



JOURNAL OF BIODIVERSITY AND CONSERVATION

Opinion

Chadong village: the lost village of Manipur, India

Rajkumari Supriya Devi

Ambika Prasad Research Foundation, Bhubaneswar, Odisha

Email-Id: supriyaaprf91@gmail.com

Damming a river creates many negative impacts on freshwater ecosystem, riverine ecology and on richness of flora and fauna. It leads to decrease in the genetic diversity and helps increase in exotic species which leads to habitat degradation. During the survey on medicinal plants of Manipur state, I found a village which is submerged due to damming of Thoubal river. I found biodiversity loss; even loss of threatened species like *Oroxylum indicum* and many more. The lost village was Chadong. It was a small village situated in the Ukhrul district of Manipur, around 21 km east from Imphal city. It was located between 24°52'41.9"N and 94°08'20.3" E. The village was sparsely populated with the population density of about 1027 as per the Census report of 2011. With the construction of a huge Dam i.e., Mapithel Dam, a huge water body is created submerging two villages Chadong village and Ramrei village, two hills, a school and about 2215 hectares of agricultural land of the villagers. These include about 125 houses of the Chadong village and more than about 90 houses of the Ramrei village. This huge area of agricultural land used to be the livelihood of the villagers. Besides the agricultural land, villagers

used to collect sand from the river banks of the Thoubal river as another means of livelihood. The construction of Mapithel Dam to harvest water and provide electricity has greatly affected the lives and livelihood of the locals. Villagers were forcibly displaced from their homes. The catchment areas of the lake are prohibited from cutting down trees. The village is no more a village but a huge watershed or a lost village. While entire village is submerged, the cross of the church is the only part of the village seen above the water level. The hills in the northern part of the lake are dense with forest and rich with flora and fauna. Animals such wild pig and porcupine are seen in the northern hills. In contrast to the northern hills, the southern hills of the lake are barren with very less vegetation. Different migratory birds are seen in the lake every year during the period of December-January. The current livelihood of the villagers are fishing and searching for vegetables in the northern hills. They are also seen to go for hunting in the hills. The dam which is constructed for the welfare of the state is costing the livelihood of the poor villagers and obviously loss of precious biodiversity. The steps taken for better human

living on a broad perspective should not harm people living particularly in that area. It is necessary to make plan for alternative source of livelihood which could have a sustainable life for the villagers and would help in the conservation of flora and fauna. The barren land in the southern hills should have been planned for agro forestry so that the inconvenience faced by the villagers to find food in the northern hills would be solved and their food security is maintained. Proper awareness could be provided to the villagers for conservation of forest, birds and

animals and the hunters could be given an alternative way of living by means of ecotourism. Loss of plants and animals could be introduced to the forest. Dam construction not only affects the entire ecosystem of the area but also aids to the frequency of earthquakes. Northeast India is also located in zone V which is a very high intensity zone for earthquake prone regions. This editorial note recommends that there is an urgent need to reintroduce the lost floral species near the study area and explore perspectives of Eco tourism as alternate source of livelihood.



Figure 1: Lost village of Manipur, India