



Hydropower and Developmental Projects on Himalayan Region: Impact on Biodiversity

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The hydel potential of the Beas basin is estimated to be 4,050 mw with significant contribution of Parbati, one of the major tributaries of river Beas in Kullu district of Himachal Pradesh. The potential of river Parbati has been harnessed in three stages comprising Stage-I (750 MW), Stage-II (800 MW) and Stage-III (501 MW). These projects are being planned to be implemented by the National Hydroelectric Power Corporation (NHPC). NHPC has planned development of the basin with construction of Stage-II initially, and completion of balance investigations of Stage-I and Stage-III before taking up these for construction. The Parbati stage-II is a run-of-the-river scheme to harness hydro potential of the lower reaches of the river Parbati. The project is “Inter basin transfer” type. The river is being diverted at village Pulga in Parbati valley by a diversion tunnel and the powerhouse is being constructed in Sainj valley, adjacent to the Great Himalayan National Park (GHNP). A gross head of 859 m between Pulga and Suind will be utilized for generating 800 MW power. The project proposes a total network of 80.75 km roads to be constructed in dam complex, Sheelagarh complex, power house complex. Considerable loss of wildlife and biodiversity in three valleys is expected to occur. The construction of proposed diversion dam near Pulga in Parbati valley will result in significant loss of upper temperate forested habitats (2700-2900 m). This habitats is characterized by upper temperate coniferous forests and its associated understory vegetation that are home of many endangered floral and faunal species such as: Himalayan musk deer, serow, goral, black bear, common leopard, Western tragopan, cheer pheasant, koklass and monal pheasant. These habitats are now being lost on a permanent basis due to construction of dam and human pressure.