

Development Bank Project Threatens Water Rights in Pakistan

Submitted by: Sungi Development Foundation Pakistan

Key players

Asian Development Bank (Financiers)

Affected Communities

Water and Power Development Authority (Implementing Agency)

Sungi Development Foundation was among a group of NGOs to successfully challenge the Asian Development Bank project which failed to comply with its own environmental and social policies resulting in harm to the local residents.

The Chashma Right Bank Irrigation Project (CRBIP) is a huge Asian Development Bank (ADB) funded project located in two districts of Pakistan; Dera Ismail Khan District in North West Frontier Province (NWFP) and Dera Ghazi Khan District in Punjab province.

Flooding has been the main environmental impact of the project; construction interrupted the natural flow of the floodwater and resulted in massive flooding on the west side of the main canal and in the Riverine Belt of the Indus River. This led to social problems in the project area such as loss of life, property, livelihoods, and impoverishment of the local communities.

The communities on the west side of the canal have been denied a resettlement plan and there has been no compensation offered to the communities in the Riverine Belt.

The situation prompted some NGOs, including Sungi Development Foundation, to conduct a research study in 2000. This showed that the land acquisition and compensation process was in violation of national laws. While land acquisition (construction of the project) began in 1995, the formal process of notification was initiated only in December 2001. As a result they started the Chashma campaign to improve the quality of life of the communities.

One of the main issues was lack of transparency; there was a very unsatisfactory multi stakeholder dialogue process that was designed and facilitated by the ABD between 2001 and 2002 involving the main stakeholders. Disillusioned with the 'stakeholders' dialogue, local communities and NGOs filed an inspection claim to the ADB in 2002. This led to the discovery of new violations by the ADB and prompted the formation of the Lok Sath initiative; a local coalition of community based organizations and affected communities. The term literally means peoples standing together, united, and assembly of the people.

In September 2004 the ADB said it was planning to work with the Government on implementing the recommendations of the inspection claim.

For more information

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http://www.adb.org/Inspection/Projects/chashma_right.asp



www.freshwateraction.net

Freshwater Action Network

www.righttowater.org.uk

