

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
Social Assessment Report
Rampur Hydro Electric Project
Satluj Jal Vidyut Nigam Ltd. (HP)

1. The Satluj Jal Vidyut Nigam (SJVN) proposes to set up the Rampur Hydro Power Project (RHEP). The site is on the Satluj River in Kullu district of Himachal Pradesh. The objective of the project is to provide electricity within the framework of sustainable development and to promote social development. In order to achieve this objective it was considered necessary to carry out a social assessment of the project area

2. The objective of the study is to elicit view of stakeholders and to formalize recommendations for social development activities in the project area and to establish monitoring procedure for impact analysis. The study adopts three important approaches:

- To understand the social issues associated with the project.
- To follow a consultation process to understand the perceptions of the various stakeholders to the local issues;
- To develop an action plan to address the issues concerned to the stakeholders

3. The base line socio-economic data have been collected from secondary sources such as the Census, the District Statistical Hand Book and the Planning Department of Himachal Pradesh. Primary data have been collected by household surveys conducted by Agro-Economic Research Centre of Himachal University and supplemented by the study as needed .

4. The following stakeholders were identified for carrying out the consultations: project officials, government officials, NGOs, village heads, Panchayats, associations like the Yuak Mandal and women's associations and focus groups such as Scheduled Tribes.

5. The Immediate Project affected area/influence Area is defined as the area from where land is acquired for the construction for any component including residential colony of the project or situated over the alignment of the proposed tunnel of RHEP. Accordingly, Panchyats namely Gadej, Bahawa, Tunan, Bari, Poshana, Kharga, Kushawa of Tehsil Nirmand and Duttanagar of Tehsil Rampur have been identified for the study. The main concerns of the people living in the Project affected Area are related to adverse effect of blastings, problems relating to water level due to the project activities, etc.

6. The main purpose of discussions with stakeholders was to improve the quality and intensity of stakeholders' participation in the social development programs. Improving stakeholder participations means identifying the obstacles to stakeholder participation and then developing a strategy and formulating a plan of action for removing such obstacles. The stakeholder analysis brought out the following issues:

- The educated stakeholders were fairly aware of the project. The uneducated had an indifferent attitude towards the benefits or the problems associated with the project like disbursement mechanism of compensation, rehabilitation measures.
- The general opinion among the stakeholders was that the social development plan of the project should address the problems of poverty alleviation by awarding petty contracts to the local contractors and by advising the contractors to deploy the local labourers on contract works.

- Consequence of Blasting: (i) An area of concern was the possibility that blasting may lead to cracks developing in houses. The stakeholders would like to put in place a package of compensation being announced; (ii) A major concern expressed was that when the blasting activities take place the water level at high altitudes will fall; It was suggested that water harvesting should be taken up to augment the water supply situation; and, (iii) the concern of the stakeholders was that blasting will tend to create landslides and therefore constructing walls should adequately protect the hillsides. Dust pollution is also a major concern.

7. **Effects of the Rampur Hydro Projects on Ecology-** Some stakeholders expressed concern that the project may have adverse effects on the ecosystem after a period of about five years.

8. **Demand for another Public Hearing** - Public hearing relating to the project was organized on October 26, 2005 before the present elections to panchayats took place in January 2006. There is a demand for another public hearing in view of the newly elected body but this demand seems unjustified. Public hearings cannot become a function of political changes

About 500 persons attended the Public hearing including public representatives and MLA of this area. People were made aware about the development of the project and schemes framed/ to be framed by the project for the benefit of the local persons / community development.

9. **Women Stakeholders:** In order to consider the view of women, the household was taken as a starting point. The value system of an agricultural household reflects both traditions and culture apart from economic status. The older generation has accepted the existing status of women and is not particularly interested in empowerment. The younger generation, say 35 years old and below particularly those who have been to school are resentful of the situation where they are not able to take their own decisions. They look forward to empowerment

10. Impact on tribal. There are 122 tribal families living in the Project Affected Area which belong to the Kinnaur tribe and have migrated from Kinnaur district and They accept the tribal origin but do not identify themselves as Tribal and their features are summarized as : (a) They have no collective attachment to land and natural resources therein; (b) They do not follow the customary, cultural, economic, social or political institutions which separate from those of the local society; and (c) they speak the same language as the other local residents. Thus these tribal families merged with the local society.

11. In order to create awareness among the stakeholders and the potential beneficiaries about the project benefits resulting from the Rampur Hydro Power Project, appropriate steps should be taken to put up hoardings/boards in prominent places depicting the likely project benefits so that they attract the attention of the people at the large.

12. It is suggested that expansion of buildings of existing schools may be taken up to enlarge educational facilities in the project area.

13. In order to empower the women, it is suggested that women animators may be trained for each village. They may be trained in batches of 12 to 15. Each batch should consist of animators from different villages. This way they will be able to interact with each other. The details of the training course should be carefully worked out but must include health care,

pregnancy and childcare. These animators will contribute largely towards creating the conditions for women's empowerment.

14. A monitoring committee should be setup with the objectives of finding out whether the different social development programmes such as Infra developmental works in the project affected area ,Technical Education Scheme for local youth , awarding of petty contracts to the local persons etc. are keeping to the time schedule. In case there are delays, the reasons for the delay need to be identified, and suggestions should be made for removing the causes of the delay. The monitoring committee comprising of Women PAP participation i.e Chairperson of Block Development Committee (BDC) is depicted in chapter 3 para 3.22.