

CHINESE DAMS IN TIBET

All papers and media are full of news via a News Agency that China has commissioned the Zangmu Dam in Yarlung Tsungpo (Brahmaputra) of 510000 KW! It is not understood why the capacity of the dam is given in KW, except to give the impression of a very big capacity generation, - 510000 KW, as we all know, is merely 510 MW. In comparison, our Subansiri Lower is 4 times bigger in capacity (2000 MW), Dibang Lower is 6 times bigger (3000 MW) and Siang upper (6000MW) is 15 times bigger than the commissioned Chinese dam. **Most importantly the Chinese dam is a true 24x7 Run of the River generating model, where natural flow of the river is unhindered**, - flowing through turbine(s) as well as over the dam. **In contrast, our version of RoR, holds up water for 20 hours in lean months when the project is 'offgrid' and creates a flood in 4 hours at night when all the turbines are run to generate electricity. We may term our dams as 4 hr generation dams to maximize power generation. It destroys the downstream ecology and livelihood of the riparian people completely and creates grave safety hazards.** It now appears that the powerful "dam lobby" is working overtime to focus on the threat of the Chinese Dam(s) **in order to hide the horrendous dams**, they, with support from MoEF, have planned for Arunachal including the 2000MW Subansiri Lower, and the other dams over Lohit, Dibang, and Tsungpo.

The 3 big rivers - Lohit, Dibang and Tsungpo meet each other within 25 - 30 KM on the northern rim of the Dibru Saikhowa National Park (DSNP). In fact, the flow of these 3 rivers basically constitute the **life force** of this unique 'National water park'- Dibru Saikhowa National Park. The Dimwe Lower Dam (Lohit Lower actually, just above the Parshuram Kunda, - the name of the dam is deliberately given as

Dimwe Lower only to confuse people so that people donot associate it with Parashuram Kunda!) will release only 37 cumec of water for 20 hours, Tsangpo (Brahmaputra) Lower will release only 60 cumec of water for 20 hours. Dibang Lower likewise will also hold up water. **Brahmaputra will dry up near Dibru Saikhowa National Park, and beyond- the DSNP will die as well. At night a tsunami will come when all the turbines will be started. What will happen to Majuli, Kaziranga and Luit itself is incomprehensible, when this daily cycle of no water for 20 hours and a Tsunami every night everyday of the winter months will occur.**

In Siang valley of Arunachal, 208 km of the river Siang / Tsungpo will be converted into reservoirs and 160km will be converted into tunnels. Siang upper stage I in order to generate 6000MW of electricity will have an immense reservoir literally on top of the 'head' of Arunachali people of the Siang valley in a highly seismic zone with back to back dams - Siang Lower(2700 MW), Siang middle (1000 MW), Siang Upper II (3750MW), Siang Upper I (6000 MW).

It is not a horror story but a reality, after may be 15-20 years, when these dams are completed.

These dams which are product of total 'greed' for the Developer, exploiting the natural wealth of the region in **total destruction of ecology and the right of the riparian people of the region, must be resisted as a life and death issue for the region as Bhupenda's beloved Luit will die and wither and what is Assam without a pulsating Luit, Dibru Saikhowa and Majuli, Kaziranga? Pristine Arunachal, one of God's own country, will be desecrated.** No one has the constitutional right to do this to a region in the name of Development.

Sustainable Dams

But no one should oppose construction of sustainable dams like the Chinese dam now commissioned.

Our demand while opposing the 4 hr generation dams must be for **conversion of these dams to 24x7**

true dam-cum-weir projects. The rivers will flow naturally and yet generate sustainable power.

Number of dams can be built in the same river without affecting ecology of the river as natural flow is

not obstructed by the true RoR dams. Chinese are planning to generate 2030MW through 4 dams -

Zangmu 510 MW, Dagu(640MW), Jiexu (560MW), Jiacha(320MW). Dagu, Jiexu are **within 18km**

upstream of the Zangmu Dam which is now commissioned. It is possible because these true run of the

river dams have small pondages only (Subansiri reservoir is over **40km long**). There are big capacity

true Run of the Rivers dams as well, - Chief Joseph Dam of USA is a major true RoR dam which

generate 2620 MW.

A new hope :

Because of Prime Minister's ambitious Ganga Rejuvenation Project, MoEF who are the architects of 4 hr

generation Dams are now forced to make a volte-face about the norms of the Uttarakhand hydro

projects. Also, 24 of the 39 hydro projects of Uttarakhand are stalled as Supreme Court held that these

dams are significantly impacting biodiversity of the region. MoEF has now proposed a new set of

imperative conditions, - maintenance of environmental flow, longitudinal river connectivity (160 km Siang

through pipes), and aviral dhara(continuous flow) for Uttarakhand Hydro Project. This is good news for

Uttarakhand. But what is true of Uttarakhand is true of all Arunachal dams as well. Our demand for

sustainable dams with aviral dhara(continuous flow) is justified even by MoEF's new approach for

Uttarakhand. It is only hoped that MoEF/Gol makes the changes by scrapping all the proposed 4 hr

dams of Arunachal to be replaced by 24x7 sustainable generation projects as per the vision of our Prime Minister **and not wait for massive people's protest in Assam & Arunachal against these destructive dams.** Protest we must now, tomorrow will be too late.

PRADIP KUMAR BHUYAN

Sr. Citizen