hoardings that 'warn' people that within a 100 m zone of the project work any protest, *dharna pradarshan* is not allowed. 170 boys that the company had employed were expelled as the andolan grew weak. They have formed a union now and protesting for getting work, as guided by Nautiyal. Nautiyal has also shifted the struggle towards Guptakashi, the powerhouse site of the project and dharnas are taking place there. A gandhian group of youth is also active in that area. Especially after the 2013 tragedy and the consequent damages to the agricultural land of the villages and to the homes of the town of Augustmuni, the impact of the project have become clearer in people's mind. The town people feel that

it is due to dumping of the tunnel muck in Mandakini and the compound impact of two projects, that it became so damaging without even heavy rain in the Rudraprayag area. The town people have also launched a campaign against the company, to get compensation for their damage.

Projects on Alaknanda

A Lone Village's Struggle against the Vishnuprayag Project

The barrage of the Jaiprakash company project is located near Lambagarh, close to the Badrinath *dhaam*. It is one of the earliest proposed projects in Uttarakhand. It involves a diversion of the Alaknanda River through a 12 km tunnel, affecting what is considered as the first *prayag*, the *Vishnuprayag*. The powerhouse is located across the Alaknanda River from the town of Joshimath that acts as a regional administrative, market and service centre. Chaen village is located directly upslope from the powerhouse, the only village directly affected by this project. The main livelihood of the villagers close to Lambagrah and of Chaen¹⁵ was agriculture, supplemented by providing milk, fruits, vegetables and such sales to the pilgrims on route to Badrinath and Hemkund Sahib and tourists going to the Valley of flowers.

The Pradhan of Chaen, about 80 years of age, when was met with in the year 2012, had recounted how when the company had arrived in the area, it was clueless due to its lack of knowledge of the topography. The villagers helped in the surveys and suggested location to put their pillars, with the belief that they will be made beneficiaries of development that the project will bring. The village was in good condition as the livelihood options were available, what they wanted were roads, good school for their children and health services. They were promised all this.

Chaen residents along with the activists and NGO from Joshimath and separately as well, have held many protests over the years, with demands of increasing the amount of catchment area treatment plan, constructing a road from Chaen to the Badrinath highway, providing jobs, providing compensation to the homes that ceded after the tunnels started operating. They have at times blocked the Badrinath highway and at times held hunger strikes. These protests are a collage of

¹⁵These nearby villages of the dhaams also have temples which are considered important, for example Chaen has a temple of *Sita*, with the belief that Sita stayed in the area during the *vanwaas*.

disjointed rallies and memorandums, each calling itself an *andolan*, especially in the vocabulary of the local NGO Janadesh. Janadesh also printed booklets on the village and the matter of Chaen has been widely covered in the local media. Virender Singh Bhandari of Chaen felt that as it was the initial project the people were not aware, but the people affected by other projects in the region are negotiating well with the company. He felt that when the company is capable of ‘buying’ every top official, what standing do they have, *jab bade bade logon ko kharid sakti hai company to hum kya hai?*

Most in the village like Bhupal Singh, chose to protest individually and as a subject of bureaucracy, chiefly through ‘papers’, applications and complaints to different departments and agencies. Bhupal Singh had polybags full of files and applications. The documents have increasingly become important as the affected people stake claims to the company and also approach courts. The ‘displaced’ were never acknowledged by the company as to be affected by the project. In the pressure of the people a sum of money was forwarded in the name of *devi aapda*, which was declared to be the cause of the land sinks. Bhupalsingh came to the empty reservation centre in Joshimath town with his family. It was in deplorable condition when I visited it last time, although the family continue to capture it as a mark of protest against the ceding of their eight room house in the village. Other families continued to live in tin sheds in Joshimath for 2-3 years.

When I went to the village in 2015, most of the people had repaired the homes themselves and stayed in the village. People have spent on court cases as well, but now they do not wish to spend more and hence more or less they have stopped the protests, engaging in individual negotiations. Whoever could afford to, have constructed homes in Joshimath and came to the village for agricultural work. Fruit bearing trees are still not coming up. The Jaypee company meanwhile had constructed the road, due to which many young boys have employed jeeps to ferry people to Joshimath town. The resentment continues however, especially in the SC hamlet of the village, the people of which were neglected from whatever compensation was otherwise provided to villagers. Now the project is said to be traded to Reliance, hence it will be difficult for the villagers to approach the new agency with their problems.

NTPC Projects: Negotiations and Compromises

NTPC has two projects on the Dhauliganga River (tributary of Alaknanda river) in the Chamoli district, the Lata Tapovan Project¹⁶, whose work has not progressed much due to a stay by the Supreme Court and the 520 MW Tapovan Vishnugaad project. The Tapovan Vishnugaad project has a 12 km long tunnel with its barrage site near Tapovan and Dhaak villages, about 15km uphill from Joshimath. The powerhouse is located near Selang village, downhill of Joshimath. As the tunnel of this project goes under the Auli forest above the Joshimath town, the town people are also protesting against this project. The protests are ongoing from 2004-05, which includes rallies, dharnas, and blocking the construction work. In June 2005, villagers had blocked construction of a road to the barrage site near Tapovan demanding that the compensation be settled before construction on the project is allowed to begin. People of Saleng also protested against the land acquisition and have also *gheraoed* the visiting ministers demanding the stalling of the project (Amar Ujala, 2.3.05). There was such a strong opposition of the inauguration of the project by the Chief Minister, that he has to do the inauguration from Dehradun itself.

Joshimath people are banking on a report of a committee setup in 1976, which said that the town and the surrounding villages have grown on an ancient landslide; it is a deposit of sand and stone, not hard rock. It was considered to be even unstable for the pressure of the township, and it recommended restriction on heavy construction work, blasting and heavy traffic, felling of trees and even on agriculture. However, NTPC has declared only one portion of the town, Ravigram as affected as its lands have been acquired. The tunnel of Tapovan Vishnugaad project is said to be passing under Joshimath. CPI ML and CPI M activists are active here. The town and the surrounding villages have demanded assurances of water supply and insurances for their homes and livelihood sources. In a joint rally in 2010, thousands participated against the NTPC projects with traditional musical instruments. The town market remained closed (*Rashtriya Sahara* 2010).

Eventually however the people were forced to give in. Cases were filed against the Dhaak people who went for protests. The youth of their village were initially taken and then expelled from work. Deweshwari Devi of Dhaak feels that

¹⁶ It has at least four more projects planned upstream till the Indian border in Niti valley.

people are under pressure of company only because there are no other employment sources. Suresh Devi said that she was against giving her land to the company but all the neighbours gave theirs, so she also had to give it. Those whose sons are employed in the company feel more assured. Anusuya Prasad Pant in Tapovan felt that the company work will at least go on for 8-10 years as there is no immediate desperation as both his sons are earning well working in the company, even when they have sold all their land to the company. From Selang people took out *juloos* few times, and angry at the cracks in their homes, they stalled the work for close to a year, leading to distribution of work to some people. Here as well cases were filed against 50 people who have to appear in courts in Gopeshwar or Joshimath since the last 7-8 years. Rukmini Devi feels that there is no one to listen to them, the people are now tired, when the officials do not listen to us, who will help them, *is gaon mein koi sunwai nahi hai, ab to log thak gaye, jab madad adhikari logon ne nahi ki to kaun karega?*

The Lata residents had not allowed company to enter in the area initially. However, the struggles in this area are influenced by the history of Chipko movement and consequent government actions leading to loss of rights of people over the forests. According to Dhan Singh Rana, a CPI M associated comrade of Lata village, the government declared the area as Nanda Devi National Park, due to which there are many restrictions on the villagers for example they are not even allowed to use drums in the area. Due to the restrictions on agricultural practices, the people are now forced to depend on the Joshimath town for cereals and other things like medicine as they cannot even collect herbs from the forests. However, flouting all this company is allowed to do blasting, *humen dhol bajana mana hai, unhe blasting karna allowed hai*. He said it is like a company rule here, the company started their work holding no public hearing, even as the land belonged to schedule tribes. In name of development and environment, different government agencies are getting their way by staking contradictory claims. The company is claiming that there are no wild animals in the area, whereas Rana says that the Forest Department and environmental organisations are receiving crores from international bodies in name of saving the wildlife there.

From 2002, the villagers started their struggle against the Lata Tapovan project of NTPC. Initially there were joint protests with the Tapovan Vishugaad project affected, but then work started in the downstream project. Till 2013 the company work could not be started in Lata, when new GM, Shrivastava was

appointed in the area by the company, who held continuous meetings with the villagers and said to have introduced divisions. Rana felt that earlier there was a collective feeling that the village was to be saved, slowly contractors got born. The other villagers were told that the leader, Rana will get benefits as he has more approach and the rest of the villagers will be left with nothing. Ultimately the company entered in an agreement with the villagers, in which the villagers have claimed for a sharing of 8% of their profit with the villagers.¹⁷ Rana feels that the villagers do not have much exposure; it is easy to lure them, as immediate gains are projected, *kisi ne kuch dekha nahi hai, kahne mein aa jaate hain, alp lobh ke liye.*

Even when Rana was opposing the project in his area, he later took a contract for supplying material to the downstream project with a group of others in the village. As a CPI M activist his responsibility for the village as a whole made him mobilise against the project. But when others entered in individual negotiations, he also as an earning member of his family had to seek some work, especially when he was pressurised by others as he has more favour of the company as a potential candidate for contract work in comparison of other contractors that the area is teeming with, in order to keep the dissent in check. Reini, the centre of Chipko village was already feeling deceived with the Chipko movement, Gauradevi's son Chandra Singh feels that everyone have 'eaten' in name of Chipko and they did not get anything, so they easily entered in compromise with the company.

After the disaster people are forced to take company work more as the tourists have decreased drastically in this area.

Vishnugaad Pipalkoti Project: Everyday Protests

After the powerhouse of the NTPC project in Saleng, the barrage of THDC comes up in Haleng. It is a 420 MW project known as Vishnugaad Peepalkoti project. The powerhouse of the project affects amongst others, the village Hatt that is said to be *chotikashi*, as it was main stopover on the earlier *chardhaam yatra* route. There

¹⁷ However, Shrivastava when talked to expressed his surprise at the audacity of 'such' people (brainwashed by CPI) of demanding a share in profits of the company. He said that they have only accepted the money for fodder, and that too will not be given to villagers, but to the state government, as the company does not wish to establish a wrong precedent. People do not full idea of what they stand to loose and what they should demand.

were numerous *belpatra* trees, old temples like the Laxmi Narayan temple and religiously important *kunds*.

A section of the village has shifted to a site across Alaknanda river, breaking their homes in the village, a necessary condition to receive compensation. It includes all the families of SCs in this Brahmin dominated village. However, those who have shifted were not given further instalments by the company. They eventually had to build homes on the agricultural land, using their own money, taking loans, breaking FDs, selling land and going bankrupt in the process. In the new place they do not have access to forests and irrigation facilities, forcing them to return to the main village for wood and fodder.

The families who have remained behind stall the work of the company at day to day basis. The person, who guides the main leader in the village Narendra Pokhriyal¹⁸, is Delhi based activist Vimal Bhai. He communicates through his phone, faxes and emails, and occasionally visits the protest site. On the motivation of Pokhriyal, villagers have stopped the construction work many times. The actions included blocking the work by putting locks to the machines of the company, by the few families which are left in the village. At times, the work remained closed for months (*Amar Ujala* 2014). Individual leaders sat on month long dharnas (*Dainik Jagran* 2014). In addition, Bharat Jhunjhunwala¹⁹, has sought to put forward a court case and appeal to World Bank, which is funding the project. However, the work is continuing. The struggle here has remained isolated from the nearby Joshimath area. Cases were filed against the protesting people, and whole attention now is in the court cases.

Hatt is almost empty now, only 8-10 families have stayed back, out of which only 3-4 reside there. The labourers of the company have now taken over the empty spaces, the school and anganwadi. Uma Hatwal, an affluent old lady said that they are not demanding anything from the company, they are not beggars, they are happy in their homes, they have 60 nalli land, which the company cannot compensate for. She said that the company has attacked them in the fashion that a bear attacks,

¹⁸ Who has now joined the Aam Aadmi Party as he felt that he needed some political back up.

¹⁹ A retired Professor of Economics, who has settled near the Shrinagar town. Earlier the locals had approached him to intervene in the proposed project in his region. Later he became active in protesting against the projects, chiefly through petitions in the Court and speaking in seminars and discussions and writing about the issue.

finishing off the person. She expressed her anguish on the destruction of Garhwal, *garhwal ki kaisi barbadi kar rahe hain*. She says, *they sent the NGO people to assess our weak points, what all we own, whether we have TV, cattle etc.* Bhuvneshwari Mahila Ashram, a NGO was hired by the THDC here to mediate with the villagers. In a letter addressed to the village Pradhan, the NGO says that it their duty towards ‘THDC and World Bank’ to put efforts for mitigation of the problems of the people.

Different Players and the Ideological Playfield

Apart from the activists based in the affected villages, there are many activists, intellectuals, political representatives, *sadhus*, NGOs, *sarvodayis*, journalists, literary figures and platforms that are involved in the struggles and in the larger discussion about hydropower projects in the state. There are few who are active only as public interest litigator and few have adopted a more eclectic combination of intellectualism and activism. There is a competition in taking credit and staking claim on the resistance, which struggle ‘belongs’ to which group, which banner is in prominence, whose slogan is heard, who is the person that should be considered the authority for which project/region. This insecurity also comes from the presence of many contending ‘activists’ and thus resistances ‘could get appropriated’ by others. There have been instances of NGOs taking credit of resistances being built by others, the former have more media approach, or of activists arriving and taking over spontaneous resistance of villagers. Some activists are not working with a tag of any clear or exclusive ideology. Even when the activists belong to defined ideologies in terms of right, left and gandhian, in their mobilisation discourse, a mix of all exists. Few intellectuals like to remain free floating and attend programs of each group.

Differentiations on the basis of caste and class do not form the basis of working of the different political groups and they thus, do not hesitate in coming to one platform. The discourses of accumulation and resource exploitation by outsiders, the cultural religious importance of rivers, and the questions of livelihood are not specific to one group and have been raised continuously through earlier movements of the region as well. However, the prominence given to specific concerns do differ in the case of different political forces. It is a specificity of this region, religious-cultural elements cannot be separately raised from environmental and livelihood questions. The distinction of political and religious that is normally maintained by left forces

cannot be practiced fully in Uttarakhand. However, the way in which religious sentiments and beliefs are getting appropriated by Hindutava forces, non hindutava people, are compelled to be cautious of the religious, lest they be considered pro-Hindutava. There is no independent green lobby that argues to save the ‘river’ for itself, to save its wildness and scenic beauty, irrespective of the religious sentiments²⁰.

Hindutava Forces

Apart from the BJP and VHP leaders in Uttarakhand, the *devbhumi*, hindutava is also practiced by some sadhus and the influential ashrams. Surely all sadhus are not rightist, but in Uttarakhand the vocal discourse has tended to be limited to narrow ‘Hindu’ concerns and remains appropriated by the Hindutava forces. In fact after Babri Masjid, Ganga seems to be the anchor on which the Hindutava politics has leaned.²¹ The influential individuals like G. D. Agarwal, an IIT Professor turned sadhu Gyanswaroopanand and the JNU and other universities’ alumni like Hemant Dhyani (who were affiliated to the student wing of BJP, ABVP, and have also floated a separate platform named Ganga Avahan), are attached with a more vocal ashram *Matri Sadan* in Haridwar, which has taken a stand against the projects, but their discourse also remains limited to Ganga and its relevance to the Hindus of India.

The hindutava forces have termed the damming of mother Ganga as ‘matricide’, a death of *Gangatava*. However, it remains mother of only Hindus. VHP had also associated itself with the Tehri struggle using the same argument. There are many bodies and voluntary organisations associated with them. One of them, the Akhil Bhartiya Akhara Parishad, a body of *sadhus*, had threatened to leave Haridwar and protest against Mahakumbh if the project work continues (Singh, B. 2010). Uma Bharti, a BJP leader has especially projected her concerns for Ganga and when not a Minister, she had actively opposed the dams on the river. She was also of the opinion

²⁰ This demand is raised by intellectuals, like S. Pathak (2012).

²¹ The Prime Minister chose to run elections from Benaras, saying that he has been called by the mother Ganga to stand from there.

The impact of the forces is not that much visible in terms of Hindu-Muslims tensions as the state remains largely of Hindu population, but incidents have started taking place, for example, tension as the *tazia* during Muharram passed in Almora town in 2015. However, these remain minor and rare incidents and it appears that it will remain difficult for the Hindutava politics to find a foothold in Uttarakhand as the community consciousness is strong otherwise.

that the relocation of *dhaari devi* temple of Shrinagar for the hydropower project there, led to the 2013 disaster (In the case of Shrinagar project, as submergence of *dhaari devi* temple became the central point of protests, the company entered in an agreement with the *pujaris* of the temple to relocate the temple at a platform at the same spot, thus negating the basis of the protests). As the Minister of Water resources she has a powerful but still inactive voice in relation to the hydropower projects. Now the concern of the ministry is more about 'river development'. She claims now that she was never opposed to dams, but only wishes to maintain the *aviralta* of the river (Chauhan 2014). The religious and cultural sentiments of the people associated with the river are used for political gains often by the BJP. However, being elected in power in Uttarakhand repeatedly, it has actively pushed for the hydropower projects.

Religiosity has been a part of politics in this 'devbhumi'. However the politics should not be confined to this, is the contention of other activists. The Chipko movement used the strategies as tying rakhees to trees and reading sessions of Bhagvad Gita and the Narmada struggle also projects Narmada as a Hindu Devi, these practices however, were not exclusionary and the vision remained broader. Not so in case of some Sadhus, who only fought for saving the purity of a stretch of Bhagirathi, sidelining the concerns of affected villages' altogether. Their religiosity and faith need to extend to concern for human lives, is the contention of many. The religious-cultural metaphors, idioms and practices used by activists are both strategic and essential for people to come together. They however, need to be contextualised within the complex environmental, social and political issues.

Left activists and the counter resistance forces have argued that the ashrams in Uttarakhand that run due to the yatras and religious tourism are linked with the rivers, and thus there is an interest of sadhus in the *aviral* flow of the rivers. From Haridwar to the *chaar dhams*, the sadhus and *maths* have tremendous property under their ownership (Bhatia 2014). However, there is no joint or consistent or strong opposition by the sadhus (S. Pathak 2012). According to S. Pathak (2012), the sadhus themselves are divided between BJP and Congress. Even the *shankracharyas* are in different camps, one supported the dams, and the other opposing them. Vocal and famous sadhus like Ramdev or Shankracharya, have not made it a cause to oppose the resource exploitation in the state.

The critique of dams by sadhus by saying that they reduce the spiritual quality of Ganga, does not take into account the other rivers or even talk about Ganga in a holistic sense. Sadhu Premanand, who runs a big Shivanand Ashram by the River Bhagirathi in Uttarkashi, distinguished between the social, political and religious work in a conversation. He refused to get involved in matters like hydropower, as according to him it is not the job of mahatmas to engage in social work, *samaj seva*, being the work of political leaders, *baandh vagerah ka kaam neta ka kaam hai*. He felt that Ganga is a *devi*, it is a living deity, it should not be jailed. But he did not think that he or the sadhus need to do anything proactively to respond to the situation. He was of the opinion that they need not make any conscious efforts for society as their existence itself benefits it.

In the case of Loharinaga Pala, Pala Maneri and Bhairon Ghati Projects, the local protests were strong, when G.D. Agarwal²², sat on dharna making religiosity as basis of his protest. Even his dharnas were mostly in Haridwar and Delhi, with high media and government attention on this individualist opposition. He equated saving the Ganga from dams as saving the Hindu faith. According to him (Agarwal 2008), *“Gangaji is no ordinary river in our ethos to be related to these lowly tasks that other rivers and streams also perform...It is a matter of the life and death of Hindu faith, culture, tradition, sentiments and ethos...to me the effort to equate or consider Gangaji to any other river is an attack by the modern scientific/economic culture on the traditional Indian culture,”* The zone from Gaumukh to Uttarakashi was demanded to be declared as eco sensitive zone.

According to Drew (2014), he was seen as a *baharwala*, person from outside who took over the resistance in Uttarkashi. Locals are against the demand of declaration of the area as eco-sensitive zone, as it restricts their activities, even making impossible the measures like microdams. His hunger strikes got the attention and fame that eluded the demands of the people and took attention away from them. Drew highlights that the women of the affected villages wished the people to know

²² The ashram he got attached to, Matri Sadan, had taken such stands earlier too, for example, against mining. But these actions are sparse and not communicated and shared on a mass scale with people.

The yatra of Matri Sadan that I attended involved a fleet of seven fifteen-seater buses and cars, inviting Professors of Environmental Science and Geography with their families from different states, who remained more in a picnic mode. The discussion that occurred at the end of three day yatra was more focussed on how much water should flow in Ganga and how the dams should be arranged to allow the water to flow.

that their only concern was not about Bhagirathi, but the tributaries that are closer to them and on which they depend more and existence of which remained more urgent than the concerns of saving pan-Indian Hindu culture. They wished for the people to know of the impacts of the projects and the losses they have incurred due to the projects; so that they could be compensated for what they had lost. Although the religious concerns also resonate in people's concerns, the mountain-based concerns did not find any space in the concerns raised by Agarwal (pp. 239-240).

Although the stalling of these projects is seen as a win for Agarwal, according to T.N.Shrivastava, GM of the project agency NTPC, the projects were in fact stalled due to BJP-Congress dynamics, as a political strategy as elections were around the corner in the year 2009. He also expressed the doubt that the real interest behind stalling the project was to safeguard the ashrams in that stretch of the river. He argued that it was not a mere religious sentiment, as the project had in fact received approval of religious representatives, *our project was inaugurated with the puja of priests of Gangotri temple, they were not opposed to the diversion of Ganga*. Due to the individualistic manner of these protests and exclusive focus on the stretch of Bhagirathi, many activists also raised questions about the 'real intentions' behind the protests (Bhatia 2010). The particular basis of these protests, gave opportunity to the 'counter-resistance forces' to question the resistances in general, as 'abrupt disruptions by sadhus of the development to safeguard their ashrams'. Behind G.D.Agarwal however, it was not only the support of Hindutava forces, but also powerful lobbying of influential persons whom he has mentored²³.

Agarwal, former Head of the Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering at the IIT, Kanpur, himself teaching the technology of projects like Maneri Bhali (according to Ravi Chopra of People's Science Institute, Dehradun), chose religion as the basis of his protest, ignoring the livelihood concerns of the protesting people or even scientific loopholes in the technology he has taught.

²³ According to Tripathi (2009), these include Anil Agarwal, founder of the Centre for Science and Environment, Dr Ravi Chopra and Rajendra Singh, recipient of the Magsaysay Award and founder of the Tarun Bharat Sangh in Rajasthan.

Agarwal chaired the organisation People's Science Institute (a non-profit 'research and development organisation' run by former IITians), with Ravi Chopra, as the Director. Ravi Chopra was also a member of National Ganga River Basin Authority, who along with other two members resigned in support of Agarwal's protests. Chopra also chaired the 2014 MoEF Expert Committee appointed on directive of Supreme Court to assess the role of hydropower projects in 2013 disaster.

According to Alley (2015:292), historically in context of Ganga, the religious leaders have tended to maintain a separation between Hinduism and science, and between Hinduism and politics, thus eliding ‘the contradiction between their cultural logics’ and any opposition between tradition and modernity, as modernity at a level is already incorporated into their position. To remain “*powerful in their right, religious leaders maintain claims to Ganga in distinctly transcendent terms, distinguishing politics, science, and environmental pollution as pursuits of a separate and more mundane order*” (p. 294).

Both local level leaders of BJP as well Congress are acting as mediators and gaining out of the contractor level work that the projects provide. The distrust that they have bred makes it difficult for people to organise easily. Also, as the local leaders are now more influential in the small state and have accessibility to the ‘big’ leaders, people trust more on their ‘approach’ than the long drawn struggle. This access to shortcut is also seen as a mark of individual superiority (Bauman 2004:104). Further a culture of disengagement and discontinuity that is slowly creeping on the youth as a marker of modernity (p. 17) means that the immediate needs remains more important than land, and that the youth is not tied up with their legacy in a strong way, easing the work of contractors.

Left Forces

At many places, including Maneri Bhali (Uttarakashi)²⁴, Joshimath (as we have discussed), Dharchula, Munsiyari (Pithoragarh) and Kedar Ghati (as discussed earlier), left forces have guided and built the resistances of people. The rifts between CPI M and CPI ML are not sharp, as mostly there are only few people in an area of left ideology, they have often come together too on a single platform to oppose the projects. Class divisions cannot be a basis of politics in Uttarakhand as divisions are not that sharp but resource allocation and distribution remain skewed in pahar and plain areas. In addition to the political parties, many activists like Chauhan are also associated with the left ideology. There are also complaints of the resistances being built by them, taken over by the NGOs. A committed CPI ML activist *Jagat*

²⁴ In the village *Tiloth* that was affected by the powerhouse of the Maneri Bhali project, there was resistance under the leadership of CPI leaders Kamlaram Nautiyal and Chandansigh Rana, leading to better compensation packages for the village.

Martoliya (who later joined the BJP) who works in Dharchula and Munsyari, was complaining how a particular NGO was diluting struggles by indulging in practices like paying the travel costs of the people. He said that the NGOs ‘arrive out of nowhere’ and take photographs of the gathered people and circulate it as ‘their struggles’. The circulation in social media gives visibility and strength to the struggles, but the struggles themselves gets appropriated by those who can use such media, primarily NGOs and urban activists.

Left activists are more conscious of need for a ‘clear’ ideology, and mostly for them the meaning of the term ideology itself is with left ideology²⁵. Atul Sati, a CPI ML activist felt that most people fall for immediate gains and are not able to sustain the pressure of the project authorities in form of corruption and repression, as they are not attached to any ideology. He felt that in absence of an ideology, the discouragement by the society affects the person more and breaks the struggle, and a person think in terms of tangible immediate gains. Bereft of ideology, Indresh Maikhuri, CPI ML, feels, the activist, *andolankari*, remain assertive aggressive but do not grow politically and remains individualistic²⁶. He feels that due to the history of struggles that the region has seen, the consciousness level of people has increased, that is why the communist led struggles are still possible in the region and historically as well an area in Garhwal was termed as the red valley, *lal ghati*. Due to neoliberal impacts and cultural degradation, the left democratic forces have diminished however, he felt. However, it is difficult to have political hold in the Uttarakhand region only with class basis and without religious cultural orientation.

In respect with the hydropower projects, the left forces talk about rights of people over their resources *haq hakuk*, and livelihood. As opposed to individual accumulation on resources, they talk about collective ownership. Their take is that *astitava* (survival) and *asmita* (identity/dignity) are primary to *aastha*. According to a left inclining journalist Charu Tiwari (2012b), the concerns of *aastha* and

²⁵ Whereas Mannheim was bothered about inclusion of Marxism itself as an ideology, a perceptive amongst many perspectives, today it is at times seen as ‘the’ perspective, the only perspective when others remain merely ‘moralist’ or impure or misguided perspectives.

²⁶ However, in the same region I found activists with ‘ideology’ taking contracts of the company and providing their houses to it for rent. Also there are activists like Mohan Singh Takuli, without any defined ideology, who perhaps bring to fore that the requirement of an ethical, moral, cultural and spiritual basis is important to fight the ‘hegemony of inside’. Ideology then may provide the worldview but without ethical force the achievement of a utopia seem difficult.

environment can sustain only when the people in Uttarakhand will remain. People are forced to leave their villages as real issues of people are obscured behind the verbose of environment and development. Indresh Maikhuri, felt that focus on *aastha* dilute and weaken the people's protest. People are not opposed to the hydropower generation, but they demand that they also get some benefits like drinking water, irrigation water and electricity. Otherwise generally the river comes to be of no use to the people. When asked why the struggles are not able to come together, he felt that in Uttarakhand there is a special kind of apoliticalness, the political distinctions are not sharp and people feel that all parties are good, only some people inside them are bad. He feels that the activists are still not in a position of capitalising on the advantages of a small state by forming a strong pressure group, whereas due to the formation of a small state, the hold of administration has increased, *satta sarkar ka reach sab tak hai*, everyone is related to ministers and MLAs and feel that individual approach can solve their problems. The struggle has become a medium of getting some gains, as he gave an illustration of a minister who told the villagers that he will provide benefits, but first they should at least do some *dharna pradarshan*, to legitimate the fulfilment of their demands²⁷. He felt that the anger that simmered in the people, accumulated over decades, got fizzled in the Uttarakhand movement, now it is difficult to develop a state wide basis of protests.

Gandhian Forces²⁸

Most movements in Uttarakhand have adopted non violent means and methods of yatras, dharnas and hunger strikes. *Padyatras* remain an important method undertaken by activists of all ideologies, to emphasise the local rootedness of the struggle and to reach out to the people. Some activists have adopted a 'sarvodayi' lifestyle and have established ashrams that engage with the protests mainly by taking

²⁷ This also highlights the culture of resistance in the region. But also raises question of how these resistances have come to be perceived by the people and their political representatives.

²⁸ Uttarakhand region has seen many devoted Gandhians. Sridev Suman became an active satyagrahi with the salt satyagraha and died for the cause of the Garhwali people's rights to survive with dignity and freedom opposing the rule of Tehri kings. Mira Behn and Sarala Behn were close associates of Gandhiji. They both moved to the interior of the Himalaya and established ashrams there, Mira Behn working in Garhwal area and Sarla Behn established Laxmi ashram in Kausani. These three in turn influenced many other activists, Sundarlal Bahuguna, Vimla Bahuguna, Chandi Prasad Bhatt, Radha Bhatt. The Sarvodaya Mandal is still active in the region, and is now headed by Suresh Bhai, who runs an ashram in Matli, Uttarakashi.

out yatras, getting attention of the media and publishing booklets funded by Oxfam etc. The focus on the methods itself, that is, on yatra etc, has given the protests more symbolism than meaning, as the constant presence with any struggle was not observed. According to Vimla Bahuguna, the activists are not living in the villages and with people now to guide the resistances. In the Sarvodaya movements, the leadership remain individual centric and dominated by symbolism, like *wrapping a scraf (patta) on the head*, according to Trepan Chauhan.

The Gandhian activists like Sundar Lal Bahuguna and Chandi Prasad Bhatt remained active in struggles like Chipko, Tehri movement, campaigns against liquor and they have had influenced many young activists in the years of 1970s and 80s, including the left leaning activists of the Uttarakhand Jan Sangharsh Vahini. The principles of Sarvodaya, decentralisation of power, decentralisation of technology, small scale industries, and reconstruction of rural life remained important concerns. In the activists working against the hydropower projects, there is a complaint that both Bahuguna and Bhatt have not given any strong statement against dams and given their ‘status’ in the society, they could have made a strong voice²⁹. This is felt by many activists that the culture of giving awards by the government, has not only created divisions within movements like Chipko, but also has led to a practice of insistence on ‘soft’ strategies, *saumyatam padyati*, by which they mean to not oppose the state.

Gandhian activists like Radha Bhatt, do not see the issue of hydropower in isolation, but along with the environmental and livelihood related damages of the projects, also bringing attention to similar models of development being emulated in road construction and commercial forests that are not suitable for the needs of people and the ecology. Along with the historical and socio-political coalition of issues, she along with other sarvodayis has put in efforts for a formation of a coalition of different activists in the region. It was attempted in name of Nadi Bachao Andolan, (and a broader forum Himalaya Bachao Andolan was also visualised) wherein many

²⁹ Bhatt, when asked about his non-involvement in the opposition to projects, recounted that he already had written a letter against the Vishuprayag project in 1982 to then Prime Minister, Indira Gandhi. The project was later revised so as not to affect the Valley of Flowers. He feels that it was his job to highlight the issues, now it is on the people to act as he cannot be active everywhere, *humne virodh ka theka to nahi liya hai*. Same sentiments were echoed by Vimla Bahuguna, Sundarlal Bahuguna’s wife, who is inactive due to increased age and health issues as well. Whereas the methods of Bhatt and Bahuguna, received better attention earlier, of writing letters to the Prime Minister and others ministers and of sitting on fasts, they seem not to be that effective in present scenario.

NGOs, sarvodayi groups, right leaning forces and other prominent activists came together. It took on many *padyatras* and meetings in the year 2008, declared as the Nadi Bachao year. However, many like Ramda (2008) felt the andolan remained engaged in symbolism of collecting water of different rivers. Expensive booklets were published, but the effort of presenting the whole picture before the people in different regions did not take place. The involved institutions and NGOs also received funds in name of saving Ganga. The coalition ultimately gave in to the mutual tussle between the activists for recognition and leadership.

Another attempt at finding a common ground has been a sustained demand for a separate policy for Himalayas, a *Himalaya Niti*, a demand that Sundarlal Bahuguna rose during his earlier struggles and which is adopted now by most activists³⁰. This demand can also be seen as a way of finding a common ground with other Himalayan states, with similar issues and a sharing a unique Himalayan ecology. In fact, a pan Asia Himalayan Policy is also thought about, as the rivers and Himalayas are transnational, and in recent years there seems to be a competition between nations for prior appropriation of the rivers for construction of hydropower projects. There is also a thought amongst academicians of linking the local resistances with resistances in other nations, making it an international issue. For this however, it is important to sustain local resistances.

Behind the demand of Himalaya Niti, there is a realisation that ‘development’ thrusts in all the Himalayan states remain similar being energy, tourism, medicinal plants etc, but everywhere these are regulated by private players. The territorial conditions being similar, the risks are also similar, of landslides, earthquakes, cloud bursts, floods, forest fires etc. Traditional knowledge of mountain people should be respected and work provided to them is the contention of this Niti. It speaks of reserving the local’s right over land, water and forests and looking out for alternative energy avenues. On the lines of establishment of eco-sensitive zones, the committee suggests the concept of ‘cultural eco zones’ (Chopra et al. 2014:194-214).

³⁰ Especially by Sarvodayi Suresh Bhai. His pamphlet for promotion of the Himalaya policy is based on Bahuguna’s maxims like *dhaar ainch pani*, *dhal par dala*, *bijli banava khala khala*, meaning water will be retained if there are trees on the slopes, the abundance will be such that electricity could be produced in each stream, rivulet and gully.

NGOs and Development as the Anti-Politics Machine

Whereas all activists hold NGOs responsible for weakening of the protests, most are in some way or the other have associated with such organisations for support. What an activist means by NGOs also remain fuzzy, as they themselves, even when not registered as a NGO, take projects directly from funding organisations or from NGOs, for either financial support for livelihood, or their activist work like publication of booklets etc. In addition, there are numerous corporate social responsibility related projects, like of Reliance and Azim Premzi active in the region. The main engagement of NGOs in protests remains in form of seminars, discussions, occasional yatras, publishing of booklets and public interest litigations. Most have programs or names related to environment, forests and Himalaya.

Be it the adoption of environmental discourse instead of 'narrow' local demands of livelihood during the Chipko movement or the transnational movement discourse, in Uttarakhand the movement discourse have shown parallels with the 'international' discourse that is seen as 'in' at the time. It is possibly the closeness with NGOs as well as strong intellectual tradition in activists, as the public intellectuals remains attuned with the global discourses. Also, many Sarvodayis and other academicians take grants and projects that may demand such language of climate change and global warming. So even when Suresh Bhai, a sarvodayi running Matli Ashram in Uttarakashi, was opposing the hydropower projects that are being built as a measure to mitigate climate change, in his booklets during the Nadi Bachao Andolan yatras, the chief concern also remained climate change in Uttarakhand.

The hydropower companies are increasingly employing NGOs as their ideological apparatus, to improve their image, internalise the politically correct language, to manage their CSR components, and legitimate their activities through their 'community work' and research studies. They not only disseminate the company ideology in an acceptable form but also depoliticise the struggles. A big and well known NGO of Uttarakhand, Shri Bhuvneshwari Mahila Ashram has taken a project from World Bank, to mediate the rehabilitation related activities of THDC in the Vishnugaad Pipalkoti project in Chamoli. The common perception is that they are employed to dilute the struggle in the area. As described earlier, an old woman in Hatt village Uma Hatwal, told me how the women of this NGO had visited their village,

sat in their *aangan* and started asking them what all they own, to assess their economic status. The main job of this NGO was to make the displacement seem inevitable and voluntary. The old woman was infuriated at the fact that someone, whom she was treating as a guest was trying to act sympathetic and assess their 'worth' and 'status' sitting in her own courtyard. She told them that whatever they were, they were kings in their land and place and no outsider had any authority to take pity on them and intrude their personal lives like that. The retort of this old woman was a sharp reaction to the objectification and charity approach of the NGOs. However, such open boycott was also possible because the family was financially sound; most families have taken to seeking benefits from such organisations.

Dinesh Bhatt, a cultural activist in Uttarakashi district posed a question, have NGOs make us parasitic or have they enabled us? The 'infiltration' by NGOs and the way they take over and influence the leadership, as well the influence of local political party leaders, might have led to this remark of Uday Singh Rana, of Jamak village in Uttarkashi, the leadership has finished, we are like orphans, *leadership khatam ho gayi hai, anaath jaisi stithi hai. thekedaari mahol bana diya*. The whole atmosphere is of contractors³¹. Shemshersingh Bisht, a prominent activist of Uttarakhand feels that the NGOs have created a situation of confusion. NGOs have changed the culture of the youth employed in these. The villagers also feel that the employees are different; they look like contractors, so people start asking them for labour work.

The environmental NGOs, which intervene by holding meetings in the region and publishing booklets on projects, remain in the role of safe 'critique', and retain the legitimacy to become part of the Government committees. They are cautious that they are not seen as 'anti', they limit their discourse to benefit sharing with people and not ownership of projects by the people. According to Atul Sati, many came to work on the issue of hydropower projects as at that point of time, ActionAid had received

³¹ This feeling is prevalent in Uttarakhand, that everywhere there is a broker, be it in village, in block or at state level, in politics and otherwise. An activist even remarked that most activists are seeing resistances also a contract job, they think it is my *thekedaari*, my *dukaandaari* to run a particular resistance and others can only work under him. S. Pathak (2012) notes that the brokers, *dalals* have increased in the new state and Dehradun contains more than Lucknow.

Contractor work is only employment available to the people at times and it appeals more to the educated youth in terms of 'respectful work', than other labour related work.

funds for water that was then handed to the local NGOs. Trepan Chauhan told that funds were even given in name of water fellowships to the NGOs³². They take away the political space of struggles. He writes that, whereas the activists stay busy outside, the company keeps to its work of construction. In the Nadi Bachao Andolan, the village level leaders were called outside for seminars and *padyatras* of the forum, while in the area the *andolan* weakened. Monthly payments were given to village level activists by the forum, leading to scepticism in villagers about their interests, *avishwaas ki sanskriti*. Besides the NGO projects are of limited scope and time period, and hence they leave the villagers in between after the promises of support. At times, people do not even realise which organisation has come in the area, the organisation people take photos at *dharna* sites with the villagers and leave (Chauhan 2009).

Mahendra Singh Kunwar, a geologist and activist of Chipko, and now running a NGO, Himalayan Action Research Centre in Uttarakashi, felt that the struggles now-a-days lack the inclination and inspiration to continue out on roads, most are more comfortable with energy workshops. Indresh Maikhuri feels that the NGOs have transformed the consciousness of people and are corrupting them. The NGOs talk in same language of struggle as other activists, but when they provide for activists' travel fares, food and luxury lodging; people start thinking that all struggles have some selfish interest behind them, *bina swarth ke koi ladai nahi ho rahi hai*. He also feels that the NGO dominated concerns remain narrow, he cites the example of Vimal bhai, who only emphasises on the need of public meeting in every site specific struggle, whereas for officials public meeting remains a mere formality. The concerns of people do not form the centre of their protests. Further, even when the NGOs have a reach to the villages, they do not take struggles to a conclusion, to a conclusive action, *nirnayak chot*.

In Uttarakhand the forums like Uttarakhand Sangharash Vahini and other activists of 70s-80s like Bisht tended to keep themselves away from NGOs as well as from political parties, as they felt that this will limit their reach to the people. However, now this kind of distance is not maintained. NGOs are providing useful employment in the region, attracting many activists. Earlier activists have floated their

³²Around the years 2007-08, huge funds were given to the six-seven big funding organisations working in India on the issue of water, including ActionAid, ChristianAid, WaterAid.

political parties or started own organisations. Padel and Das (2012:497-505) bring attention to the way NGOs affects movements largely in India. Young activists get appropriated in the NGOs. Instead of self-reliance or a consciousness that the collective action generates, focus remains on individual voluntarism. At times they lead to de-politicisation of the resistances, co-opt and subvert the radical language, limiting it to human rights and conversation. Further, the Hindutava groups and political parties also float their NGOs, complicating the situation.

Marginalisation of People and Issues

Be it the women in the Mandakini valley, or in Bageshwar or in Phalenda struggles, they have continued the agitation despite the men entering in compromises with the company. In Narmada struggle, women have prevented men from taking cash compensation as they realise the importance of land. Such strength could be developed in Uttarakhand as unlike NBA, the struggles remained short termed and the main and prominent leaders tended to be men.

The demographic presence of the Dalits and the Tribals in villages is comparatively low, though significant in upper hills like Niti and Mana valley. In projects like Shrinagar in Pauri district and in Chaen village in Chamoli, the dalit section complained that their concerns got marginalised as the influential individuals started negotiating with the company and vice versa. Bhotiya community is influential now after the reservation for tribals, but the affluent do not live in villages. Villages like *Faliyati* and *Dhilli* in Munsyari have only fifteen and seven bhotiya families respectively, which migrate to high altitude areas for half of the year, to collect herbs etc. No one amongst them is left behind to resist or negotiate with the project officials for over half a year.

Further, the villages that are already facing the danger of landslides especially in monsoons and are in fragile condition, remain uncertain about the projects as they wish to leave the villages as well, but the compensation is not enough to resettle. The economic vulnerabilities not only make company's entry easier but also lead to difficulties in sustaining long term struggles. The involvement of local administration ensures that the vulnerabilities of the villagers are easily exploited by the project authorities. Money, liquor and police power are used to break the resistances. Wide

spread addiction to alcohol, makes it easier for the project officials to negotiate with men. In addition, in males there is a fleeing tendency in Uttarkhand. The dominant castes of Brahmin and Rajput and more educated amongst them, seems more prone to just negotiate as they seek ways to migrate. The migration of most educated also means the others left are not that conscious, feels Shemsher Bisht.

There is also a unique situation of high migration and often the families that have migrated remain interested in selling their land, as it remains of no 'use' for them. The single women and elderly left behind find it difficult to counter the consistent pressure in absence of support. A committed leadership to stay put throughout to maintain motivational levels to counter the strategies of the company has not evolved in most areas. Besides, contractors or *dalals*, create added strains in the struggles and create a divisive opportunist culture. Their motive and only purpose seems to be mediating the speedy exploitation of whatever resources they could have access to.

Fragmented Struggles

Thinking about why the site-specific resistances do not come together to become a big challenge, Harish Chandra Chandola, a well known journalist living in Joshimath, observes that *the old economy of the region has collapsed. As it is people do not have any income, how can they afford to spend on resistances? The basic problems of people of survival have remained unresolved; the spirit of struggling has grown cold. The temporary jobs by the company act as a balm. When the Government does not listen to people and instead helping the companies, where can people go? This is a phase, a situation of fatigue.*

The resistances in Uttarakhand have remained widely known and respected. But many villagers, when talked to in present, do not feel the same respect for their own struggles, be it Chipko or Tehri movement. Not only were people's demands sidelined but the struggles also became individual centric. In context of Tehri, many women told me that they never understood what the leaders were speaking, what all the fuss was about. Repeatedly they went to Purani Tehri, sometimes they were given *shawls, dhotis*, sometimes they went to accompany other women, to see Bahuguna, but they were just a part of the crowd. Even the women, who were mobilising other

women, like of the active group *Mahila Samakhya*, feel they were just used as an instrument to further the 'cause'. They were called when women were needed, to go to jail, to be beaten ahead of the protesting crowd. But the gravity and meaning of the resistance was not clear to them.

Within activists, a lot of mutual complaints exist. Within the subgroups of activists, mutual promotion is encouraged. This indicates to a kind of legitimization crisis within the activists, especially because active involvement has diminished. The generation of activists that emerged in 1970s and 80s, have remained most active and vocal, new activists to take over the struggles are not coming up, feels Shemsher Singh Bisht. The dynamics between the activists, and the socio-political situation within Uttarakhand and the ambit as defined by the company practices means that struggles remain site-specific. This at one level looks like a powerful pressure group is missing to counter the claims of the projects. But looked another way, the concerns of these site-specific struggles have a legacy of the earlier movements, political and cultural impacts of the history of the region and its challenge to the dominant development. In that sense then, the localised struggles do not remain localised only (Moore 1999:675).

Professionalization of Activism

There are many free floating activists in Uttarakhand. They stand in solidarity with many causes. Their engagement remains at many levels. A phenomenon of 'Professionalization of Activism' manifest not only in project oriented NGO work but other professions as well like journalism, law or academics. The professionalization means that the activists do not live in the villages, but are like floating activists, who will hold meetings, write and give lectures about the issues. Few only feel comfortable and compatible in seeking 'relief' through public interest litigations. At times, they seem to be diluting the struggle by channelizing it in routes of negotiations and courts. Some expressed the view that once a particular area's case goes in court, then the struggle tends to lean on results out of court and the peoples' base diminishes.

Increasingly professionalisation means the young see activism only in transitory terms, they contribute briefly by making documentaries etc and do not stay

for longer periods in the struggles. The activism in a sense provides a sense of much needed support and assurance to the people that their voice is reaching out of the interior villages. For the activists, it provides a sense of legitimacy, otherwise committed to livelihood needs, along with a social aura. They also fulfil the role of guiding the people about legal issues and written documents and gathering outside support of media and larger society.

Counter Resistances

There seems to be conscious effort by the companies, contractor lobby and politicians to launch a counter resistance in support of the project by mobilising youth, journalists, NGOs and literary figures. The counter resistance forces are claiming that the NGOs and institutions who are opposing the projects have received foreign funding to stall the development initiatives in the Uttarakhand region (Bhatt, P. 2012a). There have been demonstrations and court cases in the last three-four years to start the projects that were stalled in the Uttarakashi district. The lobby indulge in regional chauvinism, developmental claims of the projects, irrational explanations about the projects and open threats.

A lawyer Gajpal Rawat threatened me in the Rudraprayag court as I had gone there to meet Gangadhar Nautiyal, fighting the cases of Susheela Bhandari and others from the villages affected by L&T and LANCO projects. He said that the companies have led to development of the area, they have even provided all the lawyers with laptops, and who so ever will oppose the projects, are agents of outside countries. They will be severely beaten.

Rajen Todariya was actively opposing the Tehri Dam and was a well known journalist and editor in Amar Ujala, who later formed a platform name Uttarakhand Janmanch, that started supporting the hydropower projects coming in the region, making regional chauvinism as the basis of their oppositions and by pitting hill identity against the plains' identity. Others who joined the forum include the poet Leeladhar Jagudi and Avdhash Kaushal, who runs a NGO Rural Litigation and Entitlement Centre (RLEK) in Dehardun. Both of them had received Padamshree³³ in

³³ Although the small state has close to twenty padma awardees, many on the issue of environment, most have not associated themselves with the issue of hydropower.

the fields of literature and environment and they declared that they will return the awards if the stalled projects are not started.

Todariya had written powerful poems and articles against the Tehri dam, one poem being, *kisi bhi shehar ko dubone ke liye, kaafi nahi hoti ek nadi, sikko ke sangeet par naachte, samajhdaar log hon, bheed ho magar banti hui, kayaro ke pass ho tarko ki talwar, to yakin maniye, shehar to shehar, yah kaafi hai, desh ko dubone ke liye*, that, it is not enough to have a river for submerging a city, the intelligent people when they dance at the music of money, when crowd gathers but remain fragmented, when the cowards have all the reasoning, all this then can submerge not just a city but the whole nation. However through his forum, contractors were encouraged to blacken the face of few project opposing activists (Jhunjhunwala, G.D. Agarwal and Rajendra Singh³⁴) in Shrinagar, and they were later publically facilitated by the forum.

There is also a perverse use of ‘science’ to defend projects, which makes Tiwari (2012b) wonder if all the intellect and logic has been ‘sold’. As Tiwari says, ‘pro-power’ poet Leeladhar Jagudi argued in an article that water hitting the turbines will help it in absorbing oxygen. Tunnelling the water will prevent the pollution which affects the river water in open, keeping it pure (p.8). Jagudi in a conversation said that *whereas we worship rivers, they are destroying us. We should start seeing them in physical sense, as a matter. We have to think in terms of utility, water was roaming as a vagabound, rivers were unemployed, now we have put them to work*. He borrows extensively from the utilitarian and conquering aspirations of modern development. His upcoming book is named as; the rivers are not rational, *nadiyon mein dimaag nahi hota*. Avdhash Kaushal, runs a NGO Rural Litigation and Entitlement Centre (RLEK), seemed to have not even a basic idea of what the structure of projects are like, he compared the tunnels with the household pipes. He said that the sadhus who are opposing the projects have ashrams of 500-600 rooms fitted with ACs, they themselves cannot survive with AC. For him, the private

³⁴ A Magsaysay award winner, and known as *jal purush* (the water man), he frequents Uttarakhand as a ‘celebrity speaker’ to take part in discussions on water and rivers and in resistances.

companies were conducting a national duty. He thus, not only support the technology of dams, but also the dam lobby.³⁵

Culture of Resistance

Public Intellectualism

Uttarakhand has a culture and history of resistance and public intellectualism. At many sites, journalists and academicians are playing a key role in supporting the resistances. There are many journalist-activists. They remain rooted in the local knowledge. The earlier movements have also seen an important role of journalists and there is no clear cut demarcations- journalists are very much involved in activism and vice versa. There are many area specific magazines like *Uttara*, *Yugvani* and *Regional Reporter*, journals like *Pahar*, newspapers like *Nainital Samachar*, which articulate the local concerns. Many activists of earlier protests have not started magazines, but have formed local forums like *Mahila Manch*, and local political parties like *Uttarakhand Lok Vahini* and *Uttarakhand Parivartan Party*³⁶, which though have limited political reach, frequently organise meetings to discuss issues at hand. The attempt of these activists to organise *goshtis*, meetings and discussions and to bring out literature on the issues troubling the region can be seen as an attempt to create a local public sphere, especially when in the mainstream media and politics this space remains negligible³⁷. Most of these activists being associated with earlier movements

³⁵ T. N. Shrivastava, GM, NTPC told that Kaushal had approached the company to fund the expenses he had incurred in the cases in the Nainital High Court with a demand to start the projects, which the governmental company could not give as the case challenged the Government.

³⁶ Mostly the villagers remain divided between BJP and congress, like most of the other states. However, as regional voices were strong at the time of statehood movement, there still are expectations from regional parties. Like the people of Nainisar in Ranikhet, whose land has been given to the Jindal group approached the Uttarakhand Parivartan Party to raise their issue. It's a small party operating in Almora, headed by P.C.Tiwari, who has been active in various movements in the state as part of Uttarakhand Sangharsh Vahini and otherwise. As a lawyer he is also associated with the Human Rights Law Network and his party to Global Green party, thus seeking network at many levels. Same is true for other activists as well.

³⁷ There are many regional channels in Uttarakhand; Zee Uttrarkhand, Sahara UP/Uttarakhand, Sadhana Uttarakhand, Jain TV Uttarakhand, Samachar Plus, ETV Uttarakhand, TV100 etc, but the news in them does not reflect the people's concerns.

and part of many regional and national networks, the issues are raised in perspective of regional history.

Other than the organic intellectuals who come from Uttarakhand, there are few who have settled there out of choice. One amongst them being Jhunjhuwala, who has been accepted as a collaborator by the left, right as well as the sarvodayi forces despite being an ‘outsider’. His status as a retired professor of IIM, along with his public interest litigations, articles, books and participation in the created public sphere has provided him this acceptance. However, his arguments also tend to remain more centric on the psychic benefits of rivers, rather than being people centric. In a paper, he argues that to harness the psychic effects of rivers, as an alternative to dams, universities, hospitals, design centres and software parks can be established along the banks of the Ganga, so that the psyche of their workers remain balanced and active (Jhunjhunwala 2014:21). In another paper, he (2014:165-171) on the basis of a survey of the pilgrims downstream of the Tehri dam, concludes that the rivers’ contribution towards their spiritual and mental peace, benefits towards health, business, child bearing, success in examinations etc., will amount to a Rs. 4666 crores per year if the water quality is improved by removing the Tehri dam, which remained more than the money earned out of the operation of the dam. This kind of critique of the projects is in fact in the same language of cost benefits that the movements against hydropower have tended to criticise. Even as the notion of value of psychic benefits etc is expanded beyond the material, it is again put to the same logic of quantification, rather than accepting the incomparability of the aspects.

The inclusion of organic intellectuals in the text book writing, have resulted in the books like the 10th class text book of Geography of the Uttarakhand State Board, which has a separate chapter on the river valley projects and not only speaks of local *khuls* and other locale specific water harvesting methods prevalent in different regions like Rajasthan, but also how dams become instrumental in more flooding due to accumulated sediments and other impacts of dams. The movements against dams like the NBA and Tehri movement are also included and the basis of the resistances explained.

The journalists, academicians and literary figures can be seen as involved in the processes of ‘knowledge production’, building evidences and expertise to counter the claims made by the project authorities. However, at times the same basic ideas of

the development ideology are also seen in the protesting voices, for example, the activists while promoting the small projects were found to be giving the same logic that the project companies are using, that the river water not being used, is going 'waste'³⁸. However, this notion of waste is not that much about conquest of nature, it has more to do with the resources not been available to the locals even as they struggle with scarcity, but been taken to or going to the plains. More importantly, the activists bring to attention the concept of community ownership and self reliance of the village by building small hydroprojects.

There is a strain of caution in the arguments of activists, lest they be labelled 'anti-development', they start with the disclaimer first-that one is not anti-development, anti-state or anti-dam³⁹. In fact, a 'pragmatic resignation' of the activists is also seen in the hydropower companies' advertisements in the progressive journals and magazines, which otherwise take a stand against the projects.⁴⁰ The development discourse has been successful in putting the onus on the protestors to prove their basis of protest. The organic intellectuals of the region like S. Pathak (2012), have also brought attention to the aspects of the local traditions that require change, demanding for a critical tradition. Questions are raised about practices like cremating the dead by and in the river. He also raises questions about the collection of thousands of people in Haridwar for religious gatherings. Tourism is needed, but what kind of tourism? Development is needed, but what kind of development? Let the roads go to villages, but let it be built in sensitive manner. Let the fragile ecological zones be left free from noises and roads and vehicles, he says.

The significant role of literary figures and journalists in a sense defines the area of resistance and counter resistance. When there were physical attacks by contractors on few intellectuals opposing the project in Shrinagar, the most obvious response by other activists was an exasperation of not using the civilised means of putting forth the arguments by the counter resistance forces.

³⁸ For example, Joshi, Rohit (2013) 'Ek Janyatra Uttarakhand ki Behtari ke Liye', *Nainital Samachar*, 1 April.

³⁹ Mahendra Kunwar said that after coming of the central government in the year 2014, a list of anti-dam organisation was sought.

⁴⁰ For example, advertisement of Satluj Jal Vidyut Nigam Ltd. that built the Naptha Jakhri project in Himachal Pradesh in Pahar (Issues 16-17, 2008-2009, back cover), of THDC in Yugvani (Back cover of February 2006, middle page of December 2015), and of THDC again in Uttarakhand Aajkal (in a special issue on the submergence of Tehri, September 2005) and in Regional Reporter (October 2012).

Cultural Expressions

Large section of the Uttarakhand population still being illiterate, the influence of cultural activists is more evident than that of journalists and literary figures. The people's cultural activists, *jan-sanskriti karmi*, being in tune with the resonance of the times and the society, can be the prophesier like Girda, who could forewarn the consequences of hydropower projects in the region, as he sang in 2009 describing the disaster that was imminent and which occurred in 2013,

*is wayapari ko pyaas bahut hai
ek taraf barbaad bastiyan,
ek taraf ho tum
ek taraf doobti kashtiyan
ek taraf ho tum
ek taraf sookhti nadiyan
ek taraf ho tum
ek taraf hai pyasi duniya
ek taraf ho tum*

this businessman is ever thirsty
on one side are the destroyed homes,
the other side are you
on one side are the sinking boats,
the other side are you
on one side are the drying rivers,
the other side are you
on one side is the world, parched,
the other side are you

*azi, wah kya baat tumhari
tum to pani ke wayapari
khel tumhara, tumhi khiladi,
bichchi hui ye bishat tumhari,
saara pani chus rahe ho,
nadi samandar loot rahe ho,
ganga yamuna ki chaati par
kankar pathaar kut rahe ho
uf, tumhari ye khudgarzi,
chalegi kab tak ye man marzi
jis din dolegi ye dharti
sar se niklegi sab masti*

what can be said about you?
you have even started a business of water.
it is your game, you are the only player
all the moves are made by you
you are sucking away all the water
you are looting the rivers, the seas
on the breasts of ganga and yamuna
you are crushing and pounding stones
oh, what selfishness and audacity
till when will you have your way?
when this earth will reel
your joyride will screech and stop

*mahal chobare bah jayenge
khaali rokhar rah jayenge
boond boond ko tarsoge jab
bol wayapari tab kya hoga
delhi dehradun main baithe
yuvjankaari tab kya hoga*

your palaces and corridors will get washed
away
what will be left is mere boulders
when you will yearn for every drop of water
tell me, o businessman, what will happen
then?
tell me o planners, sitting in delhi and
dehradun?

*aaj bhale hi mauz uda lo
nadiyon ko pyasa tadpa lo
ganga ko keechad kar dalo*

for today, have your fun
let the rivers die of thirst
let ganga get muddied

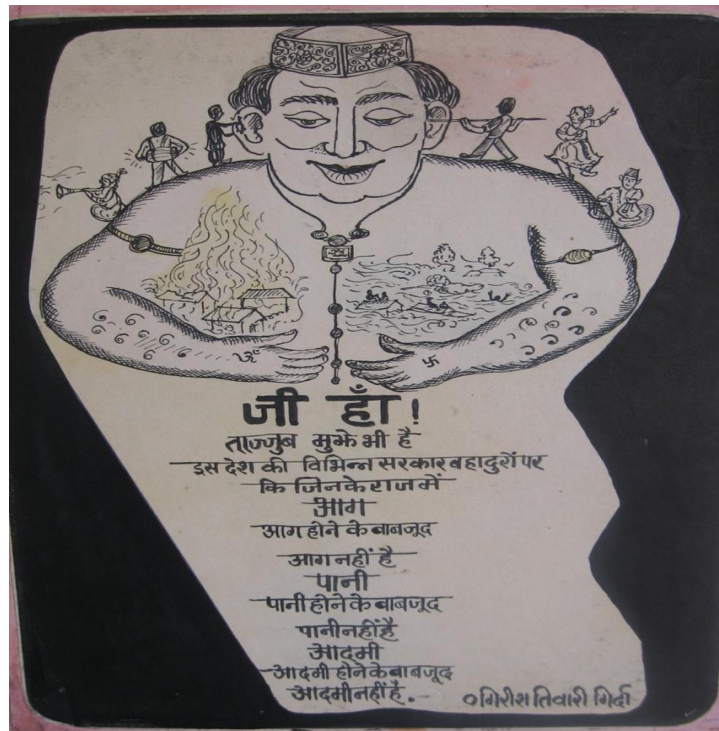
lekin dologi jab dharti
bol wayapari tab kya hoga

world bank ke tokendhari
nagad udhaari tab kya hoga

but when this earth will tumble
tell me, o businessman, what will happen
then?

o, token carriers of world bank?
o, people who survive on debt?

A theatre activist Omprakash Badhani, presently teaching in Inter College in Uttarkashi, felt that the rivers issue warning in form of disasters that the path of development that is taken, is neither suitable, nor sustainable. He had gone with his team to mobilise the Chaen villagers, and feels that their present condition is of a sad village as they did not listen to the warnings. Such a fatal way of generating electricity is not right. Nobody has a right to mortgage rivers, be it government or the society; the rivers are above political interests.



An illustration by B. Mohan Negi, the cultural activists are trying to wake up the government to notice the forest fires and floods, which in fact are taking place in its aegis (photo taken in an exhibition as part of a discussion on movements in the region on 25.3.12 in Augustmuni).

The consciousness of people however, develops through a process. A singer Jagbir Parmar of a village of the Joshimath area, after the coming of the Jaypee company, sang to ask people to support the Jaypee project and the employment opportunities they were bringing. It was a 'gesture of goodwill' towards the company

which believed to be bringing development to their region. However, as the work progressed he got disillusioned. At first Parmar composed a hindi song⁴¹:

<i>berojgari hatana hai,</i>	we have to eliminate
<i>rojgaar pana hai</i>	unemployment and find out jobs
<i>J.Pji ki company mai, naukari ko jana hai</i>	in Jaypee Company, we will go for a job..
<i>arey, ye koi thekedaari nahi</i>	this is no contractor's work
<i>ye to JP ka kaam hai</i>	this is Jaypee company's job
<i>Subah se shaam tak</i>	from morning to evening
<i>Bhaari kaam to karna padega</i>	you have to put heavy labour
<i>Magar das-pandhra roj main</i>	but after 10-15 days
<i>Mota rakhm bhi to milega</i>	heavy paycheck will be received.

And after two years, he observed that the villages no longer have water to drink, or material to build homes, or local plants to feed on, and that Jaypee after all was like any other contractor, he composed against the project, this time in Garhwali:

<i>Daddu yu kanu julam hwege</i>	Brother, what wrongdoing is this?
<i>JP kano julam keige</i>	How could Jaypee be so cruel to us?
<i>Gei ci mina harya bharya dawa</i>	I used to see such green plants
<i>Hwe gya sab matyo mati rawa</i>	But all this has become the brown color of earth
<i>Thayo jakh gaunwalo ko ghat</i>	Where earlier the <i>ghats</i> were located,
<i>Hondu tak 'machine' ko buliyat</i>	Only the sound of 'machines' are there
<i>Jham jhamane daddu . . .</i>	
<i>Kakh ge si akware dani</i>	Where the seeds of walnuts had spread
<i>Kakh ge su kua ku pani</i>	Where well water flowed
<i>Hwege si baun bi birani</i>	This forest does not belong to us now
<i>Kya hwe gau kelu bi ni jani</i>	No one knows how this has happened
<i>Jham jhamane daddu . . .</i>	
<i>Bas gei ca jakh JP ka kuli</i>	Where the Jaypee labourer has settled
<i>Payonda taya takh dhatuli</i>	there we used to sharpen our sickle on the stones
<i>Yakh ma hwanda taiya rala</i>	Where the people once gathered
<i>Basi yatak puliswallah</i>	they have put a policeman there
<i>Jham jhamane daddu . . .</i>	
<i>Age na holu kya jani keli</i>	What will happen, no one knows
<i>Kampani khuli ke tu mani kya peli</i>	What benefit did you get from the company?
<i>Kei tei ni ryutu ke tei ni rurhi</i>	There is neither sand nor concrete left
<i>Kanu kwe bana la garib ki kur i</i>	how will the poor now build homes?

⁴¹ Both these songs of Parmar are taken from Fiol (2008:52-53). I have altered Fiol's translation as well as the song wherever I thought it was not appropriately recorded.

This change in the worldview depicts the multiple perspectives that a person lives in. The understanding of development and colonisation is not as an abstraction but includes more personal and localised forms like taking over by the policemen the space where the people gathered. The earlier ‘acceptance’ of the project may look like the impact of hegemony, but in fact the counter imaginations and cultures still survive. Thus, the daily resistances unfold in both material and symbolic terms, and range from resistance to pragmatic resignation (Scott 1985). It is more ‘practical’ for people to resist at ideological level, through cultural expressions and folk stories.

The cultural expressions live long after the resistances stop being visible, as an undercurrent. There are numerous poems and stories written about the memories of Tehri town and the movement, not just the ‘poets’ and ‘writers’ but many have resorted to such expression to give way to the pain that such development caused them⁴². For example, the book *Ek Thi Tehri* (Shikhar 2010) is dedicated to the people, for whom Tehri will always stay. In one of the chapters, it is recounted how for the old activists/people it was difficult to resettle in Dehradun. The ‘given’ lifestyle of towns like ‘attached bathroom’ in the home was unbearable, how they felt caged inside the rooms, as opposed to the open spaces, libraries and orchards, and the confluence of rivers in Old Tehri. In the hundreds of poems written, some blame ‘development’ for Tehri’s plight, some blame the cowardice of the local people, the tactics of the contractors, the cunning arguments of the officers, and the unsteadiness of intellectuals. Narendra Singh Negi, we have discussed, has sung heart rending song about Tehri dam. He asks in Garhwali, whether to see the drowning of a town of such an old heritage, is it not like seeing *pralay* with open eyes?

Trepan Singh Chauhan’s novel *Hey Bwari* expresses the resentment of a woman Yamuna, who participated in the political struggle for statehood believing that the youth will find work in the villages in the new state. She faced violent attack by the Muzafarnagar police molesting her body and dignity. After this hard won battle for her own state, she finds it hard to find work for her son in the village, as the liquor mafia engulfs her village, the corrupt local bureaucracy drains the people, and above all, a hydropower project comes to their village. This time the villagers find the fight

⁴² There are many collections of poems and stories and personal histories, some being, *Doobti Tehri ki Aakhiri Kavitaayen*, edited by Hemchandra Saklani, *Tehri ki Kahani*, *Tehri ki Jubani* by Mahila Samakhya, *Yadon mein Purana Tehri Shehar* by Dr. P.S. Rawat, *Tehri Aadhyopant* by Maniram Bahuguna.

against the project company tougher as it is also against their own people and the SDM personally take charge to promote the project and harass the people, even as the NGOs try to capitalise from the people's struggle. Even when the daughter-in-law yearns to go out of the village to live in towns, no respectable work opportunities could be found by her husband within the state.

The struggles of women have found expression in many songs and folk stories too. The lack of respect and neglect of the work they do in mountains, for example, collecting grass for the cattle, led to programs like *Ghasyari pratiyogita*, organised by Chetna Andolan. It was a competition of village women for cutting grass and consequent recognition of this aspect of their work and felicitation for that. The best *ghasiyari* received the award of best ecologist, as it the women of mountains who in fact do maximum of the agricultural, cattle and forest related work and thus maintain a crucial relation with the land and forests and possess deep knowledge about them.

Cultural Response to Larger Questions of Environment and Development

Environmental consciousness and sustainable development is embedded in the everyday for a villager engaging in agricultural labour, cattle rearing and forest dependence. The struggles for survival and for ensuring the rights over the surrounding nature, have also become folk tales for the people, be it Chipko, or many more such local struggles (Upreti 2014). Songs which remain a source for the women (and men) to unite for a struggle, may not have a defined environmental consciousness as specific poems and songs of Chipko, but the kirtans and religious songs are also attached to the everyday relations one lives with the river and the trees.

According to the folk knowledge of Uttarakhand, in the high mountain region, in *bugyals*, one should not wear shoes that has spikes (but soft shoes made of natural fibres), and bright colour clothes and speak softly or the *van devi (aini aanchri)* gets angry. The wild animals are not to be killed and the flowers not to be plucked. The herbs can be collected in a specific period only. Even grass has been given a place of importance, as it is prohibited to graze animals on grass till the time it matures and seeds come out of it, to enable further propagation. The life of the villagers in the high mountain regions is difficult and they have to survive with the scarce resources. Thus,

whenever they visit *bugyals* with their sheep and goats, they pray before the *van devi*, to acknowledge the collective effort and care that is needed for living there.

Many folktales are about this balance that is needed with the nature for survival in mountains and the acceptance of the towering presence of nature. In one of the stories, the sun decided to rise in the night. Troubled by this tantrum of the sun, the people tried all kinds of tricks to teach it a lesson. Ultimately they went to an old man to ask what could they do make the sun rectify its ways. The old man laughed and said, there is no use fighting with the sun, what you can do is to accept its ways, accept that when it comes, that is day and when it goes, that is night. After that people stopped fighting the sun. In another story an old man wished to cut a tree. When he started initially he could hear the suffering voices of the tree as soon as he lashed it with his axe. He stopped and came back the next day and again he could hear the faint moaning. He left and came back the next day, by which time he was so desperate to get the wood to sell it to get food, that he did not hear any voice (of his conscience) and could cut the tree. For survival, it was allowed to take from the nature what was needed.

Another folklore is that of Madho Singh Bhandari. Madho Singh was a soldier in the army of the Tehri king. The story goes like this, when he returned to his village Maletha (at a distance of 30 kms from Devprayag in the Tehri district), his wife had nothing much to offer him as food and water. There was no irrigation facility in the village even when the villagers had good land. The river Chandrabhaga flew near the village but there was a big mountain in between. It the tale of his effort of bringing the river water through canal dug out through the mountain. Three km long *kuhl* and eighteen km long tunnel for bringing water to the village was constructed in the year 1634 by the villagers' *shramdaan*. Maletha has since remained famous for its irrigation canal systems, the *kuhls* and the way the villagers manage these and the collective-cooperative system of agriculture that they have evolved.

These folk tales and songs provide an ideological response to the dominant understanding of development and environment. These are often recounted to inspire the present actions. Cultural resistance to the conception of unilinear progress is also evident in the different cultural notions of work, time and space. There are not stark demarcation of inside and outside still in the villages. Still primarily agriculture and forest related work is considered work and not the labour or office based work. Folk

songs are not as much for the solitary celebration of nature as much for the human relationship with it. Forests are seen as ‘maternal home’ by women.

Attempt at Alternatives

The co-existence with nature is also reflected in the regulatory and management practices of the villagers, for example the flow of water to be used for irrigation in form of *khuls* and for livelihood in form of *gharats*. These practices that remain an integral part of lives in Uttarakhand, have been presented by the activists as an alternative, a practical response to the hydropower projects. There is also an attempt to develop alternatives around these practices. Gharats in Uttarakhand were historically run by the economically weaker sections, they getting a part of the flour which was produced in the mills. The person who managed the gharats was known as *baghwal*. Slowly the gharats came in their ownership. Many came in the ownership of single women. In colonial period taxes were applied on gharats, and according to the Kumaun Water Rules Act of 1830, the *gharats* and *kuhls* required permission of administration for their set up. After independence as well the taxes continued. Slowly as the diesel run mills came up and it became difficult to get the construction material for gharats due to restrictions on forest use, it became difficult to run gharats (Purohit, B. 2002).

There used to be a deep link with gharats, as the meeting point and there are many *nyolis* (folk songs especially associated with oak forests). Gharats were an important part of a self reliant village. Gharats represent a combination of skills of carpentry (*badhai*), blacksmith (*lauhar*) and of working with stones (*tankere*). In additions to the knowledge of these technologies, it also involves the knowledge of regulation of water in a way so as to enable suitable elevations and flow of water for running the mill (Mishra 2006).

Still, some individuals keep working on upgrading of gharats as a means to bring electricity to their villages which remain out of purview of government initiatives. In Khod village, Jakholi block in Rudraprayag, a 65 year old retired army person Pushkar Singh Bhandari, has developed his own technology to upgrade the gharats to bring electricity to six villages, in Rudraparyag and in Almora districts

(Nautiyal 2006). There are many other such individual initiatives. Narayan Dutt Raturi in the Riksal village of Thalising block of Pauri district have developed seven one to five KW projects, which work as *gharats* in the day time and generate electricity in night time (Pokhriyal 2014).



Gharats in Bageshwar by Saryu



Historically the society has attempted many times to develop models of electricity generation. There used to be power house in Nainital that run with little water and fulfilled the local needs (Pathak, S. 2012). In fact, for the first time in India, electricity was generated using hydro energy in Tehri by the Bhagirathi water in the year 1909, by the then kings. Chandi Prasad Bhatt recounted that as part of Chipko

movement, near Gopeshwar a *bijli satyagrah* was started and power generated on a small hydro enterprise in Balkhila, in 1970s, as a mark of protest against the government, as private generation was not allowed and electricity was not supplied to the villages otherwise. Sarvodayi leader Biharilal has built a 25 KW hydel in the Bhudhakedar area in Tehri. Such initiatives did not get much institutional promotion. Instead of further strengthening such initiatives, the present gharats and small projects also lie neglected.

It is the mandate of UREDA to build microhydels and upgrade water mills for producing electricity. Small scale Industry Department has declared gharats as small scale industry. But these are not promoted much by the new state. Whereas mostly in Uttarakhand the UREDA built projects lie damaged and neglected, in Nepal the microhydels were found to be managed well. The Daarchula district of Nepal has about 50 microhydels, built on small *nallas* and *gaads*. This particular project in the photo below was the ninth project on the *gaad* Bhartola, run with collaboration of two villages. Some projects provide electricity for two-three villages. Curiously these projects also are built under the Poverty Alleviation Program, funded by World Bank and European Union. But these are run by the villages themselves. The projects give opportunity to the villagers to find work depending on electricity, like photocopy work. A rotating fund stays with Panchayat to give loans for such enterprises. Mini-grids have been developed in the villages for energy delivery.



Size of villagers' rights: photo taken on 22.12.2013 shows the 15 KW Bhartola gaad microhydel in Shankarpur, Daarchula, Nepal.

The working of the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy in India remains limited. In Uttarakhand, the State Government has opened this field of running microhydel for corporate interests. Conditions are put on panchayats if they wish to undertake any such project. The panchayat has to collaborate with a NGO for projects smaller than 100 KW and with a company for projects from 100 KW to 2 MW. Such company is needed for collaboration that has an experience of building hydro projects and should have a substantial sum of money (a few crores) to back up its plans (Chauhan 2015). No doubt this opens the way for companies already investing in big projects, to also draw benefits from the smaller projects. This also creates difficulty for any independent village community initiative. It also discourages any act of self reliance and enterprise that the villagers wish to take themselves.

Some activists of Uttarakhand intervened to organise two companies of the villagers under the Producer Company Act about four years back, with villagers as shareholders. The projects were conceptualised in a way that they will be built by *shramdaan*, would not disrupt the *rupai* in the fields, or any other river related functions, and they would first provide for the village and the remaining power will be sold.⁴³ Chauhan (2015:34) feels that these can provide substantial earning for each family of the village. The projects are visualised as a model in terms of design, community ownership and size, but are also sought as a solution for preventing migration from these interior villages, by providing livelihood option.

The alternatives are presented to put to question the present hydropower projects, which are not even operating to their full capacity. For example, Tehri dam is producing less than 30% of its installed capacity. There are huge losses in transmission. According to Grumbine and Pandit (2013:37), 20 to 30% of power generated is lost due to poor grid transmission and theft. This amount is greater than the current cumulative hydropower production.

Alternatives are sought not only in hydro area, but in solar energy potential and through pine needles (in abundance they are used a bio-fuel and to produce electricity). Apart from such initiatives, where all the discussion zeroes in, is a serious thought about the seemingly unending electricity demands. Also, we have to think seriously about decentralisation as a way of ensuring fulfilment of basic needs,

⁴³ As explained in Shah, Rajiv Lochan (2012) and a meeting I attended of the villagers in 2013.

especially in the mountain conditions. Mammoth schemes of centralised piped water and electricity supply systems have failed to work in mountains. Alternative decentralised electricity production and local water harvesting can provide both the facilities and livelihood opportunities in the villages.

Ultimately even solar and wind energy are not without their negative impacts, they also need large tracts of land. Solar power plants lead to waste, they need disposal of batteries and panels. Desert ecologies where they are proposed are also fragile. So in the end we will have to think of decentralised models, solar energy production on rooftops and more importantly limited use of energy. It is not just about energy ultimately, it is about how we are visualising our villages, towns, economy, society and culture, rooted in reality and yet having dreams of positive transformation, rooted in people's potential.

Discussion and Conclusion

The responses and resistances against hydropower projects in Uttarakhand are different from the earlier struggles and social movements. The struggle now is against the combined interests of state and private capital—politicians, corporates, contractors, local bureaucracy and the elite of different regions who are involved in these projects. The implications and effects of the projects are not known to the local people when the projects are initiated in the villages. People who had waited for years for development of infrastructure in their villages remain ambiguous about the projects and often the new temporary jobs are too tempting to be rejected. New conflicts, social relationships and cultures are introduced in the villages due to the arrival of the hydropower projects. Also, after Uttarakhand state was formed, the local administration and political interests have a more intimate connection, knowledge of and access to the local people and their natural environs.

The project authorities often convey the message that the projects are inevitable and if the compensation as offered is not taken, then that will also be lost. There is no uniform rehabilitation policy that the companies follow and they deal with specific villages and individuals on different terms. Such practices of the companies and the absence of other development activities and opportunities in the region reduce the negotiating power of the people. In Uttarakhand, people mostly do not wish to cut

off the possibility of negotiations with companies for individual benefits; they do not boycott the companies in the hope of possible ‘temporary’ gains.

Resistances are at times seen as a means for individual compromises, whereas they could become a platform for discussions and a widening of the public sphere. Collective negotiations due to organised resistances could prove to be acts of agency and assertion. The individual compromises instead mean that the interests of the village collective often get side-lined. Those without social capital stand to lose more. The mutual distrust amongst the villagers makes solidarity for future actions difficult. The resistances also are remaining localised despite the potential that a common platform can offer for contesting the nexus of powerful forces of the state, private companies and individual interests.

According to Dwivedi (1997), whereas the approach of the activists remains framing the issues within a ‘wider development dystopia’, keeping resistance and resettlement at opposite poles, people understand the issue in much more flexible way. But the resistances in Uttarakhand depict that even as particular interests are important and need to be addressed, a larger vision is equally important, so that the question of ‘what am ‘I’ getting out of it’ gets addressed alongside ‘what can be collectively achieved in long term’. These dual goals are difficult to balance and achieve, but addressing both together remain important nevertheless.

Certain ways of resistances are made to appear more acceptable, as state chooses to engage with only these. For example, state administration chose to ignore the people’s protests against the projects in Uttarkashi, but responded to the individualistic protests of G.D. Agarwal, an influential figure close to political and social elites in Uttarakhand and elsewhere. This puts to question the notion of success and failure of the resistances.

Resistances instead could be seen as a way of enhancing people’s consciousness and politicisation, taking as their basis, the people’s collective concerns, rather than be seen as a medium to achieve goals of some persons alone. Even when the protests like that by Agarwal are said to have stopped three projects on Bhagirathi river, and are thus termed successful for forcing the state to do so, they limit the discourse and scope for further resistances as they appropriated the people’s

struggle and overshadowed their concerns to represent conservative religious sentiments. They represent a different ethic of resistances.

The legitimisation and recognition anxiety that the activists share may be understood in terms of the stagnation in their participation in social movements and of the movements themselves, as well as of the larger insecurity about the resistances getting appropriated or diverted towards other goals by NGOs or Hindutava forces. In such a scenario, creative programs that seek respect for a Pahari way of life like *ghasiyari pratiyogita*, play an important role. Place based alternatives to dominant development, are a strong critique in themselves. The cultural expressions, folk tales, songs and initiatives for developing alternative models of development, provide powerful responses and even resist the dominant development discourse.

Many activists said that Himalayas are passing through a phase of social movements. The presence of dissent everywhere, in its many forms, despite the manipulations and repressions by the state and private capital is in itself meaningful, even when widespread resistances have not yet emerged. There is pessimism, but there is also anger, indicating also a passion for positive change. The 'utopia' is found in the past, but not a passive fixed past, not a returning to the past, but taking what has been good in it, the respect for ways of life developed over years, the traditional practices that have stood the test of the time.

It has been repeatedly emphasized in Uttarakhand, that neither the conservation of the environment nor economic growth and infrastructure development are wished at the cost of human beings, that these are best achieved by a symbiotic human-nature relationship. People are still asking the state for development, an appropriate one, the RoRs that are small-scale, community run and appropriately designed as per the specificities of the fragile mountain environments.

People's current responses do not unambiguously indicate a clear future for social movements and resistances, even when the need seems urgent given the huge onslaught and risks that the region is encountering in the form of numerous hydropower projects. The cultural expressions in its different forms, such as songs, poetry, literature, *yatras*, can be seen as undercurrents of the current 'social consciousness'. It is possible that resistances lie latent within these varied cultural

expressions and materialise at a later time. It is just a phase of abeyance and *perhaps the land has given much and it is just resting...waiting for the rain to come...for the seasons to unfold...for the hidden seeds to spring to life...*

Conclusion

While I was writing this, fires had engulfed the forests of Uttarakhand. The nests of the birds, the burrows of the animals, nothing was left, everywhere there was smoke and more smoke. How many years will these forests take to get replenished, nobody knows. With the destruction of the forests that hold the earth on mountain slopes, the first rains can wash away the soil that takes years to come into being. If it is heavy rain, it may lead to floods and landslides. Forests contain the intensity of the heavy rainfall, preventing soil erosion and gully formation and thus, check such phenomenon. By reducing the run-off, forests release water slowly, long after the monsoon season has passed. What is taking place with the development that is being practised in Uttarakhand is, to my mind also similar to these happenings. The ‘trees’ of accumulated knowledge and culture are getting destroyed; the rains thus have the potential to wash ‘the people’ away, who are increasingly becoming like the loose soil, vulnerable before the torrential downpour. The local culture and the specific mountain environment, not only provide the people with rootedness, the sense of binding and of belongingness, but enable them with a capacity to selectively imbibe from the changes that rain from ‘above’.

It this sense, modernity and development have to be seen as processes, from which people selectively take what they need to address the aridity that they may have in their culture and lives. But these processes are instead being implemented as a finished and uncontestable project by the state and private companies, which in turn carry out their works with limited self-reflexivity and transparency and with minimum scope for participation of the local people, whose lives get deeply affected by these. Development (*vikas*) in form of these projects is getting associated with terms like destruction (*vinash*) in the discourses of the Himalayan people and activists. It is a *vikas* that does not manifest with the flow of the rivers, but in stopping the flow. Thus, the new imposed ways of life stand in opposition to the ‘traditional’ that formed the basis of the cultural and religious ways of life for the local people.

The hydropower projects are being promoted as *vikas* in Uttarakhand in the backdrop of years of promotion of such projects in India, which chose to show its potential and modernity through the engineering capacity of taming the rivers. With

strong movements against this notion of development, and the huge displacement that the dams on the Narmada river and the Tehri dam have entailed, an ‘alternative’, solution was forwarded in form of the Run of the River (RoR) projects. These RoRs are being taken up as the drivers of development in the Himalayas and especially in Uttarakhand state, which fought for its autonomy in order to address the historic negligence and excessive extraction of the regions’ natural resources by outsiders, while the local people were debarred from the essentials that sustain their livelihoods, all in the name of conservation and development. These projects also manifest as a global process of resource extraction.

The overall attempt in the promotion of RoRs, seems to be to adopt a politically correct language by emulating the language of alternatives to mainstream development, in order to promote the hydropower projects within an ideological realm, as green, appropriate, sustainable and small-scale. However, there remains a huge difference between the conception of alternatives that social movements have formulated over the years and the alternatives like RoRs that come in the name of ‘region specific’ development to harness the ‘hydro potential’ of the region. The projects engage NGOs to impress on people that they can be mere ‘beneficiaries’ and not ‘owners’ of lands and forests they have tended. Hence, the only way the ‘intruder’ companies, which give an impression to be in possession of mountains through their practices, engage with them would be to ask for their demands, *maang rakho*, they are told in the looming presence of the state standing in favour of projects.

The RoRs continue to cause dispossession in the mountain villages, by felling their forests, diverting the rivers, taking over agricultural land, leading to drying up of springs and ceding of their land and houses; without being held accountable for any of this. Further, the region seems to be in an imposed disaster-mode, due to heavy interventions in the river beds and flows. The people say that the mountains are now asking for sacrifices, *pahar ab lagataar bali maang raha hain*, to avenge their destruction. Rivers refuse to take their taming lying down.

The onslaught of huge number of projects in a small fragile mountain region and history of social movements that Uttarakhand is also known for, provide a common ground for a region wide movement, based on opposition to the dispossession and the shared aspirations of development. However, the varying socio-economic situations of different villages and individual villagers have meant that the

'resistances' are coming up in various forms. Even when the activists tend to resist the development projects with an ideological basis, for the people, development remains a culturally contested terrain. The people's 'responses', thus vary from collective resistances to collaboration with the private companies by individuals seeking their own immediate gain. Thus, the responses to 'development' do not always boycott it and nor do the people always collaborate with development projects wholeheartedly, but the responses often fall in between the two poles of the continuum—complete acceptance and complete rejection.

It is realised that there is no fixed recipe for collective action. It is not possible to emulate and replicate the social movements of any other area. It is also difficult to point out as to why the region is not coming up with resistances as is expected, given the vibrant social movement history of Uttarakhand. Nevertheless, few reasons are evident. Geography of the Uttarakhand region gives a different conception to the 'mass base' of movements as it comes to be seen more as an intangible shared consciousness that may not manifest physically in huge gatherings. Development and livelihood opportunities have remained limited, so the option of employment opportunities through the development projects is often sought for, as are roads and basic material infrastructure that also come along with development of hydropower. The strong kinship base of the villages, in which each family is related to the other, makes it difficult for one to resist when the other decides to negotiate. The kin and social networks stand divided after the coming of project companies. The relationships seem to have been penetrated by the market forces, as there is competition to get the meagre benefits that the companies lure people with.

The nexus of regional and national contractors seems to have taken a hold over the region, capitalising on the innocence and distress of the people. The villages are largely bereft of the presence of youth and men who migrate out of the mountains for earning livelihoods. The consistent migration over the years seems to have affected the sense of belongingness to the land and villages. Development aspirations have increased in the youth. There is also a sense of betrayal that most people carry with their political leaders and with the earlier movements, which they think have failed to materialise any gains for them and have further made life difficult by imposing a 'foreign' understanding of 'conservation'. Movements like Chipko thus are seen as an instrument that has been turned against their actual interests. In general,

a belief has come that social movements are a platform for capitalisation of benefits by a few.

So pervasive is the reach of language of companies and NGOs in the region and the sheer number of the hydropower projects, that people have started looking at themselves as people who can at any time be potentially ‘displaced’. Aspirations for a better life have for many families, transformed into an aspiration for displacement—‘we only wish to be displaced’ (*humne visthapit hi chahiye*) the people insist. There is a feeling in few that this may be a way to access a small piece of development and modernity.

Resistances themselves have been reduced to a means of reaching compromises by the companies and the politicians. The resistance process thus, is not always leading to a deepening of solidarity amongst the local peoples and activists and it often does not culminate in the joint expression of mutually agreed demands amongst the villagers. Thus, from a potentially politically enabling process, it becomes a disabling process, once it becomes an instrument for individual compromises. It is however, not to say that people are not resisting. Even as people’s social networks get torn apart by circuits of global capital that work through the neoliberal state, they continue their own individual struggles. Negotiations are the ways in which they adapt, and act. The struggles have become more individual and inwards, with increased uncertainties and risks. Hence, there was a need to change the focus of the study from ‘resistances’ to ‘responses’.

No one single coherent ideology or overarching goal unites all activists and different locale based resistances. Social movements in Uttarakhand have tended to be not guided by any single well defined ideology—Gandhian, Leftist, Environmentalist (green) or Hindutva etc, but remain influenced majorly by region specific concerns, drawing upon many ideologies. What these earlier movements highlight is that, addressing the immediate practical needs and interests of the people is as important as a careful portrait of a long term vision, lest the movements get appropriated for other intellectual or political purposes. A shared concern and mass consciousness could exist earlier with varied actions and different leaders, taking the shape of a social movement. However, this has not materialised in the present situation. The legacy of social movements in the region has led to a political consciousness that is evident in the demands that the people made on the project companies in a few places, such as

having a share in the hydropower company's profits, and also in an ability to assert their goals in face of violent state repression. Still, a coalition or a regional political platform has not evolved in the region despite years of social movements.

Further the basis and the modes of the resistances themselves are important, as it is seen that the resistances that are based on narrow concerns and conservatism, which evolve not in conjunction with the concerns of affected people, may become 'successful' in halting individual projects, but they often hamper possible future resistances. The ethical and cultural rootedness of the resistances thus seems important, a cultural consciousness that does not get reduced to chauvinism and narrow interests of a few individuals. With such a consciousness, the people's resistances may not have come to be 'successful' in stopping the unwanted development work or in enabling the demands that the resistance had come up with, but the process of struggle itself became a reference point for the other resistances, some of which could also stop the entry of the company in their areas, as they intended.

Given the ways in which the resistances get appropriated in Uttarakhand, the cultural activists seek 'utopia' in the tradition and culture of the region, not with the intention of reverting back to an idealized past, but to provide a critical, ethical and value-based resistance to the dominant model of development that is being practiced. Also, the collective cultural practices related to rivers and water usages have not become a 'past'. Rather, they are very much alive even as they often stand neglected. Giving up these indigenous ways of 'natural resource usage' also means giving up a way of life that has proved to be effective over the years.

It is with the small rivers and streams that the bonds of the mountain people are stronger as their lives are completely dependent on and revolve around them. Hence, it is been seen that the social movements against 'small' projects, that divert the smaller rivers and tributaries, continued despite severe state repression in form of threats, violence, police cases and visits to jails. The movements in Uttarakhand thus have repeatedly highlighted that the cultural contexts and relationships with the environment can form the basis of environment protection and development. These concepts when come from global policy levels, often remain bereft of local concerns including those for livelihoods and do not always establish a balance between conservation, resource exploitation and livelihood needs in actual practice, even

though the ‘successful merger of environmental conservation and unlimited economic development’ is claimed to have been incorporated within the idea of ‘sustainable development’ since long.

The milieu is such that *vikas*, green energy and modernity are what everyone appears to be seeking, be it the state, the bureaucrats, the local people or the activists. But their precise goals and methods have huge differences. Cultural forms and indigenous ways of interacting with nature and the cultural expressions thus provide the seeds of resistance, are at time dormant, and at times they are struggling to burst out. The folklore and songs and the local idioms provide a more intimate and long lasting basis for resistances and have the potential to revive and create socio-political spaces of resistance. The songs of Narendra Negi and Girda, from whom I have drawn extensively in my work, have touched the people deeply and have repeatedly become the locus of resistances in the area. People have responded more to the cultural mobilisations. The myths, like that of the descent of Ganga, are in themselves powerful symbols and counter-narratives of the logics like that of the taming and conquest of nature.

The folklores and people’s songs present the delicate balance between the nature and human needs and livelihoods, which can provide a counter narrative to the hegemonic discourses of development and environment. The resistance to a unilinear notion of progress also manifests in the different cultural notions of work, time and space. The community consciousness that comes on the basis of a critical tradition and culture, enables a resistance against the appropriation of the collective movements by the conservative forces, and also forms a basis for alternative politics that question the enforced conception of development from the ‘outside’ and also the ‘inside’ that is challenged by differential personal individual interests. Cultural expressions reflect the anxieties and aspirations of the region as a whole and can be seen as an undercurrent of the people’s consciousness. Girda compares the people’s consciousness with that of a river, which at times flows under the rocks and stones, below the surface. The river at such times appears to have disappeared, but it comes back to its natural flow a little further. The cultural expressions, the organic intellectuals and the history of movements in the region, present themselves as a hope that perhaps the region is just waiting, for the undercurrents to surface.

References

Newspapers and Magazines

- Agarwal, G.D. (2008) 'A Critique of Loharinag-Pala, Pala-Maneri and Other Hydroelectric Projects on R. Bhagirathi', URL: <http://tapasya-bhagirathi.blogspot.in/2008/05/critique-of-hydroelectric-projects-on.html>, Accessed 11 July 2016.
- Amar Ujala* (2004) 'Kanastar Bajao Rally Nikali: Phalenda Baandh Kisi Surat Mein Na Banne Denge Grameen', 5 October.
- Amar Ujala* (2005) 'Phalenda Project Ka Virodh Kar Rahe Bees Log Giraftar', 22 September.
- Amar Ujala* (2014) 'Virodh ke Chalte Ek Mah se Band Pada Hai Vishugaad Pipalkoti Pariyojna ka Kaam: THDC ko 30 Crore ki Chapat', 5 December.
- Aswal, Ratan Singh (2016) 'Smart City Par Nahi Smart Pahad Pe Dhayan De Sarkar', *Nainital Samachar*, 1 April.
- Bahuguna, Sitaram (2016) 'Saenkado Logon Ka Rozgaar Cheen Liya Hai GVK Company Ne', *Yugvani*, March, p. 44.
- Bhat, Shravan; Paul, Cuckoo (2015) 'India's Solar Power Punt', *Forbes India*, URL: <http://forbesindia.com/printcontent/40047>, Accessed 8 June 2015.
- Bhatt, Chandi Prasad (2009) 'Nadiyon ko Aviral Bahne Do', *Hindustan*, 16 September.
- Bhatt, Praveen (2012a) 'Pariyojnao ke Samarthan ke Bahane Chal Raha hai Bada Khel', *Nainital Samachar*, 1 May.
- Bhatt, Praveen (2012b) 'Ek Baar Phir Ujadenge', *Nainital Samachar*, 1 May.
- Bijalwan, Madan Mohan (2011) 'Loharnaga-Pala Jal Vidyut Pariyojna ka Sach', *Yugvani*, February, pp. 42-43.
- Chandola, Harishchandra (2013) 'Pariyojnao ki Dhokadhadi', *Nainital Samachar*, 15 January.

- Chauhan, Trepan Singh (2009) 'Thekedar Rajnetaon aur N.G.O Ne Mil Kar Cheen Liya Sara Pratirodh', *Nainital Samachar*, 15 November.
- Chauhan, Trepan Singh (2013a) 'Shiksha ke Nijikaran Ki Aur', *Samyantar*, April, URL: <http://www.samyantar.com/uttarakhand-privatisation-of-education/>, Accessed 11 June 2016.
- Chauhan, Trepan Singh (2013b) 'Uttarakhand: Khanan Mafia Aur Satta ka Gathjod', *Nainital Samachar*, September.
- Chauhan, Trepan Singh (2014) 'Ganga Paharo Se Neeche Aayegi Bhi?', *Samyantar*, August, URL: www.samyantar.com/गंगा-पहाड़ों-से-नीचे-आएगी-भ-2/, Accessed 11 June 2016.
- Chauhan, Trepan Singh (2015) 'Choti Pariyojnayen Bade Davedaar', *Samyantar*, March, pp. 33-34.
- Chopra, Ravi (2013) 'The Untold Story From Uttarakhand', *The Hindu*, 26 June.
- Dainik Jagran* (2006) 'Panchayat ko Saunpi Jayen Pariyojnayen', 1 April.
- Dainik Jagran* (2014) 'Almora Ke Purva Saansad Ne Bhi Diya Samarthan', 29 November.
- Deccan Herald* (2013) 'Tehri Dam Sitting on an Active Fault: Seismologists', 6 May, URL: <http://www.deccanherald.com/pages.php?id=297401>, Accessed 11 December 2012.
- Dogra, Bharat (2009) 'Musibat Main Hai Visthapit, Nai Tihri Main Nahi Dikhi Ronak', *Navbharat Times*, 1 September, p. 10.
- Gailora, Geeta (2012) 'Baandh Main Doobi Jindgiyan', *Samyantar*, 43 (10), pp.11-12.
- Hardnews* (2009) 'Vanishing Waters of Uttarakhand', September, URL: <http://www.hardnewsmedia.com/2009/09/3193>, Accessed 11 December 2012.
- Jain, Mayak (2015) 'India Post Starts Selling Holy Godavari Water, Ganga Jal May Be Next', URL: <http://scroll.in/article/732143/india-post-starts-selling-holy-godavari-water-ganga-jal-may-be-next>, Accessed 8 June 2015.
- Jhardhari, Vijay (1997) 'Kaise Lapata Hue Hamare Beej', *Nainital Samachar*, 14 November.

- Jolly, Asit (2016) 'Why Linking Rivers Won't Work', *India Today*, April, URL: <http://indiatoday.intoday.in/story/riverlinkingnarendramodinalgreentribunal/1/642498.html>, Accessed 11 June 2016.
- Joshi, Mahesh (2012) 'Kaisa Vikas Chahte Ho Uttarakhand', *Nainital Samachar*, 1 May.
- Joshi, Mahesh (2013) 'Uttarakhand ke Liye Abhishap Saabit Hoga Eco-sensitive Zone', *Regional Reporter*, March, pp. 13-15.
- Joshi, Mahesh (2007) 'Hamari Holi-Diwali To Janpratinidhiyon Ne Badrang Kar Di', *Nainital Samachar*, 1 December.
- Kasniyal, BD (2015) 'Water Resources Depleting in Ganga Catchment Area: Study', *The Tribune*, 10 August.
- Kapur, Manavi (2015) 'The Ghost Villages of Uttarakhand', *Business Standard*, 17 July.
- Krishak, RK (2013) 'Paththar Nahi Hain Pahar', *Alaav*, 38, pp. 3-7.
- Maikhuri, Indresh (2012) 'Kanun Par Kalikh Potti Company', *Regional Reporter*, August-September, pp. 17-19.
- Malhotra, Sarika (2016) 'Muddied Waters: Why the Ganga Can't be Clean', *Business Today*, 10 April, URL: <http://www.businesstoday.in/magazine/features/whythegangacantbecleaned/story/230439.html>, Accessed 11 June 2016.
- Martolya, Jagat (1997) "'Meiti' ne Bhawnao ko Disha Di Hai", *Nainital Samachar*, 14 November.
- Menon, Manju; Kohli, Kanchi (2016) 'Letting Them off Easy', *The Hindu*, 20 June.
- Mittal, Tusha (2008) 'The Ganga's Last Roar', *Tehelka*, 19 July, pp. 20-23.
- Nainital Samachar* (1994a) 'Netritavaheenta ka Santraas', 1 October.
- Nainital Samachar* (1994b) 'Jeet ke Rumaal ko Hila kar lenge Uttarakhand', 1 November.
- Nainital Samachar* (2011) 'Mandakini Ghati Mein Aag', 15 February.
- Nainital Samachar* (2013) 'Uttarakhand Aapda Ne Media ke Vaare-Nyare Kar Diye', 15 October.

- Nautiyal, Badri (2006), 'Aath Andhere Gaon Mein Faila Bijli ka Ujala', *Yugvani*, June, p. 42.
- Nautiyal, Vidyasagar (2003) 'Uttarkashi Ka Sankat Baandh Prabhavit Hai', *Nainital Samachar*, 1 November.
- Padmanabhan, Chitra (2013) 'When the Ganga Descends', *The Hindu*, 28 June.
- Pandit, Maharaj K. (2013) 'Nature Avenges Its Exploitation', *The Hindu*, 21 June.
- Pathak, Shekhar (2012) 'Vikas Nahi Vinash ka Prayay', *Samyantar*, 43(11), August, pp. 20-24.
- Pokhriyal, Mritunjay (2014), 'Uttarakhand ke Urja Purush: Narayan Dutt Raturi', *Regional Reporter*, January, pp. 33-34.
- Punetha, Prem (2013) 'Uttarakhand: Jameen Loot ki Taak Mein Sarkar', *Samyantar*, April, URL: <http://www.samayantar.com/uttarakhand-land-government-and-mafia-ready-for-loot/>, Accessed 8 June 2015.
- Ramaswamy R. Iyer (1990) 'Large Dams: The Right Perspective', in B. D. Dhawan (ed.) *Big Dams: Claims, Counter Claims*, New Delhi: Commonwealth Publishers, pp. 62-100.
- Ramaswamy R. Iyer (2014) 'For Rejuvenating, Not Re-engineering, the Ganga', *The Hindu*, 16 July.
- Ramda (2008) 'Hara Samandar Gopichandar Bol Meri Machli Kitan Pani', *Nainital Samachar*, 15 August.
- Rana, Digvijay (1999) 'Thoughtless Application of Alien Concepts Harmful', *Garhwal Post*, March 12.
- Rashtriya Sahara* (2010) 'Joshimath Band, Maharally Mein Umra Huzum', 16 March.
- Rashtriya Sahara* (2014) 'Pahar ki Pira ko Di Awaaz', 20 January.
- Rawat, Surat Singh (1995) 'Abhiyantriki Truti hi Jal Risaav ka Karan Bani', *Amar Ujala*, 1 September.
- Rawat, Surat Singh (2003) 'Intake Ka Muhana Raet Se Anta, Karamchari Farzi Reading Lete Rahe', *Amar Ujala*, 13 June.

Rawat, Surat Singh (2006) 'Durghatna Baandh Ke Manual Ki Andekhi Se', *Amar Ujala*, 8 July.

Rawat, Surat Singh (2012) 'Afsarshahi Ne Cheena Janjatiya Logon Se Do Gaon', *Amar Ujala*, 17 October.

Regional Reporter (2012) '12 Varsh Niwas Banam Mul Niwas', October, p. 6.

Regional Reporter (2014) 'Niti ke Abhav Mein Shiksha', December, p. 4.

Romero, Simon (2015) 'Taps Run Dry in Brazil's Largest and Wealthiest City', *The Hindu*, February 18, p. 17.

Sah, Rajiv Lochan (1977) 'Prithak Parvitiya Rajya: Ladai Anivarya Hai', *Nainital Samachar*, 1 September.

Sah, Rajiv Lochan (2006) 'Sansadhano ki Ladai Ka Prasthan Bindu ho Sakta Hai Phalenda Samjhota', *Nainital Samachar*, 15 May.

Sah, Rajiv Lochan (2012) 'Kah Do ki Sarkar Nahi Biki', *Nainital Samachar*, 15 May.

Samyantar (2015) 'Jameen ki Loot Main Sarkar ki Meherbani', December.

Sanwal, Preamsingh (2006) 'Run of the River Vidyut Pariyojna: ..Tab Pahar Kya Pahar Rah Payenge?', *Yugvani*, June, p. 17.

Sethi, Nitin (2015) 'Third Expert Panel to Review Uttarakhand Dams', *Business Standard*, 5 June.

Singh, Bhupen (2010) 'Himalaya ke Ghaav', *Jansatta*, 21 April.

Singh, Bhupen (2015) 'Vikas Ka 'Bhaim' Tut Gaya Bhimtaal Ki Is Yatra Se', *Nainital Samachar*, 15 October.

Singh, Prithviraj (2014) 'Uma Says 'Human Excretion' Caused U'khand Floods', *Hindustan Times*, 17 September.

The Hindu (2012) 'Few Buyers for Himachal Power This Summer', 19 June, URL: <http://www.thehindubusinessline.com/economy/few-buyers-for-himachals-power-this-summer/article3546860.ece>, Accessed 8 June 2015.

The Hindu (2015) 'Relief Officials Milked Uttarakhand Disaster', 30 May.

Tiwari, Charu (2012a) 'Prakartik Sansadhano ki Loot Ki Pariyojnayen', *Samyantar*, June, URL: <http://www.samayantar.com/projects-for-looting-of-natural-resources-1/> and <http://www.samayantar.com/projects-for-looting-of-natural-resources-2/>, Accessed 26 September 2012.

Tiwari, Charu (2012b) 'Himalaya: Basega to Bachega', *Samyantar*, 43 (10), July, pp. 7-10.

Tripathi, Purnima S. (2009) 'Captive Ganga', *Frontline*, URL: <http://www.frontline.in/static/html/fl2605/stories/20090313260504100.htm>, Accessed 19 June 2015.

Upadhyay, Kavita (2014a) 'Gangotri Glacier is Retreating: Report', *The Hindu*, January 7, URL: <http://www.thehindu.com/sci-tech/energy-and-environment/gangotri-glacier-is-retreating-report/article5549905.ece>, Accessed 8 June 2015.

Upadhyay, Kavita (2014b) 'Damned by Development', *The Hindu*, 16 December.

Uttaranchal India (2005) 'Scrap the Deal', 6 July.

Documentary Films

Devi's Dilemma (Nirvikalpa & Ramesh Chandra Pant 2014)

Indradhanush Udas Hai (Rohit Joshi 2013)

Phir Subah Hogi (Kavita 2006)

Government Documents and Publications

Chopra, Ravi; Das, B. P.; Dhyani, Hemant; Verma, Ajay et al. (11 member Expert Body constituted on the directions issued by the Supreme Court of India) (2014) *Assessment of Environmental Degradation and Impact of Hydroelectric Projects During the June 2013 Disaster in Uttarakhand*, New Delhi: Unpublished. Submitted to The Ministry of Environment and Forests, Government of India (MoEF).

Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG) (2010) *Performance Audit Report of Hydropower Development Through Private Sector Participation, Uttarakhand for the Year 2008-2009*, New Delhi.

Government of India (1954) *The Problem of Economic Development*, Planning Commission, New Delhi: Government of India Press.

Government of India (1998) *National Policy for Hydropower Development*, Ministry of Power.

Government of India (2008) *National Policy for Hydropower Development*, Ministry of Power.

Government of Uttarakhand (nd) *Policy on Hydropower Development by Private Sector in the State of Uttarakhand (25 MW to 100 MW)*.

Kumar, M.S.; Lande, V.W.; Paunikar, W.N.; Sangolkar, L.N. (2011) *Water Quality of Bhagirathi/Ganga River in Himalayan Region*, Nagpur: National Environmental Engineering Research Institute (NEERI).

Mukherji, G.B. (2010) *Report of the Task Force To Look Into Problems of Hill States And Hill Areas And To Suggest Ways To Ensure That These States And Areas Do Not Suffer in Any Way Because of Their Peculiarities*, New Delhi: Planning Commission.

Books and Articles

Adas, Michael (1989) *Machines as the Measure of Men: Science, Technology and Ideologies of Western Dominance*, New York: Cornell University Press.

Agarwal, Anil (2001) 'Can Hindu Beliefs and Values Help India Meet Its Ecological Crisis?' in Christopher Key Chapple & Mary Evelyn Tucker (eds.) *Hinduism and Ecology: The Intersection of Earth, Sky, and Water*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, pp.165-179.

Agarwal, Rakesh (2001) 'Micro Power: User-Friendly and Efficient', *Economic and Political Weekly*, 36 (27), pp. 2500-2501.

Agrawal, Arun (2005) *Environmentality: Technologies of Government and the Making of Subjects*, Durham & London: Duke University Press.

Alley, Kelly D. (2015) 'Separate Domains: Hinduism, Politics, and Environmental Pollution', in Assa Doron, Richard Barz & Barbara Nelson (eds.) *An Anthology of Writings on the Ganga: Goddess and River in History, Culture, and Society*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, pp. 272-301.

- Althusser, Louis (2012) *Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses*, New Delhi: Critical Quest.
- Asthana, Vandana (2012) 'Forced Displacement: A Gendered Analysis of the Tehri Dam Project', *Economic and Political Weekly*, 47(47-48), pp. 96-102.
- Bahuguna, Sundar Lal (2007) 'People's Programme for Change', in Indian National Trust For Art And Cultural Heritage (ed.) *India's Environment: Myth & Reality*, Dehradun: Natraj Publishers, pp. 1-15.
- Basu, Jayanta (2013) 'Activism and the Media', *Seminar*, 652, pp. 44-47.
- Bauman, Zygmunt (1989) *Modernity and the Holocaust*, Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Bauman, Zygmunt (1992) *Intimations of Postmodernity*, London & New York: Routledge.
- Bauman, Zygmunt (2004) *Wasted Lives: Modernity and its Outcasts*, Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Baviskar, Amita (2007) 'The Dream Machine: The Model Development Project and the Remaking of the State', in Amita Baviskar (ed.) *Waterscapes: The Cultural Politics of a National Resource*, Uttaranchal: Permanent Black, pp. 281-313.
- Baviskar, Amita (ed.) (2008) *Contested Grounds: Essays on Nature, Culture, and Power*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Baviskar, Amita (2010) 'Social Movements', in Nirija Gopal Jayal & Pratap Bhanu Mehta (eds.) *The Oxford Companion to Politics in India*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Baviskar, B.S. (2001) 'NGOs and Civil Society in India', *Sociological Bulletin*, 50(1), pp. 3-15.
- Beck, Ulrich (2006) 'Living in the World Risk Society', *Economy and Society*, 35(3), pp. 329-345.
- Berger, Peter L.; Berger, Brigitte; Kellner, Hansfried (1974) *The Homeless Mind: Modernization and Consciousness*, New York: Vintage Books.
- Berremen, Gerald D. (1983) 'The U.P. Himalaya: Culture, Cultures and Regionalism', in O.P. Singh (ed.) *The Himalaya: Nature, Man and Culture*, New Delhi: Rajesh Publications, pp.227-265.

- Bhaduri, Amit (2009) *The Face You Were Afraid To See*, New Delhi: Penguin.
- Bhatia, Shankar Singh (2010) *Uttarakhand ke Sulagte Sawal???*, Dehradun: Uttarakhand Shakti Prakashan.
- Bhatt, Chandi Prasad (1992) 'Chipko ka Ek Prishtha', *Pahar*, 5-6, pp. 244-248.
- Bhushan, Chandra; Hamberg, Jonas; Goyal, Abhinav (2013) *Green Norms for Green Energy: Small Hydro Power*, New Delhi: Centre for Science and Environment.
- Buber, Martin (1937) *I and Thou*, Edinberg: T. & T. Clark.
- Capra, Fritjof (1981) *The Turning Point: Science, Society, and the Rising Culture*, New York: Batman Books.
- Chandola, Harish (1994a) 'Uttarakhand: With Violence?', *Mainstream Weekly*, 32(47), pp. 11-12, 20.
- Chandola, Harish (1994b) 'Why Uttarakhand?', *Mainstream Weekly*, 32 (48), pp. 3-4, 35.
- Chandola, Harish (1995) 'What Kind of Uttarakhand', *Mainstream Weekly*, 33(47), pp. 29-31.
- Chandola, Harish (2002) 'Doomsday for Tehri', *Mainstream Weekly*, 40(26), pp. 25-26.
- Chandola, Harishchandra (2003) 'Doobta Hamara Shehar', *Pahar*, 12 (2), pp. 265-268.
- Chandola, Harish (2008) 'Minor Nandigrams of Uttarakhand', *Mainstream Weekly*, 46(19), 27 April, URL: <http://www.mainstreamweekly.net/article665.html>, Accessed 11 June 2016.
- Chauhan, Trepan Singh (2014) *Hey Bwari*, Delhi: Sahitya Upkram.
- Colopy, Cheryl (2012) *Dirty, Sacred Rivers: Confronting South Asia's Water Crisis*, New York: Oxford University Press.
- Coomaraswamy, Ananda K. (1981) *Essays in National Idealism*, New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers Pvt. Ltd.
- Cronon, William (ed.) (1995) *Uncommon Ground: Rethinking The Human Place in Nature*, New York: W.W. Norton & Company.

- Dharmadhikary, Shripad (2008) *Mountains of Concrete: Dam Building in the Himalayas*, California: International Rivers.
- Dhasmana, Rajendra (1994) 'Prithak Rajya: Har Samasya Ka Hal, Har Sawal Ka Jawab' in Suresh Nautiyal (ed.) *Dhaad*, Dehradun: Pratiksha, pp. 86-89.
- Dogra, Bharat (1994) 'Pawns in a Chess Game', *Economic and Political Weekly*, 29 (50), p. 3130.
- Drew, Georgina (2014) 'Mountain Women, Dams, and the Gendered Dimensions of Environmental Protest in the Garhwal Himalaya', *Mountain Research and Development*, 34 (3), pp. 235-242.
- D'Souza, Rohan (2007) 'From Calamity to Resource: Flood Control and the Politics of Natural Limits', in Amita Baviskar (ed.) *Waterscapes: The Cultural Politics of a National Resource*, Uttaranchal: Permanent Black, pp. 248-280.
- D'Souza, Rohan (2008) 'Framing India's Hydraulic Crises: The Politics of the Modern Large Dam', *Monthly Review*, 60 (3), pp. 112-124.
- Dwivedi, Ranjit (1997) 'Why Some People Resist and Others Do Not: Local Perceptions and Actions Over Displacement Risks on the Sardar Sarovar', *Working Paper Series No. 265*, The Hague, Netherlands: Institute of Social Studies.
- Dwivedi, Ranjit (1998) 'Resisting Dams and 'Development': Contemporary Significance of the Campaign against the Narmada Projects in India', *The European Journal of Development Research*, 10 (2), pp. 135-179.
- Dwivedi, Ranjit (2002) 'Models and Methods in Development-Induced Displacement', *Development and Change*, 33 (4), pp. 709-732.
- Eck, Diana L. (2003) 'Ganga: The Goddess Ganges in Hindu Sacred Geography', in Amita Baviskar (ed.) *Waterlines*, New Delhi: Penguin Book India Limited, pp. 28-49.
- Emerson, Robert M.; Fretz, Rachel I.; Shaw, Linda L. (1995) *Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Erlewein, Alexander (2013) 'Disappearing Rivers-The Limits of Environmental Assessment for Hydropower in India', *Environment Impact Assessment Review*, 43, pp. 135-143.

- Erlewein, Alexander; Nüsser, Marcus (2011) 'Offsetting Greenhouse Gas Emissions in the Himalaya? Clean Development Dams in Himachal Pradesh, India', *Mountain Research and Development*, 31 (4), pp. 293-304.
- Escobar, Arturo (1995) *Encountering Development: The Making and Unmaking of the Third World*, Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Esteva, Gustavo (1987) 'Regenerating People's Spaces', *Alternatives*, 12 (1), pp. 125-152.
- Fairhead, James; Leech, Mellisa; Scoones, Ian (2012) 'Green Grabbing: A New Appropriation of Nature', *The Journal of Peasant Studies*, 39 (2), pp. 237-261.
- Farooquee, Nehal A; Maikhuri, R.K. (2007) 'Role of State on Forests: Case of Uttarakhand', *Economic and Political Weekly*, 42 (35), pp. 3537-3540.
- Ferguson, James (1994) *The Anti-Politics Machine: "Development", Depoliticization and Bureaucratic Power in Lesotho*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Fiol, Stefan (2008) *Constructing Regionalism: Discourses of Spirituality and Cultural Poverty in the Popular Music of Uttarakhand, North India*, Unpublished PhD, University of Illinois.
- Franco, Jennifer; Mehta, Lyla; Veldwisch, Gert Jan (2003) 'The Global Politics of Water Grabbing', *Third World Quarterly*, 34 (9), pp. 1651-1675.
- Freire, Paulo (2014) *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, New York: Bloomsbury Academic.
- Gandhi, M. K. (2014 [1910]) *Hind Swaraj*, Delhi: Rajpal and Sons.
- Giddens, Anthony (1990) *The Consequences of Modernity*, Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Girda, Girish Tiwari; Pathak, Shekhar (2013) *Aaj ka Pahar: Biswani Sadi ke Aathwen Dashak ke Uttarakhand Par Ek Nigaah*, Nainital: Pahar.
- Goldman, Michael (1993) 'Tragedy of the Commons or the Commoners' Tragedy: The State and Ecological Crisis in India', *Capitalism Nature Socialism*, 4(4), pp. 49-68.
- Gramsci, Antonio (1971) *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, New York: International Publishers.

- Grumbine, R. Edward and Pandit, Maharaj K. (2012) 'Potential Effects of Ongoing and Proposed Hydropower Development on Terrestrial Biological Diversity in the Indian Himalaya', *Conservation Biology*, 26 (6), pp. 1061–1071.
- Grumbine, R. Edward and Pandit, Maharaj K. (2013) 'Threats from India's Himalaya Dams', *Science*, 339, pp. 36-37.
- Guha, Ramachandra (1986) 'British Kumaun Main Van, Vyavastha Aur Vanandolan', *Pahar*, No.2: 112-130.
- Habermas, Jurgen (1972) 'Science and Technology as Ideology' in Barry Barnes (ed.) *Sociology of Science*, London: Penguin Book Ltd., pp. 353-375.
- Habermas, Jurgen (1981) 'New Social Movements', *Telos*, 49, pp. 33-37.
- Hall, Derek; Hirsch, Philip; Li, Tania Murray (2013) *Powers of Exclusion: Land Dilemmas in Southeast Asia*, Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press.
- Hall, Stuart (1986) 'The Problem of Ideology: Marxism Without Guarantees', *Journal of Communication Inquiry*, 10 (2), pp. 28-44.
- Hardin, Garrett (1968) 'The Tragedy of the Commons', *Science*, 164, pp. 1243-1248.
- Harvey, David (2003) *The New Imperialism*, New York: Oxford University Press.
- Holbraad, Martin (2007) 'The Power of Powder: Multiplicity and Motion in the Divinatory Cosmology of Cuban Ifa (or Mana, Again)', in Amiria Henare, Martin Holbraad and Sari Wastell (eds.) *Thinking through Things: Theorising Artefacts Ethnographically*, London: Routledge, pp. 189-225.
- Illich, Ivan (1974) *Energy and Equity*, New York: Harper & Row.
- Illich, Ivan (1985) *H₂O sand the Waters of Forgetfulness: Reflections on the Historicity of "Stuff"*, Dallas: The Dallas Institute of Humanities and Culture.
- Ishenhour, Cindy; Mcdonogh, Gary; Checker, Melissa (eds.) (2015) *Sustainability in the Global City: Myth and Practice*, New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Jain, Sarandha (2013) 'Pollution and Purity', *Himal Southasian*, 15 March, URL: <http://himalmag.com/pollution-purity/>, Accessed 8 June 2015.

- Jhunjhunwala, Bharat (ed.) (2014) *Water: Impact of Dams on its Qualities*, Delhi: Kalpaz Publications.
- Joshi, Navin (2008) *Dawanal*, New Delhi: Samyik Prakashan.
- Joshi, P.C. (1995) *Uttarakhand: Issues and Challenges*, New Delhi: Har-Anand Publications.
- Joshi, Varun; Kumar, Kireet (2006) 'Extreme Rainfall Events and Associated Natural Hazards in Alaknanda Valley, Indian Himalayan Region', *Journal of Mountain Science*, 3(3), pp. 228-236.
- Joy, K.J.; Gujja, Biksham; Paranjpe, Suhas; Gaud, Vinod; Vispute, Shruti (2008) *Water Conflicts in India: A Million Revolts in the Making*, New Delhi: Routledge.
- Keeffe, Jay O'; Kaushal, Nitin; Bharati, Luna; Smakhtin, Vladimir (2012) *Assessment of Environmental Flows for the Upper Ganga Basin*, New Delhi: World Wildlife Fund.
- Kishwar, Madhu (1992) 'Demanding and Honest, Open Review: Movement against the Tehri Dam', *Manushi*, 70, pp. 2-11.
- Klingensmith, Daniel (2007) *'One Valley and a Thousand': Dams, Nationalism, and Development*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Kothari, Rajni (1983) 'Party and State in Our Times: The Rise of Non-Party Political Formations', *Alternatives*, 9, pp. 565-618.
- Kumar, Pradeep (2000) *The Uttarakhand Movement: Construction of a Regional Identity*, New Delhi: Kanishka Publishers.
- Lal, Vinay (2001) 'Too Deep for Deep Ecology: Gandhi and the Ecological Vision of Life', in Christopher Key Chapple & Mary Evelyn Tucker (eds.) *Hinduism and Ecology: The Intersection of Earth, Sky, and Water*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, pp. 183-212.
- Larrain, Jorge (1986) *The Concept of Ideology*, London: Hutchinson Education.
- Li, Tania Murray (1999) 'Compromising Power: Development, Culture, and Rule in Indonesia', *Cultural Anthropology*, 14(3), pp. 295-322.

- Li, Tania Murray (2008) 'Situating Resource Struggles: Concepts for Empirical Analysis', in Amita Baviskar (ed.) *Contested Grounds: Essays on Nature, Culture, and Power*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, pp. 193-244.
- Linkenbach, Antje (2007) *Forest Futures: Global Representations and Ground Realities in the Himlayas*, Ranikhet (Uttarakhand): Permanent Black.
- Mannheim, Karl (1968) *Ideology and Utopia: An Introduction to the Sociology of Knowledge*, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd.
- Marcuse, Herbert (2002) *One-Dimensional Man: Studies in the Ideology of Advanced Industrial Society*, London & New York: Routledge.
- Marx, Karl; Engels, Fredrick (1970) *The German Ideology*, Lawrence & Wishart.
- Mawdsley, Emma (1998) 'After Chipko: From Environment to Region in Uttaranchal', *The Journal of Peasant Studies*, 25 (4), pp. 36-54.
- Mawdsley, Emma (1999) 'A New Himalayan State in India: Popular Perceptions of Regionalism, Politics, and Development', *Mountain Research and Development*, 19 (2), pp. 101-112.
- Mawdsley, Emma (2006) 'Hindu Nationalism, Postcolonialism and Environmental Discourses in India', *Geoforum*, 37 (3), pp.380-390.
- McCully, Patrick (1998) *Silenced Rivers: The Ecology and Politics of Large Dams*, New Delhi: Orient Longman Limited.
- McLellan, David (1998) *Ideology*, New Delhi: Worldview Publications.
- Mishra, Anupam (2006) *Saaf Mathe ka Samaj*, New Delhi: Yatra Books & Penguin Books.
- Mitra, Amit (1993) 'Chipko: An Unfinished Mission', *Down to Earth*, April 30, URL: <http://www.downtoearth.org.in/content/chipko-unfinished-mission>, Accessed 11 June 2016.
- Moore, Donald S. (1999) 'The Crucible of Cultural Politics: Reworking "Development" in Zimbabwe's Eastern Highlands', *American Ethnologist*, 26 (3), pp. 654-689.
- Moose, David (2007) 'Ecology, Uncertainty and Memory: Imagining a Post Colonial Irrigated Landscape in South India' in Amita Baviskar (ed.) *Waterscapes: The*

- Cultural Politics of a National Resource*, Uttaranchal: Permanent Black, pp. 213-247.
- Nadarajah, M. (2013) *Living Pathways: Meditations on Sustainable Cultures and Cosmologies in Asia*, Malaysia: Areca Books.
- Nandy, Ashis (1983) *The Intimate Enemy*, Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Narayan, Shriman (1968) *The Voice of Truth*, Ahmedabad: Navjivan Trust.
- Nayak, Arun Kumar (2010) 'Big Dams and Protests in India: A Study of Hirakud Dam', *Economic and Political Weekly*, 45 (2), pp. 69-73.
- Nederveen Pieterse, Jan (1998) 'My Paradigm or Yours? Alternative Development, Post-Development, Reflexive Development', *Development and Change*, 29, pp. 343-373.
- Nehru, Jawaharlal (1958) *Jawaharlal Nehru's Speeches Volume Three March 1953-August 1957*, Delhi: The Publications Division Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India.
- Nehru, Jawaharlal (1983) *The Discovery of India*, New Delhi: Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Fund.
- Nehru, Jawaharlal (2015 [1954]) 'Will and Testament', in Assa Doron, Richard Barz & Barbara Nelson (eds.) *An Anthology of Writings on the Ganga: Goddess and River in History, Culture, and Society*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, pp. 42-43.
- Nilsen, Alf Gunvald (2007) 'On New Social Movements and the 'Reinvention of India' ', *Forum for Development Studies*, 2, pp. 271-293.
- Norberg Hodge, Helena (1991) *Ancient Futures: Learning From Ladakh*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Padel, Felix; Das, Samarendra (2012) *Out of This Earth: East India Adivasis and the Aluminium Cartel*, New Delhi: Orient Blackswan.
- Pahari, Ramesh (1989) 'Chipko ke Pandreh Saal', *Pahar*, 3, pp. 132-138.
- Parajuli, Pramod (1991) 'Power and Knowledge in Development Discourse: New Social Movements and the State in India', *International Social Science Journal*, 127, pp. 173-190.

- Patel, Varsha (2015) 'Going Green? Washing Stones in World Class Delhi', in Cindy Ishenhour, Gary McDonogh & Melissa Checker (eds.) *Sustainability in the Global City: Myth and Practice*, New York: Cambridge University Press, pp. 82-101.
- Pathak, Avijit (1991) 'On Community Consciousness and Cultural Dialogue', *Mainstream Weekly*, 29 (52), pp. 53-58.
- Pathak, Avijit (1994) 'Meaning of Uttarakhand: Need to go Beyond the Politics of Modernity', *Mainstream Weekly*, 32(49), pp. 5-6.
- Pathak, Avijit (1998) *Indian Modernity: Contradictions, Paradoxes and Possibilities*, New Delhi: Gyan Publishing House.
- Pathak, Avijit (2004) 'Teaching/Learning Sociology: A Critical Engagement with Modernity', *Sociological Bulletin*, 53 (1), pp. 31-48.
- Pathak, Har Govind (1983) 'Water Resources of the U.P. Himalaya: Their Uses and Potentials', in O.P. Singh (ed.) *The Himalaya: Nature, Man and Culture*, New Delhi: Rajesh Publications, pp. 161-173.
- Pathak, Shekhar (1985) 'Intoxication as a Social Evil: Anti-alcohol Movement in Uttarakhand', *Economic and Political Weekly*, 20 (32), pp. 1360-1365.
- Pathak, Shekhar (1986a) 'Mussorie Nirnay aur Shesh Khanan Gatha', *Pahar*, 2, pp. 80-85.
- Pathak, Shekhar (1986b) 'Uttarakhand Mein Samajik Andolano ki Rooprekha', *Pahar*, 2, pp. 97-111.
- Pathak, Shekhar (1997) 'State, Society and Natural Resources in Himalaya: Dynamics of Change in Colonial and Post-Colonial Uttarakhand', *Economic and Political Weekly*, 32 (17), pp. 908-912.
- Pathak, Shekhar (2005) 'Submersion of a Town, Not of an Idea', *Economic and Political Weekly*, 40 (33), pp. 3637-3639.
- Pathak, Shekhar; Guha, Ramachandra (1989) 'Sthaniya Itihas, Jan Itihas Ya Rashtriya Itihas', *Pahar*, 4, pp. 200-213.
- Peet, Richard; Watts, Michael (eds.) (1996) *Liberal Ecologies: Environment, Development, Social Movements*, London and New York: Routledge.

- Penyuli, Virendra (1986) 'Tehri Baandh: Laagat-Munaafa Tatha Puranwaas-Muawaze ki Asliyat', *Pahar*, 2, pp. 58-72.
- Pfaffenberger, Bryan (1988) 'Fetishised Objects and Humanised Nature: Towards an Anthropology of Technology', *Man, New Series*, 23 (2), pp. 236-252
- Pokhriyal, D.S. (2005) *Nyoli Satsai 1*, Nainital: Gyanoday Prakashan.
- Prakash, Gyan (2000) *Another Reason: Science and the Imagination of Modern India*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Purohit, Bhagwati Prasad (2002) *Uttarakhand ke Jal Sansadhan Prabandh*, Gopeshwar: Himalayan Peace Foundation.
- Purohit, K.D. (2000) 'Energy Needs, Uses and Hydro-power in Uttarakhand', in M.C. Sati & S.P. Sati (eds.) *Uttarakhand Statehood: Dimensions of Development*, New Delhi: Indus Publishing Company, pp. 334-341.
- Ramanathan, K. and Abeygunawardena (2007) *Hydropower Development in India: A Sector Assessment*, Philippines: Asian Development Bank.
- Ramanathan, Usha (1996) 'Displacement and the Law', *Economic and Political Weekly*, 31 (24), pp. 1486-1491.
- Rangan, Haripriya (1996) 'From Chipko to Uttaranchal: Development, Environment, and Social Protest in the Garhwal Himalayas, India', in Richard Peet & Michael Watts (eds.) *Liberal Ecologies: Environment, Development, Social Movements*, London and New York: Routledge, pp. 205-226.
- Rangan, Haripriya (2000) *Of Myths and Movements: Rewriting Chipko into Himalayan History*, London & New York: Verso.
- Robbins, Paul (2004) *Political Ecology: A Critical Introduction*, Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.
- Robinson, John (2001) 'Regionalising India: Uttarakhand and the Politics of Creating States', *South Asia*, 24 (2), pp. 189-212.
- Roy, Dunu (2008) 'Hydropower in Uttarakhand: Is 'Development' the Real Objective?', *Economic and Political Weekly*, 43 (41), pp. 19-22.

- Sarin, Madhu (2008) 'Empowerment and Disempowerment of Forest Women in Uttarakhand, India', in Mahesh Rangarajan (ed.) *Environmental Issues in India: A Reader*, New Delhi: Dorling Kindersley, pp. 483:506.
- Schumacher, E.F. (1974) *Small is Beautiful*, London: Abacus.
- Scott, James C. (1985) *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance*, Yale University.
- Scott, James C. (1995) 'State Simplifications: Nature, Space and People', *The Journal of Political Philosophy*, 3(3), pp. 191-233.
- Scott, James C. (1998) *Seeing Like the State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press.
- Seminar (2013) *Chasing Waters: A Symposium on Transboundary Cooperation in the Ganga Basin*, 652, pp. 12-13.
- Sharma, Mukul (2009) 'Passages from Nature to Nationalism: Sunderlal Bahuguna and Tehri Dam Opposition in Garhwal', *Economic and Political Weekly*, 44 (8), pp. 35-42.
- Shikhar, Pratap; Rana, Sirjana (2010) *Ek Thi Tihri*, Dehradun: Yugvani Press.
- Shinn, Larry D. (2001) 'The Inner Logic of Gandhain Ecology', in Christopher Key Chapple & Mary Evelyn Tucker (eds.) *Hinduism and Ecology: The Intersection of Earth, Sky, and Water*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, pp. 213-241.
- Shiva, Vandana; Bandyopadhyay, Jayanta (1986) 'The Evolution, Structure, and Impact of the Chipko Movement', *Mountain Research and Development*, 6 (2), pp. 132-142.
- Shiva, Vandana; Bandyopadhyay, Jayanta (2007) 'Chipko: India's Civilisational Response to the Forest Crisis', in Indian National Trust For Art And Cultural Heritage (ed.) *India's Environment: Myth & Reality*, Dehradun: Natraj Publishers, pp. 16-23.
- Shrivastava, Kumar Sambhav (2013) 'Maximum Devastation Occurred In Areas of Maximum Forestland Diversion', *Down to Earth*, June, URL: <http://www.downtoearth.org.in/news/maximum-devastation-occurred-in-areas-of-maximum-forestland-diversion-41483>, Accessed 8 June 2015.
- Sinha, Subir (2003) 'Development Counter-Narratives: Taking Social Movements Seriously', in K. Sivaramakrishnan & Arun Agrawal (eds.) *Regional Modernities:*

The Cultural Politics of Development in India, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, pp. 286-312.

Sinha, Subir; Gururani, Shubhra; Greenberg, Brian (1997) 'The 'New Traditionalist' Discourse of Indian Environmentalism', *Journal of Peasant Studies*, 24 (3), pp. 65-99.

Sivaramakrishnan, K.; Agrawal, Arun (eds.) (2003) *Regional Modernities: The Cultural Politics of Development in India*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press.

Steinberg, Theodore (1993) "'That World's Fair Feeling": Control of Water in 20th-Century America', *Technology and Culture*, 34(2), pp. 401-409.

Tagore, Rabindranath (nd) *The Complete Works of Rabindranath Tagore: Plays*, URL: <http://www.tagoreweb.in/Render/ShowContent.aspx?ct=Plays&bi=72EE92F5-BE50-40D7-3E6E-0F7410664DA3&ti=72EE92F5-BE51-4087-2E6E-0F7410664DA3>, Accessed 30 May 2016.

Thakkar, Himanshu (2013) 'How Much Do We Know About Our Dams And Rivers?', *Dams, Rivers and People*, 11 (1-2), pp. 30-31.

Theophilus, Emmanuel (2014) *Headwater Extinctions: Hydropower Projects in the Himalayan Reaches of the Ganga and the Beas: A Closer Look at Impacts on Fish and River Ecosystems*, Delhi: SANDRP.

Umamaheshwari, R. (2015) 'River as a Feminine Presence: Godavari in Andhra Pradesh', in Ramaswamy R. Iyer (ed.) *Living Rivers, Dying Rivers*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, pp. 219-239.

Upreti, Prabhat (1993) 'Uttarakhand Mein Vibhinn Andolan, Sthitayan aur Uttarakhand Rajya ki Maang', in Navi Chandra Dhoundiyal, Vijaya Dhaundiyal & Sanjiv Kumar Sharma (eds.) *Prithak Parvatiya Rajya Bhaag-1*, Almora: Shree Almora Book Depot, pp. 197-221.

Upreti, Prabhat (2013) *Uttarakhand ki Lok Aiwon Paryavaran Gathayen*, New Delhi: Radhakrishna Prakashan Ltd.

Urry, John (1992): 'The Tourist Gaze and the 'Environment'', *Theory, Culture and Society*, 9(3), pp. 1-26.

Valdiya, K.S. (1996) *Uttarakhand Today*, Almora: Shree Almora Book Depot.

- Valdiya, K.S. (2014) 'Damming Rivers in the Tectonically Resurgent Uttarakhand Himalaya', *Current Science*, 106 (12), pp. 1658-1668.
- Valdiya, K.S.; Bartarya, S.K. (1989) 'Diminishing Discharges of Mountain Springs in a Part of Kumaun Himalaya', *Current Science*, 58(8), pp. 417-426.
- Vanaik, Achin (2001) *Economic Globalisation: Myth or Reality?*, New Delhi: People's Publishing House.
- Werner, Hanna (2015) *The Politics of Dam: Developmental Perspectives and Social Critique in Modern India*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Worster, Donald (1983) 'Water and the Flow of Power', *The Ecologist*, 13(5), pp. 168-174.
- Zachariah, Benjamin (2001) 'Uses of Scientific Argument: The Case of 'Development' in India, c 1930-1950', *Economic and Political Weekly*, 36 (39), pp. 3689-3702.