THE ROLE OF PROTESTS AS PLATFORMS FOR ACTION ON SUSTAINABILITY IN THE KULLU VALLEY, INDIA

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ABSTRACT

The Himalayan region of India has a surprisingly fragile ecosystem due in part to its geomorphic characteristics. In recent years the Himalayan ecosystem has been disturbed in various ways by both human and natural processes. Large developments threaten ecosystems in the area. modifying local land use and subsistence patterns. This has important implications for the sustainable livelihoods of the local communities. People in these areas are very concerned about the lack of inclusion in development decision-making processes and the negative effects of development on their livelihood. These concerns have often not been addressed or evaluated by government decision makers. In this context, protest actions are opening new avenues for participation.

The purpose of this research was to understand the role of protest as a vehicle for public participation in environment and natural resource decision-making, as well as to consider whether such movements are learning platforms for action on sustainability. Protest action in the context of public participation is considered a learning platform that could give rise to more sustainable decisions and the empowerment of local people in the northern Indian mountain region. The specific objectives of the study were: (1) to consider the relationship between protest action and public participation in the Indian Himalaya; (2) to understand the reasons why people decide to participate in protest actions, particularly in relation to government decisions about development and natural resource use; (3) to determine the types of information people used in making their decision to join a protest; (4) to explore whether and how people learn about sustainability through participation in protests actions; and (5) to explore the ability of local communities to articulate their concerns effectively through protests.

The field research was undertaken over a five-month period in the Kullu district, Himachal Pradesh, India, with the Allain Duhangan Hydro Project and five surrounding villages being chosen as the case study. The methods used were qualitative. These include semi-structured individual and group interviews, participant observation, visits to the affected areas, document review and in-situ observation of protest actions. Emphasis was placed on information obtained from informal group conversations at the household level and government interviews. This information was compared and contrasted with government documents, reports, newspaper articles and information from other interest groups, such as local authorities, NGOs, engineers, lawyers, and members of provincial, regional and local government departments. The village of Jagatsukh was selected for in-depth study. That is where people started to organize around the Allain Duhangan Hydro Project and also where the protest actions in relation to the Hydro Project actually started.

Research findings included the identification of numerous and diverse stakeholders involved in decision-making processes for the Allain Duhangan Hydro Project. Stakeholders included: multiple government agencies from the state, regional and local governments; developers; international development agencies such as the World Bank and Statkraft

Norfund Power Invest AS; Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs); local residents; and protestors. The study focuses on the process of implementing a large development - in this case hydroelectric - and highlights conflicts between developers, government agencies and local residents. Findings show that while local participation in decisions is wanting, the government is building new avenues for participation through the creation of the Local Authority Development Area (LADA), an agency meant to act as a mediator between developers and local resource users. Efforts such as these failed to dissuade local people, who started a protest movement in the area in hopes that their concerns would be heard. The patterns of protest actions are described by local people as a mechanism for empowerment and inclusion in the process of decision-making.

Protest actions are spreading throughout the area, not only to stop developments but also to re-shape how developments are taking place. Data show that through different protest actions, protestors are addressing the power imbalance between developers and local people. These imbalances occur because resource developers and people affected are not sharing the same level of information. In the process of protest organization, learning was identified as one of the major catalysts for action and was a transformative experience for some of the protestors. Through organization, local people learned about sustainability and the negative effects of the project, including air pollution and dust created by heavy machinery, deforestation and the loss of medicinal plants. Public response to these and other issues was expressed through protest action.

This study suggests that while efforts are being taken to develop regulations and programs for improving public participation, what is lacking is the empowerment of local players in the process of decision-making. Progress in this regard requires the capacity to address misperceptions through open forums; the inclusion of a third party to facilitate the participation process; new and open networks for information exchange; and for decision-makers to act on the information collected in the best way possible to mitigate damages. These changes can be effective mechanisms in promoting trust and accountability among multiple stakeholders, as well as in developing more democratic processes and sustainable practices.

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Table of Contents

ABSTRACT ii

Acknowledgements iv

List of Tables vii

List of Plates viii

List of Figures ix

List of Acronyms x

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION 1
1.1. Background 1
1.2. Context 3
1.3. Purpose and Objectives 6
1.4. Approach 7
1.5. Contribution to Knowledge 8
1.6. Organization of the Thesis 9

CHAPTER 2: PARTICIPATION, PROTESTS AND LEARNING 11
2.1. Introduction 11
2.2. Public Participation Theory 11
2.2.1. Meaningful Public Participation in Resource and Environmental Management 16
2.2.2. Public Participation in Resource and Environmental Management in India . 20
2.3. Social Movements and Protest in North India 28
2.3.1 Social Movements: Definitions 28
2.3.2. The development dilemmas 32
2.3.3 Mobilization: Protest 37
2.4 Protests as platforms for learning 46
2.4.1 Public Protest as a Platform for Learning 50
2.4.2 Protest and Transformative Learning 51
2.5 Summary 55

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH APPROACH 57
3.1. Introduction 57
3.2. Case Study Research Strategy 58
3.2.1 Case Study Site 59
3.3 Data Collection 64
3.3.1 Participant Observation 65
3.3.2 Semi- structured interviews (SSIs) 67
3.3.4 Secondary Sources Review 73
3.4 Threats to Validity and Reliability 73
3.4.1. Use of a Translator 75
3.5 Data Analysis 76
3.6 Reflections on the Research Process 77

CHAPTER 4: Protest Actions against the Allain Duhangan Hydroelectric Project in the Kullu Valley: Questioning the Meaningfulness of Public Participation .. 78
4.1. Introduction 78
4.2 Allain Duhangan Hydroelectric Project 79

4.3. The Allain Duhangan Hydro Project Stakeholders 82
4.3.1. Sharing Responsibilities: The Process of Involvement 83
4.3.2 Environmental Act 83
4.3.3 Electricity Act 84
4.3.4. Land Acquisition Act 86
4.3.5 Regional Government 88
4.3.5.1 Local Area Development Authority (LADA) 97
4.4. Local Government 98
4.4.1 Panchayat 98
4.4.2 Mahila Mandal 101
4.4.3. Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO) 102
4.5 International and National Investors 103
4.5.1. The World Bank 103
4.5.2. Bhilwara (LNJ) Group 105
4.5.3. Statkraft Norfund Power Invest AS of Norway 106
4.6. Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA) in the Allain Duhangan Hydro Project. 106
4.7. Memorandum of Understanding 110
4.8. Public Hearings 111
4.9. Participation through Protest Action in the Kullu Valley 116
4.9.1. Patterns of Protests 117
4.9.2. Protest Process 123
4.10. Summary and Discussion 127

CHAPTER 5: LEARNING THROUGH PROTEST ACTION 131
5.1 Introduction 131
5.2. How People Learned 132
5.2.1. Learning Through Local Context Leads to Action 132
5.3. Multiple Sources of Information the Protestors are Using to Engage in Protest Action 139
5.4. Making Meaning: What did People Learn Through Protest 146
5.4.1 Outcomes Grounded in the Literature 146
5.4.2 Outcomes Grounded in the Data 152
5.5. Protest as an Ongoing Platform of Learning 161
5.6. Different Levels of Engagement Produce Different Learning Outcomes 165
5.7. Summary and Discussion 174

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS 177
6.1 Introduction 177
6.2. The Relationship Between Protest Action and Public Participation 177
6.2.1. Why People Decide to Participate in Protest Actions 181
6.2.2. Information People Use in Making Their Decision to Join a Protest 183
6.2.3. Learning about Sustainability Through Participation in Protests Actions 185
6.2.4. The Ability of Local Communities to Express their Concerns through Protests 187

6.3. RECOMMENDATIONS 189
6.3.1. Participation and Learning Through Protest Actions 189
6.3.1.The Need For a More Inclusive Process of Public Participation 191
6.4. Learning Through Protest Actions: A New Dimension of Public Participation 195

REFERENCES 197

APPENDIXES 211

List of Tables

2.1 Group Decision-making methods according to Vroom and Yetton
2.2 MoEF annual reports (1994-2004)
2.3 Ladder of Transformation and change Mezirow
3.1 Semi-Structured Interviews conducted in HP
5.1 Rank of sources of information used by the protestors
5.2 Accessible and more meaningful avenues of information as perceived by the protestors

List of Plates

Plate 1. View of the Himalaya from the Prini village in the Kullu Valley
Plate 2. Village affected nearby the project
Plate 3. Example of an Interview normal setting
Plate 4. AD project holding tanks being built in the Hampta Valley
Plate 5 & 6. Workers Campsite: No adequate infrastructure and poor electrical conditions
Plate 7. Tunnel made at the construction phase
Plate 8. Transmission line crossing agricultural field
Plate 9. Protest in Kullu
Plate 10. Women from the Kullu Valley Protesting

List of Figures

2.1 Ladder of Participation according to Arnstein
2.2 Social-Environmental Movement in India
3.1 Allain Duhangan hydro project area
4.1 Map of the Allain Duhangan hydro project area
4.2 AD general layout
4.3 Participation according to the HPCD program
4.4 Participatory democracy and models of citizen involvement
that influence on policy-making processes
4.5 Transmission of information and decision-making process in the AD
according to the protestors
4.6 Duplication of Government departments is creating fragmentation of
decision-making process
4.7 Government decision-making process according to a member of the Mahila Manda
6.1 Government decision-making process as perceived by local people
6.2 NGO involvement in the exchange of information perceived by the protestors
6.3 Phases to address decision-making process for large development

List of Acronyms

AD	Allain Duhangan
CAO	Compliance Advisor Ombudsman
CEA	Central Electricity Authority
CBI	Consensus Building Institute
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
ESIA	Environmental and Social Impact Assessment
ESMU	Environmental Social Management Unit
HP	Himachal Pradesh
HPCD	Himachal Pradesh Corporation Development
HPPCL	Himachal Pradesh Power Corporation Limits
IA	Implementation Agreement
IFC	International Finance Corporation
KV	Kalparishk ENGO from Delhi
LADA	Local Development Area
MoEF	Minister of Environment and Forest
MOP	Minister of Power
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NGO	Non Governmental Organization
NOC	Non Objection Certificate
NR	Northern Regional
PMU	Project Management Unit
PIU	Project Implementation Unit
PPA	Power Purchase Agreement

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background

Since 1947, Indian society has been shaped by democratic principles. Independence brought the idea of change and the necessity for a new political-cultural configuration based on the creation of new governmental organizations after a long period of colonization (Katzenstein, 1992). However, democratic rebuilding has not ended poverty and social injustice in modern India (Katzenstein, 1992; Oommen, 2005; Shah, 1997; Singh, 2001). Several researchers are questioning the validity of Indian democracy, because the socio-cultural values that shape the society have tended towards a top-down hierarchical distribution of power rather than horizontal distribution (Katzenstein, 1992; Spehr & Dutt, 1996; Oommen, 2005; Shah, 1997; Jenkins & Goetz, 2008; Singh, 2001).

The process of democratization in India has been complex, since the states are characterized by cultural, ethnical and religious diversity (Oommen, 2005). For several reasons, Indian democracy is characterized by the interaction of multiple challenges. The first challenge is the adoption of a neoclassic economic system focused on modernizing and rebuilding a new Indian nation. The idea was to open India up to the global market and to create new sources of employment and welfare, which were needed because of imminent population growth. According to Suri (1991) “In between 1921 and 1951 the nation’s population increased by more than 50 percent; over the next 3 decades, the population nearly doubled” (p:22). According to Oommen (2005), the new refrain around Indian development was “that all-round economic prosperity will benefit all, including poor” (p:17). However,

through indiscriminate economic growth the economic insecurity of the poor has been further exacerbated due to the rapacity of the liberal markets (Oommen, 2005). Furthermore, in the 1950s, the Green Revolution introduced high-yielding seeds and chemical fertilizers (Anderson, 1982 & Gupta 1998). Such interventions negatively disrupted social relations, which were based on community decision-making over lands and products. In addition, fertilizers became the number one cause of environmental degradation in rural areas (Shiva, 1998).

In the second half of the twentieth century, a centralized economic system directing growth through the rapid development of large and multi-national projects without consideration of the social and cultural costs was promoted throughout the country. Concerns arose regarding the lack of consultation around decisions about these projects (at the normative, strategic and operational levels). In most cases, this rapid growth disenfranchised local and poor people. In rural areas, the dramatic increase in large development, such as hydroelectric and mining projects, induced yet another challenge – dealing with the huge displacement of people in the 1970s and 1980s from their home regions (Suri, 1991). This resulted in a large migration to the city, which created a new nucleus of poverty. The lack of participation in decision-making processes led to mounting antagonism towards development-induced displacement and resulted in new forms of political activism (Dwivedi, 1999). Several studies analyze this displacement, indicating that it resulted in multiple negative effects, such as: loss of culture, food insecurity, unemployment and impoverishment (Baviskar, 1995; Dwivedi, 1999; Suri, 1991; Roy, 2002). Another challenge is that these displacements caused and continue to cause environmental

degradation in the new settlements, which puts the health of the ecosystem at risk. A study conducted by Nautyal & Kaechele (2008) shows that conservation and management of the ecosystem/landscape and the development of the local economy are interwoven. Recognizing the problems associated with these developments and displacements, in the 1980's government developed a more inclusive and horizontal environmental protection law, which included public hearings as a mandatory part of the process. However, the large number of social protests - a common form of participation in India - show that the formal platform of participation expressed in the policy frameworks has not been inclusive enough. Protest actions have been used as a platform for education and learning through action and to evaluate the legitimacy of participatory mechanisms embedded in Indian legislation.

1.2. Context

This research took place in northern India, more specifically the Kullu Valley, which is an important national and international tourism destination. In general, large tourism, mining, hydroelectric and other developments in the Himalayas affect the livelihood of local people. This occurs because "the ecosystem is becoming unable to sustain the demands of the changing life style of the growing number of inhabitants as well as the population in the plains and, therefore, the resources are depleting rapidly" (Samal, Palni & Dhyani 2005: 3). The situation is complicated further by the fragility of the Himalayan ecosystem. The Himalayas are the key to ecological and social stability in India by virtue of being a center of biological and cultural diversity and the storehouse for water and other resources.

The negative impacts on sustainability are a direct consequence of the indiscriminate expansion of industries in urban centers and the unsustainable extraction of natural resources in rural areas (Shiva, 2002). According to Dwivedi (1999), the construction of hydro dam projects account for a large number of displaced people - many of them in mountain regions. Developments in India only consider economic costs and benefits, "which take no account of the infringement of people's rights…that something is awry is realized when people organize protest movements or when spontaneous resistance occurs" (Parasuraman, 1999: 47). The Indian Himalayas, known for rich biological and cultural diversity, are seriously threatened by the building of dams, adventure tourism and unsustainable agriculture (Shekhar, 2007).

Important considerations in the pace of such rapid development, which promised distributive justice, are a) the democratic processes being used to make decisions about the type of development that is appropriate and b) how this development should take place. Several studies have demonstrated that the consultation processes being used by governments to make such decisions are faulty. According to Shekhar (2007), there is an historical lack of cooperation between local residents and developers that often leads to situations of conflict between indigenous people and managers. In many cases, the only attempt to inform people was a brief notification of the final decision, even though this decision directly affected the livelihoods of many residents who depend on these economic activities (Shekhar, 2007). According to the Center of Excellence in Environmental Economics (2010), public participation in India occurs too late in the decision-making process

and at the stage when it is not possible to influence any of the characteristics of the project, such as type, size or location.

Nonetheless, public participation and inclusion in the decision-making process of large developments has been increasing over time and is manifesting itself in different ways. In fact, one form of participation – the protest – is now widely used in India. This may in part be a response to weak or non-existent formal participation opportunities, as outlined above, or for other reasons related to the empowerment of local people over management of their natural resources. As an example of protest actions, one of the larger protests in India took place in Delhi when people organized "The Right-to-Information" movement (Jenkins & Goetz, 1999) where a large and forceful group of people demanded transparency in government transactions and payments. In the northern state of Uttar Pradesh in the 1970s a protest against the cutting of trees turned into a world famous environmental movement called Chipko (Hug the trees) (Swain, 2000). The movement stands in opposition to forest exploitation by outside contractors (Swain, 2000). This movement became a source of inspiration in defense of forests and was adopted by other communities in the Himalayas and throughout India. Another important protest action was the movement against the Tehri dam project on the Bhagirathi River. This was one of the earliest anti-dam protests in the region and with the support and cooperation of Chipko leaders, local people protested against displacement, salinization of the soil, drought and downstream water shortages (Swain, 2000). Protestors in Joshimath also took action against dam construction by blocking construction traffic and holding hunger strikes to make their voices heard. The company listened to the

protestors' demands and responded in a positive way by increasing the funds to improve the development conditions and to increase public participation (Diduck et al., 2007). These examples suggest that local people affected by decisions about development are using protest action to open new channels of dialogue.

These manifestations of public activism have been creating an atmosphere of tension among multiple stakeholders in India and the rest of the world (Shekhar, 2007). In a democracy, citizens use protests as an opportunity to express discontent (Porta & Diani, 2006). In this context, protests are defined as "sites of contestation in which bodies, symbols, identities, practices, and discourses are used to pursue or prevent changes in institutionalized power relationships" (Walter, 2007). Protests are non-authorized ways of affecting political, legal and cultural processes that have the potential to generate some meaningful public participation at the level of decision-making processes.

1.3. Purpose and Objectives

The overall purpose of this research was to understand the role of protests as a vehicle for public participation in relation to decisions about resources and the environment and to consider whether such movements are learning platforms for action on sustainability. Within this research context, the objectives of the research were to:

1. To consider the relationship between protest action and public participation in the Indian Himalaya;
2. To understand the reasons why people decide to participate in protest

actions, particularly in relation to government decisions about development and natural resource use;

3. To determine the types of information people use in making their decision to join a protest;
4. To explore whether and how people learn about sustainability through participation in protests actions; and,
5. To explore the ability of local communities to articulate their concerns effectively through protests.

1.4. Approach

The research was interdisciplinary and as such the conceptual framework for this research was derived from broad areas of education, social movements and natural resources management. First, this research contributes to a large collaborative project between the University of Manitoba and the Shatri Indo-Canadian Institute entitled "Encouraging Conservation and Sustainable Development in the Indian Himalaya". This project had been undertaken in the Kullu District of Himachal Pradesh, India. I chose this study area for a number of reasons, mostly because of the high tourism rate, but also because of the large number of hydro projects that are putting the local ecosystem at risk (Gardner et al., 2002). Another reason for choosing this area was to complement a line of Master's level research that had been carried out in the Indian Himalaya and in this region by students of the Natural Resources Institute such as Sandu (1998), Cole (2000), Mckay (2000), Bingeman (2001), and Kent (2005). Finally, I wanted to understand protest as an active process of personal reflection that leads to meaningful public participation,

and to determine what motivates communities to publicly contest their problems in non-violent protest actions in order to achieve collective demands.

The fieldwork was conducted in Manali over a five-month period from August to the beginning of December, 2008. The study approach was qualitative and designed within a case study research strategy. A variety of methods were used within this context to collect data, including document and literature reviews, observation, interviews and journaling, as outlined in Chapter 3. By using different tools, I hoped to triangulate the data that I collected in looking at participation and protest action.

1.5. Contribution to Knowledge

This study contributes to the literature and understanding of protest actions in the context of meaningful public participation and elucidates the role of protests as a new platform of education and learning in this northern Indian mountain region. Furthermore, since the "Seattle showdown," movements of protest began to take on a new and important role among activists. In a public declaration, a group of activists mention that *protests are now considered by the people as valid vehicles of public participation in western countries* (Barlow & Clarke, 2002). For example, student, grassroots organization and citizen protests have been viewed as manifestations of collective justice (Barlow & Clarke, 2002). Lastly, this research aimed to break with the traditional view and stigma of protests as being undesirable and instead, to consider them as a new platform of communication, participation and learning.

In theoretical terms, the importance of this research lies in the learning component of protest actions. Furthermore, this research has scholarly significance, because it links the process of creating meaning with social action manifestations, thereby contributing to transformative learning theory. In addition, one of the greatest contributions was to Mezirow's transformative learning theory, because throughout the chapters I describe how some protestors moved from transformative learning experiences to being part of protest actions.

1.6. Organization of the Thesis

The thesis is organized into six chapters. Following the introductory chapter, the second chapter provides a literature review addressing various topics pertaining to public participation, social movements, protest and learning in India. It provides a review of the learning component of protest actions, and includes a discussion of how the lack of participation is creating new opportunities for learning and demanding more inclusion in the decision-making processes. The third chapter provides a description of the study area in order to give context to the methods used in the fieldwork and the research findings. It also discusses the research design and methods, along with providing details on the selected cases, and the data analysis process**.**

The results of this study are presented in Chapters 4 and 5. The fourth chapter includes an analysis of stakeholders, as well as institutional actors involved the Allain Duhangan Hydro Project. It also addresses the current roles of various players in the birth of protest and provides an evaluation of the current level of public participation for the issues from which those protests arose. The fifth chapter discusses some key

considerations relating to the learning component of protests actions. Finally, the sixth chapter brings the results of research together by addressing the research objectives and presenting an analysis of learning as a catalyst for action in protest that aims to achieve more sustainable practices.

CHAPTER 2: PARTICIPATION, PROTESTS AND LEARNING

2.1. Introduction

Given that the goal of my research is to better understand the relationships among public participation, protest and learning for sustainability, the term sustainability will be used in this research as "a goal, concept and a strategy. The concept speaks to the reconciliation of social justice, ecological integrity and the well being of all living systems in the planet….without compromising future generations" (Moore, 2005:78). This chapter considers the literature in these three key areas. I begin by looking at the literature on public participation, particularly as it relates to the situation in India, to establish the context of this research and how the lack of formal instances of participation is justifying the spread of protest actions. I then consider the literature on protest, social movements and mobilization. Lastly, I examine the transformative learning literature to understand how and what people learn in social movements and if learning is a catalyst for social action, as well as a vehicle that may promote sustainability.

2.2. Public Participation Theory

The study of public participation is complex due to the multiple meanings, interpretations and uses of the word *participation*. The various definitions of *participation* create a certain level of ambiguity, especially when we need to understand participation from the practice (Buchy & Hoverman, 2000). Renn et al. (1995:2), for example, define public participation as "forums for exchange that are organized for the purpose of facilitating communication between government, citizens, stakeholders, interest groups, and businesses regarding a specific decision

or problem". This definition suggests a certain amount of institutional control of participation events that would not seem to include publicly planned, or perhaps spontaneous, participatory events. It almost makes them sound neat, orderly and well planned, with little room for spontaneity and mess.

Early on, Arnstein (1969) linked her definition of participation to the amount of power citizens ultimately had over the final decision. For her, public participation is about the fair redistribution of power that enables those without power to be deliberately included in the future (Arnstein, 1969). To explain her ideas, Arnstein suggests that the degree of public participation may be conceptualized as eight steps or rungs on a ladder. The rungs on the "ladder of participation" range from non-participation to citizen control (Figure 2.1). Non-participation is defined as one-way communication where the information is transmitted vertically and the participants are 'educated' or 'cured' with information (Arnstein, 1969). The middle stage, or degree, is "tokenism" where participants are able to hear and allowed to express their ideas, however they may or may not have an impact in the final decision-making. Finally, in the "citizen control" stage, participants have full control and partnerships are developed where the participants decide whether or not they want something, and if so, what they want it to look like (Arnstein, 1969).

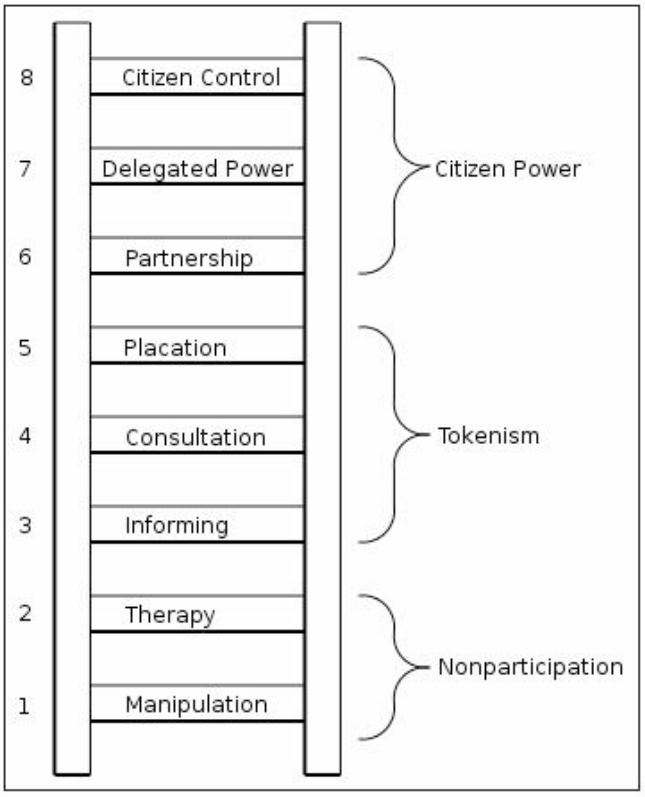

Figure 2.1: Ladder of participation (according to Arnstein 1969: 3)

Researchers from many fields, ranging from health care to planning, have commented on public participation as it relates to their interests. In natural resources management, Vroom and Yetton (1973) developed an early typology of participation in that field. In this model of leadership behavior (Table 2.1), a leader is assumed to have external tools for evaluating the success of formal policies and recommendations from multiple perspectives. The model was intentionally developed to provide specific guidelines to managers as to when to use participation (Vroom & Tetton, 1973). The model moves from individual decision-making processes through power sharing and/or participation (Margerison & Glube, 1979).

Table 2.1: Group decision-making methods (Vroom and Yetton 1973: 557)

A1	You solve the problem or make the decision yourself using information available to you at the time.
A2	You obtain the necessary information from your subordinates, and then decide the solution to the problem yourself. You may or may not tell your subordinates what the problem is in getting the information from them. The role played by your subordinates in making the decision is clearly one of providing the necessary information to you, rather than generating or evaluating alternative solutions.
C1	You share the problem with the relevant subordinates individually, getting their ideas and suggestions without bringing them together as a group. Then you make the decision, which may or may not reflect your subordinates' influence.
C2	You share the problem with your subordinates as a group, obtaining their collective ideas and suggestions. Then you make the decision, which may or may not reflect your subordinates' influence.
C3	You share the problem with your subordinates as a group. Together you generate and evaluate alternatives and attempt to reach agreement (consensus) on a solution. Your role is much like that of a chairman. You do not try to influence the group to adopt 'your' solution, and you are willing to accept and implement any solution which has the support of the entire group.

Both the Arnstein and the Vroom and Tetton models define participation as a dependent variable on the level of consultation inside a hierarchical structure that moves from non-participation to active involvement. These typologies have been used as measurement systems for evaluating political actions and large development projects. In both models, a moral assumption is found, where the top is morally superior or more acceptable than the bottom. Today, the reality is that there are many justifications for citizen participation in decision-making processes. The commonly cited justification for citizen involvement includes democratic, substantive and pragmatic rationales (Korfmacher, 2001). In the context of resource management, the democratic rationale emphasizes that the citizens are the "quasi-owners" of the resources; hence, they have the right to participate in the decision–making process (Korfmacher, 2001). The substantive rationale holds the view that citizens have unique knowledge about the resource in question, and therefore their contributions should inform the decision-making process (Korfmacher, 2001). With the pragmatic rationale, "attempts have been made to get around the hierarchical nature of the ladder by linking participation not to the degrees of direct democracy, but to the meaningful needs of public officials" (Bishop & Davis, 2002: 310). In addition, there is an underlying message from participatory models that assumes what is morally correct for citizens based on the principles of direct democracy. In many cases the values associated with participation have been adapted in political agendas by institutions to support their views of development. Because of this, perceptions of justice in decision processes and outcomes increases trust and support for authorities, and people are more satisfied even if the outcome is

unfavorable (Lind & Tyler, 1988). According to Thibaut and Walker (1975), people judge the fairness of a decision based in part on the opportunity they have had to voice their opinion and the extent to which that opinion is heard. Recognizing the importance of fairness to conceptions of participation, Leventhal (1980) suggested six principles for procedural fairness: 1) consistency over people and across time, 2) suppression of personal self-interest (bias), 3) use of accurate information, 4) modifiability of decisions, 5) representativeness of the concerns of all recipients, and 6) adherence to prevailing ethical and moral standards.

In part, I considered participation from the typologies elaborated by Arnstein and Vroom et al. (1973). In addition, my perception of public participation and its relation to protest actions is drawn from the concepts of trust and fairness developed by Thibaut and Walker (1975). The empirical and testable aspect of the public participation theory opens a new dimension of communication between theory and practice. In this context, learning allows people to make connections between the lack of clarity-real inclusion and the need to interfere in the process. In this light, people no longer trust in the legal channels to express their discontent. The dissociation of people from formal instances of participation is opening new platforms of participation recognized as protest actions.

2.2.1. Meaningful Public Participation in Resource and Environmental Management

Within the realm of resource and environmental management, governments, NGO's, industry and the general public have been using public participation

processes as a means to involve citizens who are affected by planning decisions. As Hjortsø (2001: 17) indicates, "*People associate the very concept of democracy with the activity of participating in government decision making*". Mitchell (2002: 187), links this directly to the notion of sustainability indicating: "*key aspects of sustainability include empowerment of local people, self-reliance and social justice*".

Given the basis of this research, it is interesting that during the 1970's Western activist groups began to question the decision–making process of business and government, which sought to maximize profit with little consideration of the environmental and social consequences (Cortner & Moote, 2000). Kessler et al. (1992) point out that this early activism has moved to a point where public knowledge and concerns about the effects of resource management mean that people are no longer willing to leave decisions to developers.

For this reason, instances of participation are shifting to a more meaningful public participation platform, which is defined as "*a highly communicative process that includes a critical exchange of ideas among proponents, regulators and members of the public*" (Diduck et al., 2007: 220). Further, Mitchell (2002: 188) states that in relation to resource and environmental management "*citizens increasingly are expecting what they consider 'meaningful' participation, which in their view usually means sharing of the power*". These notions of power link with Arnstein's (1969) early work, in that people are demanding a real voice at the table when decisions are being made that affect them, their community or the environment and resources around them. This means that to achieve meaningful public participation in natural resources management, it is necessary to recognize the voice of different

stakeholders that will be affect by the decision-making process. When systems of participation create opportunities for meaningful involvement through early participation, they are inclusive, deliberately transparent and empowering, and they can be excellent platforms for learning (Sinclair et al., 2007). The idea is that an intentional enhancement of public knowledge results in broader and better public involvement, which will reduce immediate and future costs and community-based adversity (Webler et al., 1995).

Equally important is the creation of deliberate platforms of sharing, which must be based on the constant reformulation and reinforcement of activities oriented to understand multiple points of view, and to consistently include people's interests during the decision-making process. According to Sinclair et al. (2000), to create meaningful instances of public participation, it is necessary to include multiple stakeholders. This inclusion should be early enough in the decision process to actually impact the decision. According to Mitchell (1997), an early stage involvement is not usually considered because of the time and cost involved in the planning stage. Yet it is at this moment when relationships and understanding of the situation begins to generate dialogue, and so early involvement must be considered a crucial part of the process, irrespective of the time and costs involved (Sims et al., 2007).

According to Sinclair et al. (2007: 320), this early inclusion is meaningless without a truthful inclusion of ideas. "*Representation of interest [is an important aspect because] it is [based on] a redistribution of power, away from entrenched*

interests to those who have formerly been relatively powerless". Stakeholders must be well informed of the positive and negative aspects of the project, and then their opinions must be considered during the process as well as in the final decision. Mitchell (1997) suggests two basic stages of sharing information: 'information out' and 'information in'. Mitchell (1997) suggests that 'information out' is where the planning information is shared. How well this information is shared may influence the quality of the process and future participation. The second step, 'information in' is when people express their concerns and views of the situation.

Both stages can foster a representation of interest, which should be shared among multiple stakeholders. If not, participants will think the invitation to participate is not fair or real and will not become involved. This will further complement simple and clear sharing of information. The information must be easily accessible and equally shared throughout the process. If the information is not clear enough, the participation will not be equal. According to Sinclair et al. (2000) regular updates help to interest people in the process. Easy access to information creates a level playing field for sharing opinions and results in more meaningful discussions. Easy access to information means the delivery of clear, simple and understandable information where people feel comfortable to share this knowledge (Mitchell, 1997). According to Mitchell (1997), it is of some importance to promote public participation based on the creation of mechanisms that permit an uninterrupted exchange of information throughout the process.

Finally, there should be available resources to help participants be aware and critical about the situation, enable them to engage in a critical process that could potentially enable learning and lead to more meaningful participation. This in turn could lead to sustainability in natural resources management.

2.2.2. Public Participation in Resource and Environmental Management in India

In the early 1970s, international meetings such as the Stockholm Conference certain organizations began to demand environment impact assessments of major industrial developments around the world (Paliwal, 2006). The Environmental Planning and Coordination (NCEPC) agreement constituted in 1972 was the first attempt to include the environment in the economic equation in India (Paliwal, 2006). This created a small opening in the decision-making process, as local knowledge about environmental conditions was sought.

In the 1980s, the vision of participation changed to the promotion of a more inclusive process. However, the understanding of the word 'participation' varied according to the necessities of each interest group. For example, from an institutional point of view, participation was defined as 'participatory development', which considered public opinions during the planning of large local developments. However, in the end decisions were still made by economic and government interests. In contrast to this, NGOs and local activists elaborated their definition of participation as a 'self-development' process. According to Tandon and Kak (2007: 3), "*people's self-development involved a process of collective action which led to fair processes of negotiation with the institutions*". The definition of participation evolved

into a more critical decision–making process, which "*questioned development agencies and government decision–making that affected communities, livelihood and human rights*" (Tandon & Kak, 2007: 3). People were no longer willing to accept unfair conditions or lose their property rights and livelihood without a fight. Collective and social mobilization began as a platform of discontent against top-down decision making (Tandon & Kak, 2007). These collective mobilizations aimed to change the institutional understanding of participation to become a more inclusive process.

During this time, the Indian government began to experiment with programs and took two big steps to include the populace. The first initiative was in the area of health care. Government initiated an educational program for adult education, with forums and round tables (Tandon & Kak, 2007). The second initiative involved "the impact of the forest on forest dwellers in Himachal Pradesh" (Tandon & Kak, 2007: 3). This program was based on consultations with local people and the respect of local knowledge in the decision-making process regarding management of forests (Tandon & Kak, 2007). Both initiatives took into consideration traditional and local knowledge and led to a new understanding of public participation. This new *Participatory Research* focused on empowering local people through knowledge generation and capacity building. According to Tandon & Kak, (2007), the core of participatory research is focused on empowering 'have-nots'. This means the acceptance and encouragement of people's existing knowledge, values and desire to participate and to be included in the process. The aim of including people's world-views was to broaden the discussion. However, after the experimental phase, the

Indian government did not fully integrate these tools into the process. In contrast, non-governmental institutions in India used these concepts to produce the Participatory Rural Appraisal, and other studies recognized people's traditional knowledge and values (Tandon & Kak, 2007).

During this time period, government and economic groups were still focused on development without thought to the environmental and social costs. Social movements in the 1980s became stronger and in the 1990s, the implementation of a legal process began to take shape. In 1994, India enacted the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) regulation for development projects under the Environmental Protection Act of 1986. This marked a further opening of the decision-making process, as the Indian EIA system demanded public hearings for projects captured under the Act. As a result, the central government demanded an EIA in all major projects undertaken by government agencies or the public sector (1994). The Ministry of Environment and Forest (MoEF) is responsible for the EIA notification liaison. Based in Delhi, it has six regional offices in charge of developing guidelines over the use of natural resources. In 1997, public hearings became mandatory for environmental clearance for certain projects in specific areas of the country (Sinha, 1998). The idea was to promote more democratic and participatory practices under the law. However, in an evaluation of public involvement based on multiple hydro projects in the Kullu region, results show that some participatory tools, such as public hearings, were not used properly (Sinclair et al., 2000). Developers and some government institutions involved in the process did not provide the information on time and part of the information was not delivered. According to Sinclair and

colleagues (2007) evidence showed that this process was unsuccessful for several reasons: the invitation to participate was sent too late; often these invitations were in written form to a largely illiterate population; and the notifications were written only in the official language and not translated to the local language, which is mandatory under Indian law.

Nevertheless, in some areas of natural resources management, such as solid waste, public participation is evolving into more meaningful ways of involvement. After the World Urban Forum of 2006, "*the Indian government decided to include the excluded people*" (Ghose, 2007). The 74th Constitutional Amendment Act of India was to encourage civic engagement and to ensure better management and monitoring mechanisms. An example of this is the creation of neighborhood groups in charge of solid waste management. To achieve positive results, the government created a community participation law, with funds available to promote initiatives and ensure public participation. To monitor this initiative, the Indian government opened two centers: Participatory Research Asia (PRIA), and the Centre for Communication Resource Development (CENCORD) (Ghose, 2007). Both centers are in charge of dealing with waste problems in cities and creating partnerships between governments and local interest groups. The process involved several steps, such as conducting meetings with developers and communities involved throughout the process, creating a collaborative strategic design for dealing with residential solid waste, and negotiating and discussing resources available to deal with the problem (Ghose, 2007). The region of Uttaranchal and the whole hilly region, where the disposal of solid waste has been a major problem, offers a good example of this

process. According to Ghose, 2007 in many places waste is carried downstream, polluting the valleys. The constant rush of tourism in the area exacerbates this condition. To solve the problem, government decided to engage local people in the management of solid waste, creating partnerships with civil society organizations. The association of three powerful groups - Participatory Research in Asia, the Himalayan Study Circle and the Uttaranchal State Government fostered the creation of a new institution. This creation, Mohalla Swachhata Samitis, is "*in charge of approximately 200- 250 households which seek a proper waste management system*" (Ghose, 2007: 143).

During this period, another area of developing public participation interest was the forest industry, one of the most important components of the Indian economy. This is especially true in the Himalayas, where it is part of the local subsistence, including traditional practices and sources of food (Shiva, 2002). Local people have seen deforestation as a major sustainability issue, as it impacts their dependency on timber and products associated with the forest. The historical lack of forest policy and the fact that timber companies have been in hands of foreign companies - which don't involve local people in their decision-making process - have been major problems for the sustainability of the area (Berkes et al. 1997). Protest actions became widely used around the country and are considered by protestors to be participatory platforms of a true democratic process (Guha,1989). For example, in the 1970s, a social movement called Chipko questioned the lack of involvement in the decision-making process around commercial forest extraction practices in the Northern Himalayan Region. The Chipko movement was protesting against resource

extraction practices that didn't subscribe to community participation. Government responded in favor of the protestors and finally "*halted large-scale commercial forestry*" (Berkes et al. 1997: p.21). This social victory encouraged a more sustainable and fair extraction of forest resources. The situation switched from an authoritarian and centralized decision-making approach to a more sustainable and participatory management system that takes into consideration the fragility of the mountain environment (Berkes et al., 1997).

2.2.2.1 EIA in India

Legislative provisions for public involvement in environmental assessments were made mandatory by the Environmental Impact Assessment regulation for development projects under the Environmental Protection Act of 1986. The principal goal of this regulation was to strengthen the public involvement process (Rajvanshi, 2003). According to Rajvanshi (2003), the EIA demands a long process with several steps, ruled by the following conditions: i) The project needs the approval of the public investment board/planning commission/central water commission/central electricity authority, etc. ii) The project is referred to the Ministry of Environment and Forest by other ministries. iii) The project is to be located in an environmentally fragile or sensitive area. iv) The project under dispute must be discussed in depth.

The EIA process is now mandatory for large projects, particularly those with multiple and harmful environmental impacts. *Table 2.2* demonstrates the status of EIAs in different sectors since 1994, and the evolution of EIAs in different developments in India (Paliwal, 2006).

Table 2.2: MoEF, Annual reports (1994-2004)

Year	River valley projects	Industrial projects	Thermal power projects	Mining projects (Medium + large)	Other sectors	Total
1994	8	20	15	13+24	104	104
1995	13	55	13	19+51	29	180
1996	6	54	26	39+15	30	170
1997	4	98	39	7+17	21	186
1998	9	34	17	9	11	80
1999	5	45	17	25	12	104
2000	5	52	15	17	36	125
2001	12	63	14	9	23	121
2002	12	83	7	31	25	158
2003	16	220	5	19	55	315
Total						1,543

The table shows that more than 1,500 development projects have been evaluated by EIA. The EIA process in India involves three basic steps - (a) preparation of the EIA report, involving scoping to documentation, (b) review and decision-making and (c) post project monitoring (Joseph, 1998). The 'review of decision-making' section suggests that *public involvement* has been weak and calls for accountability to improve EIA reports. In this context, a "range of techniques that can be used to inform, consult, or interact with stakeholders affected by a proposal" (UNEP 2001).

2.2.2.2. Public participation in Northern India

In northern India, the construction of hydro dams and tourism projects has been a constant debate. On one hand, those projects generate employment and economic benefits, which are needed in the area because of the rise of population and the industrial boom in India. For example, the development of the tourism

industry, has given employment to a large number of people (Oommen, 2004). On the other hand, these developments are weakening the relationship between local people and powerful groups. The local population has not been taken into consideration in the decision-making process, yet they are the ones who are suffering the consequences of this lack of public participation.

In a document review by Sinclair and Diduck (2000), instances of public involvement in the Kullu region were analyzed. The review found that in the Kullu Valley only three EIAs have been conducted and all of them are connected with hydroelectric projects (Sinclair & Diduck, 2000). Several minor hydro developments taking place in the area and tourism developments have not been properly evaluated. As well, hydroelectric projects in the Uttarakhand region have caused serious controversy because of the present and future social, cultural and environmental impacts (Rana, Sati & Sundriyal, 2007). According to Rana et al., (2007) there is an absence of transparent guidelines and methodology for EIAs in the Himalayan region. As a result, protestors and people affected by the constant power abuses in the region of Narmada River went to court. According to Culle (2001), the *SardarSarovar* dam under construction on the Narmada River has been at the centre of controversy for more than ten years. This case has significant importance for the history of development in India, because the supreme court of India in 2000 adjudicated a public interest litigation petition filed by the Narmada Bachao Andolan (NBA - Save the Narmada Movement) (Cullet, 2001). As a result, people are opening new channels of dialogue through the enforcement of legal processes, leading to new social movements. These movements are making a social statement, showing that

people are able to act as a collective to fight against unfavorable situations. At the same time, some protests have been strongly repressed, as the government considers these collective actions illegal representations of power affecting the civic peace of Indian society. This led to at least a thousand protestors being arrested at the project site (Shah, 2001).

As Mitchell (1997) and Hjorstsø (2001) suggest, the achievement of social justice and more sustainable practices mostly depends on an active personal engagement in political and social processes. This means the bridge that connects public participation and social movement theories for this research are people's positive perceptions of collective actions as the main vehicle of participation to achieve social justice and sustainability.

2.3. Social Movements and Protest in North India

2.3.1 Social Movements: Definitions

The term *"social movements"* became current in nineteenth-century European, where the concept was associated with the emancipation of the exploited class (Shah, 2001). Scholars divided the study of social movements into two broad categories: old and new social movements. The "old movements are related to working class political parties and trade unions as the principal forms of social change" (Holst, 2002: 6). This research draws from the Resource Mobilization Theory, which traces a connection between collective manifestation and organizations in search of access to resources (McCarthur & Mayer, 1977). The new social movements are more related to identities than to class politics. "The new social movement considers

organizational forms of social change such as feminism, environmentalism, peace, identity and autonomy" (Holst, 2002: 7). This research will consider protests in the context of new social movements.

New social movements are difficult to define because they are related to events, places and cultural elements that are impossible to disassociate from the context, or to unify in only one category of analysis (Singh, 2001). However, there are several common elements of social movements. Some of the most important common elements include having a particular ideology, an organizational structure and a recognizable leadership (Singh, 2001).

The notion of a *movement* has been and is in constant reevaluation by different disciplines and scholars. Some scholars use the term *movement* interchangeably with *organization* or *union*. Others use it to mean *historical trend* (Shah, 2001). According to Rajendra Singh, social movements or social actions are constructions based on societal values, and each validates the authenticity of the other's existence. If a society is a collective social entity, it is so because it is always defined by collective social actions (Singh, 2001).

The understanding of social movements is largely evolving from sociological and psychological theories, which attempt to understand social behaviors. Social movement theory was born and developed from three paradigms; the social-structural paradigm, the psychological paradigm and the social-psychological paradigm (Wood & Jackson, 1982). Several different theories and frameworks help to explain these paradigms and the phenomenon of social movements. For example, Gurr (1970: 37), in his discussion of the *theory of relative deprivation,* argues that

"*perceived differences in power and privileges between groups - that is, relative deprivation - influences protest among those feeling underprivileged*". This theory is under the social–psychological paradigm, because it seeks to explain the protestors' psychological perception in a social context of repression.

The beginning of a social movement is based on social contradictions and conflicts, which are inherent in human society and any social organization (Gore 1989, Oommen 1990, Singh 1993). Furthermore, we need to assume that problems and conflicts exist in every society and that it is the responsibility of individuals and social movements to respond to those problems. The degree of the complexity of these movements demands a complete identification and deeper analysis of their objectives, ideologies, leadership, and organization (Shah, 2001). Gurr (1970), Turner and Killam (1972), and Smelser (1963) shared the basic precept that the main purpose of social movements is to reduce grievance through collective actions. However, this definition does not explain how and why people get organized. Several authors said that discontent is an important component, but not the only reason to enroll in social movements (Gurr 1970, Killam 1972, Smelser 1963, Obershall, 2000). The need for an ideology, in combination with a large amount of discontent and an individual preference structure are seen as potential platforms of organizations (McCarthy & Mayer, 1977). In India, the identification of social movements becomes increasingly complex, because India is a pluralist political and cultural society, which has six sources of permanent conflict: 1) patriarchy, 2) inequality, 3) sectorialism, 4) periphery, 5) externality and 6) hierarchy (Oommen, 2005). In each category there are either long-term organized movements or short-term informal movements

(Oommen, 2005). When a society changes, the configuration of social movement changes as well.

In Northern India, there are few studies that focus on social movements, despite the large number of protest actions and the spontaneous formation of 'micro' and 'macro' movements. In several sectors, protest actions are considered a mainstream vehicle of public participation in India (Oommen, 2005). Freitag (1996) reveals that one of the most important movements began in Utthar Pradesh. The 'Cow Protection Movement' (GuarakshiniSabha) was one of the first organized movements documented in Northern India (Freitag, 1996). The cow has suddenly emerged as the principal symbol for the mobilization of dominant caste groups, because they represent the large agro-pastoral sector of the northern Himalayan Region (Data, 2002). Another important movement that still stands as an example today is the Chipko Movement (Hug the Trees) (Joshi, 1981). The Chipko movement (explained in Chapter 2) began in the 1970s, when a group of women in the Nanda Devi region in the Himalaya launched a protest against the felling of green oak (*Quercus* spp.) trees and other species along the catchment of Rishi Ganga River (Joshi 1981). The Chipko movement began to question the top-down relation between the state and peasantry (Guha, 1989). Among other successful achievements, the protest actions stopped the indiscriminate harvesting of oak trees in the area and began a social/environmental movement that caused the exchange of knowledge among stakeholders (Banyopadhyay, 1992). Another important movement grew out of protests around the Tehri dam project on the Bhagirathi River. This was one of the oldest anti-dam protests in the region and with the

support of Chipko leaders, the local community protested against displacement, salinization of the soil, drought, downstream water shortages, etc. and gained international attention in doing so (Swain, 2000). In rural areas in the northern mountain communities, the precursors of the farmers' movement are also evident. These movements challenge development that affects their lands, produces water scarcity and, in some cases, causes the displacement of people.

These protests are further evidence that contemporary social movements in India, previously largely focused on basic livelihood demands, have widened their scope by including various environmental concerns (Gadgil & Guha, 1995). Popular environmental movements in India can be divided into two categories on the basis of their focus and coverage. Macro movements demand broader policy and social change and have wider geographical support or influence (e.g. Chipko, Tehri Dam protests in Uttarakhand and the Silent Valley Hydroelectric project in Kerala). Micro movements have relatively local and narrow geographical influences that focus on local sustainable development practices (e.g. J.P. Enterprises Hydro Project, Uttarakhand; Ralegaon Siddhi and Pani Panchayat of Maharashtra State) (Reddy 1997).

2.3.2. The development dilemmas

Since the founding of India's democracy, Congress has focused on poverty alleviation. To solve the problem of explosive population growth, government adopted a neoclassicist economic system. This approach, adopted from capitalism and colonialism principles, has been eroding communal actions and social systems

(Guha: 1989). The system focused on 'modernizing' and rebuilding a new Indian nation, implementing an open market based on competition. The government plan was to create new sources of employment and welfare. According to Oommen (2005: 17), the new refrain around Indian development was "*that all-round economic prosperity will benefit all, the poor included*". Statistics on poverty in India indicate that absolute poverty has decreased considerably and that India now has one of the fastest economic growth rates of 8% over the past three years (World Bank 'India Country Overview', 2007). This development imperative spread through the country, but has only in the very recent past started to take shape in the mountain regions of the north with the advent of many large scale hydro, military roads and tourism projects as previously outlined.

Much of this rapid economic growth and market liberalization has, however, further exacerbated the economic insecurity of the poor (Oommen, 2005: 36). According to Warringtong (2003), in many mountain regions there is a vertical gradient of poverty, as 80% of the people who live there are impoverished. Poverty as an outcome is produced by the lack of provincial and grassroots consultation in the implementation of new types of development (Warringtong, 2003). India's first major hydroelectric power installation started generating electricity in 1902. The project was located in the upper course of the Cauvery River in South India and was developed by the British companies to generate power for the Kolar Gold Field mine (Joshi, et al.; 1988). In a 1951 plan to fight poverty, irrigation maps were created to point out areas with potential hydroelectric capacity. The selected areas were located in Uttaranchal, Himachal Pradesh, Sikkim, and in the North-Eastern Region

(Joshi, et al.; 1988). The development of hydropower during this period was slow, reflecting the 1970s the government, declaration that no money was available from the state to develop large projects in isolated provinces (Linkenbach, 1994). In 2007, the importance of developed hydro projects in the area was re-assessed by the Asian Development Bank. In the annual report, it mentioned that only 20% of the potential hydropower had been developed in India (Asian development Bank, 2007). Government has been seen as "Keen to accelerate hydroelectric development projects through a number of legislative and policy initiatives at the central and state levels. As discussed in detail in the report, these include preparation of a shelf of well-investigated projects and streamlining of statutory clearances and approvals, establishment of independent regulatory commissions, provision for long-term financing for projects, increased flexibility in sale of power, etc. " (Asian development Bank, 2007: 3).

In the Kullu region, funding allocated to develop villages and towns are mostly coming from revenues of hydroelectric and large development projects in the area. These projects contributed 1.5% of their total revenues during the first year of production to implement social and infrastructure projects in the affected areas. In the 2008 Himachal Pradesh Clean Energy Development Investment Program, government announced that it lacked funding. It used this announcement to justify and to facilitate the speed of concession to private projects to develop the area.

The negative results of hydro and tourism developments have been quite acute, especially in regards to social and environmental impacts (Sinclair & Diduck, 2007). Socially, the displacement of local people for development has had serious impacts.

Displacement means "*a loss of livelihood, habitat and assets, social disruption and disorder and severance from an eco-system which had sustained them. Most critically, these displacements threaten the poor and the weak with even greater impoverishment*" (Lama, 2000: 25). According to Sims (2001), in India the construction of "*Hydro dam projects could have displaced between 26 million and 58 million people between 1950 and 1990*" (World Commission on Dams, 2000: 4). The UN Committee for Refugees in its 2000 report estimated that there were 157,000 displaced persons in northeast India (Baruah, 2003). Today, the Land Acquisition Act still promotes cash compensation for loss (Lama, 2007), despite a lack of success with this program.

An indirect consequence of these large developments is the imminent cultural loss produced by the displacements. In the whole Indian Himalayan region there coexists "*remarkable cultural, ethnic and biological diversity. Multiple ethnic composition is a striking feature, with more than 171 of a total of 573 scheduled tribes inhabiting the region*" (Samal, 2000; Samal, Palni & Dhyanim, 2005).

In addition, recent development projects are not considering environmental impacts in any meaningful way, especially given the pressure put on the fragile natural resources of the mountain region. The construction of dams and/or tourism centers is attracting more people to the area, which promotes new sources of employment, income and other benefits for a few people. On the other hand, these developments are not bringing the fragility of the Himalayan ecosystem into the equation.

In general, mountain ecosystems are unique, complex and fragile places that are particularly sensitive to population pressures and global climate change (Samal, Palni & Dhyanim, 2005). For this reason, in the planning stage of a large project it is necessary to understand the unique characteristics of the region to ensure long-term availability of resources. Project planners and managers must analyze the whole scenario before proceeding with huge developments. It is the inadequacy of analysis prior to the implementation of projects that can damage or destroy unique species in the mountains. It is this fragility of the ecosystems that must be constantly evaluated by a multi-disciplinary staff of researchers. For example, the Himalayas currently contain nearly 50% of the total flowering plants of India, of which 30% are endemic (Samal, Palni & Dhyanim, 2005). Furthermore, it is important to consider that native species are a fundamental part of the habitat balance and people's standard of living. Many of these developments have spawned local protest action as the rights of people are infringed or the environment and resources they depend on are negatively impacted. The state is clearly favoring one sector of the population, while most of the local residents are left feeling alienated (according to the definition of alienation by Marx) in regards to their own resources.

The oppressive, top-down state management imposed on village life has threatened the historical symbiosis between villagers and their surroundings. According to Guha (1999), in some occasions top-down decisions dislocate people from their traditional practices to the point where they begin to degrade the surroundings in order to be part of the economic system. For example, since the 1930s, forest policies and laws have been prohibiting local use of the forest (Guha,

1999). Local residents have seen the state monopolization of natural resources, which disrupts traditional forms of resource utilization, as restrictive and harmful to their lives. In an attempt to protect their livelihood and their children's future, people are speaking out through protest. For example, according to Rana and colleagues (2007: 349), when the Tehri Dam reservoir began to fill "*the locals after having lived in the region for centuries [had] to witness helplessly their village being slowly drowned in the name of development disaster*".

Local people are trying to make it clear that their voices can no longer be ignored in the process of development, even if projects are for the good of the nation. Being heard is proving to be a challenge though, in the face of nation building, and this is creating animosity among multiple-stakeholders. New social movements are being born to defend local people's rights in the area (Rana et al. 2007).

2.3.3 Mobilization: Protest

Mobilizations depend upon "*the coercive, normative, remunerative, and informational resources that an incipient movement can extract from its setting and can employ in its protest*" (Herbert, 1986: 61). Some of the important questions about social movements are why, and in what capacity, people act collectively. McCarthur & Mayer (1977) argue that mobilizations are in relation to the societal support and the constraint around social movements. Partnerships with other organizations, how much funding they have and what kind of the resources are available in the process of organizing, are all examples of issues that impact mobilizations. Gurr (1970) analyzes protest through the lens of relative deprivation

theory. He suggests "*that perceived differences in power and privileges between groups - that is relative deprivation - influences protests among those feeling underprivileged*" (Wood & Jackson, 1982: 4). In contrast, Blumer (1978) through the lens of interactionist theory, argues that deprivation is not the only motor that drives a protest: "*It is only when the group begins to feel that the social order that produces deprivation is illegitimate*" (Wood & Jackson, 1982: 4). On the other hand, McCarthy and May (1977) point out that through resource mobilization groups organize to get resources, which means that the enrollment in the social movement is based on a task-oriented paradigm where the protestors engage in a process to engender change.

Finally, in a look at political protest, Tilly (1974) affirms that "*Through the chaos of living cities …we see men held to their routines by commitments and controls, often dismayed by their routine…yet, occasionally these men…join with other men to strike about the situation itself*" (Tilly, 1974: 105). There is a general consensus that deprivation is one of the first catalysts of protest. According to Bayley (1962), the move away from deprivation protests is characterized by general structures that permit us to categorize and to understand protests. Bayley identifies two kinds of protests: legal, and illegal, and from there he moves to more specific categorizations such as violent and non-violent.

In most cases, protests are not singular events and are based on the ideological principles of the time. In the absence of an ideology, a protest becomes an individual and isolated event, which tends to disappear in short time. Protests are structured by the theory of collective action, which suggests two levels of

explanation to these unconventional events. According to Oberschall (2000: 28), the first is the *macro-structural level,* which has four dimensions of analysis that describe the necessary condition of challenge: "*1) discontent and dissatisfaction, 2) beliefs, values and ideologies filter and frame the dissatisfaction, 3) the capacity to act collectively, 4) political opportunities, for example, division in the regime, international support for dissidents etc*".

The second level is the *micro-personal level,* where people have to decide whether or not, when, and how to participate in the challenge. The decision to participate or not depends not only on the four macro conditions named above, but also on the people's perceptions and expectations (Oberschall, 2000). The notion of the micro level is an application of the rational actor model of collective action under uncertainty: "*people weigh expected benefits and costs and decide on action with the highest net benefits. The goals sought by the challenger are collective goods such as reforms, overthrow of the regime, etc*". (Oberschall, 2002: 28).

Oberschall (2002) explains that, in relation to these two broad levels, participants encounter five variables in the decision-making process that characterize choice under uncertainty. For example, in the deciding moment participants evaluated the costs of participation, such as "*arrest, injury, opportunity, cost, etc.*" (Oberschall 2002: 29). The combination of both macro-micro levels can trigger the involvement of a large group of participants, or conversely, stimulate non-involvement.

The achievement of a particular goal during or after the protest will be related to the tactics elaborated by the protesters. Tactics range from the use of elementary resources, such as visual effects, to the use of gunfire. For example, a simple tactic is the presence of a mass of people, since it is a visual way to show power. A more sophisticated tactic is Mahatama Gandhi's development of passive resistant or non-violent protest (Obershal,2002).

The success or failure of any mobilization will depend on the strategic capacity of protestors to get their message across (Ganz, 2003). According to Ganz (2003: 285), a successful protest will be a consequence of strategic thinking which "*is reflective and imaginative, based on how leaders have learned to reflect on the past, pay attention to the present and anticipate the future*". Thus, the leaders of protests are people who are able to capture the spirit of discontent and to guide these feelings into a more elaborated and organized level of action.

2.3.3.1 The role of Protests in India

Social protests are part of a long tradition of public participation and social mobilizations in India, as illustrated in the map below.

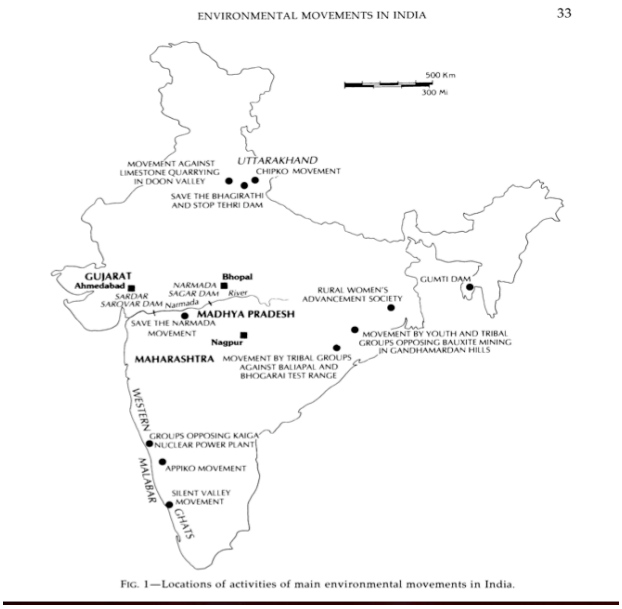

FIG. 1—Locations of activities of main environmental movements in India.

Figure 2.3. Social-Environmental Movements in India, P.P Karan:33.

This map represents the large presence of social movements in India. In comparison to other countries, these are not isolated events, being spread throughout the country. The literature indicates that there are two kinds of protest movements in the area, characterized by either violent and non-violent social mobilizations. However, this research is dealing only with non-violent protest. Non-violent protest, or s*atyagraha,* is defined by Gandhi as the non-cooperative mobilizations. This type of protest is widely spread and has been used by environmental and social movements in the Northwest Himalaya. (Shiva & Bandyopadhyay, 1986). Gandhi refers to *satyagraha* as a technique which "*is used [as] passive resistance in all departments of life. We [Indian people] cease to cooperate with our rulers when they displease us*" (Shiva & Bandyopadhyay, 1986). Non-violent protests have been used in a variety of causes, including human rights, gentrification and caste issues. In the seventies, under the umbrella of non-violent protests the so-called ecological and

environmental movements emerged. This was a result of local and subsistence economies being primarily dependent on ecological goods and services. Ecological or environmental movements are defined as*"the conflicts over the use of natural resources between state and industry on the one hand and local people on the other*" (Linkenbach, 1994: 7). These movements arose from Gandhi's idea of empowering villages and their locally based economic and traditional systems to fight against overconsumption of resources and large developments (Linkenbach, 1994).

2.3.3.2 Antecedents of Protests in the Himachal Pradesh Region

In the 1960s, Gandhi sent people to the Himalayas to form ashrams in charge of protecting the cultural heritage and to empower isolated communities to be more self-reliant. Ecological/environmental movements were meant to fight against the depletion of life-supporting ecological systems at hands of the state or developers (Linkenbach, 1994). In her thesis, Laura Mckay (2002) raised an important point about the legal procedures. *"Given the implications of conservation legislation and policy established at the national level, it is appropriate to inquire as to whether flexibility is, or could be, exercised in the grass roots management" (pp.29).* Even today, ecological movements place the responsibility for protecting natural resources in the hands of local residents, who hold the cultural values and use the resources. This contradicts existing legal polices. Mobilizations against developments emerged mostly from local residents, social workers, women's organizations and intellectuals (Linkenbach, 1994).

Some studies show linkages between the impacts of protests in the use and management of natural resources. Conversely, the use and management of natural resources can foster the birth of protests, as illustrated by the strong relationship between local people's subsistence and natural resources management in rural areas of India. The literature on the nexus of protest and natural resources management clearly establishes that in the Northern Himalayas region, mismanagement of natural resources is creating animosity between stakeholders.

To understand the protest taking place in the Kullu Valley, it is necessary to understand the history of the Hilly regions. In the 1960s, Gandhian women were relocated throughout the Himalaya to educate people in different matters such as health, literacy and social issues. Sunderlal Bahuguna, one of the leaders of the Chipko movement, was part of one of these ashrams. In 1968, a group created a forest rights declaration that was distributed in Barkot. This declaration explained the relationship between the local life style and the forest, with an aim to regaining the right of forest management at the local level (Guha, 1989). This action has been recognized as the beginning of the Chipko Andolan movement. In Hindi, Chipko literally means to adhere to or hug the trees (Guha, 1989).

The Chipko movement began in Uttar Pradesh, spreading throughout the area to fight against indiscriminate deforestation at the hands of commercial forest. It was also a protest against strict State regulation of local forest initiatives (Guha, 1989). The strategies of the Chipko movement can be divided into three parts. First, they were trying to get the support of the local government and *panchayat* to influence decision-making processes. Second, some representatives were in charge of

distributing the message of the movement in other provinces and places, in order to gather as much support as possible. Third, collaboration with different political parties and student organizations were made. These strategies resulted in several partnership and collaborations among groups. For example, leaders of the Chipko movement worked with the communist party in the south to fight for better labor rights (Linkenbach, 1994).

In the Himalayas, women have generally been at the head of social actions. One of the most famous actions recalled from the Chipko movement was when local women hugged the trees to protect the forest. In the 1980s, these actions were translated into a new policy that limited deforestation in the Himalayas. This success, in combination with the three strategies named above, were the foundations that made the Chipko movement well known around India and the world. According to Rangan (1996), the Chipko movement does not represent the views of local people. Within their own province, the group has been criticized because the local communities did not receive benefits as a result of the protests. However outside of the Himalayas, and even in other countries, the Chipko movement has become a myth and its legacy is inspiring new social movements (Rangan; 1996 & Mawdesly; 1998). The legacy behind the Chipko movement continues to inspire actions related to social justice and the protection of the environment, as it has for the past 30 years.

Another important movement that was born in this region arose in order to fight against the Tehri Dam hydroelectric project. The development took place on the Bhagirathi River, the principal tributary of the Ganges (Karan, 1994). According

to Shiva (1991), the Narmada reservoir was planned to be the largest in India, displacing 120,000 people from 254 villages.

People affected by large developments have been feeling threatened by the effects on their rights over resources and because of their ecological dependency on the environment. According to Karan (1994) "*These environmental movements are an expression of the socio-ecological effects of narrowly conceived development based on short-term criteria of exploitation" (p.84)*. Today, social organizations continue to question the State's centralized approaches to natural resources extraction. These organizations seek a more decentralized and community-based approach. In the Kullu region, conflicts arose when government officials tried to move the borders of the Himalaya National Park in order to promote hydroelectric developments. According to Mckay (2002), the justification from officials was the lack of biodiversity and proper use of the area. On the other hand, conservationists claimed that ecological richness was present in the whole park (Mckay, 2002). These claims continued until the beginning of 2008, when a proposed hydro project on the Thirtan River was stopped by a local NGO named Envi-Saviours, who since 2005 have been very active in the area promoting environmental education and campaigns in order to save the pristine area. The court process ended in 2008, with the rejection of the Hydel Dam project.

Another recent protest action that was important in the area was reported in the newspaper *India Together (2008*). The paper noted that a proposed ski village tourism project slated for the Kullu District had generated some opposition. In 2006,

after a grand convention (*Jagatipuch*), the local people of the Kullu Valley discussed the problem of tourism in a meeting led by a former member of the parliament, Maheshwar Singh. Several activities were organized to open the dialogue and discussion around the project. The Jagatipuch concluded with the rejection of the ski village project by the local people. However, government would not listen to local complaints until NGOs began to appear. The reasons for the final rejection, which included pollution, cultural erosion and other social and environmental impacts of the project, were originally dismissed by government officials and the developers. In 2006, the leader of the Chipko movement, Sunderlal Bahuguna, was invited to join the mass-mobilization against the project. The rally succeeded in stopping the implementation of the project, which currently is under revision by the court and several government authorities.

2.4 Protests as platforms for learning

Very little has been published in the academic literature regarding the nexus between participating in a protest and learning. In the literature, there is no consensus regarding the learning process that occurs in social movements. Some authors have named this learning process "Popular Education", others "Politics of Education" or "Informal Learning". Most learning theories in adult education contextualize learning in different scenarios. According to Jarvis (1987: 1), learning occurs in a variety of modes: "*formal, informal, non-formal, directed".*

Through the lens of non-formal learning theory, I consider the learning outcomes of protest actions as a basic component of social actions. Using this framework, I identify the triggers of learning in protest actions. In the case of a

protest, the entire process - from the planning stage to the protest itself - offers opportunities for participants to develop a non-formal interchange of information. Non-formal education has been used to "empower underprivileged learners, in advanced capitalist and under-developed countries" (Malcolm, Hodkinson & Colly, 2003: 314).

Non-formal learning differs from other learning theories in that it has a political dimension. However, certain aspects of informal learning can also be used to understand protest actions. For example, informal learning is an ongoing process through everyday embodied practices. Other important features of informal learning include mutual sharing, the sharing of knowledge horizontally and the absence of educational settings" (Malcolm, Hodkinson & Colly, 2003). From the non-formal platform of learning I have examined individual participation through the lens of transformative learning, a branch of non-formal education. This study demonstrates that before, during and after protests, people are often involved in a particular level of learning. Learning became the main focus of this research, because through learning it is possible to understand the individual process of transformation and acts of mobilization. Kapoor (2004) said through popular education people can articulate their struggle into a political discourse and as a justification for action. According to Chovanic et. al (2008: 194), learning in social movements in contrast to formal platforms of education involves more than one dimension, and can include: "*spiritual, cognitive, ethical, emotional, physical, psychological, socioeconomic, political, and cultural dimensions*". To this list I would add an environmental component, as it is through the specific understanding of

personal relationships with natural resources that rural macro and micro movements are appearing in the world. This explains why protests are taking place in the Kullu Valley.

Social movements and education have as a principal goal the achievement of a conscious transformation. According to Cunningham (1989: 34), "*the intentionality of adult education in a movement is revealed by how formal or informal, or unconscious the educational process is*". This means it is necessary to analyze at what stage of learning the people are at, whether they have been learning something new during the process, and if this learning involves some transformation of values or perceptions. Participants often critically evaluate the given information; who will be involved in the process of protests, their level of involvement in the cause, and so on (Obershall, 2000). At a minimum, people have to learn something about the protest issue before they decide to engage.

Dykstra and Law (1994: 124) analyze popular social movement through three branches of study: 1) vision, 2) critical pedagogy, and 3) pedagogy of mobilization. In this study, *vision* is seen as an alternative configuration of a new reality based on ideas emerging from collective action. Critical pedagogy involves a critical view of a situation and a reformulation of reality as well. Critical pedagogy is more complex and employs three dimensions of analysis. These dimensions are based on a collective interchange of information and a personal way of building a new perception of the world. Finally, Dykstra and Law (1994) analyze the pedagogy

of mobilization, which promotes "*leadership development, analytical and strategically thinking*" (Dykstra & Law, 1994:124).

The pedagogy of mobilization is based on the engagement of four stages. These stages move from a participative interchange of information where participants become aware of the situation through to the reshaping of reality. The model presented by Dykstra and Law shows a strong connection between active participation and learning. Moreover, after the first interchange of information, certain individuals begin to play more active roles and the idea of a leader or leaders begins to emerge in the protests. The leaders are those who organize the information from people's ideas and values and from there the idea of a collective begins to emerge (Dykstra & Law, 1994).

In a collective, people become aware of power abuses*, and* the learners or protestors began to reflect on the content of the unfair condition. Participants learn that something is negatively affecting their lives. In a later stage, they are able to decide to accept the unfair condition or to change the situation. In this stage participants learn about the situation and possible solutions, linking knowledge with their aspirations and values (Dykstra & Law, 1994). For example, in northern India the rapid depletion of natural resources has been increasing poverty and food insecurity. The continuing lack of opportunities for public participation and the history of other social movements in the area, such as the Chipko movement, are tools that in the people's minds promote reflection and the birth of short and long-term social movements in the area.

2.4.1 Public Protest as a Platform for Learning

Protests are collective actions with a certain level of organization that generate dialogue among multiple-stakeholders. This dialogue, based on the interchange of ideas, promotes awareness and learning. Several scholars suggest that "Involvement, participation, political action is not new to adult education; it has been a fundamental principle for centuries" (Faris, 1986; Heaney, 1993; Holst 2002; Lovett, 1988; Lovett, Clarke, & Kilmurray, 1983; Rubenson, 1989; Schied, 1995; Selman, 1990). Further, some scholars assert that it is impossible to have a social movement without an educational platform. Freire (1970: 119-120) argues: " *[That] in the process of mobilizing or organizing, [which is when people reflect]… Education is before, is during and is after … what I want to say is that it's impossible to organize without education "*. Thus, Freire links organization with learning. In the process of creating a new social movement, there is more than one person involved. Naturally an interchange of information and values begins that will lead to a modification of personal perception through a reflective process that will shape a common ideology.

Kastner (1990) suggests that working in social movements is a positive and ongoing educational experience. According to Walter (2007), the Clayoquot Sound protest of 1993 in Canada reveals that the level of organization moved from basic to something more elaborate through the learning experiences that protesters shared in a peace camp. The peace camp was considered the pedagogical platform for adult learning and to transform their lives and the structures around them (Hall, 2004; Walter, 2007); Hall, 2004). The relationship between social movements and education is complex and depends on multiple factors.

There are two strong learning components in public protests. Protests are active and vocal methods to influence a large sector of the public and/or politicians. The vocal message is based on previous agreements and common goals that the protestors have discussed and decided to express. The second learning component is related to the natural formation of social movements, in which organizational ideology, beliefs and skills are passed from one member to another in two different educative forms (Crowther & Shaw, 1997; Dykstra & Law, 1994; Kastner, 1990; Martin, 1988; Selman, 1990; Holst, 2002: 81). The first educative form is i*nformal*, which means that information circulates by "mentoring or modeling" (p: 81). The second educative platform is *formal*, which is based on guided and deliberate information that is given through workshops, seminars, lectures, etc. (Crowther & Shaw, 1997; Dykstra & Law, 1994; Kastner, 1990; Martin, 1988; Selman, 1990; Holst, 2002: 81). The personal outcome will involve a personal evaluation of the information in context. In the organizational micro–level defined by Oberschall (2000) and named above in the social movement section, an early organizational stage before the protest involves a process of sharing information. Information sharing is the platform for a decision–making process that can promote individual or collective awareness of the situation, which can naturally lead to learning and public action.

2.4.2 Protest and Transformative Learning

One lens through which to consider the adult learning that occurs as a result of protest action is transformative learning. Mezirow (1994) explains that the

foundation of transformative learning is based on the interpretation and reinterpretation made by the learner about 'x' experience. Social action can be an important outcome of such learning. In natural resources management, social actions are linked to an ongoing learning process and to important individual and collective outcomes. To determine what type of learning the protestors are engaging in, I analyze the learning component of the protest action related to sustainability, from the perspective of instrumental and communicative learning. Instrumental learning is defined as learning that permits controlling or manipulating the environment or people (Mezirow, 1995). Mezirow (1995) suggests three categories of data analysis: a) obtaining skills and information, b) determining cause-effect relationships, and c) task-oriented problem solving. Instrumental learning is often understood as the new skills and information the participant gets from the protest. For this research, I will look at incentives of protest participation, how the information is transposed before, during and after the protests, and how protestors manipulate the message. I will also study whether participants are engaged in a deeper and more transformative type of learning. I will use the definition of communicative learning as an identification tool. Mezirow defined two categories that permit communicative learning: a) understanding values and normative concepts, and b) understanding other's points of view. Communicative learning is considered a more analytic and reflective understanding of the surrounding world. Mezirow (1994) suggests that critical thinking is very important in places where authority structures have been weakened. Social movement theory suggests that the person who is able to move from a passive

stage to an active stage is someone who knows that they can get something better (Woodhill, 2002).

In this theory, the person is aware of the actual situation and able to recognize that something is missing or is unfair. This critical awareness described by social movement theory is similar to the disorienting dilemma of Mesirow, who describes a "disorienting dilemma which serves as a trigger for reflection and future change" (Mesirow, 1994). It is important to identify if reflection involves some perception/transformation of reality or if it is a short-term resolution to solve an external conflict.

In transformative learning the process of transformation is complex, because it involves different stages that are not always fully achieved by the learner. The process usually involves ten steps although the order of the steps may not follow the same sequence for each learner.(Table 2.3),

Table 2.3. Ladder of Transformation and Change Mezirow (2000) p: 22.

1	A disorienting dilemma
2	Self-examination with feelings of fear, anger, guilt, or shame
3	A critical assessment of assumptions
4	Recognition that one's discontent and the process of transformation are shared
5	Exploration of options for new roles, relationships, and actions
6	Planning a course of action
7	Acquiring knowledge and skills for implementing one's plans
8	Provisional trying of new rules
9	Building competence and self-confidence in new roles and relationships
10.	A reintegration into one's life on the basis of condition by one's new perspective.

The accomplishment of these stages will lead to an "*active process of making meaning from our experiences through reflection, critical reflection, and critical self-reflection*" (Dirk, 1998:4). The outcome of this process reflects individuals who are more inclusive in their perception of the world (Mezirow, 1991). Daloz (1986) suggests that transformative learning depends less on rational, reflective acts and more on a holistic, even intuitive process. Furthermore, the protests in the Kullu Valley were analyzed from a holistic perspective, moving from basic to complex structural levels that were understood by participative observation and interviews as defined in Chapter 3.

Mezirow's model (1997) suggests that in the process of becoming adults, we develop three critical areas, such as "1) critically assessing assumptions, 2) recognizing paradigms, and 3) working collectively with others on problems and problem–solving approaches". Freire (1970) also views transformative learning as an emancipation process that liberates groups of people to act against social forces that impede their goals. Freire also postulates "*to surmount the situation of oppression, men must first critically recognize its causes, so that through transformative action they can create a new situation, one which makes possible the pursuit*" (Freire, 1970).

The learning outcome will be dependent on natural reflection and different levels of social learning called *loops of learning*. Similar to instrumental and communicative learning, the loops of learning are useful tools to identify exactly where people are in their learning process. Brown and Dyball (2005) suggest three loops of learning in natural resources management. The first loop explains the simple

relation of consequences and action; this means in this level of learning, stakeholders are able to understand the relationship between conventional practices and the impacts of those practices in the environment. The second loop entails reflecting on the newly acquired knowledge generated by the different players, processing the acquired knowledge and beginning to change the practices. Finally, the third loop involves a deeper level of analysis that associates values, where each case will be seen as a single case study with specific contexts and solutions. For this research, it was important to identify the role of multiple-stakeholders in the area and in what loop of learning they are with respect to natural resources.

In the case of the Allain Duhangan and other hydro projects taking place in the area, there has been insufficient dialogue among stakeholders. The general perception among local residents is that only a small group is deciding what affects entire communities and that the offered compensation given does not actually compensate for the loss. This paper looks at transformative learning as learning that occurs when people engage and share their diverse perspectives and experiences. The engagement and sharing leads to the development of a common framework of understanding and a basis for joint action to deal with issues around environmental sustainability.

2.5 Summary

Public Participation, Social Movements and Transformative Learning theories are interconnected in this research, and are critical to any understanding of the impacts of large development and the spread of protest actions in the Kullu Valley.

The excessive number of hydroelectric projects taking place in the area is a response to increasing energy demands in India and the rest of the world (World Bank, 2008). The history of public participation in India suggests that some areas have a history of more inclusive platforms of participation. However, there are still many questions around whether or not voices are being heard. In the Kullu Valley, grievance and discontent are some of the major catalysts for action and the springboard for social movements.

Today, people are fighting to open new and more meaningful channels of participation. A new form of participation – the protest - has evolved as a result of the public not being heard. Protestors have been criticizing big development projects and are calling national and international attention to these developments. Discontent and learning are fueling the various protest actions in the area. Learning through social action connects participation and social movement theories. Through this learning, people discovered the value of being organized, understood grievances and found ways to address discontent. Mobilization has been explained in the literature as a combination of external reasons with a personal process of decision-making. The micro or personal process of decision-making to join a protest action involves a more personal exchange and analysis of the information and it is at this level where most individual and social learning occurs. This connection has been overlooked by Oberschall and other academics in the literature of social movements who describe personal experiences from the outside (discontent, disagreement, unfairness, injustice) and not as an inside personal transformation of values. In this case, I argue that the process of collective organization involved not only a

preference structure analysis or a shared feeling of discontent, but also an important learning component embedded in the process of organization and construction of the ideology that will enforce collective actions.

Two important questions raised by several scholars from both disciplines, are why and how people move from a passive attitude into action. Through the following chapters, learning is seen as a major platform for mobilization. Moreover, this research introduces an opportunity to re-evaluate protest actions from an individual perspective rather than a solely social process.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH APPROACH

3.1. Introduction

The basic methodological approach of this research was qualitative. Qualitative study can be defined as "*an inquiry process of understanding social or human problems based on building a complex, holistic picture… reporting detailed views of informants and conducted in a natural setting*" (Creswell, 1994: 10). Another definition of qualitative methods elaborated by Van Maanen (2003: 520), suggests that qualitative methods "*are an umbrella term covering an array of interpretive techniques which seek to describe, decode, translate, and otherwise come to terms with the meaning, if not the frequency, of certain more or less naturally occurring phenomena in the social world*".

Within this context, I felt that a qualitative approach was the most appropriate for the study because empirical data collection involved studying and

working with people. As well, the setting for this research was where people lived – their local natural setting. The study was context dependent, meaning that reality was grounded in the local experiences of the people I worked with. The research also had an exploratory component because I have not found much that details the interconnections between participation, protest and learning, particularly as these relate to the developing context of Northern India. As Creswell (1994) points out, qualitative methods are well suited to exploratory research, where many variables are unknown, the context is important, and where a theory base for the subject may be lacking. Further, Bogdan and Taylor (1975) argue that qualitative techniques allow researchers to share in the understandings and perceptions of others and to explore how people structure and give meaning to their daily lives. The focus of this study is to understand people's perceptions of formal public participation platforms and why people decide to join protest actions.

3.2. Case Study Research Strategy

I used a case study strategy as the main vehicle for implementing the qualitative approach proposed. The case study that I used was the Allain Duhangan Hydroelectric Project located at the Prini Village in the Kullu Valley. The case study approach involves systematically gathering enough information about a particular person, social setting, event, or group to permit the researcher to effectively understand how it operates or functions (Berg, 1989). Moreover, the case study focuses on understanding the dynamics present within a single setting (Eisenhardt, 1989). According to Yin (1994), the distinctive need for case studies arises out of the

desire to understand complex social phenomena, as is being proposed by this research.

My choice of a case study strategy is justified in a number of ways. The most important is the fact that data collection was based on contemporary events, in a particular place and within a defined context. This study focused on contemporary protest actions that took place in the Kullu Valley. As well, I focused on "how" and "why" questions related to citizen use protest as a vehicle of participation and expression (Yin, 1994).

3.2.1 Case Study Site

This research was conducted in the Kullu Valley located in the northwestern state of Himachal Pradesh, India. The selection of the Kullu Valley related to local context: several development projects have been constructed, or are under construction or consideration that threaten the sustainability of the region and the traditional lives of local people; the region is a high mountain area, fragile in its cultural and ecological composition; and people are questioning the impacts of these development projects on local people and the environment, which has manifested in both non-violent and violent protests.

There is preliminary research in the area that suggests people are being disenfranchised in the decision-making processes being used to approve and implement many of these developments and there is also growing documentation regarding the concern of the local people about the impact of development on

natural systems. As well, the selection of the study site is primarily based on the fact that a number of Master's students from the Natural Resources Institute at the University of Manitoba and the Department of Geography at the University of Delhi have been working on issues of sustainability in the region. These issues have been undertaken through a long collaboration between the institutions funded in part by the Shastri Indo-Canadian Institute.

The Kullu Valley is in Himachal Pradesh State in the north region of the Indian Himalayas. It is an excellent case study site because the region embraces a vast mountainous terrain between the rivers Ravi in the northwest and the Tons-Yamuna in the southeast. It occupies an area of 55,673 km2 (latitude 30 22' and 33 10' N longitudes 70 46' and 79 00'). It shares boundaries in the north and northwest by the states of Jammu and Kashmir, in the east by Tibet (China) and in the southeast by Punjab.

The state of Himachal Pradesh came into existence in 1948. Himachal Pradesh comprises 12 districts, and its capital is Shimla. The region has a predominantly agro–pastoral economy, with almost 91% of the population depending on agricultural practices and traditional handicrafts. Another important economic source is forestry. According to Gardner (2002: 286), the Kullu Valley has "*valuable deodar (Himalayan cedar)*" and other important native species. Since the second half of the twentieth century, Kullu Valley authorities have been promoting the economic growth and development of the area.

Between the 1950s and 1970s the Indian government cataloged the Valley as a region that could provide energy to the country and the explosion of hydro development began in the early 1980s. The area is rich in natural sources of water and the rivers run uninterrupted, nourished by constant flows of water produced by summer monsoons and Himalayan glaciers (Rana, Sati and Sundriyal, 2007). According to Samal and colleagues (2005: 482) "*from 1985-86 and 1998-99, the number of projects implemented in the Indian Himalayan Region was 787*". Most of the development projects in the area have been related to hydro dams and tourism infrastructure.

Prini Village and other nearby villages where the Allain Duhangan Hydro Project is taking place were chosen for this study. This hydro project was not an isolated case. I know from previous research that there are a number of projects under construction in the area that have caused concern and sparked protest actions. These could be the basis for another study. Other proposed hydro developments include the 140 MW Chango-Yangtang Project and the 200 MW Bara Bangal Project. At the same time, tourism developments such as the Himalayan Ski Village are being proposed. The Allain Duhangan Hydro project has been at the center of discussion in the Kullu Region and local people have organized from the beginning to fight against the project.

The impacts of large development projects lend support to calls for conservation initiatives and offer a good opportunity to understand the spread of protest action. The response to the scale of development in the Kullu Valley

presented the opportunity to explore the learning aspect of protest actions. The pictures below show a general view of the mountains from the villages (and why this region is considered a tourist area). Plate 2 is an example of a traditional Himalayan architectural style called `wooden` architecture where layers of wood are alternated with broken stone. Five types of traditional architecture have been identified in the area. The one in the picture is named Pent-roof or chalet style, which is one of the most ancient construction styles of the Himachal Pradesh (Jain, Singh & Sharma; 2005). Indigenous construction is prevalent in the districts of Shimla, Kinnaur and Kullu (Times online, August 5, 2007). The buildings are built from Deodar forests, which grow in those areas. The arrangement of the wood is very particular; usually the beam thickness is approximately 30 cm in diameter and extends the entire length of the wall. The space between beams is filled with stones without any cementing materials (Jain, Singh & Sharma: 2005) . It is also the main construction component, as it provides the stability that this style of building needs and because it can endure long periods of corrosion caused by weather. Wood is also the main fuel for household heating

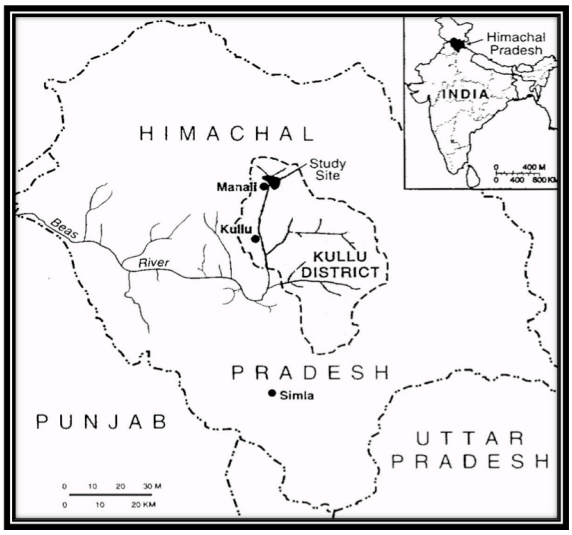

Figure 3.1. Allain Duhangan Hydro project area, Berkes et.al, 1997.

Plate 1. View of the Himalayas from Prini Village in the Kully Valley (V. Lozecznik, 2008)

Plate 2. Villages affected nearby the project (V. Lozecznik,2008)

3.3 Data Collection

According to Yin (1984), a case study strategy may employ a variety of data collection methods such as personal stories, documents, oral histories, in-depth interviews and participant observation. The fieldwork was undertaken over a five-month period in the fall of 2008. To satisfy the objectives of my research, I mostly used participant observation, key informant interviews, document review, and interviews with the protestors, government institutions and company members. All attempts were made to speak to individuals from different socio-economic, demographic and cultural backgrounds, particularly when conducting interviews at the household level.

The research also took an interactive and adaptive approach (Nelson, 1991). Using this approach, I considered the context and real-life situation in which protest actions were studied. For example, some locals felt uncomfortable participating in

interviews because the government and company could target them. As a result, most of the interviews were set in informal settings such as the market, teashops or other public places, fields or in Manali town. On several occasions, people were working or doing housework, so visits to the villages were rescheduled, requiring multiple visits to the same village. Sometimes locals were very happy to talk with someone about their situation and concerns, so the interviews and conversations were lengthy. In many cases, I was only able to conduct one interview per day.

Numerous respondents who were identified as key informants by their peers were interviewed first, as their active and leadership role in protest actions led to them being interviewed more than once and away from their home village. The best way to access these key informants was in Manali Town after their market shopping.

3.3.1 Participant Observation

Becker (1998) suggests that observational data, especially participant observation, permits the researcher to understand a program or treatment to an extent not entirely possible using only the insights of others obtained through interviews. According to Patton (2002), the purpose of observational analysis is to take the reader into the setting that was observed. This means that observational data must have depth and detail. For this reason, the data must be descriptive enough to provide all the necessary details to permit understanding of what occurred and how it occurred (Patton, 2002).

During the initial visit to the study area, I used participant observation to identify and understand the dynamics of the location. Visits to and observations of the local hydro dams, tourism development, and local farms were undertaken to understand the dimensions and effects of these development projects. This helped me gain valuable insights into the daily practices of the locals, because I was able to understand their interaction with managers and government officers as well as their transformative learning experiences. There were a few events related to public participation during my fieldwork, such as Panchayats meetings, street meetings and some protest action outside of the Deputy Commissioner's office in the Kullu town.

I attended these events and observed how people were interacting, as well as the type of information available and issues raised. For example, in the visits to the Jagatsukh Village I noticed that a protest leader learned several things in the protest process through reading government documents and sharing information with the external NGO. He was worried about energy efficiency in his house so he implemented a double window system to avoid the indiscriminate use of forest products. In another example, a local woman was teaching young women about traditional medicine, because she was afraid that the knowledge would disappear with her.

The protest actions that I was present at may be considered under the category of the *Satyagraha,* defined by Gandhi as the non-cooperative and non-violent protests used in Chipko, and other more violent forms of protest initiated by the Uttaranchal Separatist Movement (Shiva & Bandyopadhyay, 1986). For example,

In October of 2008, I followed a rally initiated by local women outside the Deputy Commissioner's office in Kullu town. Throughout the manifestation, the women chanted, used banners and flyers to inform people, and expressed their demands regarding the lack of day care facilities.

In November of 2008, I followed another protest action when some locals from Jagatsukh village decided to write a letter of complaint to the Allain Duhangan project. The petition outlined issues related to the use of forests by migrant workers and the closure of pasture areas. I kept a daily journal of observations and reflections as backup the interviews, observations and to track the progress of the study.

3.3.2 Semi- structured interviews (SSIs)

In this study, SSIs were used to generate data and information about how the evaluation of development projects has changed over the years, how communities are responding to those changes, why people are protesting and under what conditions the protests emerge.

Semi-structured interviews are defined as vehicles that permit one to learn how things work in communities (Russell & Harshbarger, 2003). This type of interview involves the implementation of a number of predetermined questions and/or special topics, but interviewers are allowed the freedom to be somewhat informal in terms of following up on issues raised by participants and deciding if other questions should be added. As such, semi-structured interviews can be considered conversations that occur when the researcher has achieved a better understanding of the system under inquiry. This condition permits the interviewer to

have more interactive dialogue with the interviewee (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2005).

To conduct a semi-structured interview, however, the researcher needs to be self-critical, aware of biases, open, and a good listener and observer (Pretty, 1995). Participants were identified based on certain characteristics, mainly their involvement in protest actions. Local leaders were the first consulted and were used in a snowballing technique to identify participants. At the end of each interview I asked the interviewee to identify other individuals who might be important to the research. Snowballing stopped when the recommendation of individuals for future interviews became repetitive (Morse & Richards, 2002). Respondent selection was further restricted by the geographical limitations of selecting individuals who resided in the villages near the project (Prini, Balhair, Nagar and Jagatsukh). However, over time it became clear that certain individuals based in the Kullu town and the state capital of Shimla would be critical to the body of data being collected. Thus, several trips to Kullu were conducted, and two trips were programmed to Shimla.

In the interview process, I used key informant interviews, which are defined as a kind of individual interviews that involve forming a relationship over time (Chambers, 1994). The purpose of key informant interviews is to build understanding about cultural differences, instances of public participation, consultation processes, local understanding of the situations and so forth. In this context, I was working with several people in the villages who were informed about village activities and events. For example, one task of my key informants was to call

me when a meeting was happening, when there were negotiations with the developers, the status of the court process or when news was published.

I used the term *informant* here as "the individual who shares information" (Goetz & LeCompte, 1984). *Key* informants differ from other informants by their position in a culture. In most cases their information has rich connection to the research topic, or they have special knowledge, status, or communication skills and are able to share with the researcher their points of view (Goetz & LeCompte, 1984). Key informant interviews were used to explore "why" and "how" protests are employed by local people, the sorts of information they use to decide to join a protest action, what they learn through being involved in a protest and their satisfaction with other forms of public involvement.

Key informants are from different backgrounds, such as project planners and managers, community leaders, protest leaders and participants, as well as those who have participated in other ways in decisions about development and government agents. Key informant interviews were conducted in places defined by the interviewees and the researcher. By interviewing members of each of these groups, the full range of protestors and antagonism to protest actions were revealed. A total of 70 people were formally interviewed, but only 55 interviews were in relation to the Allain Duhangan Hydroelectic Project. In addition, casual conversations that provided insight on the situation were considered in the field notes. The breakdown of formal interview respondents as follows:

Table 4. Semi-structured Interviews

Respondent affiliation	Number of respondents	Code
Provincial Government (Shimla)	5	S1, S2,S3…
Local Government (Kullu Town)	7	K1,K2,K3…
Panchayats	6	P1, P2,P3…
Local Agency Development Area (LADA)	3	L1,L2,L3
Villages		
Manali		
Women	1	
Men	3	
Total	4	M1,M2,M3
Jagatsukh		
Women	8	
Men	4	
Total	12	J1,J2,J3…
Prini		
Women	0	
Men	5	
Total	5	P1,P2,P3…
Balahir	2	
Women	0	
Men	2	
Total	2	B1,B2
Nagar		
Women	2	
Men	4	
Total	6	N1,N2,N3…
Developers		
AD representatives	3	AD1,AD2,AD3
Engineers	2	E1,E2
Community Members		
Households	10	
Women	6	
Men	4	
Total	10	H1,H2,H3…
Local NGO	5	
TOTAL		70

Throughout the data collection, I focused mostly in the Jagatsukh village, since these people were identified by the rest of the villages as the holders of the strongest position against the process and were the ones who organized the protest actions against the implementation of the Allain Duhangan Hydroelectric Project.

Appendix A outlines the interview schedules that I used for the data collection. The first is aimed at public participants who have been involved in some local protest action, whether current or not. This allowed me to collect data to satisfy my objectives based on public participation and learning theories. The schedule asks people about local development decision-making processes, their involvement in protests and what they learned through being involved. A separate schedule (Appendix B) was developed for government and industry in order to get their views on the public role in development decision-making, how such involvement is achieved and their ideas about protest action.

Respondents were always assured that their answers and opinions would be kept confidential as it was presented in the ethics report and approved by the ethical committee (Appendix D). My translator and I both reinforced that the interview could be stopped at any time, and that respondents could refuse at any time to answer any questions. In the picture below I am with a local family from Jagatsukh, I was invited to the balcony before an expedition to the project area. This family was not interviewed, because they did not have active participation in protest actions, but this was the format for most of my interviews with local people.

Plate 3: Example of an Interview with a local family from Jagatsukh (Source: Villager from Jagatsukh,2008)

3.3.4 Secondary Sources Review

Secondary sources (statistics, government documents, projects and other related documents) were used to complement and contrast the information collected in the research process. Other data was gathered from photographic documentation and from NGOs and a newspaper review. The objective of using the secondary sources review method was to build an understanding of the present situation of development and to review management and government official records to gain insight on trends in the government, local people and managers. The data gathered through secondary sources reinforce and supplement my final research findings.

3.4 Threats to Validity and Reliability

Threats to validity and reliability are based on complexity, but in social science studies it is fundamental to take them into consideration to provide truthful

information. According to Mckinnon (1988: 36), validity is concerned with the question of whether the researcher is studying the phenomena he or she purports to be studying. In this sense, it will involve critical reflection from the researcher to determine if he/she is studying more or less than the claimed purpose.

Reliability is concerned "*with the question of whether the researcher is obtaining data on which she or he can rely*" (p: 36). According to Kirk and Miller (1986) the data collection must be separate from the accidental circumstances under which information is gathered. This means the researcher will seek to built consistency in individual or group responses. Protests are characterized by a strong emotional component that can lead to a distortion of the information based on prejudice, lack of clarity, etc. One obvious issue likely to impact the validity and reliability of the data was the use of a translator, as discussed below.

I verified, refined, added and discarded information derived from participant observation, interviews with community members and a checking process with the people after the interview; that took place before, during and at the end of the research. According to Creswell (1998) participants should play a major role in establishing credibility. Another way of verifying the data information collected was through the used of triangulation method, which took place throughout the research process by comparing and contrasting data from the different sources through which it was gathered. According to Creswell (1998), the use of triangulation is of some importance in a case study because this process will demonstrate the validity of the

information collected. This process involves corroborating evidence from different sources to shed light on the information collected.

3.4.1. Use of a Translator

The complexity of undertaking qualitative research with non-English speaking informants was a major issue in the verification and corroboration of information. I used a translator, which added a level of complexity to my data collection, especially since my first language is not English. The translator was an excellent help in indentifying key informants and providing insight into local institutions and traditions. When necessary, the interviews were conducted by a translator.

The translator was key in helping me to identify the dynamics of the communities and key roles of participation. In the field, I worked together with the translator in the process of gathering first hand information to identify the contemporary events where protests took place. Examples of this include where the protests are taking place, when the public hearings happened and to develop understanding of the local codes and traditions. Another important role of the translator was to help me to contact protesters.

Finally, the translator was fundamental to data collection. After going over the definition and set-up of the upcoming meeting, the translator then helped guide me through the semi- structured interviews. When doing interviews, I always checked with the translator to be sure that the information I was documenting was accurate. A further test of this was the member checks I carried out, as described above.

3.5 Data Analysis

I divided the collected data into categories and themes. This was in part aided by the literature on public participation, social movements and protests, and learning. To understand the formal instances of public participation in the area, I used Arnstein's (1969) eight-step typology model, and Vroom's (1973) model. Both models helped to organize and study the types of participation in which people are engaged.

The literature on protest was very useful in helping to understand the reasons why and how people were protesting, and why they were using a certain structural and strategic process to express discontent. Finally, I understood how meaningful and transformative protests have been for local people through the analysis of instrumental and communicative learning outcomes. To process the data I used TAMS, which, like Nvivo, is a software package that helps the researcher prepare categories and themes from the data. TAMS made it easy to extract, analyze and save coded information.

The coding in TAMS is done through textual tags (similar to html) which allows for a certain amount of automation. Recurring codes (such as "protest", "learning", etc.) can be applied using third-party tools. For example, after coding my interviews, I am able to conduct complex searches and have the interviewees' age, gender, etc. displayed as categories next to the respective results.

3.6 Reflections on the Research Process

For the most part, the research methods selected proved to be suitable for the research. Interviews provided the best source of data, while participant observation and informal conversation with local people was essential to understand the way of life and the relationship of the locals with the landscape and visions of development. Document collection was one of the most complex but significant parts of this research in that it was used to validate the protestor points of view or to contrast their views with facts.

Trust was reinforced by visiting the communities several times, engaging in long conversations prior to the interview, and on several occasions drinking chai tea and enjoying sweets with family members. All of these were used as opportunities to engage in general conversation and socialize with local people. Establishing appointments with the locals before visiting them might have proved useful, since most of the locals were working in their fields or traveling to Kullu. Participation in protest actions proved to be complicated, because I arrived at the end of the project when protests were less frequent and more spontaneous rather than organized actions. Nevertheless, having a cell phone proved to be very useful because it enabled better communication with key informants and protestors.

CHAPTER 4: Protest Actions against the Allain Duhangan Hydroelectric Project in the Kullu Valley: Questioning the Meaningfulness of Public Participation

4.1. Introduction

As outlined in Chapter 2, notions of public participation have been gradually changing in India. According to Dwivedi & Jaitli (2007: 172) "*Participation [in India] now includes actions by citizens and citizen collectives to influence decisions of the state and make it more accountable…There is a growing emphasis on citizens demanding policy reform and accountability, and transparency of institutions of governance*". The literature indicates that since Independence in 1947, citizen participation has been experiencing remarkable progress in India. Policy-makers have been striving to create policies that address inequality and poverty.

Policies have also been implemented to improve the democratic process under the banner of participatory democracy (Tandon & Kak, 2007:11). For example, in the beginning of the 1990's policy-makers implemented legislation aimed at decentralization, to create a more equitable distribution of power among the provinces. Since then, the emphasis has been on local institutions (Tandon & Kak, 2007), creating new departments in charge of monitoring democratic practices.

In theory, the implementation of general policies has been a remarkable success. For example, finances and functionary policy were in hands of the central government until the introduction of the 73rd and 74th Amendment Acts in the 1990s, which shared some of the power through devolution to local representatives (Tandon & Kak, 2007).

However, given the inherent tendency of Indian culture to move toward top-down decision-making, the implementation of more horizontal policies has been very challenging. People have manifested their discontent through resistance and protest actions. According to Arundhati Roy (2001) the main problem of India's polices for public participation is the lack of consultation and the lack of rehabilitation polices that deal with displaced or affected people. In 2008-09, the situation remained almost the same.

The government is creating polices to improve the exploitation of energy sources. One example is the creation of Himurja, a government office set to "encourage private sector participation in small hydro power development" in Himachal Pradesh (himurja.nic.in/smallhydro.html). However, as I discussed in Chapter 2, the process of inclusion in decision-making has not been addressed or re-evaluated by the government. Large groups of people are still protesting for things such as a more inclusive and meaningful system of representation at the decision-making level.

4.2 Allain Duhangan Hydroelectric Project

The Allain Duhangan Hydroelectric is located in Prini village near Manali Town in the District of Kullu of Himachal Pradesh.

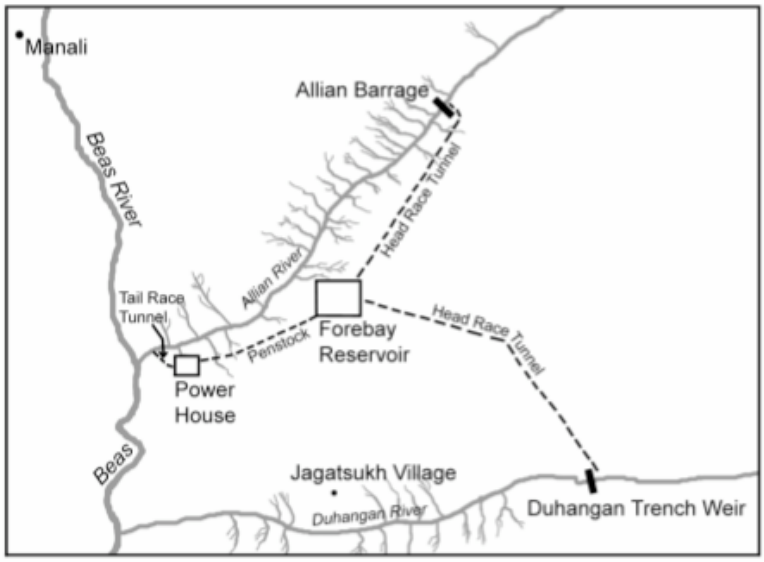

Figure 4.1. Map of the Allain Duhangan Site (SANDRP, 2007, pp.2)

The above map shows the location of the project in relation to Jagatsukh village. The map illustrates how the project is affecting the Beas and Duhangan Rivers, the main sources of water of this village. Access to the project is from the town of Kullu, located along the National Highway-21. The Allain Duhangan Project (ADP) is a run-of-the-river hydro project designed to produce 192 MW installed capacity of hydropower. The project included the diversion of the Allain and Duhangan, two tributaries of Beas River located at Prini village in the Kullu district. The project involves the construction of a barrage, forebay reservoir, which is planned to dam the Allain and Duhangan streams.

Plate 4. AD project holding tank being built in Hampta Valley (J. Gardener, 2008)

The project it also consists of a high head underground power plant that will utilize the flow from a combination of glacial snowmelt and monsoon rains in these two rivers (EISM, 2003). The combined flows of the two rivers will be fed via a 1.69 km long pressure shaft into a single powerhouse, with two 96 MW capacity units (EISM, 2003). The project intends to function as a merchant power plant with short term Power Purchase Agreements (PPA) of one-three years. Power generated at the project would be fed into Northern Regional Grid (NR Grid) of India. A 220 kV power transmission line, approximately 185km long, is under construction to move power from the project to an existing substation at Nalagarh. From there, it will be fed into the NR Grid. The diagram below shows the project's spatial dimensions.

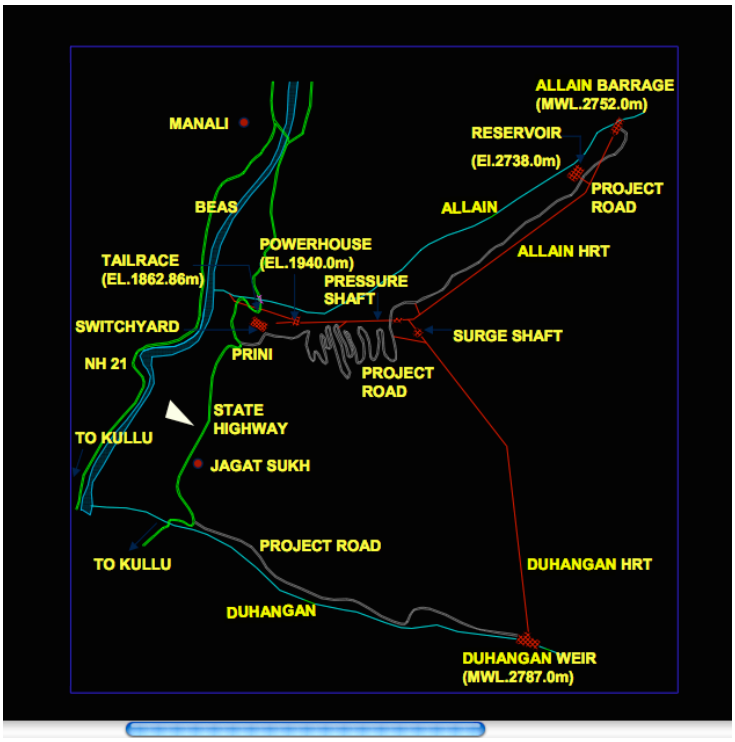

Figure 4.2. Allain Duhangan general Layout (CDM, 2004 pp. 55)

The project has been approved and financed by a mix of economic corporations included the World Bank Group, Bhilwara group and SNP. The Indian partners were/are in charge of executing and supervising the construction phases. Construction work at project site started in 2004 and the project was expected to start generating power in June 2008. However, since the beginning of 2004, several protests have spread through the area. These actions against the implementation of the Allain Duhangan project have been caused delays in the expected timelines.

4.3. The Allain Duhangan Hydro Project Stakeholders

The Allain Duhangan Hydro Project was developed under the energy hydro plan of India. It was designed as a run-of-the-river facility. Run-of-the river plants use little, if any, stored water to provide water flow through the turbines. The World

Bank in 2008 provides a definition: "run of the river developments where no or little impoundment takes place and the natural river flow is utilized with no seasonal regulation". Finally, Indian government describes these types of hydro projects as more environmentally friendly, as they do not create large reservoirs.

4.3.1. Sharing Responsibilities: The Process of Involvement

The development of small and large projects in India involves the consideration of many steps and the inclusion of several institutions to ensure that all laws are followed. In the case of hydro developments, the power sector was opened up to private investment in 1993. Since then, decisions involve a fairly large number of stakeholders, from the central government to local villagers. The Electricity Act, the Environmental Act and the Land Acquisition Act, which are the main policies affecting decision-making process, also need to be considered. I will define in what degrees all these components are interacting together.

4.3.2 Environmental Act

The Environmental Act ensures the protection of the environment and the livelihoods of citizens. Hydro developments up to 100 MW (in general large projects) are obligated under the legislation to complete an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA). The EIA legislation was enacted in 1994, and is under the Environment (protection) Act formulated in 1986 (Sinclair & Diduck, 1997). Under this Act, a

series of steps are established that involve multiple stakeholders (such as government institutions and grassroots organizations) in decision-making processes.

The Allain Duhangan Hydro Project and other large projects taking place in the Kullu Valley must follow the requirements of the EIA process to mitigate the impacts of the projects on the environment and people. The final decision is, in theory, to be based on the consideration and analysis of an extended list of secondary data. This involves multiple disciplines from different departments such as topography, ecology, forestry, hydrology, etc. The Environment Protection Act has been modified since its creation to promote more environmentally friendly practices and to respond to the Kyoto protocol demands regarding climate change (Gupta, 1999). The EIA proposes several steps in order to achieve a more horizontal decision–making process to foresee and address potential environmental problems/concerns at an early stage of project planning and design (Sinclair & Diduck, 1997). The regulations will have some variations depending on the state and the project itself.

4.3.3 Electricity Act

Policies related to hydro projects are regulated under the Electricity Act of 1910. The Act's guidelines identify hill states as better candidates for the implementation of hydroelectric projects. During the 1970s, the H.P State Electricity Board (H.P.S E.B.) indentified the feasible potential of hydropower in various river of the Kullu valley as 24,000 MW. In 1991, the government of India recognized the

inefficiency of its existing power plants. Furthermore, 32.5% of all power produced in these plants is lost (http://www.powermin.nic.in/). In the 1998 "Policy of Hydropower Development" government recognized that it lacked the necessary funds to invest in large hydroelectric projects. In light of this, government created a Power Development Fund.

In 1994, the Sub-Committee of Power recommended that energy producers be taxed. They also recommended changes in the electricity departments, the billing of electricity, bulk licenses and distribution of licenses (Policy on Hydro Development, 1998). The report proposed to develop a tax of 10 cents per KW. The policy suggests that the percentage of energy coming from hydro dams is 24.8% currently and will ideally provide 40% of the total energy needs of India. This means hydro will be one of the largest providers of energy to the country. The involvement of the private sector to overcome the underdevelopment of energy sources has been accelerated and expanded all over the country. The Minister of Power is providing long-term funding, low financing rates, low tariffs and high incentives, in order to promote investments.

The Electricity Act of 2003 was formulated to provide an appropriate legal and regulatory framework to create an investment-friendly environment. Its main goal is the protection of consumer interests. According to the Energy Data Directory of India, the 2004-05 statistics showed a 5.74% increase in the demand for power (TERI, 2004-05). According to the World Bank (2008), "the Government of India's top priority is to provide all citizens with reliable access to electricity by 2012". In

2006, it was estimated that the installed generating capacity of India – hydro, gas, coal, nuclear, etc. - was approximately 125,000 MW. Government estimates that an additional 100,000 MW will be necessary to supply rural areas with energy.

To cover the energy demand, government has focused on the exploitation of underdeveloped hydropower. These hydro projects have been concentrated in the northern and northeast part of the country. In particular, the government has been stimulating investments in the district of Himachal Pradesh through the tools provided in the Act. The energy capacity for this district of the Kullu Valley has been calculated to have a potential of 20,415 MW. Today, only 6,370.12 MW of this potential has been achieved (Himurja, 2008). In Himachal Pradesh, at least 13 small projects have been planned for 2010 in response to demands for electricity from Himachal Pradesh and the rest of the country (Himurja, 2008).

4.3.4. Land Acquisition Act

The Land Acquisition Act regulates the acquisition of land and the establishment of compensation to be paid on account of such acquisition on behalf of the "public purpose"(Bandyopadhyay, 1995). In the Kullu Valley, responsibility for this Act lies with the Department of Forestry, which is in charge of establishing monetary compensation according to the use of the land. This law has been under constant evaluation by different sectors (NGO, advocacy and grassroots groups) due the ambiguity of the term "public purpose".

Public sectors have been complaining about the process of resource acquisition. Several NGO's are arguing against this process, as it has been used to

promote the state's acquisition of land on behalf of the private sector in order to accelerate certain types of developments (Bandyopadhyay, 1995). In 2007, numerous villages from the Kullu Valley got together and sent a formal letter of complaint to the government to prohibit the acquisition of land by the "Ski Village Project", an international corporation that wanted to implement a Five-Star hotel/resort development in the area.

A local from Balahir, in an informal conversation, gave his impression of large developments. He said these kinds of projects have been harming their subsistence lifestyle by using agricultural and horticultural land for the purpose of development, which provides no real benefits to the villages affected. These sentiments were shared by several local people. This shared perception was one of the reasons why locals began to organize against the AD project. In a semi-structured interview with the same local from Balahir, his overall impression of the project was not the only reason of discontent. He point out that the authorities and a general lack of willingness to involve local people in the decision-making process have corroded the entire process of participation.

The first complaints against the project focused on the loss of forest and the lack of a proper rehabilitation plan. Mr. Ramesh, the Union Minister, in 2007 "*admitted that in the last 50 years, the Government's track record on resettlement and rehabilitation has been poor, particularly in relation to the irrigation and power projects*" (The Hindu newspaper, June 17, 2007, front page).

Locals also took offense with the Implementation Agreement (IA), which is the contract between the State and the developers that defines the limits and procedures of the project. In the court process (section below), protestors complained that after the agreement was signed, government continued to give land to the developers without consultations with, or further explanations to, local residents.

4.3.5 Regional Government

Regional governments, with departments in Shimla and Kullu, are in charge of implementing decisions under the central government agenda. Policies and national laws guide further decision-making processes. At the same time, the regional government is in charge of providing secondary sources of information to the central government. For example, the Himachal Pradesh Department of Water is studying and classifying rivers that can be used as sources of irrigation and energy production. Various sources from within the regional government, located in Kullu, will provide this information. The Irrigation Board, Control Pollution Board, Energy Department, Agriculture Department and Forest Department, coordinated by the Kullu Deputy Commissioner, provide information to the provincial government. From there, it is passed on to the central government for final decision-making. For example, S2, a member of the Pollution Control Board, mentioned:

> *"Some of the villagers' demands are not going to be negotiated. We have a national regulation (in the case of river diversion at least 15% of the water must be discharged - no more and no less than that). In 2005, this rule was integrated as part of the Indian policy. If we change the conditions the companies will complain that the change is unconstitutional".*

The implementation of hydroelectric projects involves development, construction, specific procedures, and shared responsibility among multiple stakeholders. Different levels of the project demand different amount of involvement. For example, local, regional and provincial authorities are in charge of selecting the best location for the project and negotiating compensation. The central government and developers are in charge of the implementation contract (explained in the section below).

Governmental responses to complaints regarding the implementation of the project have not been satisfactory for some local people. For example, a common answer from the regional government departments was, as K2 noted, that, "*We need to follow the process, if the central government wants a hydro development we need to provide a hydro development, is not much that I can do to stop projects*".

This comment indicates that some regional and local authorities have been feeling powerless to affect decision-making and are unable to explain some of the project outcomes. The relationship between the central government and the states has been in constant change. Over the past 30 years, India's development policies experienced a trend toward private participation, and new 'public-private partnerships' have become the norm (Besley & Ghatak, 2000). Projects designated as "public goods" by the central government, such as hydroelectric dams, have been part of these partnerships. Public goods have been defined as projects that are "non-excludable", meaning that projects related to natural resources (water, energy) are

going to take place with or without the consent of the local people (Department of Energy).

This results from the central government's assertion that mega-projects related to natural resources opportunities benefit a large sector of the population (Tandon, 2007). Government regulations state that projects under this category need to follow procedures and programs to decrease the impact of hydroelectric projects in the areas affected. An example below is the mechanism to implement large hydroelectric projects designed by the Himachal Pradesh government.

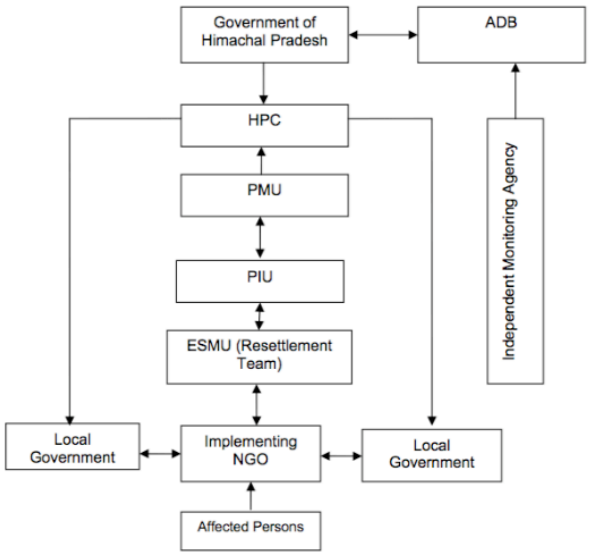

Figure 4.3. India: Himachal Pradesh Clean Development Program, 2007, pp. 20

This diagram explains the system in place to deal with large development project. It illustrates several sub-categories that are in charge of implementing the project. For example, consultations, conducting discussions and workshops are run

by the Project Management Unit (PMU), Project Implementation Unit (PIU), and the Environment and Social Management Unit (ESMU). However, no documents or research have been produced that examine the ability of local residents to access benefits coming from large projects. For example, a 2000 study shows that almost 35% of the total population in India has no access to electricity, and that of this total a large majority are located in rural areas (Bhattacharyya; 2000). The States that were identified as having large numbers of non-electrified villages and households were Assam, Bihar, Jharkhand, Orissa, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal, have been given more emphasis under a new program of electrification. The States located in the north-east region of the country, such as Himachal Pradesh, Jammu, Kashmir and Uttarakhand also became areas of focus under a special category (Clean Development report, 2008). Though Himachal Pradesh is one of the main producers of hydropower in India, it nevertheless has been experiencing inconsistent energy deliveries to the villages near the Hydroelectric projects.

In a 2008 regional government report by the Clean Energy Developmental program, "the government explained that consultation and community discussion would be encouraged throughout the process of project implementation" (p.21). However, the perception of top-down decision-making has been generated through the contradiction between documents and actual actions of the government. Below is a diagram that the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) shares with developing nations and shows, in theory, how strong participation can be achieved.

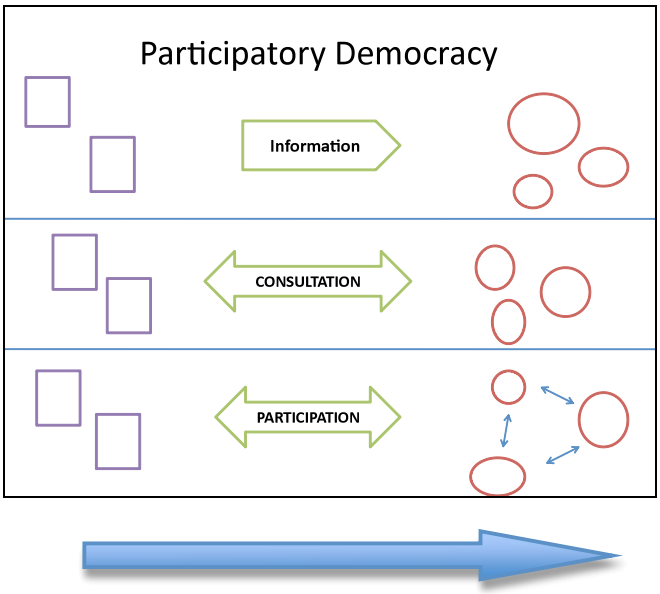

Figure 4.4. Participatory democracy and models of citizen involvement that influence on policy-making (processes)

The diagram above represent different styles of participation in democracy moving from a simple model of top-down delivery information to a participatory system that promote exchange of information among multiple stakeholders and dialogue with government authorities. In contrast, the diagram below represents the villagers' perception regarding public participation and interaction with regional authorities. Through interviews with some of the people against the project, it is evident that they have been complaining about two main issues in relation to broader development planning. First, the government attitude toward prioritizing large developments has not followed the regulations that guide the development of such projects. Second, complaints have been arising from the locals who perceive the decision-making process as hierarchical and top-down. Their view is that the top (central government) passes decisions down to the local authorities, without

properly acknowledging, representing or understanding the views and situation of the villagers being affected.

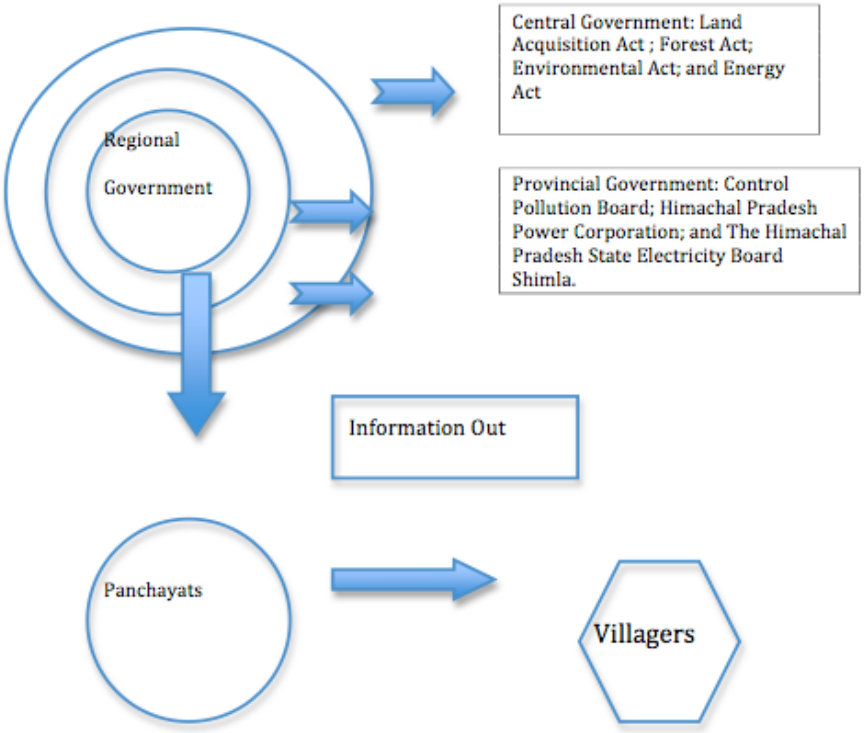

Figure 4.5. Transmission of information and decision-making process in the Allain Duhagan Hydroelectric Project, according to the protestors

Figure 4.5 shows that the transmission of information from the central to the regional and local government has been perceived as top-down by the people who engage in protest actions. A major difference from the model elaborated by the OECD is that in the first diagram local people are empowered to provide feedback while in the 4.5 diagram the information is developed and released without sharing information and concerns with the people affected. The regional government is the sole deliverer of information to the local authorities and the local authorities deliver

information to the villagers. The perception of some of the protestors (mostly the leaders of the protest) is that the information they received from the regional and local government has been distorted and censored.

J2 said "*We had several meetings with authorities from the Kullu Valley, they promised to send documents, and information but nothing happened. We argued about the extension of forestland to the developers, but they said that this order came from the central government. We showed them evidence that the developers have been cut more trees than limited in the implementation agreement. We asked them to visit the area, but nobody came so we felt that they are not taking our complaints seriously".*

Throughout the interviews, most protestors recognized that local authorities did not have much power in the process of decision-making, but at the same time protestors felt that local authorities did not make any effort to divulge information regarding the project.

J12 said. "*We elaborate several complaints under the 'Right Information Act'. We demand information regarding the project, but we only got excuses and no documents*."

The departments in Shimla and Kullu are exclusively in charge of assessing, evaluating and regulating hydro projects in the area. In Shimla, the most important decision-makers are the Himachal Pradesh Power Corporation Limited (HPPCL) and the Himachal Pradesh State Electricity Board in Shimla. In the Kullu area, the key players are the Deputy Commissioner, Irrigation Department, Energy Department, and Control Pollution Board. Two new departments were created in 2007 to deal

with a greater level of complexity. The first is a special department created by the Electricity Board that deals with transmission lines located in Kullu. This department is in charge of designing and implementing the transmission lines in the areas selected. The second department is called the Local Area Development Authority (LADA), has no central office, as it is represented by different departments, local authorities and panchayats. Figure 4.6 below shows that there is replica of each department in each level from the central, provincial and regional government. In Shimla and Kullu, these departments are collecting quantitative data to determine where new development projects can be located and at what cost. This means the multiple departments in charge are having meetings to discuss, evaluate and report their respective areas of research. However, the data shows a serious fragmentation of departments.

From the perspective of the Department Control Pollution Board, K2 said: "*I don't know who is regulating the outcomes of the process. I only receive orders of what I need to do and I do it".*

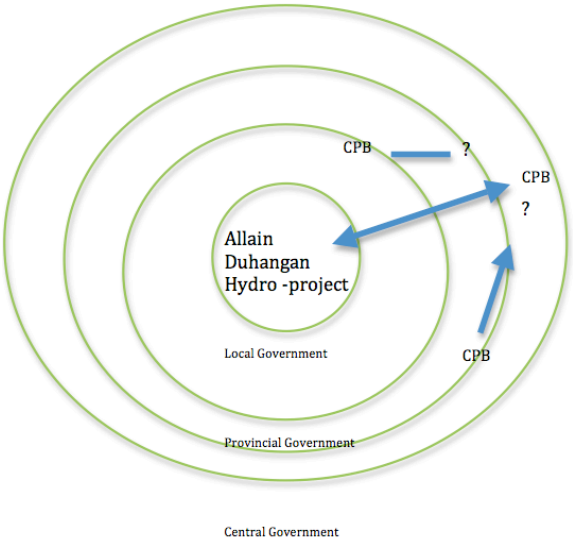

Figure 4.6. Duplication of government departments is creating fragmentation of decision-making process. (CPB is the Control Pollution Board)

The figure 4.6 shows that the Control Pollution Boards from the provincial and regional government are not interacting. The information flow has been restricted and as a result the regional government has been unable to provide the right answers to the people affected. Department fragmentation causes inefficiencies when it comes to regulation and inspection of the projects processes.

N3 noted that: *"The government is divided. Authorities from Shimla said that the government of Kullu is in charge of explaining the project to the communities affected, while the authorities from Kullu said that the government of Shimla is responsible for the process of decision making."*

Some locals commented that problems arose at the very beginning of the project. Before the first construction phase, when several regional government members came to their area for a site visit, the villagers were overlooked and the interaction between the government and villagers was poor.

4.3.5.1 Local Area Development Authority (LADA)

The Himachal Pradesh Clean Energy Development Investment Program developed the project design document in 2006. In this document, the LADA was defined as an organization that will "*ensure the implementation of the Environmental Management and Local Area Development (EMLAD). The activities of LADA will be financed by setting aside 1.5% of the total capital cost of the project*" (p:2). This group involves multiple stakeholders and was created by the Deputy Commissioner of Kullu to deal with the concerns of the villagers and to respond to their demands regarding benefits to the community from the project. The organization is directed by the Deputy Commissioner of Kullu and contains members from the affected villages as well as members from different government departments. LADA has two major roles. The first is to establish conversations and negotiations with the villagers. Members decide by consensus how to invest the obligatory 1.5% that the company put aside for the affected areas. The second role is to administer this money. These roles make it critical to have multiple stakeholders involved. This ensures the process is more accountable. Regarding the Allain Duhangan project, LADA only had two meetings on record. In both meetings, only discussions regarding the needs and the process took place. No procedures or actions were decided upon.

Nevertheless, some of the members of LADA gained contracts and jobs to implement infrastructure in the areas affected. The problem is that those members did not have the training or expertise in such matters, so the implementation was of poor quality. J10 said: *"They fixed the streets two month ago and the streets are in bad shape again, this is because they don't have the expertise or training to do those kinds of jobs, but they want the money ".*

A member of LADA mentioned that the creation of LADA did not improve the dialogue between the government and the villagers. In a dialogue with L3, he said that according to the regulations "*we should have meetings when we receive a complaint. However, no meetings have been done and the project is almost done*". He suggests that the purpose of LADA is a good idea, because *"I think it will be nice to have a pro- active relation with the villagers".* However, he mentioned that there is a lack of communication, and suggests that to improve dialogue *"we need to inform them and to make people feel that they are the owners of their future*". The main problem is that *"other members of LADA are taking all the jobs offered and not giving a chance to the villagers to earn more money".*

4.4. Local Government

4.4.1 Panchayat

The *Panchayats* are village political organizations that were establish in 1950's by the government of India. The chairperson of a Panchayat *(Pradan)* is democratically elected every five years. The Panchayats' role in regards to development and specifically, to the Allain Duhangan hydro project, is crucial, as they

are the links between the community, central and state government officials. The Panchayats have four major roles in the process. First, they represent the concerns and interest of the villagers. Second, the Panchayats are in charge of evaluating projects that can take place in the villages, which means they review documents and meeting with company and government officials. Third, they make the decision on whether or not to provide a No-Objection Certificate (NOC) to the company and government, which allows them to proceed with the project. Fourth, they are the ones who mediate between the villagers, company and government. For example, five major Panchayats have been involved in the execution of the Allain Duhangan Hydro Project: The Prini, Jagatsukh, Suru, Aleo and Nagar.

Originally, the project was to take place in Jagatsukh, but due to several complaints and opposition from the villagers, the company moved the project to Prini village, where the project is now taking place. The villagers that in 2004 unanimously rejected the project have questioned the No-Objection Certificates provided by all the villages near the project. The company claims that the other Panchayats provided the NOC in 1994. Since then, several new Pradans have been elected, with some favoring and others opposing the project. In the first instance, the locals did not formulate their complaints to the Panchayats, because they did not trust them. In the court case one of the allegations presented against the project was that the "NOC of the Panchayat was not in accordance with the HP Panchayat Raj Act, 1994". The NOC points out that in the case of developments, the duty of the Pradan and Panchayat is to deliver information to the community and after getting community support, they are in charge of providing the NOC. The locals sent letters

to the central government first and later to the provincial and local organizations, mentioning their mistrust in the local authorities.

J10 said: *"Panchayats are useless. They do not have any power to change the situation. Further, they and several people are already working for the company."*

The Panchayats are the voice of the villagers, yet the villagers are rebelling against these organizations, because of their lack of commitment and the lack of information distributed to their own people.

J3 said: "*The local government is purchased by the company. They are not working for the people. Instead they are working for the company, because they only want money."*

Furthermore, J3 mentioned during a street conversation that the local government is not helping them to stop the projects and they are not providing enough information to elaborate formal complaints. He even suggested that the Pradan has the information that the protestors have been requesting, but is not releasing it in order to keep the people uninformed about the process and avoid future protest. In a meeting with the Panchayat of Nagar, members showed me several documents related to the AD project written in the local language.

P4 said that the documents are available at the office, but nobody has claimed the information.

However, three people from Nagar said that the documents were never offered or the community was not aware of the existence of such documents. N5 said

"I knew too late about the existence of those documents". It seems that the information is not shared until after the public hearing and even then the length of the documents and public availability are confusing people.

4.4.2 Mahila Mandal

Mahila Mandal's are grassroots organizations ruled by and made up of women of the villages. The community elects the leaders of these groups. The Mahila of these villages were not all in agreement about the project: some were in favor and some were opposed.

J5 said *"At the beginning we were all against, but after the company bought a couple of the families and some of the women abandoned the institution".*

The project began to divide the villagers. Some Mahila Mandal members became strong protest leaders and pillars of this new social movement, which will be discussed later.

A member for the Mahila Manda of Jagatsukh said:

" The same way the sun make live and provide sunshine equally to everyone. The government responsibility must be the same. The government must be in charge to protect and providing justice and happiness to everyone equally"

Figure 6: Ex-leader of the Mahila Manda in Jagatsukh (V. Lozecznik)

4.4.3. Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO)

In 2004, an ENGO from Delhi named Kalpavriksh (KV), sent three representatives to assist the villagers. In order to facilitate preparatory meetings, they distributed information in the local language and Hindi, created discussions and responded to the villagers concerns. The purpose of this organization's involvement was to create more meaningful participation at the public hearings. A local NGO named *"Jan Vikas Sangh Evam Adhikar Manch"* (Organization for People's Development and Rights) also coordinated a campaign to create awareness among the affected villagers, which involved house-to-house canvassing in the villages. This NGO and other members of the community also communicated through posters and street conversations. In May 1, 2004 Kalpavriksh wrote a report accusing the ESIA document of certain irregularities. In the report, the nature of the ESIA document was criticized because it was paid for by the company and not accredited by advocacy groups. In the document, KV said, "Our recommendation would be that a

fuller ESIA is conducted as a pre-requisite to consideration of funding of the project" (2004: 2).

In August of the same year, in collaboration with other advocacy groups and NGOs, KV sent a letter to the World Bank entitled "Letter from Indian NGOs rejecting World Bank's use of Country Systems". The NGOs accused the World Bank of requiring proponents to follow a process of inclusion that was a mere formality. They based the accusation on complaints form local villagers involved in the Allain Duganhan Hydro Project and previous critiques brought forward by multiple advocacy groups. These groups argued that the World Bank's policies regarding participation and compensation are weak and there is no real interest in helping and insuring the safety of local communities (Bicusa, 2004).

4.5 International and National Investors

Large hydroelectric projects have been funded by international and national partnerships. Investors share the responsibilities and benefits from the projects. The following participants have been the key investors and players in the implementation of the Allain Duhangan Hydro Project.

4.5.1. The World Bank

The World Bank is one of the major investors of this project. To promote fair practices and more accountability, the World Bank hired The Consensus Building Institute (CBI), which is a not-for-profit organization. In 2006, an integrated team from the the CBI and World Bank visited the Allain-Duhangan project site. The objective of this team was "to help build the capacity of the company, community

leaders, and local government to address and resolve outstanding issues and concerns including: quality and quantity of village drinking and irrigation water; worker safety near the construction site; assurance of women's and children's safety; excessive dust from project activity and trucks; and introduction of HIV/AIDS induced by migrant laborers; among others"(CAO report, 2006). In 2004, the CBI made several recommendations that they felt needed to be addressed before the beginning of the construction phase. The suggestions lead to the creation of an environmental coordinator in charge of dealing with complaints and villager concerns, and the creation of a new office space at the project site.

J5 said: *" People from the World Bank came and did a survey, we answer with the truth. They said that the information will be used in favor of the villagers, but they disappeared and never returned."*

After the identification of the problems and opening of the office, no monitoring took place to ensure that those concerns raised by the CBI and villagers from Jagatsukh were addressed. In the CAO report of 2006, the team and consultants suggested actions to respond to and address those concerns. However, the team did not return to the affected areas to inspect that the company and government addressed the recommendations. The protocols for investment of the World Bank often demand a validation process, which means to having the project design assessed at an early stage by a recognized independent group of engineers. The project was validated by the Det Norske Veritas Foundation, which has as its goal "Safeguarding life, property, and the environment" (www.dnv.com). The validation

was based on the suggestions made by the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) criteria for the CDM. The UNFCCC criterion is based on Article 12 of the Kyoto Protocol (CAO, 2006). According to the World Bank, "validation is a requirement for all CDM projects and is seen as necessary to provide assurance to stakeholders" (Validation Report, 2006). However, validation is not a participatory process of consultation. The main objective of the validation reports focuses on the prevention of risks during the construction phase, which is an integral part of the World Bank protocol. For example, the validation report of the Allain Duhangan concluded that the monitoring plan is not being properly followed if concerns and villagers inputs and concerns are not being recognized and acted upon by the company. In 2004, protestors from Jagatsukh sent a letter to the World Bank (Appendix D). Protestors argued there were several irregularities in the project area and that local authorities and the company were not responding to complaints raised by some community members.

4.5.2. Bhilwara (LNJ) Group

Bhilwara Group is a corporate, multi-product and service conglomerate that works with textiles, vehicles and hydro projects. Located in Delhi, they have been developing hydro projects in India since 1997. The first project in which the group was involved was in the construction of the Malana Power Company LDT. This was the first partnership with SNP Norway Power. The Malana project, according to some newspapers articles and authorities, was a complete success. According to Uptal Bhaskar, a journalist with the website livemint.com, Bhilwara Group "[was able to]

overcome the challenges one by one. Even the resettlement and rehabilitation in the region has been managed very well". However, Sinclair & Diduck (2000) argued that the instances of public involvement in the project were poor as well as the willingness to share responsibilities and power.

4.5.3. Statkraft Norfund Power Invest AS of Norway

Statkraft Norfund Power (SNP) is a Norwegian investors' group that funds international hydro projects. The company was created in 2003 to build on underdeveloped sources of energy, mostly in underdeveloped countries. Presently, the company is financing projects in Asia, Africa and Latin America. SNP's strategy is to build partnerships with local companies. In their web page they advocate for social responsibility and environmentally friendly practices. For example, "*the company advocates that the Allain Duhangan project will contribute to emission reductions of approximately 495000 tonnes of CO2 per year and to work in partnership with communities affected*". At the village level, most protestors did not recognized the name of this company and did not know it was one of the key investors. On the other hand, villagers recognized the World Bank and Bhilware Group, because representatives from these two groups had visited the project and surrounding area.

4.6. Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA) in the Allain Duhangan Hydro Project.

Environmental evaluations are instruments that can be used to facilitate better decision-making processes. In the case of the Allain Duhangan Hydroelectric Project, several studies were needed, involving multiple stakeholders and policy that

must be followed before any approval is given. After the investors are confirmed; the next step (according to the Indian constitution) is for every large development to be followed by an EIA or/and ESIA. The first step, involves the creation of a memorandum of understanding between the government of India and the company. The memorandum of understanding for this project was signed in 1993, when the Allain Duhangan project was first approved. The next step was the elaboration of the ESIA by external consultants recognized by the Indian government. The ESIA was conducted by an external, accredited consultant (ERM India Pvt. Ltd, New Delhi) who were paid by the proponent to evaluate the impacts of the project. A variety of stakeholders, such as NGOs, the villagers of Jagatsukh and the local newspaper, have been widely critical of both the results and the suggestions contained in the ESIA document. They argued that because the company financed the ESIA, the results were skewed in favor of the company (SANDPR, 2004).

The company has used the ESIA document to justify the validity of the project. Multiple groups of grassroots stakeholders such as villagers, local NGOs, and Mahila Manda have been emerging to oppose the project, and some have protested against the irregularities taking place during the construction phase. It is important to note that in this process, the ESIA report is the only information available to the public. According to present practice, the EIA Report is not made available to the public, but restricted access to a summary of the EIA Report (an Executive Summary) is provided for a mere 30 days between the date of notice and the date of public hearing. This short notice and lack of information have been questioned, because the impact of these projects could adversely and permanently affect the lives and

livelihoods of a large number of people. A 2003 report, entitled "Comments on the ESIA of The Proposed Allain Duhangan HEP in Kullu district in HP", was written by Environment Resources Management (ERM) - an environmental, health and safety, risk and social consulting service. The report criticized the lack of partiality and objectivity of this particular ESIA, noting that the ESIA dismissed the negative environment and social effects of this project in the area. Another important complaint was against the accountability and regulations involved in the construction phase of this project. Further, the consulting service proposed a need for government and citizen accountability in the process to improve the outcomes of the ESIA. The report focused on the nature of the ESIA, which is seen as biased, and was critical for its lack of analysis regarding the environmental and social effects of the project. Some of the results in the document point out:

> *"The ESIA agency does not seem to have proper knowledge of the river basins or the dams in the Beas basin where the ADP is proposed. It does not indicate how many trees will be felled for the project, even as it tries to give precise numbers for this. It does not seem to know basic norms like the per capita drinking water requirements." (ERM, 2003)*

On the other hand, social concerns discussed in the report match the view and the vision of the villagers, which were related to the implementation of the project. The concerns were focused on property, safety and the loss of cultural elements.

The EIAS indicated that, *"The project would not impact any homestead land or residential structures"*. The consultants argued,*"this is clearly not true as the project authorities have already started hiring houses in Prini village. Moreover, with the survey of a number of project components like the transmission line and the road*

alignment yet to be finalized, the project could lead to impact on homestead land (a property that has been used for living purpose).”

These arguments are similar to those expressed by the villagers in their formal complaint, drafted in 2004, and in several letters sent to different government departments. The villagers wanted to note, and seek restitution for, the irregularities and conclusions of the ESIA and the project itself. The main concerns generated by the local people were centered on the diversion of the rivers, loss of forest and local security issues. For example, the letters of protests showed that the women from Jagatsukh were really concerned about the migration of workers and the lack of facilities provided to those workers that were using their forest and polluting the rivers, without an appropriate solid waste facility. Further, several concerns were raised by local women regarding personal safety, due to the hiring of migratory labor. The introduction of migratory labor in the area put at risk the freedom of local women in the area. These concerns are reflected below.

J2 said: *“The company is bringing workers from different places and women/girls cannot go anywhere alone because they are afraid of those men. The life in our community has been changing. Before, women were able to visit the forest and not fear.”*

The introduction of migratory labor was criticized by several newspapers and as well as by the ERM document. In the ERM and the Court case presented by the village of Jagatsukh, there are suggestions to regulate the introduction of migratory labor, as it has been putting the security and safety of these communities at risk.

These concerns are similar to these reflected in an evaluation made by South Asia Networks on Dams, River and People in 2006. This NGO evaluated the role and the impact assessments in India and other Asian countries.

4.7. Memorandum of Understanding

When the partners and financing are confirmed and the proposal is accepted, the project must get several permits and acceptation forms in order to proceed. The departments in charge of providing those permits are located in the Kullu and Shimla. These departments are in charge of collecting evidence and drafting recommendations for the project under laws and regulations. The project received approvals from various departments, including environmental and forest clearances from the Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF), The Department of Control Pollution Board and the Irrigation Department. The memorandum of understanding for this project was signed in 1993 between the H.P. State Government and the respondent company, the year Allain Duhangan was first approved. Wildlife Week 2004, remarks that "the project was cleared in December 2000 by the MoEF in spite of an extremely poor impact assessment done in 1993" (powertechnology.com). The report was followed by a detailed study of various feasibility factors, including topography, geology and cost. The report was submitted to the government and also the Central Electricity Authority in New Delhi. This report was analyzed by several government departments and the Implementation Agreement was signed in 2001. This agreement listed the conditions of the project, such as *the cost of the project*, which was estimated to be around Rs. 1000 Crores. *The length of project*, which was projected to be three years after the signing of the agreement. *The company benefits*

from the project, which was obtained ownership of the project for a timeframe of 40 years. In the document were outlined t*he size and extension of the project*. Another important section of the Implementation Agreement were the outlined the company's duties, such as *the creation of a subsidiary company office* in the affected area. Lastly, *the company agreement was to supply 12% of energy to the government* without any cost during the first 12 years of commercial operations and 18% during the next 28 years.

4.8. Public Hearings

Under the "Forest and Environmental Law" of 1997, public hearings are considered an integral and obligatory part of the process of public participation and must be conducted for every large development project. The National Environmental Appellate Authority Act of 1997 introduced public hearings as part of the precautionary principle based on "protecting the life and personal liberty" (Lokur, 2006). Mandatory public hearings were formulated to open projects up for debate with the goal of protecting the environment, especially when the impacts of the proposed project will have negative outcomes for the communities and environment. For the Allain Duhangan project, several pre-public hearing meetings were planned to inform villagers about the project and the hearing. These meetings were planned by the regional government of Kullu to take place in the affected communities and were to be held at Prini, Aleo, Jagatsukh and Shuru villages in April of 2004. According to a June 2004 article in the newspaper "India Together", the cancellation of the pre-public hearings resulted from "a combination of bad weather and a village festival at Prini did not allow for the meetings to take place" (India Together, 2004).

On the contrary, the ESIA report of 2004 mentions that these meetings were held in February and the 14 and 16 of March 2004, as well as some focus groups to inform people about the project outcomes. Several local people from Jagatsukh and Nagar complained they were not notified on time about the public hearing and they and they were not aware of any pre-public hearings.

N3 said: *"We were not informed or invited to those meetings. We only knew of their existence a month after they were cancelled".* After the cancellation, a formal public hearing was held on the 20th and 21st of May of the same year. The information about the dates was constantly changing, as well as the location of the hearing. Contrary to the newspaper notifications, the hearings did take place, but not at the dates given and only in Prini. The other villages were not formally invited to the hearings. Because of this, the attendance at the public hearings in Prini was very low and Kalpavriksh representatives (the facilitators) could not make it. A few people from Prini commented throughout the interviews that the meeting focused not so much on the diversion of water, but the issue of compensation. During this meeting, "the villagers had assumed that the project had been cleared and the main issue to be discussed was how they would be compensated for their land that would be acquired" (India Together, 2004).

According to the EIA regulation, the ERM and the developers must provide notification one month prior to meetings in widely circulated public sources, such as newspapers and copies provided to the Panchayats, but according to several villagers that never happened. In theory, the company and government are in charge of

providing the information to the Panchayats. The Panchayats are in charge of distributing the information to people who request the documents. However, in the process, people were not formally invited to access the documents. Even if villagers could obtain the documents, their complexity and length made them very difficult to understand. One of the reasons for the lack of understanding and low demand for documents prior to the public hearing was because of the high illiteracy rate among locals and poor understanding of procedures to access to information. Another protestor complained that the notification was too short and inaccessible. People questioned the validity of the public hearing processes.

J2 said: "*It is not a real system, because we are not having real discussions. This project is affecting local people from three different villages and we have not been consulted. The right information has not been properly distributed. For example, the public hearings on the AD project were made in the Prini Village, but people from our village were not invited. The public hearings were not announced in our local newspaper either and now our complaints are not valid, because the public hearing is done*".

A common response throughout the interviews was that people only began to know the project objectives and details during the public hearings. In these hearings, people from the company and government provided a summary of the project. At the end of the presentation the people affected by the project were invited to ask questions. However, at the public hearings the dialogue was poor. This was due to

the low turnout and the fact that most of those who attended only gained their understanding of the project from the meeting itself.

J10 said "*We didn't know that we could stop the project right there [public hearings] or after 30 days of being given the MOU, we were not invited either. The problem is that we cannot trust in the government or newspaper because they are working for the company. For that reason, we didn't receive proper information. Nobody suggested that we were able to stop a project at the public hearings. They explained that the government already gave the MOU. Further we didn't understand the consequences of this project until the NGO from Delhi explained to us*".

One of the main reasons for this was the highly technical nature of the project, which made villagers feel too intimidated to ask questions. For example, some villagers from Jagatsukh and Prini mentioned that as they didn't have much information about the project, they didn't understand what "diversion" means or its implications. Another important critique made by the villagers was in relation to how the project was presented. The majority of the people *"assumed*" that the project was already approved with or without their consent. For that reason, the discussions were based more in compensations and benefits given to the community rather than the inclusion of their environment, social or livelihood concerns and opinions on the project design.

Villagers felt that government was following the formal process in order to fulfill the minimal requirements of participation, as outlined in the ESIA. However, these processes have been not been understood by the villagers and have not

promoted positive dialogue between the government, company and villagers, as shown in the diagram below.

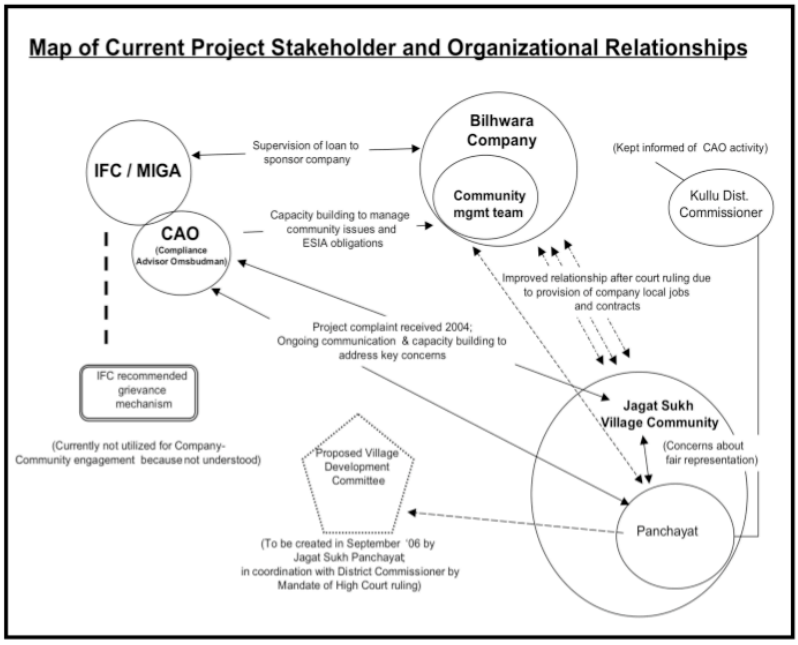

Figure 4.7. Process of participation identified by the CAO in 2006, pp.6

The diagram above shows that within the first two years of starting project construction, villagers were not aware of the mechanism of participation proposed in the guidelines elaborated by the IFC. In 2008, protestors from Jagatsukh were still complaining because the lack of clarity and transparency of the process. In the construction phase, participation as a tool to achieve fair and more democratic practices has not been used properly, and this has been negatively affecting the relationship between the villagers and the government. To open new channel of communication, people are using protest actions, because the formal platforms of participation available to the villagers have not been working.

4.9. Participation through Protest Action in the Kullu Valley

Large development projects are of great concern to villagers in the Kullu Valley because of there effects on local livelihood pursuits and on the environment they live in. In this context, it seems important to interpret actions such as protests on their own terms. Several acts of resistance arose against this project. Protestors accused the local and central governments of not including their input in the decision-making process and not listening to their demands. .

This particular project has been the subject of controversy for several villagers and NGOS still actively protest against the repercussions of this project and others like it in the area. These protests are providing a unique opportunity for various groups to define their positions and their perception of a new and more inclusive social order in the area.

J1 said: *"I was not against development, but now I am, because they are destroying everything and taking everything without asking. I don't want developments that are going to end with the future of the villages and children".*

It seems that protest actions present a unique opportunity for people who feel excluded from the decision-making process to learn about the process of participation and to understand a project's outcomes in relation to sustainability. In this context, villagers and the disenfranchised are ready to make their own statements on the way things should be.

4.9.1. Patterns of Protests

McCarthy and Mayer (1977) argued that the link between social discontent and mobilization is a consequence of a shared feeling of deprivation resulting from the loss of 'x' resource. In the implementation stage of the Allain Duhangan Hydroelectric Project, some locals complained about the loss of forest, pasture areas, and water resources. The evolution of protest actions moved from simple and singular to multiple and complex. The evolution of protest actions is termed here as "patterns of protest", which are the responses of people based on the knowledge they have gained in the process. The protest actions moved from single manifestations to a more organized and structured series of actions. For example, complaints moved from concerns raised at the street to more sophisticated forms of legal complaints. An important slogan adopted by most of the protestors was *'to procure the safety and the future of the villages affected for future generations'*. A micro-social movement in Jagatsukh began to take place in 2004, that featured movement from single and spontaneous actions to more organized activities. Several protestors defined this transition as an organic process that transcended from several informal meetings and discussions to a more structured organization.

J1 said *"I noticed that fighting alone against the company did not make any difference, but getting organized with people gave me the opportunity to discuss and share information and to be more effective."*

In this case, as the majority of the protestors came from the same village it was possible to add a strong geographic component that made the organization process easier. However, in the process, not everyone from the same family or community got involved in protest actions. One question raised was why some people engage in protest actions while others do not. The responses of people who did not participate in protest varied according to the level of benefits they directly received and their perception of the process itself. Some people obtained certain benefits from the project, such as employment, status and financial compensations. Others felt it was too risky to join a protest action. Finally, some thoughts that were no real benefits to be had through participating in collective actions.

J 16 said: "My husband is working for the company, thanks to the projects we were able to have a better life"

J 17 said: "the government is not listening we have been complaining for more inclusion, but nothing is happening so I gave up after the court process".

Below is a quote that proves that eleven women under the name of "Women Society of Jagatsukh" signed and gave their support to the IFC in January of 2004.

"The women society is in agreement with the mitigation measures provided in the report". The letter doesn't specify what report was approved, nor did they name any of the mitigation measures of which they approved. The English translation of this letter is published in the IFC report of 2004.

The letter proves that at the beginning of the project, there was a group of people supporting and working for the project, some of whom continued supporting

the project. Two of these women were part of several meetings at the protest site by 2008.

Throughout the process a large number of people from Jagatsukh felt that at the implementation process several resources and benefits were lost. Due to the long term and multiple effects of hydro projects (2004-2010), protest actions against large projects such as hydro (or mining, as another example) cannot be considered single events. One of the most important aspects of protests actions is the fact that grassroots organizations are very local, which means they are rooted in cultural activities and based on historical events and religious practices. Moreover, protestors in the Kullu Valley have been questioning the legitimacy of public participation platforms that are key components of India's constitution.

N1 said *"I am protesting, because this project will challenge the live of this village and will put our natural resources at risk such as land, water and forest. This entire valley will be in the hands of business people and not the local people anymore".*

The extensive length of time involved in the construction phases of hydroelectric projects have led to changes in the public's responses and has shaped public protests to better achieve success. Through the process of organizing, protestors re-evaluated and adapted their tactics and strategies. For example, at the beginning of the project several letters were sent, whereas after that rallies were planed then an evolution to social performances and a court process.

In 2003, the Divya Himachal, a local newspaper, published a story entitled "People wild at Duhangan Project". The article revealed that:

"Along with the State Government, many social organizations had raised their voices against the Allain Duhangan Hydropower Project. The government objected to giving environmental clearance to the project due to the cutting down of a large number of trees and destruction of the environment and the people from the affected villages raised their voices against the project in self defense".

Participants in all forms of protests (from letters to the court process) are responding to what they felt was an unfair process. There are a large number of illiterate people in the area who do not have formal training to work in tourism or on the implementation of hydro dams. These people have been the most affected, as the project negatively affects their small businesses. For example, the construction of roads affected feed routes and the free access to medicinal plants.

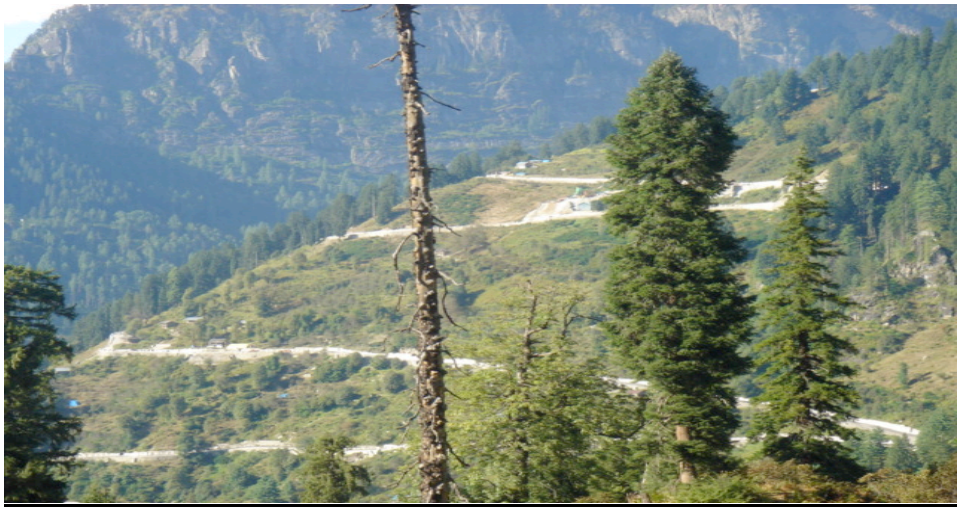

Plate 4: Access road created at the project site (V.Lozecznik, 2008)

Even though the project promised to hire local people for 85% of the jobs, disadvantages and lack of expertise in the community meant a large number of migrant workers were brought into the area for the construction phase. Large developments are affecting the landscape and sustainability of the Kullu Valley but this area is not the only one being impacted.

The Kullu Valley has been described as one of the most famous tourist destination spots on India (Kent, 2005). The landscape has been gradually changing from farming and horticulture to tourist developments, and it will continue changing with the implementation of medium and large developments. The picture above shows how the landscape has been opened up by a new road constructed to access the project. As a consequence of this construction, pasture areas have been closed to the public and communities near the project have been affected. Measurements and regulations for medium and large sized developments should be established. It is undeniable that the implementation of large developments is adding more pressure to the resources available. Villagers have been affected through the restriction of access areas, which have been used by the company to install worker camps and project facilities. Facilities for the workers do not conform to the basic regulations proposed by the project. At the campsite, it is possible to observe poor housing, badly developed and unsafe electrical infrastructure and a general lack of waste disposal facilities or basic services such as bathrooms and kitchens (as shown in the picture below). The lack of facilities puts pressure on the surrounding forest and pollutes the river. The local population therefore tends to see the migrant workers as a danger and threat. The camps are located in pasture areas, for instance, causing normal routes of pasture to be closed or negatively affected.

Plates 5 & 6: Workers' campsite: no adequate infrastructure and poor electrical connections

Plate 7. Tunnel made at the construction phase (V.Lozecznik,2008)

4.9.2. Protest Process

Below is a description of how protest action evolved from protest letters to a Court process. Throughout the process, protestors articulated their concerns and chose their strategies to maximize their public exposure in order to succeed in the search for justice.

a. Protest Letters

The first protest action adopted was to submit letters. The letters introduced the problems associated with the project and communicated the negative perceptions of the villagers about the project itself. Several letters were sent to different government departments - and even the Prime Minister - to explain the process. In these letters, villagers expressed their views and requested further information regarding the project outcomes. The earliest letter was sent in November of 2003 to the World Bank by the South Asia Network on Dams, Rivers and People (SANDRP). The letter criticized the ESIA. In May of 2004, protestors from Jagasukh sent a letter of complaint to the World Bank. In August of 2004, Kalpavriksha sent a letter to the World Bank President. At the end of that year, several letters were sent to numerous government departments. In the letters of complaints addressed to the Deputy Commissioner, protestors mention "In order to save the forest, its virginity and the environment from unneeded pressure by the large number of laborers the company should not allow them to pitch their tends in the vicinity of the forest and in the village". The goal of these letters was to evoke responses from other actors in the political process. The letters introduced a list of the project's negative impacts and

how those impacts deeply effect their livelihood. One example can be found in the memorandum against the establishment of Himalayan ski village near Manali, Kullu Valley. Protestors pointed out that a large population will be affected "comprising 70 villages [which] have a close link and depends on adjoining forest and mountains, [because] they graze their sheep's and cattle, get fuel wood, dried hay, timber for house construction, wild medicinal herbs…". In the case of the Allain Duhangan, the letters sent by protestors were not answered. When women wrote protest letters complaining against the migration of workers and the establishment of camps near the villages, there was no response. The letters made complaints about the lack of waste disposal system, the illegal uses of wood, and the lack of facilities in place to host a large number of people. In a visit to the camps, I noticed that no bathrooms, kitchen, waste disposal system were in place by 2008, even though the first protest letter was sent in 2004. This clearly illustrates that some of the local concerns have not been properly addressed.

As the frustrations over lack of response grew, actions began to escalate to larger and more visual forms. During the process of organizing, a more complex process began. Villagers divided themselves into leaders, planners and participants. The role division helped the process of organization and shaped a more aggressive strategy.

b. Rallies

Villagers from Jagatsukh organized two massive rallies, where people from the affected villages walked the approximately 10 km between Jagatsukh to Manali. The objectives of the rallies were to get the attention of the local authorities and to deliver a memorandum of complaint against the project.

J10 said: "We prepare the first rally with one month of anticipation. Everyone cooperated with the cause, because it was really expensive around Rs. 20.000. We invited villagers affected from all the different communities surrounded. In total we were around 1000 people. We created different committee in order to procure food, information, diffusion, and to invite people. The leaders we were in charge to write the memorandum, and to spread the information around"

Faced with a lack of responses by the government and company, villagers consulted other groups and institutions. The villagers responded to the lack of response by deciding to present the case in court in order to involve a third party in the process.

c. Performances

Several protest actions spread in the area as a way to communicate discontent. One of the most emblematic actions was through the women of Jagatsukh, coordinated by the Mahila Manda. One of several actions the women from Jagatsukh performed was to tie themselves to trees to protect the surrounding forest.

J4 said: *"When the Chief Minister came to check the progress of the project and outcomes we seat in the street to stop him. We got organized to block the route to stop*

them and let the government know that we were in opposition. We did a similar action to stop company members to buy our properties, because we knew that the company will try to negotiate for separate with the villagers. The company treat people with violence, they said if the people don't sale they will take their properties anyway".

d. Court Cases

Given that the letters of complaint, rallies and performances were ignored by both the government and the company, villagers from Jagatsukh took their case to the High Court of Himachal Pradesh Shimla C.W.P No. 1421/2007. The petition presented by the villagers argued several points, including:

- The nature of the NOC given by the Panchayat in 1994.
- The impact on the irrigation and drinkable water of an area of approximately 496 ha.
- The cutting of 452 extra trees
- The effects on the construction of one of the tunnels to the Bhanara village.
- The non-submission of the monthly monitoring report by the company to the MoEF.

The protesters introduced several documents to validate their claims against to the project. Among the documents was a report made by the Power Expert Committee in 2007 that accused the company of several violations.

The court dismissed the petition because the villagers did not file it under any of the categories available under the law. Further, the company argued against the petitioners. The case ended with the court ruling against the people from Jagatsukh. The lack of help and understanding in relation to the legal process discouraged several of the protestors, and left them feeling alone in the battle. Several protestors gave up after the court ruled in favor of the company. Similarly, the high cost of the process also made them feel the cost was too much for such a negative result. Another key factor was that the court process contained barriers to the participation by some of the villagers, as the process was in English, which many of the villagers do not understand. Lastly, it is too time consuming and expensive for some of the villagers to start another court process against the company. The combination of these factors led to a decline in the number of protestors.

4.10. Summary and Discussion

"The government is listening, but they are not doing anything for the people"
J2

The above quotation shows that even though there are platforms available for the villagers to express their views and concerns regarding the project, there is a shared perception that nobody is listening. Management decisions over natural resources have proven to still be lacking in meaningful public input. For example, local governments gave the required NOC before the project began, but through the interviews it seems clear that the villagers affected were not informed. In light of this, the leaders of protest actions have made several accusations. First, the impression among the protestors is that the developers are only using the process to

prove that participation is taking place in accordance with the EIA. Thus, the villagers did not perceive the project as inclusive. Second, the nature of the information delivery at those meetings did not seek to promote awareness and feedback. This was demonstrated when several local people claimed that they did not that they could provide input or modify certain parts of the project at the public hearings. Some of the locals felt that there was not a meaningful integration of the communities in the process. For example, pre-public hearings were cancelled without proper announcement, and not all stakeholders were invited to those meetings. Villagers considered information available to be minimal, and the company did not make information available prior to the public hearings. Both the Pradan from Jagatsukh and the Deputy Commissioner of Kullu refused to be interviewed. Assumptions from the villagers who believed that the company bribed their leaders were not confirmed, but there was a general feeling of distrust within the community.

The perception regarding international investors changed through the process. In the beginning, the majority of villagers trusted that the presence of international institutions would benefit them. This supposition was based on a survey made by the World Bank at the beginning of the project. The protestors trusted that this organization and the company would address their demands and concerns. However, no limits or regulations were followed. Neither the government nor the company encouraged discussions. The NGO was the only one in charge providing information before the process took place. One positive aspect is that the government now has a good disposition to talk with the villagers, and they are trying

to respond to their demands. However, that is not promoting dialogue and the villagers do not feel invited to participate or to formulate complaints. The fragmented work that each government department is doing has been identified as the number one cause of inefficiency and disintegration. The large number of departments involved in the process and the lack of communication has disoriented villagers. When they obtain information, they question if the right information has been delivered from those departments, especially when there are several contradictions between the departments' information. The protestors' concerns about the AD project have been supported by a number of national and international NGO reports. The IFC report of 2004, suggested that local concerns should be addressed before the construction was continued. This report was available to the government and villagers. As paradoxical as it sounds, the recommendation of one of the major investors did not take place before the construction phase began. The NGO from Delhi (Kalpavriksh) in 2004 did a full report denouncing the company's implementation process. Protest actions began to spread after the people began to understand that the only way to raise their voice was through collective action.

Protest actions highlight the fact that available conduits of participation are not working properly. In this context, protestors are re-evaluating the policies around participation and the process of implementation of large development. The problem is that the government is only having meetings with the Panchayats, but it seems that the Panchayats are not as representative of the villagers' views as are the leaders of the protest actions. Meanwhile there is agreement among the stakeholders

that more information needs to be distributed, since this is the best way to promote active dialogue and more meaningful participation from the start.

CHAPTER 5: LEARNING THROUGH PROTEST ACTION

5.1 Introduction

Learning through participation in social movements is a catalyst for action of the sort that is promoting more sustainable practices in natural resources management (Singh, 1998). As indentified in Chapter 2, there is no systematic description or consensus regarding how social movements impact individual and social learning. Chovanec et al., 2008 argues that social change is produced in part by the protestors who experience an ongoing process of learning that transforms his or her actions and values. The transformations vary according to the purpose of the movement and the educative platforms in place, as well as the person's subjective makeup.

In this context, long-term projects like hydro-electric undertakings have been producing multiple responses from the public. Given the gap in the literature identified in Chapter 1, I went on to study learning through protest actions related to the Allain Dunhangan project. Protest actions considered in this chapter included everything from massive or visual street actions, to individual action that sustains collective purpose, such as writing a letter, street performances, rallies and court cases. In the Kullu Valley, the unsustainable outcomes of development activities have forced individuals to form social groups that are actively re-evaluating the situation. They also are trying to develop environmentally sustainable solutions at the local level. The Allain Duhangan hydroelectric project shows that multiple factors are generating animosity among the company, government institutions and locals. Given

this situation, one of the goals of this research is to analyze how protests can be understood as an opportunity for learning about sustainability in the Kullu. The first step in considering this was to recognize the different stakeholders participating in the process of decision-making and the second is to understand how different narratives from different stakeholders are interacting to create meaning around natural resources.

5.2. How People Learned

5.2.1. Learning Through Local Context Leads to Action

A direct source of grievance that needs to be addressed is the lack of understanding of cultural elements between the state, developers and locals and how they decide about the use of their natural resources. Tribal groups and local organizations have historically possessed a management system based on the needs of the locals and small scale enterprises (Kumar, 2002). According to Bayley (1962), before, during and after democracy Indian citizens perceived the institutional level as a separate elite that does not address local concerns. Because of this, grassroots activists and social movements in India have used protest actions as a common response strategy. In this context, the Kullu Valley has been characterized by a long history of rebellions and resistances. For example, history books attribute the repressive regime of the Thankur's of Spiti to a large revolution in Jagatsukh (Hutchison & Vogel, 1933). Historically, protest actions have been used to promote more democratic practices in India (Bayley, 1962). According to Padhy (2000), hydro dams directly affect 40-50% of adivasi or tribal groups who comprise only an 8% of

the total population of India. Tribal groups have been considered at risk throughout India, including the Kullu region, due to the pressure of large projects (Padhy, 2000). Tribal groups are characterized by having their own language or dialect, and to profess an animistic religion base on spirituality and the worship of spirits, among other things.

Spirits are represented in natural resources, such as waterfalls, rivers, trees and hills (Parmar, 1992). In Hinduism, deities are described in versatile actions and polymorphic forms (Singh, 1991). The Hindu deities have the power of incarnation. Most of these incarnations take animal forms such as Varaha or Narasimha (represented by a Lion). In other cases, deities are related to specific rivers or mountains. For example, according to legend the Parbati Valley, located in Himachal Pradesh, was named because was the favorite meditation place of Shiva's wife (Singh, 1991). Another important aspect in Hinduism is the practice of Pilgrimage. Every year hundreds of Hindus travel to worship their deities. Hilly places are considered sacred and are important worship places as well as rivers and forests (Singh, 1991). This spiritual interconnection between natural resources and spirituality is manifested in the daily activities of local people living in the mountains. Thus, culture, religion and natural resources need to be understood as one holistic piece, not separately. The construction phase of hydro development has affected sacred and devotional places, which can cause people to take action. For example, the diversion of the Beas River affected three devotional areas that were used by local women for bathing and by others to worship their deities. Medicinal plants and

picking areas were disturbed through the construction phase by machinery in the hands of migrant workers.

J1 said: "*I learn from the elders several things such as what plants have medicinal powers, how old are the trees, and how important are those trees and plants for our culture and environment. However, the workers are destroying those important places and soon all this knowledge will disappear".*

The Duhangan River is *Dhomiya Ganga*, which for the local people is deeply rooted in traditional and spiritual belief (Kohli, 2004). This river has value to the people beyond economics. In the planning stages, the project compensated farmers for agriculture and horticulture areas affected. In the design, all natural sanctuaries were also identified for future protection (Allaing Duhangan Hydro Report, 2004). The difference in thinking between local people and government authorities is that local government authorities perceived natural resources and large developments as a unique opportunity to create job opportunities, to finance development-growth in the villages, to create new facilities, etc. However, they did not include protecting socio-cultural and spiritual values in the planning stages, nor did they integrate cultural differences in the construction stage.

L1 said: *"Companies are providing the money to solve problems in the villages, better schools, hospitals and, streets will be provided at the end of the project."*

The government is mostly focusing on responding to the energy needs and demands of residential and industrial sectors. Today, only 22.3% of total assessed hydro has been developed in India (Chandra, 2008). Green lights have been given to

different national/international corporations to implement hydro projects in the area.

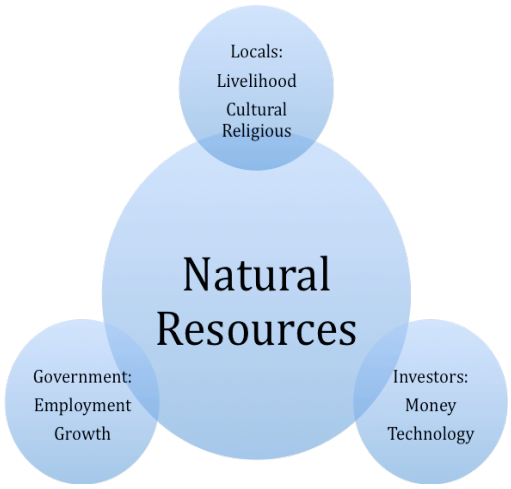

Figure 5.1. Values associated to natural resources by multiple stakeholders.

Some locals were in favor of bringing developments into their villages. Conversely, some people want to stop large developments, because the projects' results are perceived to be more negative than positive.

J1 said: *"At the beginning we all wanted the project, because the company said that we will have jobs and new infrastructure in the villages. However, now we know that these projects are only taking, but not giving anything back".*

Through interviews and document analysis, I found is a considerable difference in the approach to natural resources by the stakeholders involved in decision-making processes, illustrated in figure 5.1. The multiple values associated with natural resources are interrelated with the interests of those people and the

groups they belong too. For example, in several informal conversations with some company employees, most of the conversations were oriented toward technological aspects of the project rather than social concerns. While this might seem reasonable from their perspective, it can be quite different than that of local residents. Often the only opportunity that the public has to learn about and influence the development proposals is through public hearings, which occurred only after most major decisions were already made.

Learning through local context considers local knowledge (cultural-religious), visions (people's demands-needs) and the economic geography of the context (pasture-agriculture) when deciding upon a development. This being said, the lack of understanding of those factors has been used as a local platform to express discontent. People attempt to reinforce and protect their cultural values and identity through protest actions.

5.2.2 Learning Through Organization

"…Nor is it the truth of men and women who fight side by side and learn together how to build this future". Freire, 1970: p39.

The first question that a local person asked me in an informal street conversation was to who I thought the hydro project would benefit in the end. Today, I am still reflecting on that question. On one hand, it has been calculated that India needs to increase its energy production, since the entire country suffers from a severe shortage of electrical capacity. According to the World Bank in 2009, roughly 40% of residents in India are without electricity. On the other hand, projects that are

going to benefit citizens have also deeply affected the local environment and the lives of people living in the mountains. Someone mentioned that at the beginning of the project, local residents trusted in the government and the company to improve their lives. For example, local people were happy when they found out that several improvements were promised for the villages, such as streetlights, irrigation facilities and new and more modern schools. Further, the excitement increased among the locals with the formation of LADA, a group that was created to insure that those developments will take place.

However, the positive perception changed radically after the construction phase began. Certain irregularities negatively affected the perception of the locals. The first conflict was when people began to question the project outcomes and argued against them. The project - initially designed to take place at the Jagatsukh village - was moved to Prini village due to the protest and demands from the locals.

J1 said: "*They moved the project, because they knew that we were right and they knew that we were ready to stop them."*

Neither the company nor the local authorities addressed the concerns of the local people.

K4 said: "*It is not a clear communication between government and the people. The government is following the necessary requirements, but the people are not seeing that*".

Plate 8. Protest in Kullu (V. Lozecznik, 2008)

As explained in previous sections, local residents of Jagatsukh were assessed by an external NGO located in Delhi. The next step was the formation of a collective, which organized protest actions similar to the one shown in plates 8 and 9, in charge of identifying and addressing local concerns.

J11 said: "*This was the first time that someone tried to include us in the process. At those meeting we learnt that they would divert the river leaving our small creek even smaller and this will be not enough for the irrigation of our apple trees and crops*".

The structure of the collective formed at the villager level is semi-structured and inclusive. This means that everyone who expressed a personal interest in the project or wanted to voice concerns and share experiences was invited to participate.

Plate 9 Women from the Kullu Valley Protesting (V. Lozecznik,2008)

In this semi-structured organization, the information was shared, strategies to fight against the project were drawn up and information regarding technical aspects were explained.

5.3. Multiple Sources of Information the Protestors are Using to Engage in Protest Action

The indiscriminate implementation of development is leading to the formation of social organizations in the area. Protestors used more than one source of information to join actions against the Allain Duhangan Hydro Project. Platforms of learning started by NGOs evolved in a social organization. Such organizations made it easier to mobilize people to action as well as to discuss issues related to the environment, energy and economy.

J5 said: "*I learn so much by going to the meetings. But the sad part is what I have been learning cannot be used, because they are destroying everything. For example, I learn what kinds of plants have medicinal powers and how old the trees are and how important they are for this particular hilly environment".*

As the quote above shows, most of what people learned through the process of organizing and planning protest actions started with informal discussions and conversations. Social movements, or groups of resistance, have been spread out through the valley to promote a better understanding of projects taking place. They also serve as a nucleus against corporations and government decision-making initiatives. Education has moved from the classroom to the streets in order to respond to the locals' demands. People did not trust in formal platforms created by the government to provide information. A leader of protest actions from Jagatsukh said "*We moved to the street, because was a good place to capture people's attention and to raise questions. People felt comfortable and free, and equal to raise their concerns".* Non-formal platforms of learning were formed to deliver and to create new strategies and tactics to fight against power groups. The main source of information recognized by the locals has been street conversations (table 5.1). At the street level, locals from all social classes have been arguing, debating and sharing their views and concerns regarding the project. Participants are responding in all forms to what they see as an unfair process. These non-formal platforms of learning have been recognized and validated because, as identified above, the "right" information has not been accessible to locals, even if the "the right information act" was created in 2005 as a key participatory tool of the environmental law in India. As

the right information has not been provided, local residents felt a general sense of unfairness and exclusion that has not been addressed by the local authorities. Protests were based largely upon the credibility of information sources. This means that before joining a protest, generally a local resident tries to understand the situation and gather as much information as he/she can from sources she/he considers credible and meaningful. Table 5.1 below shows the sources of information that were considered the most credible by respondents. The procedure of ranking was elaborated according to the access and use of those sources of information used by participants in deciding on whether to join a protest or not. Results indicate that locals used more than one source of information to make their decision about joining protest actions. The rank order shows the perception of meaningfulness and trust on the source, with "1" being the most trusted and "9" being the least trusted.

Table 5.1. Source of information used by the protestors.

Source of Information	**Jagatsukh**	**Prini**	**Nagar**	**Rank Order**
Street Conversations	14	6	7	**2**
Neighbors	8	6	7	**3**
Panchaytas	2	3	1	**7**
NGOs	15	10	7	**1**
Newspaper	7	9	5	**4**
Company	6	6	4	**6**
World Bank	2	0	0	**8**
Regional Government	7	8	5	**5**
Central Government	1	0	0	**9**

The table was built from the answers obtain by protestors and locals who were associated with protest actions. For example, in Jagatsukh there were 12 protestors and three households interviewed. From the answers obtained, I ranked the information in order to determine the most accessible and meaningful platform. Below are explained the three most important platforms identified by the protestors.

a. NGOS

The first formal social organization against the Allain Duhangan project began in 2004 after several meetings with an external NGO. The NGO Kalpavriksh from Delhi was the first to introduce the information regarding the affects of the project, and the available platforms to raise concerns. One of the most meaningful protest actions, and probably the trigger, was related to the effects of the diversion of the river. The information was delivered through forums and meetings to which the Mahila Mandas and locals were invited. The nature of those meetings was inclusive - even local authorities were invited to the information session. This was the only informal-established platform of learning noted by locals that was created to transfer information and to facilitate a meaningful debate to understand the affects of the project. In the meetings several issues were raised such as employment, forest, diversion of the river and human rights. The information gathered through these meetings was used in the first creation of "meaning" regarding technical aspects and project implications in the construction phase. The knowledge gathered in these meetings was not shared with local authorities or the company, but was as an important catalyst of decision making for the locals.

b. Street Conversations

The simplistic and general conclusion formulated by the some of the local protestors from Jagatsukh was "if you don't fight for your rights, things you care about, and people you love, they will take everything from you". This statement was recurrent in street conversations. I began to understand that "they" are the government and the company. Protestors hardly differentiate one group from another. In several cases, locals mentioned that the government is now working for the company. Street conversations also involved interchanges about the environment; for example, the locals counted how many trees the company had extracted and problems related to deforestation were discussed at the meeting. Another common street conversation was the identification of people in favor or against the project.

N1 said: *"I learn mostly from my friends, we meet everyday to discuss what's going on and we share what we knew".*

Respondents from Jagatsukh, Nagar, Prini and even Manali were almost unanimous that street conversation was one of the most useful tools, because on the street everyone is equal and feels comfortable speaking about their views, concerns and problems.

J5 commented*: "at the street level I learn what is going on, who is involved and information regarding the river diversion, and deforestation. It is really useful for everyone, because the leaders show us documents and they explained the process to us".* People not only questioned the role of the government, they also discussed issues related to the project such as the diversion of the river, the effects on crops and trees,

and deforestation. In some cases leaders, distributed pamphlets in Hindi to ensure the information was accessible. The use of legislative strategies and tools as a means to fight against negative outcomes was also discussed. Different measures were adopted through a democratic processes based on voting and consensus. The measures and responses varied from letters of complaints to massive rallies.

c. Newspapers

The role of the media has been under dispute among local locals, because in the beginning the local newspaper seemed to oppose the developments. The media reported on multiple irregularities taking place in the affected area. These included problems with the decision-making process, the use of migratory labor and the destruction of natural sites. Several newspapers were reporting on the project from the beginning in 2004. Some of most engaged newspapers in the process were My Himachal, India Together, The Tribune. Some of the local press also continued reporting news regarding the project.

In June of 2004, The India Together reported, "*Many discrepancies in the ESIA report were also highlighted. Local, regional and national NGOs like Navrachna, and South Asia Network on Dams, Rivers and People (SANDRP) had earlier critiqued the ESIA document for its inadequate and incomplete data, and stated that in its present form it cannot be the basis to decide whether the project should be undertaken or not.*"

Later, some of the same newspapers began to report more favorably about the company. However, some newspapers continued supporting the locals' complaints

and published several articles against the implementation of the project, accusing the state of not responding to the locals' claims.

In 2009, the newspaper My Himachal published a news story entitled Bhilware Group's Second Himachal Hydro Project to be Commissioned by June 2009. "Success of the 86 MW Malana power project has made the Rajasthan based textile group LNJ Bhilwara make a major foray into the power sector, setting ambitious targets of being able to achieve about 3000 MW of generation capacity by 2015". Local people and environmental groups, through protest actions and legal complaints, questioned the Malana project proponents for undervaluing their inputs and their ignorance of local concerns.

N3 said *"At the beginning the newspapers were favoring us, now the newspaper are with the company. In the local news, they mention the progress and developments taking place in the villages and we "the locals" are wonder what progress they are talking about?"*

The perception of some media sources changed during the project decision-making and development, as well as the relationship of local journalists to the protestors. Currently, some local journalists are not invited to the protestors meetings and have been excluded from decision-making due to suspicions that are working with the company. Lastly, through the interview process I asked protestors to identify what sources of information they learned the most from.

Table 5.2. Accessible and More Meaningful Avenues of Information as Perceived by the Protestors

Villages Jagatsukh, Prini, Nagar	**Rank Order**
P	Street Conversations
P/N	Protests
P/N/J	NGOs
J/N/P	Locals Meetings
J/N	News Paper/Radio
J/P	Panchayats
P	Public Hearings
J/N	Company
----------	Central/Regional

5.4. *Making Meaning: What did People Learn Through Protest*

The data show that there were multiple learning outcomes for individuals that resulted from participating in the protest actions I studied. The outcomes identified in this research are related to the creation of an individual consciousness and personal involvement with the cause. They are also based on the understanding of individual experiences in a collective setting. Moreover, the outcomes analyzed in this section are grounded in the literature and data.

5.4.1 Outcomes Grounded in the Literature

Mezirow described three categories of data analysis that apply here: *"a) obtaining skills and information, b) determining cause-effect relationships, and c) task oriented problem solving*" (1995:186-188).

5.4.1.1. Obtaining Skills and Information

It is clear from the data that in this case the protesters obtained skills and new information throughout their involvement in actions against the development. At the beginning of the project - before the organization stage - three general processes were identified by the protestors. As Mezirow described in this stage, the protestors were involved in a collective awakening, including the realization and gathering of more truthful information. As an example, several people said that in the beginning they supported the project, but through experiencing the process, they perceived only negative effects. Through organizing against the project and procedures of the dam project they learned more about the process and issues surrounding sustainability. Through the interviews, I came to understand that learning outcomes were not as distinctive or clear through the process of organizing. For example, J3 said that in *"the construction phase of the project he got more hands-on experience of how to deal with the developers. He knew that under the Right information Act he was in his right to ask several questions".*

Obtaining skills was a daily process based on different sources of information available or gathered by the protestors. Several skills were acquired by the participants through the process of organization, such as how to organize, understand formal sources of information, develop a petition and write letters of protest. Protestors also began to learn about the process of implementing a large development project. The degree of motivation and self-interest in the project's outcomes and procedures partly influenced the amount of information a person sought and helped to define the role of each individual in the organization.

Nevertheless, even if people were not interest in pursuing future information, it was available and shared in the street with everyone.

J10 said: *"[As a leader I felt the responsibility…] I am sharing all that I know with everyone because this is the only way we can fight together to achieve a common goal [protect our livelihood]".*

While organizing, one of the main skills learned by the participants was collecting information. Information was strategically distributed among the participants' peers with the aim of involving those people and inform the decision-making process. For example, the leaders were in charge of consulting the NGOs and obtaining information that detailed the true intentions of project stakeholders. These leaders were the archive holders and it was they who kept a folder of information that was shared at the meetings.

5.4.1.2. Determining Cause-Effect Relationships

The second stage of "determining cause-effects relations" involved an ongoing process of learning. However, establishing cause-effect relationships was achieved case-by-case and depended on multiple factors. In some cases, when the individuals understood the consequences of protest, some of them did not want to pursue further complaints. For example, some people were scared of not being included in the negotiation with the company, others thought that there were no real benefits associated to protest actions, and some others simply feared police repression. In the process of organizing, protestors began to reflect on the magnitude of the problem and develop an understanding of the larger situation. They knew about

other projects taking place in the area, but in their own community they experienced the effects and understood the dimension of the project in the implementation stage. Most of the discussions amongst themselves turn towards the effects of environmental degradation, which was associated with cultural loss and social problems.

Before the project, people ventured to the forest when they needed to, mostly for construction, heating and healing purposes. The implementation of the project regulated their access to the forest and created prohibitions, which affected mostly local users.

J1 said: *"The Company is not only cutting the trees, they are cutting our dependency on the timber and non-timber benefits that come from the trees."*

The Forest Department has strong regulations against deforestation. In an interview with J5, who was arrested at the beginning of the project for cutting trees, he said *"I need the forest for heating my home and cooking our meals, if a men like me cut a tree without permits can go to jail, but if the developers cut 10,000 trees they only need to paid money, it is all about money"*

In general, most of the cause-effects relationships established by the group surrounded environmental problems and cultural loss. People began to understand the company was not following the principle of sustainable harvest.

P4 said that *"The company hired women to reforest the area, but they only planted trees that died because the company did not provide the right tools or taught*

them about reforestation." Other protestors involved with the tourism industry complained because the project was damaging the landscape. J3 said,*"Nobody is going to come to this village anymore, the landscape has been transformed with transmission lines and deforestation, and nobody wants to pay to see transmission lines."* Protestors from all sides expressed their discontent and endeavoured to explain the dependent relationship between their cultural practices and the natural resources of the area.

5.4.1.3. Task Oriented Problem Solving

This stage involves a more personal process, and is associated with how the some of the protestors interpreted and convert the information learned in the organizational process.

J2 said: *"After I realized that they are cutting the trees I did several actions to protect the forest. We move from writing letters, organizing rallies to tied ourselves to the trees".*

Through gathering knowledge and skills, a small group of protestors - mostly the leaders - began to understand the relationship between cause and effects. The organizing process began with understanding that relationship. People assumed different roles in the protest, from leaders to participants. The leaders began to elaborate on their tactics. Responses changed as the group tried to find efficient ways to fightsome of the negative projects outcomes. For example, in the beginning, protestors had informal discussions with local authorities where they introduced the

locals' claims and suggestions regarding the project. Activities moved and evolved to address discontent from a wide range of different media. Letters were sent to a range of authorities, moving from the local to the central government, introducing the problems as well as the views of the protestors regarding the projects. The leaders learned how to write a letter of complaint, where to look for information and to whom they needed to address the letters to. They also now understood that they had a right to ask for information. The lack of responses to these letters resulted in a massive rally, which emphasizes that the locals would continue introducing their views to the rest of the population until they obtained a response from authorities. Before and during the information-learning stage was a process of sharing. Each individual with the organization has a specific task. For example:

J5 said "*As a planner I collect the money to get food and beverages for the protestors."*

J10 said *"As a leader I called the media and I wrote a pamphlet that explains our demands and concerns."*

Throughout the process, individuals were planning ways of calling attention to their cause from different organizations. Locals used the newspapers and finally the court as a way of calling attention to the problem and also as a way to gain support from different sectors of the population.

5.4.2 Outcomes Grounded in the Data

Throughout the interviews and conversations with the protestors, other sorts of learning outcomes were identified that differed from the ones described above. In the following section, the most relevant learning outcomes identified by the protestors are explained.

5.4.2.1. Peer Trust

Mezirow says that "*if it is true that critical reflection is crucial in the process of transformation, it is not implicit that reflection will result in collective social action*" (Mezirow 1989: 172). This means that some people need a stronger trigger to move from reflection to action. Benson and Rochon (2009) suggest that interpersonal trust among people fosters better collective actions. The locals from Jagatsukh identified trust in peers and the cause as a fundamental trigger to join protest actions. Some locals commented that before the project, the socio-economic division among the locals was relatively even. Locals were mostly divided by caste and non-caste rules.

J2 "*Before I went to my neighbors to talk or to share an afternoon. Now the same family has big walls to protect what they won through supporting the project. Today, those big walls are separating us"*.

When project proponents began to negotiate with locals, some locals accepted and some rejected the negotiation process. The money that people received was in

some cases more than three times what a person can earn in a year. The lifestyle of some people who favored the company's proposal changed drastically, creating a new social class.

P5 said: "Through the creation of local unions we have been complaining and demanding what we think is fair. The basic is that we discuss and we based our decision in consensus"

On the contrary, at the street level the bond between protestors became deeper.

J11 said "*through getting organized, I learnt that the people participating in the protest and sharing the meetings at the street are the only ones that who I can rely. We do far more than protest we share views and do things together*".

There is a common feeling of camaraderie and sharing. The meetings are still happening and street conversations about the project continue to take place.

5.4.2.2 Political Benefits or Corruption

At meetings, local residents learned about and shared a common feeling of deception. Large projects often demonstrate that people cannot trust the government decision-making processes. The locals learned, through the process of resistance, that the government is not following the legal requirements. Regulations seemed to be arbitrary in the implementation of projects and there has been an obvious bias in favor of the corporations, not the locals.

M2 said: *"The government does not really care about doing a good job, because they are in power for a short time. They try to make as much money as they can before they leave their positions, and large projects like this involve loads of money. They did not take our demands seriously and because of this we went to court. We are hoping that the court considers the demands, because they are valid."*

Some people from the local government also complained about the process. They said that the provincial departments were taking all the benefits and are not including them in the important decision-making process.

L3 said: *Protests are sprouting in the area, because, the administration system is not working well, the bureaucrats and the politicians are imposing the policy on people and our local government is not helping to achieve justice. The government legislative rules that 1.2% of the total benefits of this project will be destined for implementing developments in the affected villages, but so far nothing have been done. Now we are asking where the money is, because it is part of the law to give it to the villages. However, nobody is responding this question. They say that they are using the money in favor of the people's interest, but nothing substantial has been done. They promise to plant trees but no trees were planted only cheaper branches were putting there. They agree to cut only 1200 trees but more than 4000 trees have been cut so far. Everyone knows that the company is providing the wrong data, because if they tell the truth nobody will accept the project, but the government knows, everyone knows what is going on."*

The quote above shows that some members of government felt powerless at the moment of decision-making, and these kinds of comments affected the perceptions of some locals regarding the project. The locals questioned the meaningfulness of the environmental laws, because they did not perceive that they had power to affect decision-making processes regarding the project.

5.4.2.3. Change in the Landscape

Another crucial reason the protestors identified in their decision to join protest actions was the level at which the project would manifest in their personal lives. They learned that the changes in the landscape have direct negative implication in their daily practices. The loss of some traditional species and restrictions on traditional places were major push factors, but the most severe effect identified by the protestors was the landscape transformation. For example, construction of a road access prohibited the locals from accessing sacred places or sending their animals for food.

J8 said: *"We make some money from tourism, do you think someone will come to Jagatsukh now. I don't think so, people want to see pristine nature and not hydro-electrics and transmission line developments".*

These changes were aggravated by the lack of transparency. Initially, in 2002, the MoEF gave 32,167 ha of land foro the project. Throughout the construction, phase the company began to demand more land. In 2005, the central Government increased the land from 32.167 ha. to 37.629 ha. In 2007, they were given other 9,55 ha. The MoEF justified the new adjudication of land in favor to the company arguing that the total 47.179 ha. are "much less than the 58 ha. recommended by the State

Govt in the initial stage of the project". Local residents argued in court that the addition of land was illegal and broke with the "Implementation Agreement" rules. The addition was perceived very negatively by the protestors , because the company blocked the access to valuable resources such as pasture areas and medicinal picking areas.

Some locals also learned how the transmission lines could impact them and their health. Today, transmission lines have been constructed to send energy to the other provinces. Transmission lines were installed on the farmers' lands without proper consultation. Those who negotiated with the company received monetary compensation for the installation of the towers, while those that did not negotiate received no compensation. People who are in between the towers have obviously been affected, regardless of whether they negotiated or not. This situation developed because there are no significant regulations pertaining to the implementation and regulation of transmission lines.

5.4.2.4. Polices and Legal System

Through street conversations, people shared and discussed personal findings and information regarding the benefits and problems associated with the project. Several people commented that through the process they began to know the tools available through law that could be used to make their voices heard.

J2 said: *"At the street we shared personal experiences, perspectives and ideas of how to protect our land. I learn that the project is buying land from my neighbors to install the transmission line, which is going to affect my land."*

Most of the interviewees were familiar with the "Right Information Act, 2005", "Land Acquisition Act, 1894" and policies around deforestation. For that reason, protestors were from the beginning demanding detailed information about the status of the project. In the letters and court case, local residents complained against the nature of the Non-Objection Certificate (NOC). They accused the government of delivering the NOC without previous consultation or proper exchanges of information. Some protestors argued the panchayats did not consult the locals before giving the NOC to the government and that defeated the purpose of the Right Information Act 2005. The Act was an initiative from three different government departments: the Department of Personnel and Training; Ministry of Personnel and Public Grievances; and The Department of Pension to speed the access of information for people affected by government projects or decision-making. The idea of this Act is to democratize and to inform local people about different processes. J10 said "*the NOC was not provided with proper consultation and this is not legal under the Raj Act, 1994*". The court of Shimla denied the petition to invalidate the NOC. Moreover, the court reinforced the perception that local authorities have no say in the decision-making process and the implementation of projects. The court did not consider this complaint as valid because:

'When a Sovereign like the State itself start a project and to interest. We see no reason why in the first place a Panchayat [would not agree with the state]. Local Governments are always an integral part of the State and the State acting as a Sovereign has to take decisions in the best public interest'

The negative response from the court changed the attitude of some protestors, causing some to abandon the protest process. Others continued protesting, because they perceived the process of participation as exclusive and discriminatory rather than inclusive and democratic.

5.4.2.5 Critical Thinking

Mezirow's model (1997) suggests that in the process of becoming adults we develop three critical areas: critically assessing assumptions; recognizing paradigms; and working collectively with others on problem solving approaches. Protestors commented that when they stopped trusting in the company and government vision of development for the area, they began to take action. They also began to access the sources of information available. Sometimes with the help of outsiders, they critically analyzed information supplied by government and the company. In street conversation or informal meetings, they shared and compared the information available. In those meetings and street conversations, locals discussed and questioned the government discourse regarding developments.

Other sources of information under scrutiny were newspaper propaganda, government meetings and company reports. People began to compare ideas, plan strategies and use the published information at the court level. Letters, actions, rallies and litigations were some of the outcomes. Another important outcome was a shared narrative - not against development, but against how the developments were taking place. Protestors shared a common vision of what they wanted, which was based on a better life for future generations. For that reason they tried to stop

whatever they thought was unsustainable and damaging to the future of their villages, such as deforestation and the diversion of the river.

5.4.2.6. Environmental Issues

An important outcome of the protest was learning about environmental issues. Through the process of organizing, local residents were exposed to more technical and scientific information. For centuries, people in the mountains have been dependant on the natural resources surrounding them. Their understanding of these resources has been linked or related to religious beliefs. In the process of organization, people learned about the problems related to water diversion and deforestation. They also developed insight into the process and the lack of information available to validate their concerns.

Deforestation has been a number one source of complaints against the implementation of large projects among locals. In 2005, the Allain Duhangan project paid Rs 15.45 Crores to the Forest Department as a fine for environmental violations. The total compensatory cost of afforestation was Rs 41,80,586.00. Estimates of the number of trees being cut differs dramatically from source to source. In 2005, protestors from Jagatsukh, lodged a complaint with the provincial government, claiming the company cut more than the legal number of trees. In the legal complaint against the project, local residents argued that "*the company originally suggested to cut only 94, but the company has uprooted 452 trees in the Duhangan site*". The locals had complained that deforestation is only seen in monetary values. For example, the net present value of forestland rates varies from Rs. 5.8 to Rs. 9.2 lakh per hectare (MoEF, 2004). The energy for cooking, lighting and space heating in Himachal

Pradesh at the village level comes mostly from fuel wood. Fuel wood consumption constitutes about 52% of the total energy consumption of the state. The MoEF is limiting access to the forest, but does not take into consideration the local residents' dependency on this natural resource. The money that the developers are paying is paid to the "Compensatory Afforestation Fund Management and Planning Authority". The only time that deforestation of an area will stop or be re-evaluated is when it is proven to affect biodiversity.

J1 said: *"I learn that most of ours trees are thousand of years old and if we cut them they are not going to grow easily and that some of the most important medicinal plants are dependant on those kind of trees."*

Achieved through sharing information, these realizations materialized in a formal denouncement of the company for not addressing environmental and social concerns. For example, the forest clear-cut is affecting picking areas and some of the species living there are disappearing. Concerns about species loss stimulated the creation of a list of species within the area. Locals from Jagatsukh have designated several species in their area as at risk of extinction. Some of these designated plants and their medicinal uses are: Loser (for Cramps pain), Tangul (for rash and itching), Banfasha (for chest pain and colds), Wild mint (for gastric problems), Patish (for any stomach pain), Amiva (good for high altitude sickness). Kauri (a bit gentler than Patish), Chunkhari (to protect the intestines).

a. Diversion of the River

The water policies of India have shifted from the National Water Policy of 1962, which emphasized community-owned water resources, to the encouraging of private participation since 2002. Local residents were complaining that the river provided water for the villages living by its banks. For example, in the past changes in the water cycles in the region were believed as being one of God's punishments. Today, the locals understand how much water they need for their land, the importance of forest for other ecosystems and species survival and how important natural resources are in their lives. Protesters sent out several public manifestations, reports and letters of complaint. The government recommended that 249.39 liters per second should be released to meet the water requirement. This requirement is in addition to the 15% minimum discharge to be maintained in the stream for local use. Residents later insisted that the Agreement has not been honored and the company is not releasing the necessary amount of water to cover local needs.

5.5. Protest as an Ongoing Platform of Learning

"Education is before, is during and is after … what I want to say is that it's impossible to organize without education"
(Freire 1970, p. 119-120).

In the context of hydro developments, protests are re-defined from single events to multiple and ongoing manifestations due to the length of time large projects take to develop and their multiple repercussions. This means learning will evolve as well to suit the events and circumstances. The learning component of a social movement is indisputable, but the individual transformation of values

occurring in the process of mobilization and organization in favor of more sustainable practices is something that also deserves attention.

The nature of protest actions will be determined by the projects' external and internal factors (the same macro or micro levels defined previously in Chapter 2 by Oberschall (2000)). The diagram below represents the connection between external and internal factors through the lens of learning.

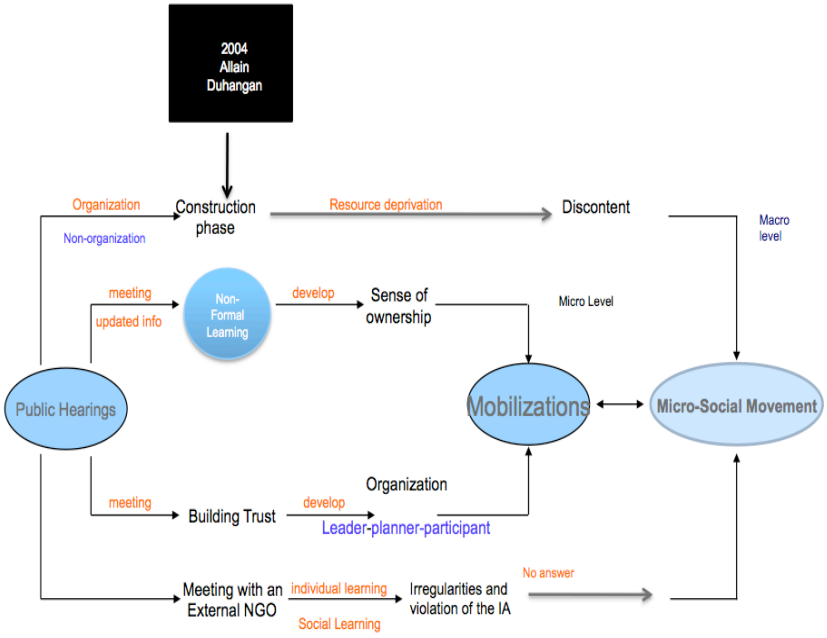

Figure 5.2. External and Internal factors that people from the Kullu valley are using to engage in protest actions.

Figure 5.2 shows the information gathered and discussed from documents, as well as informal conversations with NGOs, collectively fed a new wave of animosity against the project that resulted in a massive rally at the end of 2004. Protest actions

produced a non-linear process of learning, which was facilitated through involvement and action (Kilgore, 1999).

Protestors described how they learned at each step of the actions. As described in Chapter 2, protest or actions of resistance are common in India. The Allain Duhangan protests evolved from one event to multiple events through a process of organizing and learning about the project. The process of involvement and participation eventually caught the attention of the media and international players. For example, protests actions regarding deforestation have been debated in different spheres. Newspapers and radio programs reported on the protest actions taking place against deforestation. In 2008, the TopNews.in reported the following news: "Deforestation in Kullu for the Allain Duhangan Hydropower Project". The journalist accused the government of not taking the necessary measurements to stop or better regulate deforestation. Daulat Bharti, an environmentalist, said, "*The Forest Department says that around 10,000 trees will be cut which itself is a huge amount. The Government should realize that the condition of the state jungles would not exist at this rate of trees being chopped*". On the protestors' side, the actions began with the 2004 letters of complaint at the beginning of the project. After the lack of response, several meetings were organized and people learned that deforestation is a direct cause of landsides, loss of native species and the removal of pasture areas.

The learning process was fed by multiple actions in order to respond and to adapt to the projects outcome, over seven years of implementation. As I described in Chapter 4, the process of protest action moved from letters of protest to rallies and then to a court process. Protests cannot been seen as single event. On the contrary,

they are multiple and fluid cycles, support by a mixture of internal and external factors - in this case, moving from letters to rallies to a court process.

Figure 5.3 demonstrates that in this case, the protest response moved from spontaneous tactics to more elaborate strategies, which were formulated through an organic process of learning.

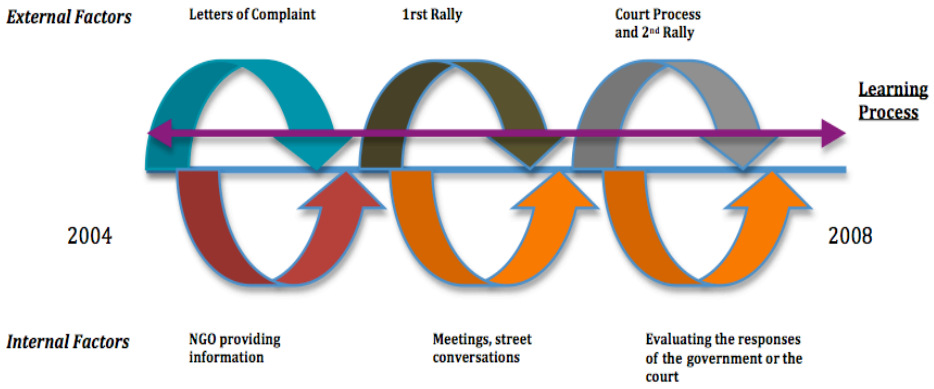

Figure 5.3. Learning through Protest actions

J2 said: *"I learn something different in the whole protest process. First, (before) I learned who was involved in and part of decision-making process. Second, (during) when we start to organize I learn that are different things related to this project we didn't know like the diversion of the river and the effects of that in our village. Third (after) I learn that the company has a tremendous amount of power"*

J12 said: *"I tied myself to a tree, because I wanted to protect the forest. The company promised to cut less than a thousand trees, but they already cut more than three thousand"*.

The arrows in Diagram 5.3 indicate a sense of ongoing process between protestors (from gathering skills to task-oriented problem solving), large developments, and the process of learning experienced through the engagement.

5.6. Different Levels of Engagement Produce Different Learning Outcomes

So far, I have looked at two of the most important vehicles of learning, which are the processes of gathering information and the processes of interpreting this information. According to the data I gathered, non-linear processes of learning were generated and based on attention cycles and different levels of engagement. For example, as previously mentioned, the level of engagement matched the position or role of an individual in the protest action. In the questionnaire, I asked the protestors, "what is your role in the protests (planner, participant, leader)?". I obtained multiple and sometimes overlapping answers. The participants adopted and re-adopted roles throughout the process through personal and democratic decision-making. The only tangible difference from one role to another was that the leaders were more established and fewer in number than the planners or participants. Even if people assumed certain roles, the process of learning was not hierarchical. The meetings involved consensus and horizontal sharing of information. Most people were educated through daily activities and through specific task-oriented activities.

Throughout the research, it was difficult to determine why certain people became leaders and others did not. Leaders were not selected by their higher educational level or economic status. Nevertheless, it is possible to identify leaders from these two categories as well. A shared characteristic of the individuals who became leaders was that of a higher level of compromise or critical consciousness process. Defined by Freire in 1970, the process of critical consciousness is one of taking action and fighting against alienation. In this case, the process is manifested in the organization (Freire, 1970).

Leaders also showed a more in-depth understanding of the project outcomes, policies and processes. Through the interviews, responses from leaders showed that they were involved in a more reflective stage than the others.

J 10 said '*The government has a 12% of the share with the company. For that reason are not positive responses by the government. They know the wildlife have been disturbance the company just paid 6000 crows for reforestation, but not a single tree had been planted. The lands we have for pasture have been delimited and are not enough food for our animals."*

Leaders' responses to the interview questions showed a more holistic understanding of the process, as well as a better understanding of the multiple effects caused by the project. Sometimes the responses showed that the leaders were aware of consequences in both the short and long term. On the contrary, most of the participants and planners demonstrated only a short-term understanding of the problems associated with the project.

A local woman commented that: "*in the leaders houses I learned about property rights and who is involved in process of decision-making. Through the meetings I began to realize how many trees were cut and damage. I realized that the medicinal plants in this forest would be damaged. For that reason, I decide to tie myself to the trees, because I wanted to protect my forest.*"

In the process of organizing, leaders were the pillars, but the participants and planners were a fundamental part of the process. Information was shared and concerns were discussed. Furthermore, tasks were distributed and plans developed democratically among the groups.

5.6.1. Three leader's stories

J12 perceived her personal experience and commitment to the protest actions as different from the experiences of her fellow protestors. She has experienced the transformation of the landscape for more than six decades. She related how she felt remorseful when she began to understand the negative effects of the Allain Duhangan project on her community and the land. She recounted that the households at one time did not have fences, and it was easy to walk into your neighbor's house for a cup of chai or to walk peacefully in the mountains. Today, the company is paying a small group of people that are building big houses with big fences and the rest of the people are feeling segregated in their own village. The access to the forest has been limited and its uses regulated. Through informal conversations with a protestor she pointed out that she has been living in the area for very long time. She was there when they replaced the red rice for apple trees. She

was also here when the tourists began to appear in the area. Now the community's situation has worsened, as it needs to deal with big machinery, immigrant workers and extensive deforestation.

In the beginning, "… *when I learnt that the forest was not our forest anymore I was really mad.*" J12 decided to join the street meetings because the company purchased the land and limited access to it. "*When we started the dialogues with the company and government, I learnt from my peers that the long duration of unsustainable deforestation was creating landslides. This also impeded local people who were no longer able to take medicinal plants from the forest*." Another reason why she decided to take action was because the young women were scared of going to the forest, due to the presence of unregulated illegal migrant workers.

J12 became a leader, "when I understood that the only way to preserve our livelihood was through organizing. I am not scared of the government or the developers, because I am old and strong".

During the process of organizing, she learned about the procedure, legalities and of new organizing strategies to stop the project. Among other things the NGO shared information about the Chipko movement, as well as how a group of fearless women fought against developers in the 1960s. "I felt inspired and angry when I realized they were cutting more trees and taking the water from the river. I became a leader, because I knew the people and the area, I wanted to protect them. My role was to collect information, mostly reports and to share it with the local women. In one of the government reports I found out about the Right Information Act, 2005 and

some clauses in the Environmental Law that we could use in our favor. I learnt that to give the NOC the panchayats need to consult the people and that did not happen. After almost four years of being a protestor leader I am a little disappointed with the outcomes and some of the people of in this village."

"It seems that the company not only took our resources—they stole our hope"

J2, another leader with formal education, described his process of learning differently. "I knew most of the laws, protocols and actions from before for that reason I become a leader."

J2 said: *"I am involved in everything, from writing letters to organizing the rallies. I have been studying the case to understand the consequences. This is not the first time that something like this happened in this area. Not long ago they implemented the Malana project, I talked with some of the people affected by this project and they described that through the project they lost almost everything. Presently the Malana project has technical problems, two years ago a pipe exploded and some people got killed and that was not reported. The same company who did that project is in charge of this project. I became a leader of protests, because I had a law degree and I can read the documents in English. I also have a better understanding of the environmental policies. I am trying to educate people while I work on the court case with other lawyers. I found out it is almost impossible to stop these project. They are priority of the government. So we did not want to stop the project, instead we attempted to change how the project was taking place and to bring more accountability into the environmental law."*

During the process he learned organizational skills and how to act collectively He described how it was very interesting to share information with NGOs, because they clarified technical questions and through these exchanges he learned a lot about the different implementation phases of the project. J2 "*I did not know that the water released was supposed to be proportional with the fluctuation of water in the river, through document analysis I began to understand that the developers were using the data for their own benefits. The company took the higher number of water fluctuation from winter and based on that number they establish the water discharge they need to produce electricity. However, the capacity of the river in summer is considerably less than in the winter."* In the process of organizing, they lost the court case and the developers' responses undervalued our comments and feedback saying that the locals are not experts or do not have the technical knowledge to interfere in the process. "*As a lawyer I understand the system, but after the court process I believe that corporate greed is an important factor that doesn't have anything to do with the technical aspects or the project itself".*

J10 a third important leader identified by the protestors. He makes his living from his apple trees and a small vegetable farm. He mentioned that before the project, life in the village was quiet and pleasant, whereas today big machinery is polluting the air and this is affecting his plants. He said that the company has offered him money to keep his mouth closed, but he felt insulted. *"I was really mad with the attitude of the government and developers. They were trying to buy influence and people, and they were very successful. However, a reasonable group of people perceived the company attitude as negative, we began to question their intentions and the*

company responded very violently. [From these experiences] I learnt that organization really matter, and I became a leader, because I don't see a future in this village for my children". During the process he described how he learned about the legal system, ecological loss, the diversion of the river and the process mostly through the action of organization. He was at the head of the process of organizing, helping to share information and coordinate group activities. Originally, "they promised to give us 1500 liters/second but they only gave 500 liters/second, which is not enough for our horticultural and agricultural practices or our expected households' standard of living. So I organized a blockade when authorities from Shimla had scheduled a meeting at the project site with local authorities and developers. The blockade was non-violent. We sat down in the street to stop the access to the project site, blocking the only road into the area. Our intention was to make the authorities and developers listen to our petition and demands. Even though we were not aggressive, the authorities and developers turned back without trying to find out what was happening and their meeting was cancelled. I also coordinated meetings and the rally. I was surprised by the lack of response by the government to our actions. Now we are almost at the end, I feel that we did as much as we could. We had no government or legal support. Even if we did not affect the process as much as we wanted, we learned through protest actions about the process and how to fight against the project."

5. 6.2. The Status of Participation

The fact that hydro-electric developments are long-term projects has influenced the type of responses and degree of participation for or against the project. At the beginning of the project, two large rallies were organized in 2004. People from every sector and locals negatively affected participated, with over 1,000 people walking in the first rally from Jagatsukh to Manali. The locals expended 20,000 rupees to organize these large events. This is a large sum of money for local residents.. According to the minimal wage index for Himachal Pradesh in 2009, 20,000 rupees is the equivalent of six months of salary for a small farmer.

J2 said: "*We cannot protect the trees and the river anymore, because we don't have any more money. We know that the company and government are doing something wrong, but have been demonstrate through the process that we don't have the power to stop them*".

Local residents have not been compensated and every protest event has been time consuming and a monetary effort for them. Further, the first court case cost around the same amount of money as the rally. For that reason, after they lost the case people began to re-evaluate their roles and the outcomes of the protest actions. For the second rally the numbers of protestors from Jagatsukh decreased. After both rallies the company negotiated contracts and land with some local residents. The lack of a positive response from the authorities caused some locals to feel hopeless. After the loss in court, some residents locals began to work for the company or were paid

for certain services so that they would stop protesting. This situation divided the locals from Jagatsukh between supporters and non-supporters.

J10 said: *"After the first High court resolution, we were really discouraged. Many people stopped believing in the system, because nothing changed and the government and company were doing whatever they wanted. They do not care about the peoples concerns they only care about money."*

Nevertheless, in the Kullu Valley, people still recognize that they are in a democracy and feel free to elevate their voices and fight back against the company and government. In the beginning, people felt that by the process of organizing they could achieve some success. They were influenced by the victory obtained by a collective from Jibhi that won a court case to protect the Tirthan River located in the Great Himalayan National Park. However, even if the locals were aware of their rights as citizens, they were concerned that the authorities were not respecting those rights.

J8 said: *"I am protesting for the coming generations, because they will not have anything if we don't stand up for our rights. The government is listening, because it is a democracy. However, they are not doing anything to protect the Oak forest or the glaciers. For that reason, we need to fight at the court level, because we need someone that will listen and bring some justice. Thus, the project has a contract for 40 years this means there will be no water after that".*

In 2008, during the last stage of the project construction and after a decline in participation, local people began getting together again, due to the lack of jobs and

the destruction generated by the project. Locals, in general, think that this is the last chance to get something more than monetary compensation. People are asking about the promised infrastructure and the benefits for the villages. Complaints have been taking a new shape and a new court case began in 2008. The picture below illustrates how the transmission lines have been installed in farmers' fields.

Plate 7. Transmission Line crossing agricultural land (J. Gardener, 2008)

5.7. Summary and Discussion

Non-formal learning platforms were the foundation of understanding the problems and consequences related to the Allain Dugangan Hydro project. According to Chovanec et al. (2008), through active involvement protestors are able to develop critical consciousness and fight effectively against the oppressive systems. The awakening process and perceived oppression by the locals have been translated in the formation of groups and the establishment of new platforms of learning at the

grassroots level. What they learn through collective actions leads to individual transformations from passive to active actors. Mesirow said that consciousness is the same as transformation. Both processes involve a re-evaluation of meaning or structures held by the locals (Mezirow, 1993). The first notable difference between groups was in regard to the understanding of values related to natural resources. The different management plans associated to natural resources showed in figure 5.1, suggest that the exchange of information did not occur in the implementation of the project. Throughout the process of organization, protestors generated a new platform of learning through sharing information and collaborative demonstrations. In the process of organization a pole of resistance was created to fight against the perceived unfair processes and negative outcomes of the project. Throughout the project, locals' perceptions were evolving, moving from trust to distrust. The evolution was based on the information collected in different non-formal settings. Throughout the process of organization and protest actions, the perceptions of some local residents changed from wanting developments to being completely against large developments. However, others continued to support the new hydro developments. The understanding and negative perception of the project and its outcomes and the lack of communication between the authorities and locals changed the minds of some people who originally supported the project. Through the process of sharing information, certain irregularities triggered discontent from some of the local protestors. For example, pre-public hearings were cancelled and the government did not provide the locals with the right information before the public hearings. During the entire implementation process, the communication was limited

from one group to another and it shaped how different groups perceived the same situations. Figure 5.2 shows that learning was complex and associated to the project outcomes. On the other hand, protests were associated with the learning process, which relied on a combination of internal and external factors.

As communication of information was not freely given to the public by the government authorities and the company, participants opened their own channels of communication and through the process learned valuable lessons about resource management and concepts of sustainability. As described in Figure 5.3, learning can occur before, during or after a process of organization takes place. Thus, in social actions the idea of before/during/after has no formal structure or dependable order. Outcomes in each stage were multiple and ongoing throughout the process itself. It was demonstrated that the help of an external NGO led to the first awakening of the local residents. They were able to express their opposition to the project through the organization of a protest. The protest further demonstrated the relationship the locals have to the land and its natural resources.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Introduction

From 1991 to the present, India has witnessed unprecedented economic growth, which continues today as mega-projects are pursued throughout the country. The mountainous regions have not been immune to this development and local people have often been disenfranchised from decisions about projects that affect them and the environment they depend on. The overall purpose of this research was to understand the role of protest as a vehicle for the public's participation in natural resource management and decisions that effect their environment, as well as to consider whether such movements are learning platforms for action on sustainability. The study was also designed to consider what individuals learned through taking part in protests related to development activities in the Kullu Valley that impact local sustainability. The objectives of this research were to: 1. consider the relationship between protest action and public participation in the Indian Himalaya; 2. understand the reasons why people decide to participate in protest actions, particularly in relation to government decisions about development and natural resource use; 3. determine the sources of information people use when making their decision to join a protest; 4. explore whether or not people learn about sustainability through participation in protest actions, and if so how; 5. establish the ability of local communities to articulate their concerns effectively through protests.

6.2. The Relationship Between Protest Action and Public Participation

According to Hjortso (2001) "People associate the very concept of democracy with the activity of participating in government decision-making processes" (p17). Figures 6.1 and 6.2 below provide a sense of how local residents perceived the

available platforms for public participation regarding decisions about development and its impact on natural resources and the environment. They also help to demonstrate that government efforts to include grassroots input in final decisions have been weak and the public wanted a much more inclusive process. Government is not accomplishing the democratic principles suggested in the political reforms outlined in the 1994 Environmental Law in regards to meaningful participation, as outlined earlier in the thesis. Figure 4.5 captures the concept that local residents feel decision-making is top-down and so is the exchange of information. They view themselves as being at the bottom of the decision framework, with little information being shared with them and having virtually no decision-making authority.

As well, the findings outlined in Chapter 4 show that, in the case of large developments, the inclusion of multiple stakeholders in the decision-making process does not result in a more equitable distribution of power over local decisions. As the data shows, with large projects such as the one studied, when multiple layers of stakeholders get involved in the decision-making process it becomes difficult for local people to understand where the decision-making power rests. Another important finding about local participation in decision-making processes is that participants felt there was a significant degree of fragmentation and duplication between government departments. This fragmentation created confusion regarding to whom they should direct their concerns. On the whole, local residents do not have much faith in the information provided to them by the government and developers and feel they have no impact on the final decision.

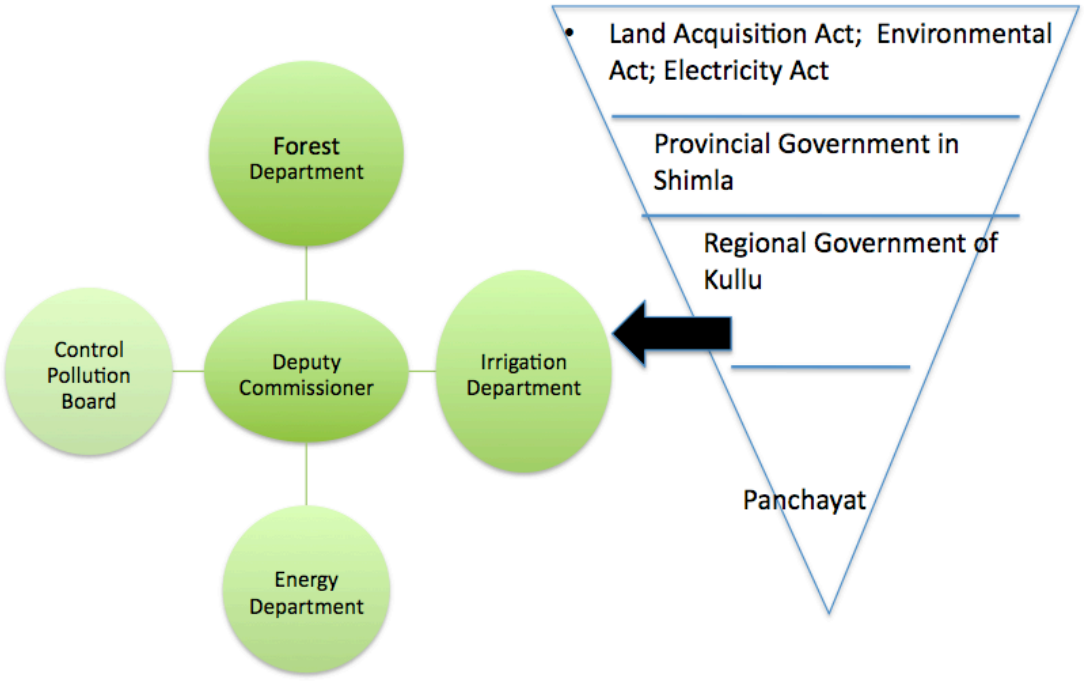

Figure 6.1. Government decision-making process as perceived by local people

In contrast to this, local residents felt that third parties, such as NGOs, were communicated more cleary. Figure 6.1 was developed to capture the findings related to how local residents perceive decision-making and the exchange of information when a third party gets involved in the process. Compared to government and industry, NGOs work with people and exchanging information in a more homogenous and horizontal way. Residents liked their interaction with NGOs and felt that they were the most credible sources of information. They also saw NGOs as important conduits for exchanging their ideas and information with government agencies and investors. Local residents ranked the sources of information according to their perception of meaningfulness. In this case, NGOs were perceived as being the most important avenue for receiving information.

Figure 6.2. NGO involvement in the exchange of information, as perceived by the protestors

The local residents widely recognized that through their active involvement in protest actions they could make considerable gains, as opposed to participating in government-run consultations. These gains included an increase in their bargaining abilities, the creation of new networks to protect natural resources and the building of networks to protect the locals' livelihoods (Lipsky, 1968). They understood that as a collective they had better chances of impacting the decision-making process and were better able to change or stop company actions. Examples of this would be public efforts to acquire land from the company or to stop deforestation. As individuals, being part of the collective meant getting better benefits, including new facilities for the villages such as schools and hospitals, and better compensation rates for each family. Unlike their negative perceptions of participation in

government-led processes, protestors were more positive about the protest actions they took. Protestors felt that they could potentially get more fruitful results by raising the level of their concerns. They also felt that protest actions could better garner attention from local decision-making authorities, such as the Deputy Commissioner or State Governor. Through protest, they could better articulate their goals by maximizing public exposure, thereby attracting media interest, the support of other villages and international attention. For local residents, another appealing aspect of protest - as opposed to participating in a conventional decision-making process – stemmed from their lack of trust in the conventional governance platforms.

In light of these concerns, there is a need for more information regarding the decision-making process, explaining both the mechanisms and the tools available for public input. Diduck et al. (2007) define meaningful participation "as a highly communicative process that includes a critical exchange of ideas among proponents". An important step toward meaningful public participation is to address the different perceptions and definitions of participation at the very beginning of the project. This would help alleviate misinterpretation and would build trust and cooperation between government and local residents.

6.2.1. Why People Decide to Participate in Protest Actions

Chapter 5 identified the sources of information that people used in deciding to join in protest actions and ranked the sources according to the local residents' perceptions of meaningfulness. The top three sources were *Street level discussions*, *NGO interventions* and *Key informants (Neighbors)*. The documents reviewed and the

interview data show that local residents began to plan protest actions because of a shared feeling of injustice about how decisions were made regarding the project and the impact the development was having on the local environment and their livelihoods. The responses showed that more than one reason drove them to participate in protest actions. Many believed that taking action in the form of protest was the only way they had to express their concerns about the development and how it was being carried out in the area. According to Smith and McDonough (2001), protests are undertaken as collective actions to question the authority of natural resource management departments. According to Rana et al. (2007), development projects in India have spawned protest because people have experienced the negative impacts of developments. In this study, some locals clearly experienced negative impacts related to developments occurring around them.

The data also show that the decision-making process can also inspire protest actions. Local resdidents were not against the development itself, as they knew the value of the project to the local economy and potentially to themselves. They were, however, opposed to how those developments were being implemented and how the decisions were undertaken without the consultation of people living in the area. The root of this grievance is very complex, because the belief systems of multiple stakeholders involved in the process are significantly different. In light of these differences, it is important to validate how the groups envision the use of natural resources and the implementation of projects throughout the process. The data also show that the protestors' reasons for protest were based on their reflections of internal and external factors and how these factors are affecting their daily lives.

According to Oberschall (2000), protest actions are based on multiple levels from a *macro-structural level (external factors)* to a *micro-personal level (internal factor)* where people have to decide whether or not, when, and how to participate in the challenge. Some of the triggers that prompted protest action by locals were a combination of external and internal factors ranging from the diversion of the Beas River to the closure of pasture roads. Nevertheless, perceptions and expectations played a critical role.

The following widely accepted reasons for being involved in protest actions were identified by the protestors: the perception and reality that decisions are still top-down; that any payoffs from project development are distributed among a few participants and not the whole community; and that these projects have a profound impact on the environment, which in turn impacts local livelihood security.

6.2.2. Information People Use in Making Their Decision to Join a Protest

The results presented in Chapter 5 suggest that non-formal sources of information were the basic information tool people used to learn about and understand the processes and outcomes related to development projects. Through the process of gathering information, protestors were able to not only understand the project outcomes, but also to determine which tactics to use in voicing their concerns about the project.

Protestors identified the street level as an important avenue for getting information, because at that level information was shared equally among all those interested. Information obtained on the street level was perceived to be more

trustworthy and meaningful than information gathered from formal sources such as government and developers, as they no longer trusted these sources. For example, neither the government nor the company explained why, in the construction phase, the Forest Department provided more land to the company than they were awarded as part of the Implementation Agreement signed by both parties.

The meetings with the NGO-KV were fundamental in the transformation of local perceptions about the project and people's own ability to impact decisions. The shared awakening led to the development of various tactics to fight back against the project. These tactics were decided through consensus and were based on personal experiences and information gathered at the meetings with the NGO. For example, through the meeting with the NGO-KV, local residents became aware of the legal avenues available to help express their concerns. This was the first time they had heard about the Right Information Act, 2005, and they began to feel included in the process. Through this information, they were able to understand, on a macro level, the effects of large developments.

Another important avenue of information was neighbors or key informants, who gathered, shared and explained the information to the rest of the locals at street meetings. Because of their ability to gather information, the community identified the key informants as leaders. The key informants were the first to demand that the information be translated to Hindi.

In general, local perceptions began to change over time. Through the process of sharing, participants moved from a lack of awareness to playing a more critical and active role. As time went on, local residents also began to more critically look at

sources of information.

6.2.3. Learning about Sustainability Through Participation in Protests Actions

Through engaging in protest actions, people felt that they learned more about issues surrounding sustainability and their natural resources. For example, they learned that the forest surrounding them was over 100 years old. This meant that re-growth would be slow for both the forest and the medicinal plants co-dependant on the forest.

In the beginning of the project, people were able to recognize the effects of the development, but throughout the construction phase people could see the damages in the landscape, but then they could see how that damage directly affected their livelihoods. For example, a protestor from Jagatsukh noticed that air pollution and dust were created by heavy machinery used by the company. The incremental production of waste beside the river and in the mountains was also a concern, and this was expressed in a protest letter. Heymann and Wals (2002) suggest that the management of natural resources is always preceded by conflict and to reverse the misuse of natural resources in a positive way it is necessary to have knowledgeable dialogue based on learning experiences. Protestors were exchanging information regarding the government and company procedures at the local level. While perhaps not always accurate and truthful, this information exchange was an effective aid in the process of organizing and became an important platform of discussion at the grassroots level.

As with most public processes involving developments around resource use and extraction, multiple stakeholders needed to share their visions. These attempts

failed from the start because one side was unwilling to share the right information with the other. Misinformation escalated to mistrust, which was fed by growing local skepticism.

Protestors base their reasons for protesting, in part, on information discussed in the non-formal platforms of learning, which were "hands on" styles of learning. Learning through actions is important because it prepares locals to fight against injustice. The data collected leads me to share the views of Kastner (1990), who argued that through organizations, people have positive learning experiences because one of the core goals of social movements is to provide a platform of education. The unequal relationship of power between decision-makers and local resource users was addressed and re-evaluated by the protestors in an attempt to bring about balance. However, the reason for the imbalance is that foreign investors and resource users are not starting with the same level of information. Freire (1970) argues that education needs to be before, during and after the process of organization to promote better and fairer practices. Local residents throughout the protest actions understood the dynamics, links and cause-effect relationships between ecosystems. I agree with Chovanec et al. (2008) when they suggest that through collective organizations, learning is an ongoing and an emancipating process that promotes more fair and environmentally-sustainable projects. A new type of learning based on sharing and dialogue is preparing people to fight back against what they perceive as unfair. In general, people have been learning through dialogue and from developing trust among peers. The streets are becoming the new classrooms to empower local people. Before the Allain Duhangan project arrived,

people learned the importance of natural resources in their lives, whereas now they are learning how to protect their resources. Daloz (1986) reinforces this transformation, arguing that learning through social organization depends less on rational, reflective acts and more on a holistic and even an intuitive process. This definition, while partially true, undervalues the importance of reflection. For instance, people approached issues from different angles, using reflection as an important component in their learning. They have made it clear that they want to stop negative effects on their livelihood. Inclusion and involvement have been described and established as crucial parts of the environmental laws dealing with large developments. In the case of hydroelectric projects, which demand extensive planning and construction, the process is even more complex.

6.2.4. The Ability of Local Communities to Express their Concerns through Protests

Through their protest actions, participants felt they were not only able to express their concerns, but also to effectively impact the decision-making processes. One of the questions asked of the locals was: "did the lack of formal opportunities for public participation lead to protest or did the lack of action on issues raised in public participation lead to protests? The responses indicated that most of the protestors felt there were few formal opportunities to express their concerns. The data collected showed that people initially sent letters and went to government offices, but their concerns and issues were not addressed. Since the agenda of a grassroots movement is flexible, activities and protest actions were evolving according to the responses of actions from the government and developers. The protestors' actions

moved from letters to rallies and in some cases to group activities or individual activities. Both protestors and authorities identified protest actions as non-violent. Most protest actions took place during the construction phase. However, even at the end of the project construction, some protestors were still trying to get the benefits promised to the local communities.

The construction of transmission lines created new complaints about the project. Protestors once again accused government of excluding them from the decision-making processes. They argued that the towers would have several negative effects on their lives. Siting towers in fields would negatively affect the productivity of the land and would not help attract tourists to the area. Protestors argued that the construction phase was almost over by the time they were asked to get involved and there had been no real benefits for the locals from the new lines. In fact, to this day there has been no new electricity or infrastructure built to supply power in the area. The power all goes to the plains.

In general terms, people recognized that they live in a democratic system, so locals knew that they had the right to formally submit their concerns about the project. Responses from authorities were not the only factors involved in shaping protest actions. Another factor was that through the process of organizing and gathering information, people became aware of the tools available inside the system to fight back against the project. The result was a semi-structured organization. As part of the organization, participants began to gather information and planned strategies to protect themselves from the project outcomes. One of the first steps

taken was to research similar cases and use the information in the legal battle. They used Jibhi's successful case as a reference. The community of Jibhi, located in the Kullu Valley, won the battle to protect the Tirthan River against hydro development and transcended into a very active ENGO.

Through the process of protest, residents felt empowered by positive results. For example, the government reevaluated the diversion of the river and as result the percentage of water released was increased. This shows that some protest actions were more than just a platform for learning; they were a concrete way for local residents to have a voice in the decision-making process.

6.3. RECOMMENDATIONS

6.3.1. Participation and Learning Through Protest Actions

"It is important to assess the influence of these resistance movements, especially as they go well beyond their local impact on specific projects and populations. The greater success of these movements has been the fact that they have given political voice to groups that were hitherto almost completely excluded from mainstream political processes" (Planning Commission report: Dams, Displacement, policy and law in India 2008: 19)

There are numerous ways to improve the process of public involvement for large developments. Restructuring the implementation process for large developments in the Kullu Valley is imperative. In the last two decades, an increasing number of measures that seek to ensure citizen access to information and decision processes have emerged on the international scene.

The empowerment of local communities can only be achieved if their views are included in decision-making processes. It has been suggested through the preceding chapters that creating an organic relationship based on a clear and transparent exchange of information among stakeholders can improve the dialogue and promote fairness throughout the process. The negative perception of the process by local residents was in part a response to the historical top-down decision-making of the central government. The empowerment of local institutions should be promoted from the beginning of any decision-making process. Based on what locals told me about the decision-making process and how they would like to be involved, I have developed the framework presented in Figure 6.3. This framework exemplifies how the process of inclusion could be approached in decision making for development projects in the region.

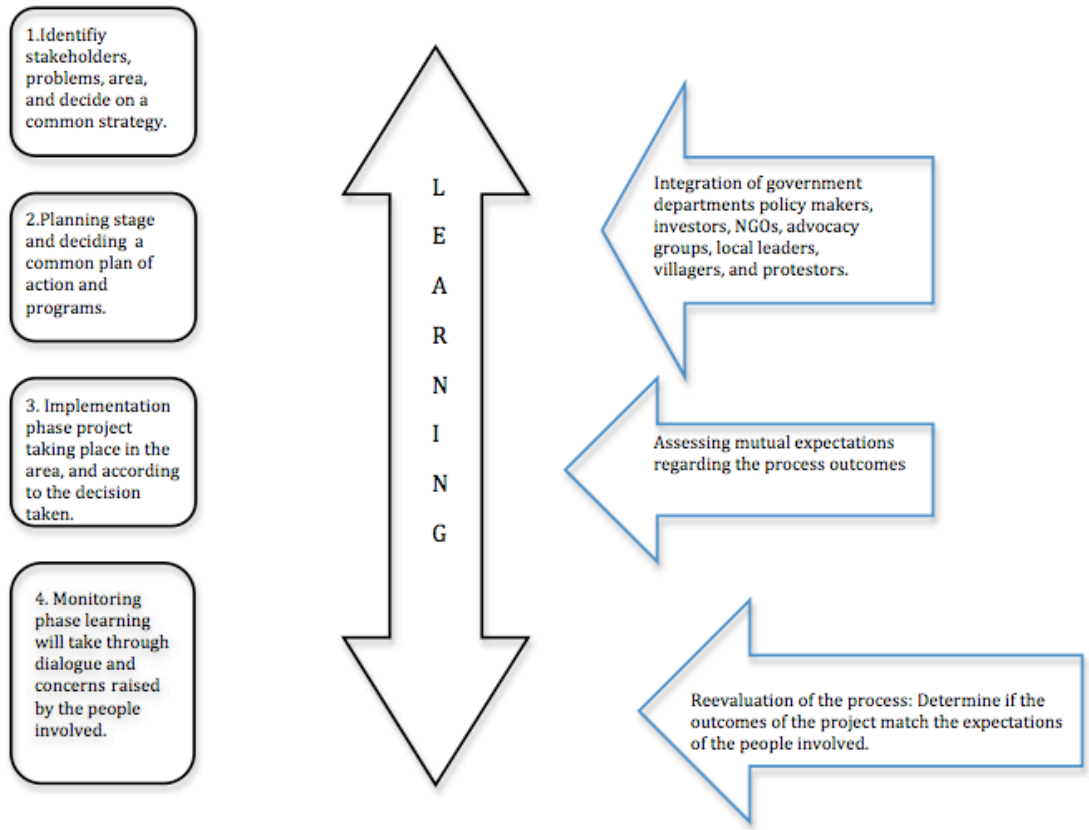

Figure 6.3. Phases to address decision-making for large developments

6.3.1.The Need For a More Inclusive Process of Public Participation

Trust was widely recognized as a key component of successful relationships among multiple stakeholders, whether government, company or local residents. One of the first issues that should be addressed is the negative perception that local residents have about different stakeholders and groups involved in the development's decision-making process, and vice versa (Herbert, 1986). In Chapter 5, it was identified that a key component and catalyst of protest actions was the local residents' lack of trust in government and company proponents. From the Allain

Duhangan site, I learned that there are specific requirements for achieving more meaningful public participation that compliments the framework presented in Figure 6.3. Preliminary meetings are meant to introduce both the WHO and the HOW. Who are the multi-stakeholders and what are their roles? In addition, these meetings should address important agenda items such as defining sustainability, as proposed in the Environmental Law. The way a public participation process is conducted can have more influence on overall success than the type of issues raised through the process. With this in mind, it is important to introduce methods for participation that participants will understand. NGOs should be recognized as formal players and involved on a greater scale in meetings and negotiations. They should be integrated into the process, since they have the experience and expertise to advise communities and to promote a fair dialogue among multiple stakeholders.

In recent years, there have been improvements to public involvement in decision-making processes within India, perhaps most notably in the area of natural resource management. Government is trying to improve the system through the implementation of new policies and departments such as LADA, which was created to promote better channels of communication and justice. Unfortunately, these implementations have not been entirely positive. The interaction with local authorities is neither entirely negative nor positive. Government listened to the public concerns, but the protestors were left feeling that these concerns were not adequately addressed. LADA was created to implement the infrastructure promised to communities affected by large development projects, but it can also be used as an intermediary to inform and promote dialogue in the affected villages. This would

help create a shared vision of social justice and provide the means to achieve common ground and understanding between groups. In future, before the construction phase of a project begins, it would be useful to create a cross-scales learning objectives among the different groups involved in decision making. This platform could be useful to examine how different narratives around natural resources can be shared to create a collective narrative. This collective narrative can be included in the planning stage to represent multiple interests.

Through LADA, part of the money referred to social projects has been invested, but none of the projects funded have been based on locals suggestions (such as a wall to protect the forest, footpaths and side drain of the village). For that reason, protestors actively demanded the right to know why the money has not been invested in the community developments promised at the beginning of the project. Policy change and institutional mechanisms are necessary conditions for participation of marginalized groups in the management and use of natural resources. Existing social structures and relations determine to a large extent how much these groups can participate. Hence, democratic policies alone do not ensure successful practices, but have important bearings upon the processes of implementation and regulation on development.

The integration of international funding institutions and investors should be regulated and evaluated, as they are fundamental parts of the process. They should be involved in the early stages of the project, sharing experiences, information and advice with the local people. There is an imminent need for a stronger regulatory body that deals with foreign investors. A regulatory plan should be part of a more

sustainable and democratic participatory process, as established by Tandon & Kak (2007).

A regulatory system should be put in place in order to address discontent. For example, the World Bank has vast experience in working overseas as a main investor in large developments. Ethical guidelines could be draw from those experiences. There also needs to be unwavering support for democratic values, and the development of venues where people can express their concerns in a meaningful way.

Recognizing the benefits of enhanced public participation is the first trigger that should lead to change. Public participation processes tend to yield better results when there is a clear purpose and agreement about goals among convening organizations. Nevertheless, it is a hard challenge to involve multiple parties and to change the dynamics between government, company and local communities. Strategies for overcoming barriers to meaningful public participation are moving towards more inclusive and democratic processes. In response, efforts towards inclusion need to be upgraded to a higher level.

If a project does proceed, the following areas of concern should be acknowledged and addressed:

1. The scope of the project should be discussed in depth, as well as environmental concerns and outcomes.

2. Constraints to understand the project outcomes should be understood from the beginning of the process.

3. The importance of designing a participation process that includes all interest groups should be reinforced from the beginning.

6.4. Learning Through Protest Actions: A New Dimension of Public Participation

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed it is on the only thing that ever has" Margaret Mead, 1985: 93 .

Despite the lack of research on the learning component of protest actions, this study demonstrates that there is an intrinsic and co-dependant relationship between learning and protest. Learning was defined in this study as an ongoing and eclectic process, which moves organically through the process of organization of the protest actions through the different protest stages as identified by the protestors - before, during and after. Throughout the protest actions, participants questioned the validity of the existing process of consultation for large developments. This new dimension of participation based on active citizens' involvement through protest action offers an increased possibility for dialogue. Protest was re-defined to fully address the demands of local residents, and actions moved from single to multiple and polymorphic events. The extensiveness (multiple phases of the project) and magnitude (multiple impacts) involved in the construction phases demanded more than one response from the affected communities. For the Allain Duhangan development, protests have been evolving to respond articulately and effectively to

each particular issue associated with the project. Through learning, people understood the asymmetries of power between stakeholders, and the need for more equitable platforms of involvement. Throughout the experience, protestors felt different degrees of transformation, based on how much they had learned through the process. In different cases, protestors were experiencing an awakening to a deeper level of understanding of the complexities and outcomes of the project. Degrees of learning were determined according to the level of engagement and perception of injustice and oppression they felt through the development process.

The systems of inclusion have been failing because of a lack of regulatory bodies willing to enforce the laws at the public level. Policies to improve participation, such as Mandatory Public Hearings and The Right Information Act, 2005, play an important role at the government level but can also be used by protestors to protect their rights (Rangan, 1996). These policies have not been recognized by the grassroots as meaningful. In this context, learning through protest action can be used to close the distance between policies and affected communities to promote more meaningful inclusion in decision-making processes (Chovanec, et al., 2001). Learning as a tool and a process may be a new channel to empower local resource users and legitimize their views in decision-making processes (Jarvis, 1987). Learning through protest action can be assessed by its tangible ability to initiate a process of transformation regarding the protestors' frame of thinking. Protest actions have led the way to a new and more engaging era of citizen participation in the Kullu Valley.

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APPENDIXES

APPRENDIX A

SEMI-STRCUTURED INTERVIEW FORMAT

The first series of question will explore the participant's role in the protests.

1. Why did you decide to take part in the protests?

2. What other means especially legal did you use to express discontent before you considered being involved in the protest?

3. In what kind of protests have you been involved: Violent – Non-Violent?

   a. Have you ever considered to participate in a non- violent protest

   b. Have you ever considered to participate in a violent protest

4. In how many protests have you participated?

5. What do you expect to achieve through the protests

6. What is your role in the protests (planner, participant, leader)?

   a. What do you do as a planner, participant or leader?

7. How are the protests generally organized?

8. How involve do you want or expect to be in the protests (a follower or a leader)?

The next questions will explore the institutional response in the process of the protests

8. What roles did the local government play?

9. Does the nature of the institutional response vary with the tactics used by the protestors?

10. Has the response of the government to protests changed through the process of protesting?

11. Overall has the participation decrease or increase?

b. If the Government negotiated with the protestors is there a decline or an increase of participants in the protests?

12. What changes in institutional policy and practice have come about as a result of different types of protest?

The next questions will explore the learning outcome of protests

13. Have you learned new things in the protests?

14. What have you learned through the protests?

15. How did you learn? (Over time, particular experience, etc)

16. When do you feel this learned the most before, during or after the protest? Why?

17. What was the source of information that played a major role in your process of learning? (Such as friends, news research, participation in community activities, family, government institutions, NGOs).

18. Have you shared your new knowledge with others? Why or Why not?

The final next questions will explore the participant perspectives on the implementation of hydro and tourism developments in the study area.

19. Has your standard of living changed with the development of the area?

20. Has your participation at the protests changed your perspectives about how to deal with development in the area?

21. Has development of Hydro dam and tourist projects impacted the environmental sustainability?

APPENDIX B

Interview Question for Government institutions

The first series of question will explore the government's role in the protest(s).

What is your opinion about protests against Hydro dam and tourism infrastructure?

Why do you things protests are taking place?

What were /are the government response to the protestors in the protests itself?

Have the government involve in some processes of negotiation with the protestors during or after the protests? you can talk me more about that.

Do you think that in the future will the protests just fade away, or will they grow and spread?

The second series of question will explore the government's opinion of public participation concern with the Hydro dams and tourism developments.

Tell me about past efforts to involve the public in decisions regarding to the constructions of Hydro Dams and Tourism development.

- Are there aspects of past public participation that worked well?
- Are there aspects of past public participation that should be changed in the future?

What is the process to inform people about the regional projects in the area?

How should the public be involved in upcoming decisions for how to implement big development projects?

How was local concern used in the management or use of resources in these projects?

Do you have any concerns/reservations about involvement of the community in these projects?

To you , what is the key to successful involvement of the public in these projects?

Often, public participation programs help to build trust among stakeholders. Do you have any suggestion for how pubic hearings and other instances of participation can help build trust with people interested in to be involved in decision -making process?

Is there anything else you would like to tell me regarding public participation for these projects?

APPENDIX C

" Translation in English from the original Hindi version"

Women Society of Jagatsukh

Sub :- Allain Duhangan Hydroelectric Project Prini – Himachal Pradesh.

This is resolved with unanimous concept that all information pertain into environment and social impact provided in the report have been obtained and understood. The Women society is in agreement with the mitigation measure provided in the report. The villagers should be given maximum job opportunity as per their qualifications. The Women society of Jagatsukh is prepared to provide its support to the implication of the project. Therefore the work on the Hydroelectric Project should be started at the earliest.

Copy is original as per record

1.	Smt. Godavri	Signed
2.	Smt. Maina Devi	Signed
3.	Smt. Chunni Devi	Signed
4.	Smt. Aruna Sharma	Signed
5.	Smt. Ritu Bala	Signed
6.	Smt. Padma Devi	Signed
7.	Smt. Nirmla Sharma	Signed
8.	Smt. Meena Sharma	Signed
9.	Smt. Gora Devi	Signed
10.	Smt. Shalina Negi	Signed
11.	Smt. Nardu Devi	Signed

Sd
Chunni Devi
Stamped
Secretary Women Society
Jagatsukh

Sd
Godavri
Stamped
Pradhan Women Society
Jagatsukh

APPENDIX D

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APPROVAL CERTIFICATE

16 September 2008

The Shastri and SSHRC

TO: **Vanessa Lozecznik** (Advisor J. Sinclair)
Principal Investigator

FROM: **Wayne Taylor, Chair**
Joint-Faculty Research Ethics Board (JFREB)

Re: **Protocol #J2008:112**
"The Role of Protests as Platforms for Action on Sustainability in the Kullu Valley, India"

Please be advised that your above-referenced protocol has received human ethics approval by the **Joint-Faculty Research Ethics Board**, which is organized and operates according to the Tri-Council Policy Statement. This approval is valid for one year only.

Any significant changes of the protocol and/or informed consent form should be reported to the Human Ethics Secretariat in advance of implementation of such changes.