

August 2020

# FISHERFOLK









## EDITORIAL

## 'NO' TO PEOPLE UNFRIENDLY PROJECTS

Several countries in the world are reverting back from coal energy but Pakistan is focusing on it. It is proving hazardous to the people and the environment. One study quoted in the cover story of this newsletter shows how it will have a negative effect over the population of the area.

Instead of providing relief to the displaced people of Thar, they are further being deprived of pastures and fresh water by diverting 200 cusecs of water of Farsh Makhi Canal. A reservoir has been built at Nabisar, Umerkot which will take water from Farsh Makhi Canal. Then, a 60-km long pipeline will connect Nabisar reservoir with Vejhiar reservoir and then it would be supplied to Thar coal site.

Earlier, Rs10 billion were spent on the water scheme to take water of LBOD to Thar coal, later on, the designers realised that saline water of LBOD was not fit for the coal site. Thus, Rs10 billion were wasted. Now, fresh water is being diverted, which will not only affect the natural beauty of Thar but also its people. Nabisar dam is being developed in the centre bed of the old Hakro river, which is a source of ground water recharge for the local population.

Another development against the people of Sindh is the federal government's announcement for the construction of Diamer Bhasha Dam. It will further reduce fresh water discharge downstream Kotri allowing sea to further invade the land. Sea, according to PFF estimates, has already intruded 4.0-million-acre land of Sindh's three districts Thatta, Sujawal and Badin while it will further invade because of having no hurdle of river water. Mangrove forests, pastures and fish nurseries will be affected and it will lead towards mass migration of people towards already overcrowded cities.

Water experts in a recent conference on Bhasha Dam organised by PFF, informed that at least 96 acres of land were being invaded by sea on a daily basis. Experts said that 60 percent of the population of the country had no access to clean drinking water while Bhasha dam was not capable of resolving that issue. People were consuming polluted and arsenic water while no dam was able to mitigate these issues.

Pakistan is a food surplus country and there is no sanctity in bringing more land and cultivation with an investment of \$15 billion on the construction of the dam. Water experts said that by the completion time of the dam, hydro energy would be so expensive that nobody would be able to purchase it. The country will also face problems in repayment of loans.

Thus, we, through this newsletter, suggest the government not generate coal-based power, instead it should move towards renewable alternative energy of wind and solar power.

Besides, we also suggest the government abandon the project of Diamer Bhasha Dam and focus on water management, which can save around 40 percent water that is lost through the canal system. At least 35 maf water flow downstream Kotri must be assured, which would provide life to people, fish and mangroves of the Indus Delta.



## Newsletter

FisherFolk

August 2020



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# COAL POWER PLANTS, PROJECTS OF DESTRUCTION

Muhammad Ali Shah

It is a fact that several countries in the world are avoiding coal energy and considering it a dirty energy. Protest campaigns are on the go in many countries. Several countries in the world are reverting back from coal-based energy. Contrary to that, our government is giving priority to coal power projects and developing it. I must tell you that since 2013, the trend has increased to construct coal power plants in the various areas of the country. Sindh and Balochistan coast (Karachi, Hub and Gawadar) and Thar Desert (Tharparkar) have been points of coal power plants. Several power plants have already been completed in these areas while some of them are under construction. Due to coal energy development, health and environmental issues are taking place. These issues will become serious in the coming days.





Currently, work is continued on two coal blocks of 13 coal blocks in Thar. Besides, coal power plants' work is also continued and coal mining is affecting the ecosystem of Tharparkar. Moreover, people's historical right of livelihood is also being affected. Health of the people of Thar, the natural beauty of Thar, and underground drinking water has been put at risk in Thar.

**We have to consider that coal energy is not development but it is indeed destruction. The coal-based power plants would create issues related to emission of greenhouse gases and an increase in the temperature along with air, water and surface pollution.**

**According to a study report by an international group, a huge combination of coal mines and power houses in Thar is underway. Under which, nine coal power plants have been planned in Thar with 10-Gigawatt power generation. The planned coal power plants would be a mega centre of environmental pollution, mercury and carbon dioxide emission, which will make Thar one of the dangerous places in South Asia.**



According to the study, the suggested coal power plants would lead towards death of 29,000 people in its operating life or 30 years of operations due to its air pollution. In addition to it, there would be 40,000 asthma emergency room visits, 19,906 new cases of asthma in children while 32,000 children would die in preterm birth. People won't be able to go on work for 20 million years (They will be on leave due to ailments) and will lead a disability life for 57,000 years due to lungs disease, diabetics and stroke.

The planned Thar Coal power plants will emit 1,400 kg mercury and 5,000 heavy metal particles (dust of coal) every year, whose one fifth parts will store on land and the mercury will affect the fertile land. The one fifth of mercury emitted by coal power plants will be stored on the surface of land that will damage land and sweet water storages. It will be around 350 kilogram annually. According to one estimate, more than 125 mg per hectare emission of mercury will spread in 1,300 square kilometre area and will affect 100,000 people.

Coal mining and coal power plants use a huge amount of water that contains dangerous effluents and particles which pollutes the clean water. Due to Gawadar, Hub and Karachi power plants, the temperature of sea water has increased which has endangered fish and other marine life. Whereas, Thar has very limited water storages, which

are endangered due to coal mining and coal power generation. In short words, there would be a case of acute water shortage in Thar due to coal power generation.

Coal power plants will create water problems for Sindh province, which is already a water scarcity hit province. In the next 30 years, 4,000 billion gallons of water will be used on coal mining in Thar while 8,500 billion gallon water will be used to produce 10 gigawatt energy. It will disrupt the whole water cycle of Thar.

People of Thar depend over underground water, whose main source is rain. Use of water in coal mining and coal power plants will damage the natural beauty of Thar while people of Thar will lose their historical right on land. World scientists and institutions working against fossil fuels are linking coronavirus with air pollution, as more people are suffering from coronavirus in those countries where air pollution is increased. It is true that coal and other fossil fuel energy development has major connections with air pollution and climate change.

Under the current scenario, instead of environmentally hazardous power projects, alternative renewable energy projects should be initiated and the federal government should focus on environment friendly projects under the light of Alternative Renewable Energy Policy 2019 draft.





The displaced families are relocated to New Senhri Dars model village.

# Where will Tharis go?

Azhar Lashari

## Some concerns of the communities displaced due to developments in Tharparker

Dwelling in one of the most arid areas of Pakistan, the people of Thar, locally known as Thari, have learnt the art of living in complete harmony with nature. If the nature was not generous enough to bestow them with an abundance of water, they adopted a lifestyle requiring little of this essential resource. They evolved an intricate indigenous knowledge system about the scanty water and other natural resources available to them and acquired the survival skills, which have been least harmful, if not completely harmless, to these natural resources.

Livestock rearing and rain-fed subsistence agriculture, their primary livelihood sources, may not have afforded Tharis the physical comforts enjoyed by their counterparts in irrigated areas but they allowed them freedom and autonomy seldom experienced by people engaged in market-driven commercial agriculture. Though (drought-induced) seasonal migrations have always been a part of their lifestyle, the Tharis always valued and preferred the peace and freedom of their homeland to the physical comforts of foreign lands.



Sounding like a fairytale, the story of Tharis appears to be fast-forwarding to its end with the advent of huge capital to mine the coal reserves of Thar and produce electricity in Tharparkar district of Sindh province. With 176 billion ton coal reserves having a potential to produce 100,000 MW electricity for two centuries, the district has become a centre of attraction for both Chinese and national investors since 2008 when both provincial and federal governments decided to exploit the local coal reserves for power generation and 'fast track' the development. In the last ten years, a number of mining leases and power generation licenses have been awarded to an array of Chinese companies and their local partners.

Out of the 13 blocks, open-pit mining started in block-2 around three years ago. The development of Block-1 has started this year. In Block-2, a mine-mouth coal-based power plant of 660MW has already been completed and linked to the national grid. A number of other power plants in block-2 are either under construction or in the pipeline. A 1,300 MW power plant is going to be installed in Block-1. If things go at the current speed, soon the development of remaining blocks and installation of power plants will start.

Development of mining blocks and power generation involve land acquisition and eviction of local communities living there. Hundreds of families have already been displaced in Block-2. Five villages — Senhri Dars, Seengaro, Bitara, Aban Jo Tar and Thariyo Halepoto — are set to be displaced due to development of Block-2. Only one village, namely Senhri Dars, has been relocated so far. With the mining in new pits and installation of new power plants, the remaining four villages will also be displaced.

Around 4,880 acres of land, including 3,800 acres of private land and 1,000 acres of Gowchar (common grazing land) has been acquired in Senhri Dars village. The farmers of Senhri Dars were unwilling to surrender their land for Thar Coal Project. Around 172 families of Dars, Kohli and Bheel communities living in Senhri Dars village have been displaced. Dars is a land-holding community while the Kohli and Bheel communities are largely landless and work as farm labour.

All 172 families have left their ancestral village homes and resettled in New Senhri Dars Model Village, which

the government of Sindh has built to relocate them. Kohli and Bheel came six months ago while Dars community has shifted there more recently. Since they do not have any Gowchar in their new settlement, their livestock remain in their ancestral village. Some men from each household are still living in their ancestral village while others make daily to-

**'Peace of mind' was something, they insisted, they had left behind in their old village. The 'freedom' they enjoyed in their old village was missing in their new settlement, they said. The model village, they said, restricted their freedom in many ways — they couldn't bring along their cattle there; their guests couldn't visit them freely late night; and they couldn't make any alteration to their houses.**

and-fro to take care of their cattle and crops in Senhri Dars.

In New Senhri, each house built over 1,100 square yards has three bedrooms, a washroom, a kitchen, sitting areas for men and women, traditional Chounra (a thatched-roof hut), a guest-room and an animal yard. Besides the power supply from the main grid connection, each house is also solar-powered. In addition to the pucca houses, the model village comprises a primary school, a market of 10 shops, separate community centres for men and women, two reverse osmosis plants to provide an uninterrupted supply of clean drinking water, a mosque and a temple.

In a discussion on their displacement and resettlement, some recently settled men gathered in the market of the apparently spacious modern model village were very critical of their new settlement.

'Peace of mind' was something, they insisted, they had left behind in their old village. The 'freedom' they enjoyed in their old village was missing in their new settlement, they said. The model village, they said, restricted their freedom in many ways — they couldn't bring along their cattle there; their guests couldn't visit them freely late night; and they couldn't make any alteration to their houses.

Shabeer Dars, 26, who works as a watchman in a medical facility in the model village is most vocal among these men gathered in the market.





“The number (172) of displaced families was ascertained on the basis of marriages registered by 2014. The resettlement plan doesn't take into account the marriages that took place after 2014. In our village, we were free to build houses anywhere on our land whenever we felt the need to do so. Here, we are confined in a limited space. We cannot make even a minor alteration to our new houses. Where will we go when our families grow,” asks Shabeer Dars.

Livelihood disruptions are one of the major concerns among the displaced families relocated to New Senhri Dars. Against the land acquired, the provincial government has paid cash compensation to the displaced families. Almost 75 percent of the families have accepted cash compensation against the land acquired from them. Those having shops in their old village have been given shops built in the small market of their new settlement. Though the displaced families were predominantly dependent upon their livestock, the government has not provided them with any alternative Gowchar. Nor has it paid any

compensation to them against their common grazing land.

“The government has promised to provide us Gowchar on 850 acres near our new settlement, New Senhri Dars Model Village. But we are not sure about it since there is no land available near our new settlement,” said Shabeer Dars. Since the displaced families of Kohli and Bheel communities are largely landless, no cash compensation has been made to them. Instead, the Sindh Engro Coal Mining Company (SECMC) has offered them temporary jobs as office boys, maali (gardener), etc. But these jobs are highly insecure. Every now and then they are fired from their jobs on one pretext or the other.

This is the story of just 172 families displaced from one village in Block-2. The people of four more villages are to be displaced in the same block. The development of Block-1 has started recently. Thousands of families from Varvai and Talvai villages are going to be displaced in the next phase. The district government and local elected representatives have been holding meetings with the villagers to negotiate their compensation package and resettlement plans.

Spread over 90,000 square kilometres, Thar coalfield constitutes almost half of the district's area. If the entire coalfield is developed, the population living there will have to leave their homes so as to make way for coal mining and power generation. Even if all of them are provided with alternative houses, none of them is going to have the same Gowchar or the land to till. Where will these displaced Thari families go to earn their livelihood is a question neither the government nor the private companies are paying any heed to.

**(Courtesy: The News on Sunday)**

The writer is a student of anthropology and history



# Air pollution

## Study

from Thar's coal mines, power plants to cause serious toxic deposition, health risks:

Emissions from a massive cluster of coal mines and power plants in Thar would expose local population to serious health risks besides causing serious damage to the desert's physical and natural environment, reveals a study launched on Friday.

**These emissions could cause 40,000 asthma emergency room visits, 19,906 new cases of asthma in children, 32,000 preterm births, 20 million days of work absence (sick leave), 57,000 years lived with disability related to chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, diabetes and stroke and 29,000 air pollution-related deaths over the 30 year operating period of power projects, the study states.**

The study titled as 'Air quality, health and toxics impacts of the proposed coal mining and power cluster in Thar, Pakistan' has been conducted by Centre for Research on Energy and Clean Air (CREA).

“Since Pakistan is already suffering from air pollution levels that are among the highest in the world, the emissions induced by coal mines and power plants of Thar will further reduce life expectancy in the country and increase the vulnerability of its citizens to the COVID-19 pandemic,” said Lauri Myllyvirta, Lead Analyst of CREA, while speaking at an online launching ceremony of the study organized by Alliance for Climate Justice and Clean Energy (ACJCE).

The Thar emissions would constitute one of the largest hotspots of mercury and carbon dioxide in South Asia, he said. The coal power plants would emit an estimated 1,400 kg of mercury per year, of which one fifth would be deposited into land ecosystems in the region.

Most of the deposition would take place onto cropland and increase the mercury concentrations in crops, said the lead analyst while terming the levels of mercury deposition as potentially dangerous in an area with 100,000 inhabitants.

The study also points out errors and omissions in the data used in Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) reports

of two coal power projects in Block-II and one in Block-VI as well as violations of Sindh Ambient Air Quality Standards and guidelines of World Health Organization (WHO) and IFC.

“Given the actual incidences of legal non-compliance and misreporting involved in social and environmental impact assessments, land surveys, land acquisition and compensation and the monitoring processes adopted for development of Thar coal mines and power plants, what the study reveals is just a proverbial iceberg of misleading public through data maneuvering, said Advocate Zubair Ahmad Abro of Alternative Law Collective, who has been fighting a legal battle for the communities adversely impacted by coal power projects in Thar. He resolved to continue legal battle for the rights of people suffering from the development of coal mines and power plants in Thar.

Muhammad Ali Shah, Chairman, Pakistan Fisher-folk Form (PFF) said the local communities of Thar were already suffering from forced displacement, encroachment on common grazing land, livelihood losses, water stress and air pollution induced by coal power project in Thar. To end the sufferings of Thari people, he demanded the government to adopt renewable energy projects and stop mining and import of coal for power generation.





# BHASHA DAM, A Big Blunder and Crime

Muhammad Ali Shah

It is my belief that a healthy and flowing Indus River provides life to Sindh. If we look from the days of British to current times, construction of dams and barrages have put pressure over flows of Indus by extracting more and more water. In addition to it, pollution and diversions to the river and channelizing it, living and healthy Indus River has reached the brink of destruction. By stopping Indus water, Indus River, Delta and people living there have been pushed to the wall socially and economically. The water, which brought silt for the growth of fish species, filled up lakes and provided rich soil to the lands, has either been constrained or dried up. Due to slow down of freshwater flow into Delta, various water ways, creeks

and lakes have become saline along with underground water resources. Resultantly, wells and ponds are not drinkable anymore for the local population and they are forced to purchase drinking water. Due to salt level increase, lands have become barren. Once rich fisheries, due to mangrove forests, are jeopardized and historically rich people of Delta are migrating on a larger scale. Despite that, the federal government is constructing Bhasha Dam and other dams that would further jeopardize life connected with the Indus River.

If we look at the mentality of controlling rivers, it shows roots back in colonial thinking by the powerful forces.

It is also true that federation of Pakistan, Punjab and establishment is following similar colonial thinking by controlling Indus River with Kalabagh Dam, Bhasha dam or other dam in the so-called name of national interest. If we study water controversies around the world, we will know that powerful countries' efforts for controlling rivers have totally political and economic motives. These forces want to control the river and its water to fulfil their interests. So, I think dam means 'Power', the one who has water, has power.

Recently, Imran Khan's federal government with colonial thinking has decided to construct Bhasha Dam. In this regard, Pakistan Tahreek e Insaaf's federal government made a joint venture of \$5.85 billion with China's state company China Power and Frontier Works Organization for the construction of Diamer

Bhasha Dam. Chinese company will have 70 percent and Frontier Works Organization will have 30 percent share in the construction. On the grounds of height level, it is mentioned that Bhasha will be the tallest dam in the world with 272 meters' height, it will store 8MAF water and generate 4,800 megawatt electricity.

Bhasha Dam will be constructed on the Indus River at Gilgit Baltistan's northern area, which is near to Chinese border. It is clear that China wants to increase its presence in the area. I think that construction of Bhasha Dam will be a big environmental blunder, because the construction site receives 300 earthquakes in a month, as it is at the peak of Central Asia's fault line. Besides, 200 square kilometre storage can bring flood on 100 kilometres of Karakorum Highway and damage villages and lands of more than 35,000 people in the area. Water and Power Development Authority (WAPDA) officials have mentioned that China will provide major funding for the dam and will also provide 17,000 workers from Three Gorges Dam Project. I would like to inform you that Basha Dam's original designer General Butt has informed then President Pervez Musharraf in 2004 in a letter stating, "I shudder at the thought of earthquake effects on Bhasha. Dam-burst would wipe out Tarbela and all barrages on Indus; which would take us back to the stone-age." In a September 2018 letter addressed to the

**It is also true that federation of Pakistan, Punjab and establishment is following similar colonial thinking by controlling Indus River with Kalabagh Dam, Bhasha dam or other dam in the so-called name of national interest. If we study water controversies around the world, we will know that powerful countries' efforts for controlling rivers have totally political and economic motives. These forces want to control the river and its water to fulfil their interests. So, I think dam means 'Power', the one who has water, has power.**

then chief justice of Pakistan, one of the US's foremost design and infrastructure firms, AECOM, cautioned against the proposed Diamer-Basha dam. The letter said, "If Wapda decides to proceed with this concept, the cost would be exorbitant and construction time would exceed ten years. The project risk associated with an RCC dam is extremely high due to the transportation issue and seismic profile found at the location of the project. In summation, for practical and economic reasons the RCC dam should not be recommended for the DBD project." It is reality that construction estimates of 2008 and current estimates have big differences. In 2008, it was said that the dam will be constructed with Rs1,400

billion, then it increased to Rs2,800 billion. However, currently there is an estimate of Rs442 billion. The question arises which estimate is the correct one. Due to construction of previous dams and barrages over Indus River, sea intrusion has wiped out 4.0 million acres of land in Delta's three districts Thatta, Sujawal and Badin, 1.2 million people have migrated from the area while 2.0 million people

have been affected with no discharge of water downstream Kotri Barrage. Our stand is that any effort of constructing dams or diverting water of the Indus River will have damaging effects over the life of the river. When we demand for releasing water in the river, then it is rhetoric of authorities that there is shortage of water but our rulers consider Bhasha Dam and Kalabagh Dam as beneficial for Sindh. We think that construction of Bhasha Dam will further endanger lives and environment related with Indus River. Politically motivated such decisions and policies will be disastrous for the helpless people of Delta.

There is a need that instead of controlling rivers, we should understand that they are living things, we provide them the right of free flowing and learn to live in harmony with nature. We should reject the wrong notion of human beings that the world is made for them and provide equal rights to every living thing on earth. Constraining rivers behind dams means constraining ourselves behind dams and polluting rivers means polluting ourselves. Let us work together to save rivers. It is time now that instead of constraining rivers behind dams, we provide them right to free flowing. We cannot make nature our slave due to our own motives. Thus, constructing any dam on the Indus River will be a big blunder and crime.



# Free Flowing Rivers

It is not an exaggeration to state that the Indus River and its tributaries have literally moulded the cultural, social and ecological ethos of Pakistan. Today, the Indus is dammed many times over and barely reaches the sea.

The Indus Water Treaty gave India utilisation rights over three of the Indus's major tributaries: the Beas, Sutlej and Ravi, and these rivers are now utilised to such an extent in India that today they almost do not flow into Pakistan.

In Pakistan these rivers have become a memory and cities and farms have been established in the channels of these rivers. The Indus too is utilised in so many ways by Pakistan before it reaches its delta that the delta is desiccating, dying and drying.





Recent studies estimate that the delta has shrunk 92 percent in the past 200 years. The impact of this drying has been felt intensely by the Indus Delta fisherfolk, who have lost their livelihoods as they have lost their river. Salinity ingress has degraded mangroves and tamarisk forests, changed species composition, affected farming and even drinking water supplies.

The Pakistan Fisherfolk Forum (PFF) has been exemplary in its work to protect the rights of the river and its people. The PFF has advocated consistently for more flows from upstream dams into the Indus Delta, and is now campaigning for legislation to recognise the rights of the Indus River.

According to the PFF, the Indus River should possess the following fundamental rights: The right to flow The right to perform essential functions within its ecosystem The right to be free from pollution The right to feed and be fed by sustainable aquifers The right to native biodiversity The right to restoration.

Muhammad Ali Shah, the Chairperson of PFF, describes the organisation's position and roadmap to protect the Indus: "The PFF believes that by building dams and barrages, the government has diverted the natural flow of the Indus River, destroyed the rivers' ecology, displaced the helpless people whose livelihood depended on the river, and destroyed the bio-diversity of the Indus Delta in the name of national interest and sustainable development. The PFF strongly feels that there is a dire need for the Indus River to be restored so that the river flows from start to tail end following the natural consistent

flow, and that the biodiversity and ecology of the river, the people and their livelihood is restored. What is the solution? Pakistani fisherfolk believe that unless we grant fundamental human rights to the delta, the way we have granted to citizens, the delta may not be restored. We must accord it fundamental rights to live, to survive and to "smile". Our demand is not vague or a fantasy. It is based on global precedents. New Zealand has granted the Wanganui River, and the Indian state Uttarakhand has given the Ganga and its tributary the Yamuna, the same legal rights as a human being.

Keeping the above international, regional and national situation in mind with regards to the gross violation of the rights of nature, the PFF has decided to start a campaign and movement on "Free Flowing the Indus River". The movement will also strive for the "Personhood Rights of River Indus". In this regard, mobilisation meetings, seminars, conferences, peoples' tribunals,

and petitions in the High Court and Supreme Court will be organised. Apart from this, the Pakistan Fisherfolk Forum will increase public awareness to highlight the issues around the Free-Flowing Indus River and Personhood Rights of the River Indus, acute water scarcity, degradation and illegal occupation of lakes, destruction of the Indus Delta, and diversion of rivers through dam building."

(Source: Free Flowing Rivers- the soul of South Asia by International Rivers : <https://www.internationalrivers.org/sites/default/files/attached-files/free-flowing-rivers-the-soul-of-south-asia-0.pdf>)



# A BARRAGE TO SAVE, OR DOOM, THE INDUS DELTA

Pakistani authorities say construction of a barrage will address key water issues, but there have been no local consultations, and experts fear that it will only add to the problems in the Indus delta

Shahid Shah



The proposed site of the barrage [image courtesy: WAPDA]

**W**ith the Indus delta in Pakistan's Sindh province fast [drying up](#), a doomsday scenario looms for communities dependent on it for survival. Drinking water is already scarce for villages in the active delta and reductions in sediment deposits have allowed for greater sea intrusion. Not only is the parched delta adversely affecting the population, it will also be sounding the alarm for the future of the vast mangroves, birds and fish along the river.

As these factors hang like a persistent threat to communities and force them to contemplate migrating to cities, Pakistan's Water and Power Development Authority (WAPDA) claims to have found a solution that will fix both the problems of water shortage and sea intrusion. The latter has become so serious that saline water has intruded 55 kilometres inland over the last seven months.

## A new barrage in the pipeline

The idea is to construct a water reservoir on the Indus river near Thatta, approximately 45 kilometres upstream of its outfall into the sea. Entitled the 'Sindh Barrage', the project is being hailed by WAPDA as one that will dramatically improve the situation not only in nearby villages but also for the densely populated and water-starved city of Karachi.

The project has received the approval of Pakistan's Prime Minister Imran Khan and construction is scheduled for a two-year period starting December 2022. In the meanwhile, WAPDA will conduct a feasibility study, engage international consultants to vet the proposal and complete the detailed designs for engineering.

In [a video presentation](#), WAPDA Chairman Lieutenant General (retired) Muzammil Hussain described the project as "phenomenal".

"Based on our conceptual study, this [barrage] can overcome both menaces," Hussain said. "There will be a simultaneous paradigm shift. [The idea is that] it will translate to a new era of development in Sindh. The end of sea intrusion will have a profound effect on the mangroves and sea life."

He vows that the project will bring a 25% return on investment and that the cost can be recovered in four years. International donor agencies will be approached for funds for construction, he added.

Authorities say the objective of the barrage construction is threefold: water storage of 2-3 million acre feet (2,467-3,700 cubic metres); flood mitigation for the surrounding 75,000 acres (303.5 square kilometres) of land; and 1,000 million gallons per day (4.5 million cubic metres per day) supply to Karachi and other towns.

## Decision without debate

The Sindh provincial government [has also agreed to the proposal](#), but without any consultation with stakeholders or debate in the legislative assembly.

Sindh's Minister for Agriculture, Muhammad Ismail Rahoo, who is an assembly member from the district of Badin that is threatened by encroaching sea water, said he was not called on for the WAPDA briefing to the chief minister of the province. "They might have called irrigation officials," he said.

Senator Sassui Palejo, a stakeholder from Thatta district and member of a Senate committee on water, also said she was kept uninformed. "They did not call us in the meeting. We are the stakeholders, [yet] we have no details," she said.

## Fears for the environment

Experts fear that the project will result in increased water logging in the surrounding lands and have a negative impact on the livelihood of communities that depend on riverbed

agriculture. They also question the availability of water to meet the needs of the proposal.

Idrees Rajput, a water expert who has previously served as the secretary of irrigation in Sindh, said the losses outweigh the benefits of such a structure. "Water will stay in the river bed from Kotri to the Sindh barrage. People will not be able to cultivate the land. Forests, too, will be damaged. Overall, this project does not seem feasible," he said.

Meer Mohammad Parhiyar, a former secretary to the provincial government, expressed concerns about the effects of such a structure on organisms living at the junction of the sweet and salt water estuary.

Parhiyar fears that the barrage will result in increased water logging and that silt would still remain in the riverbed. Instead of becoming fertile, he argued, the land of Thatta and Badin districts would become infertile.

"Instead of spending PKR 125 billion (USD 803 million) on this project, if WAPDA spent even half of it in lining the Kotri Barrage canals, not a single acre of land in Thatta, Sujawal and Badin districts will be out of cultivation," he said. The barrage at Kotri was constructed about 60 years ago between Jamshoro and Hyderabad. Losses of water there have been reported at up to 56,000 cusecs. In 2016, Pakistan's accountability bureau arrested two individuals in connection with the embezzlement of billions of rupees which were allocated to line Kotri Barrage.

Parhiyar quoted from a past report of the total committee on water resources, which notes that constructing the Tarbela dam on the Indus river has significantly reduced the discharge of water downstream. Data collected from the dam over a period of 28 years revealed that even in the high flood period, which was just seven years, the discharge downstream has been just above 50% of the allocated 10 million acre feet (maf). In the remaining years, when the water flow was low, the water

discharge was a mere 0.5 maf. In some years, low discharge resulted in the closure of electricity generation units.

Tahir Qureshi, a senior advisor on coastal ecosystems for the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), said the barrage would only be useful in the flooding seasons.

"For 10 months of the year, water does not flow downstream Kotri by up to 15 kilometres," he said.

He said the barrage would be a waste of money unless the availability of water downstream Kotri was not assured. "It would be a blunder on the part of the government. Mangroves, fisheries and marine life would all be adversely affected."

Altaf Ali Siyal from Sindh's Mehran University of Engineering and Technology predicted that silting in the riverbed would mean the end of marine life. "Palla fish (a commonly caught fish that travels upstream in the river) is already in danger. [If the barrage is constructed], we will only see the palla in textbooks." (Courtesy: TheThirdPole.net)





# OCEAN GRABBING AND DISPOSSESSING THE FISHERS

Muhammad Ali Shah

**O**cean grabbing is entering a dramatically new phase because the World Bank-led initiative is seeking privatization of property rights regimes to aquatic resources and top-down market-based conservation blueprints.

Are we witnessing a local form of global land and water grabs? Mimicking land grabbing, ocean grabbing consists of global processes and dynamics with extremely adverse impacts on people and communities, threatening a revered way of life, cultural identity, and livelihoods in small-scale fishing and closely related activities. Fishers and fishing communities must confront powerful forces that are dramatically reshaping existing access rights regimes and production models in fisheries. This process is leading not only to the dwindling control by small-scale fishers over these resources but also in many cases to their ecological destruction and very disappearance.

Ocean grabbing means the capturing of control by powerful economic actors of crucial decision-making around fisheries, including the power to decide how and for what purposes marine resources are used, conserved and managed now and in the future. As a result, these powerful actors, whose main concern is making and facilitating profit for private capital accumulation, are steadily gaining control of both the fisheries' resources and the benefits of their use. The global agenda is being replicated in waters that belong to fisher communities.

Some of the key institutions that are paving the way for ocean grabbing have adopted a human rights-based language and they argue that their 'policy reform' initiatives are rooted in the need for food security for all and poverty eradication. Wolves in the clothing of sheep! However, many examples around the world show that the underlying principle fuelling reform processes is a blind belief in

violence, but are far from being considered as socially legitimate. Sindh is an example of provincial government proposing a donor-funded fisheries policy that rests upon capitalist, hence predatory, principles.

Globally, three types of mechanisms are attempted. First, small-scale fishers are suddenly denied or lose the legal right to fish or harvest aquatic resources due to changes in legal frameworks that now require them to possess a market-embedded right to fish. The various forms of 'Rights-Based Fishing' (RBF) reforms are the key policies underpinning this form of dispossession. Such reforms, that typically allocate defined shares of allowable catch to individual fishermen or fishing companies, are frequently carried out without any meaningful consultation with small-scale fishers. In all countries where similar reforms have been implemented, fishing rights have become concentrated in the hands of fewer and fewer large players,

**Ocean grabbing is not only about fisheries' policy. It is unfolding an array of contexts including marine and coastal seawaters, inland waters, rivers and lakes, deltas and wetlands, mangroves, and coral reefs worldwide. The means by which fishing communities are dispossessed of the resources upon which they have traditionally depended is likewise taking many shapes and forms.**

market-based solutions that are in direct contrast to the wishes and demands of the representatives of civil society organizations which uphold the human rights for all.

Ocean grabbing is not only about fisheries' policy. It is unfolding an array of contexts including marine and coastal seawaters, inland waters, rivers and lakes, deltas and wetlands, mangroves, and coral reefs worldwide. The means by which fishing communities are dispossessed of the resources upon which they have traditionally depended is likewise taking many shapes and forms. It occurs through mechanisms as diverse as (inter)national fisheries governance and trade and investment policies, designated terrestrial, coastal and marine 'no-take' conservation areas, (eco)tourism and energy policies, finance speculation, and the expanding operations of the global food and fish industry, including large-scale aquaculture, among others.

Resource grabs are taking place in the broader context of changing global economic, financial, climate and environmental dynamics. As a result, a fundamental re-valuation of natural resources is currently underway. This re-valuation signals an attempt to wrest land, water, fisheries and forests and their related resources.

Ocean grabbing is occurring in varied ways across a diversity of politico-legal settings. One common denominator is the exclusion of small-scale fishers from access to fisheries and other natural resources and access to markets through the adoption or reinterpretation of laws, regulations or policies affecting fisheries governance. Throughout the world, legal frameworks are emerging that undermine the position of small-scale fisheries producers and systems, while strengthening or reinforcing the position of corporate actors and other powerful players. Such 'perfectly legal' re-allocation processes may or may not involve coercion and

and with more working fishers increasingly becoming aquatic 'tenants' paying exorbitant rents to the few 'sea lords' or 'armchair fishermen' who own and lease the quota.

Small-scale fishers, who previously had direct physical access to their customary fishing waters and to the coastal land that surrounds these or the associated ports infrastructures, are suddenly losing this access. This is happening in different ways. One way is through the establishment of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) with fishing bans or restrictions, for 'conservation' purposes. Spreading rapidly across all continents, MPAs are frequently located around bio-diversity hotspots. Declared as non-access zones, these are often the best fishing grounds remaining for local fishing communities, which see their use curtailed or find themselves displaced.

Another way that small-scale fishers are dispossessed of customary fishing rights is through the privatization of marine or lake coastal zones. A third way is the location and scale of landing sites and port facilities supported by states and the industry that are exclusively designed to sustain large-scale and export activities, at the expense of local economies and markets.

Small-scale fishers increasingly face sharply dwindling catches due to both overfishing, and pollution and destruction of fishing grounds and other critical aquatic habitats by large-scale industrial players, a kind of pre-emptive exclusion from the resource itself. In this manner, large-scale fleets operating in territorial marine zones 'capture' resources from local fishers and the entire chain of people who rely on traditional fishing activities.



# MANCHHAR LAKE

## PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE

Mustafa Mirani

I have seen Manchhar lake in two parts. Firstly, I am an eyewitness of half of the century from my childhood and secondly, I have spent time with the elders, some of them lived for a century or near to that. I talked to them for longer periods on the pride and fall of Manchhar lake.

**M**anchhar lake, situated in Sindh's two districts Dadu and Jamshoro, is the largest fresh water dam of South Asia. It is spread over 233 square kilometres, which increases to 400 square kilometres during flood. According to Arab, English and local historians this lake is 10,000 years old. Naturally, Manchhar used to get water from three sources; Aral Wah and Danster Wah from Indus River, rains streams from Kirthar mountain ranges and third from Main Nara Valley. Manchhar has remained source of livelihood for thousands of fishermen, peasants, workers and livestock holders. It contained 52 species of fish and hundreds of tons of fishing was done on daily basis. During the winter, more than 100 species of winter birds used to come from Siberia and increased beauty of this lake. They numbered in hundreds of thousands. These birds used

to attract visitors from all over the world towards the lake. The water of Manchhar lake irrigated more than 100,000 acres of land. Fishermen living inside the lake in boats were not worried about their livelihood. They used to purchase only wheat while all other food was either available for free or it was exchanged. People were rich and women had enough gold to wear. Several fishermen used to perform Hajj regularly. Two thousand families lived in boats in the lake. They performed all their customs in the boats including marriages. Other celebrations including festivals were also done on boats. People living over there were generous too. There was no religious confrontation. All religions and sects lived together and performed there celebrations even after independence of Pakistan. Growers that cultivated their land son Manchhar water were also well-to-do people of the area.





Today's Manchhar is completely different from the past. During the British Raj, Sukkur Barrage was constructed and main source of water to this lake, West Nara Canal was closed. It is known as Main Nara Valley and it was changed to Drain, Main Nara Valley Drain. The ill fate of Manchhar started from this point. After construction of Sukkur Barrage in 1932, Main Nara Valley was filled with water during monsoon and reached to Manchhar but wrong planning of WAPDA with approval of discharging surface drain of saline water of paddy crop into Manchhar affected the lake. Following it, WAPDA started another project in 1989 with name of RBOD (Right Bank Outfall Drain), which allowed saline water discharge of right bank districts of Indus River; Jacobabad, Shikarpur, Larkana and Dadu. Sindh government protested saying that this will increase salt level in the lake. WAPDA replied that salt level will remain under the standard level of 700ppm and water will remain drinkable. WHO level for drinking water has level of 1,000ppm and agriculture use water at 1,500ppm. This project was completed in 1992, then water was degraded. The salt level reached till 3,500 ppm and this content reached to 8,000 to 10,000 ppm. Resultantly, according to a survey, in 1950 more than 3,000 tons of fish was caught, it reached to 100 tons in 2001. Half of the population, dependent on Manchhar lake, migrated to other areas, some people migrated to Mangla and Tarbela dams even. Poverty level increased in the Manchhar area and livelihood of the people was constrained. Siberian birds stopped coming and environment of the lake was badly affected. Agriculture lands near lake have also become barren. Climate change is also a major reason behind degradation

of Manchhar, as rain water has stopped coming from Kirthar ranges but the major reason is RBOD's saline water. Degradation of Manchhar has caused destruction to a complete civilization, as thousands of people had to leave their homes. Migratory birds stopped coming, agriculture lands became barren and fish stocks were wiped out. Out of 2,000 living boats in Manchhar only 50 are left. In 1994, the then Chief Minister of Sindh Syed Abdullah Shah had ordered revival of Manchhar lake and end of RBOD but he could not continue a longer period in the government and his orders were not followed. He had ordered the constitution of a committee to hold the responsible people from the degradation of the lake accountable. The Irrigation Department had devised a plan to link RBOD to Indus through a link canal near Sehwan and then discharge to the other side of the river through siphon into the LBOD and discharge in the sea. Since he did not stay longer in the government, this project could not be completed. After that Pervez Musharraf's government had planned to discharge that saline water directly in Gharao from Sehwan and discharged into the sea but this project has not been completed so far.

Hundreds of thousands of people have been denied their right to sweet drinking water, there have been losses of billions of rupees, hundreds of thousands of people had to leave their houses and culture, hundreds of thousands of acres of land have become barren and thousands of peasants have migrated.



# Pakistan

## Can Fetch Millions of Dollars Through Ecotourism

### Shahid Husain

Pakistan has over 1,000-km coastline with beautiful virgin beaches. Instead of pursuing "kill and dump" policy by the establishment if these beaches are developed, the country can fetch millions of dollars in ecotourism. Sri Lanka focused on education and solely depends on tourism. Pakistan can replicate Sri Lankan experience and should provide basic good education to the impoverished Baluch and Sindhi youth. Education liberates and is reciprocal. While the student learns from the teacher, the teacher learns from the student. Bad policies, greed and adherence to unscientific policies have badly damaged the image of Pakistan that once attracted tourists from across the world whether it was in the serene desert of Tharparkar adjoining the "Great Indian Desert" of Rajasthan, India or along Sindh-Balochistan coastal belt or in Dadu and Badin districts. People live in fear while an inept bureaucracy in connivance with donor agencies is minting money. These bureaucrats have accumulated large sums of money through kickbacks and have no affinity with nature and local population. Bureaucratic capital is playing a big role in Pakistan's ailing economy. Youth is desperate to find a livelihood and in desperation often resort to violence that is not only harmful for their health but also the society. Massive corruption is nibbling the very social fabric of Pakistan society.

Take the example of Manchar Lake. Located 18-kilometer west of Sehwan in Dadu district of Sindh and 300-kilometers north of Karachi, Manchar is a vast natural depression surrounded by Khirthar Range hills in the West, the Lakki hills in the East and a flood embankment in the Northeast. It is Pakistan's biggest freshwater lake; some even say it is Asia's biggest lake, though that is debatable. But today it would be more apt to describe Manchar as a grim cesspool of agricultural effluents, including pesticides. How did that happen? The lake's misfortune can be traced back to 1982, when Pakistani authorities remodeled the Main Nara Valley Drain: built in 1932 by British colonialists to control floods in the Hammal Lake in southern Sindh and to protect the low-lying areas of the province, the water body was now turned into a drain to carry industrial runoff and agricultural effluents into the Arabian Sea. But then how did that affect the Manchar? The remodeled drain -- now called the Right Bank Outfall Drain -- did not work and was redirected to Manchar. The authorities assumed that freshwater from the Indus and from the torrents that gush down the Kirthar hills during the rainy season -- the two sources of the lake -- would dilute the effluents. That was a big mistake. For, Manchar's two sources don't provide it enough water to clean effluents. Flows from the Indus are drying up because of barrages and dams in its upstream. Moreover, the thinning down of Himalayan glaciers means that rainfall in Sindh is extremely erratic; so the Manchar does not receive much water from the torrents. This has meant that Manchar can provide scarce support to communities who have lived by it for centuries -- perhaps

even ages. Amongst them are fisherfolk called the Mohanas. Architect and town planner Arif Hasan -- who also writes on environmental issues -- says, "Folklore has it that the Mohanas are descendants of people of the Indus Valley Civilisation. Some suggest that the word Mohenjodaro is a corruption of Mohana-jo-daro -- the tomb of Mohanas." They are a fast dwindling community today. According to an analyst at Pakistan Fisherfolk Forum, a non-governmental organization: "Once there were 60,000 Mohanas at the lake. Their population dropped to 25,000 and today it is even less due to increasing effluents in the lake."

**The effluent-ridden lake water is no longer fit for drinking. So, the Mohanas have to purchase drinking water from a supply facility at the embankment.**

**The sinking lake has also paid to the livelihoods of hundreds of agriculturists who diverted its waters through small canals, phats, and then used the lake-bed for farming.**

**And that is not the end of their woes: the lake's toxic waters have played havoc on the health of their livestock. "Viral diseases, such as rinder pest and foot and mouth, and bacterial diseases such as haemorrhage septicemia and black quarter have become common among livestock. The animals in the area are also plagued by tympina/bloat and acidosis," say experts.**

An unwelcoming place

The lake's once-rich marine and aquatic life has also suffered. Environmentalists list about 10 fish species that can still be found in Manchar but says that their diversity and numbers were much higher, even a few years back. In the past, the lake waters were kept at 112-reduced level (rl, the lake's water height with respect to mean sea-level). The surplus was diverted to the Indus; "fish seeds" swam into the lake against the flow of the Indus-bound waters. The process was a boon for the Mohanas, for these little creatures would grow up to weigh a tasty 2.5 kilograms. That's a thing of the past now

In the past, the lake was the winter home to numerous migratory birds species. Since it was the first wetland on their route, Manchar during winters was redolent with a host of migratory bird species. In fact, according to the environmentalist Shujaudin Qureshi, who is now associated with Pakistan Institute of Labour Education and Research (PILER): "About 20,000-30,000 birds still visit the lake every year." However, Qureshi also adds that pollution has caused a drastic fall in their numbers. Another environmentalist Mirani notes that migratory birds do visit the lake, but fly off after an overnight stay.

It is clear: Manchar is dying and its water can now kill.

# Sindh Peoples Caravan

(March 1 till March 14, 2017)

For nearly two decades now, the Pakistan Fisherfolk Forum has been striving for the socio-economic, political and cultural rights of the indigenous fishing and peasant communities of Pakistan. At international level, the PFF carries out the rights-based work through the platform of the World Forum of Fisher Peoples (WFFP) as the PFF currently hold its chair.

In continuation with the PFF's yearly campaign for the restoration for River Indus and Indus Delta, the PFF organized Sindh Peoples Caravan. The Sindh Peoples Caravan was divided into two major phases as mentioned hereunder;





**MOBILIZATION AND AWARENESS RAISING PHASE:** The Mobilization and awareness raising phase started from February 10, 2017 and continued till March 6, 2017. This month long phase included sensitization and political education with regards to the need of a socially organized movement for a strong resistance against the violation of basic right to water. Around 20000 people from fishing and peasant villages, academia, religious leaders, government officers, media and others were sensitized throughout Sindh province. The associate members of Pakistan Fisherfolk Forum, activist and leaders actively participated in the mobilization phase of Sindh Peoples Caravan. During the phase people were invited to actively participate during the next major phase of Sindh Peoples Caravan.

**SINDH PEOPLES CARAVAN-THE CAMPAIGN PHASE:** The second phase included a series of political actions across the province Sindh. This phase started with a week-long campaign from Karachi on March 7, 2017 and culminated on March 14, 2017 in Hyderabad in the form of a massive



people's assembly that was participated by around 5000 people from fishing and peasant communities, civil society members, academia, government officials, media and other stakeholders. The 2017 Sindh Peoples Caravan was carried out under the theme;

## PROTECTION OF OUR RIVERS & DELTA.



### Specific Objectives of Sindh Peoples Caravan included:

- To raise awareness among the communities about their water rights and responsibility
- To strongly demand from IRSA for reserving at least 35 MAF water downstream of Kotri for regeneration of Indus Delta
- To explore the factors damaging health of water bodies and rivers and therefore diminish life and livelihood of indigenous people
- To extend strong voice for improved water governance and environment flows of rivers
- To sensitize people for no more dams, no more diversions and no more cuts on Indus River in future





## TDH PROJECT

The project addresses the problems of youth and children of fishermen community of Ibrahim Hyderi in Karachi. The project is aimed to organise and mobilise youth of the fishermen community to get equipped with education and skills to reduce the poverty and social vulnerability of fishing community. The project also aims to improve social interaction among local and immigrant communities so that social harmony is increased and isolated communities have opportunities to get mainstreamed in society adopting alternative livelihood resources. The project is focused to improve education through awareness and youth mobilisation for skill learning and human resource development. It is planned to enhance gender balanced social development though creating space for girls to learn and participate in recreational activities.

### PROJECT ACTIVITIES:

#### **Youth Training**

PFF organized a training on youth programmes in cooperation with the TDH on 15/2/2019 at Ibrahim Hyderi Karachi with the aim of contributing to the reduction of youth unemployment in both Ucs.

#### **Girl's football Match**

PFF in collaboration with TDH hosted the first football match for girls in Ibrahim Hyderi with 4 teams participating in the event that concluded in month of RAMZAN. Participating from IBRAHIM HYDERI, young footballers were seen in action during the matches played in the tournament.

#### **Formation of Child Clubs in Six Schools**

Formation of Child Clubs in selected 6 schools of the project area was done in order to enable children to participate and learn in an enabling environment. A Child Club comprising of 20 children has been formed. This was also aimed at reducing dropout ratio and increase enrollment in government schools.



## Career Counseling Events

Six career counselling events were held in order to empower youth with particular focus on the girls. The career counseling events were organized by the consultants and career experts.

## Establishing two skill development centers

Two skill development centers were established in two areas Ibrahim Hydri and Ali Akber Shah village to train women, girls and boys to produce skilled human resource.

## SAFE SPACE FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS

Safe Space for Women and Girls have expanded safe spaces to reach over 200 women, young women and girls in Ibrahim Hyderi. Providing access to economic, social, political, and cultural and sport opportunities to fulfil their potential and actively contribute to the development of their community.

## Child Participation Events:

### SINDHI CULTURAL DAY:

Cultural day was celebrated with eagerness by PFF selected public school children in the both UCs. Students from the six schools gave speeches, sung songs and theater performance for the audience.

### WORLD ENVIRONMENTAL DAY:

World Environment Day was celebrated at Government primary Ali Akbar Shah School under the theme 'Say no to plastic pollution.' Various activities such as planting saplings and discussion on environmental issues were held.

## School infrastructure

### development and play material:

Pakistan Fisherfolk forum with the collaboration of TDH provided basic facilities to public schools to improve the quality education.

## Global Action Month:

### Girls Forum:

PFF staff team and Youth of PFF organized public event to commemorate World Fisheries Day on 21 November under the theme "girls forum" at Ibrahim Hyderi, Karachi to raise voice for the protection of Ocean Ecology which is being threaten by the industrial waste dumping in ocean and using the deep see trawlers for fishing.

## Sport Tournament Events:

Pakistan Fisherfolk forum with the collaboration of TDH organized boys' friendly football match on November, 2019 on the occasion of Global Action Month to create awareness as regards important of sports. Approximately 100 youth from both UCs participated in the customized and fun-filled track and field events.

## World Day Against Child labor

The World Day against Child Labor was held on 12-6-2019. It is an international day to raise awareness and prompt action to stop child labor in all of its forms. Total 150 children, 50 youth and 50 community members and school's children took part in world day against child labour.



# Capacity Charges,

Reveal Studies

## Neglecting Renewables Intensifying Pakistan's Financial Burden:

Massive build-up of coal power projects in Thar and ignoring renewable energy both at policy and operational level have been intensifying Pakistan's financial burden amidst the economic downturn induced by COVID-19, reveal two studies launched.

High capacity payments to thermal and coal power generators coupled with surplus installed generation capacity have been adding to increasing cost of electricity and worsening power sector's circular debt, state the studies conducted by Institute for Energy Economic and Financial Analysis (IEEFA) and World Wind Energy Association (WWEA).

Both the studies launched at a webinar—titled as “Pakistan's Power Crisis: Imperatives for Renewable Energy in Sindh” and organized by Alliance for Climate Justice and Clean Energy (ACJCE)—underlined the significance of using the renewable energy of Sindh as the cheapest and the most cost competitive source of power that does not receive any capacity payments.

Simon Nicholas, author of IEEFA's study titled 'Thar Coal: Locking Pakistan into Unsustainable Capacity Payments', said the government of Pakistan had already realized the gravity of capacity payment issue and raised it with the

government of China, which had been sponsoring coal power projects in the country under China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).

“Premier Imran Khan has noted that total capacity payments to power generators could reach an entirely unsustainable Rs1.5 trillion (US\$9bn) in the next few years. The government of Pakistan has now asked China for easier repayment terms on 12GW of CPEC power projects totaling US\$30bn of investment,” he said.

Despite the gravity of capacity payments, he said two more coal power projects in Thar, namely Thar Energy Limited and Shanghai Electric had reached financial close in the current years. These projects, he said, would not only receive capacity payments but also intensify the issue of overcapacity afflicting the power sector before the outbreak of pandemic.

Zeeshan Ashfaq, author of WWEA study titled, '*Fostering Renewable Energy Development in Sindh: Identification of Impediments and the Road Ahead*', said weak grid infrastructure; limited ability of provincial government, lack of effective coordination mechanisms; and arbitrariness in regulatory and policy decisions were hampering growth of renewables in Sindh.

**He said Sindh, where 72 percent of existing solar and wind power projects of the country were located, had an immense potential for development of renewables. However due to centralized governance of power sector in the country, the potential of the province for renewables was not being realized. In December 2017, the cabinet committee on energy's decision stopped renewable energy projects, including the ones initiated by Sindh under feed-in-tariff framework, while allowing the coal and RLNG based plants to be developed.**

He urged the Council of Common Interests to act proactively for enhanced coordination between the federal and provincial governments on renewable energy policy, planning and development. Besides, he demanded the Sindh government to formulate provincial renewable energy policy, in line with its mandate and the federal Alternative Renewable Energy (ARE) Policy-2019.

Others who spoke at the occasion included Sohaib Malik, Senior Analyst, Wood Mackenzie Power & Renewables; Engineer Mehfooz Qazi, Director, Sindh Solar Energy Project, Sindh Energy Department; and Advocate Ramis Sohail, a representative of Alternative Law Collective and ACJCE. **#End#**



Formally founded in 1998, the Pakistan Fisherfolk Forum (PFF) is a registered unique civil society organization working for advancement of social, economic, cultural and political rights of fisherfolk and peasants in Pakistan enjoying great mass support.

The Pakistan Fisherfolk Forum (PFF) can be described as the one of the strongest social movements in Pakistan. The PFF is a democratic organization with more than 100,000 memberships across the country having minimum 35% women ratio. PFF has proved itself as nursery of producing the leaders in the fishing and peasant communities across Pakistan. Its struggle targets the policy issues relating to fishing rights, fish marketing & fish conservation, rehabilitation of the Indus Delta, Sustainable Fisheries Policy, abolition of Contract System over inland waters, historical fishing rights on entire water bodies for indigenous fishers, discouraging industrial fishing by deep sea trawlers & marine pollution, detention of fishermen. Besides, agrarian reforms, land reforms and promotion of organic farming are some other advocacy agenda of the organization. The PFF's capacities and capabilities of working in the field of early warning, rescue and evacuation, emergency response and early recovery have been recognized at national and international level. Thus, PFF is at home in the fields of CBDRM, DRR and climate change. The PFF also remained engaged with the government departments at district and provincial level to take the concern and problems of communities forward. The PFF's engagement with the government provided an opportunity for both communities and government to sit together and learn about each other's experience and expertise.

PFF has an image of a future in which fishers and peasants live a life of dignity and realize their rights to life and livelihoods. They are organized to promote democracy, equity, equality, social justice, sustainable development and responsible use of natural resources.

### **PFF Governing Body meeting July 4, 2020**

**Place: SDS Hall, Qasimabad Hyderabad**

**Chair: Muhammad Ali Shah (Chairman Pakistan Fisherfolk Forum)**

#### **Participants:**

- |                             |   |
|-----------------------------|---|
| 1- Muhammad Ali Shah        | (Chairman),                             |
| 2- Fatima Majeed            | (Senior Vice Chairperson),              |
| 3- Mustafa Mirani           | (Vice Chairman),                        |
| 4- Saeed Baloch             | (General Secretary),                    |
| 5- Ramzan Mallah            | (Deputy General Secretary),             |
| 6- Gulab Shah               | (Coordination Secretary),               |
| 7- Ramzan Mallah            | (District President Umerkot),           |
| 8- Allah Bachayo Mallah     | (District General Secretary Umerkot),   |
| 9- Rasool Bux Mallah        | (District President, Sanghar),          |
| 10- Ayub Mallah             | (District General Secretary, Sanghar),  |
| 11- Muhammad Ishaq Mirani   | (District President Kashmore Kandhkot), |
| 12- Mithan Mallah           | (District President Badin),             |
| 13- Umer Mallah             | (District General Secretary, Badin),    |
| 14- Haji Abdul Rahim Mallah | (Information Secretary, Badin),         |
| 15- Aslam Mallah            | (Member Governing Body, Badin),         |
| 16- Muhammad Mallah         | (Member Governing Body, Jamshoro),      |
| 17- Abdul Majeed Mallah     | (District President Hyderabad) and      |
| 18- Talib Katchhi           | (General secretary, Karachi).           |

#### **Agenda:**

- 1- Campaign against coal power plants
- 2- Formation of strategy on water scarcity and grabbing of lakes
- 3- Central election

#### **Proceedings:**

Agenda 1, Campaign against coal power plants

Chairman Muhammad Ali Shah welcomed all members of the governing body and said that Pakistan Fisherfolk Forum has been opposing coal power plants since its formation. PFF is part of several international campaigns against coal power plants. Currently, coal power plants are in progress in Lakhra and Thar, which would make thousands of Thari people homeless and whole land of Thar would become polluted. Pakistan Fisherfolk Forum is the alone civil society organization that is opposing coal power plants abroad and in Pakistan besides becoming part of the protest campaigns and long march against coal is an example of it. This is why, today's meeting's first agenda is coal power plants and we are seeking suggestions against it, so that we support the affected people from it and our struggle saves their livelihood and environment. He said that they are mobilizing people through advocacy and PFF has also launched its YouTube channel as well, which is being subscribed by several people. Process of online meetings is also continued, which is being participated by national as well as international experts and civil society organizations in a large number. Besides, online press conferences are also being conducted. Situation of Thar is very much depressing where people are migrating due to coal mining and they are facing issues of livelihood. Thari people are endangered from several angle. In order to provide fresh water to Thar coal, a channel is being constructed from Farsh Makhi canal to Nabisar, which will take water from Chotiari dam that would affect the local population and there would be water scarcity and it is threat to livelihood of thousands of fishermen. Thus, PFF think on it and start mobilizing fishermen.

Ramzan Mallah of Umerkot said that due to Thar coal water scheme there would be shortage of water in Umerkot lakes, especially Kalanker will face dryness. Livelihood of thousands of fishermen of Chotiari dam will also be disturbed, so I suggest that campaign should be started from Umerkot and Sanghar districts.

Umer Mallah of Badin said that I have been surveying



the area for last two months on behalf of Pakistan Fisherfolk Forum and have been grieved to see that local people are being suppressed, no organization is working while all people are looking towards Pakistan Fisherfolk Forum, as Thar being close to Badin, is well aware of PFF struggle. Situation is painful as people are being forcefully migrated. There is need to do work to save Thar and natural beauty of Thar.

Aslam Mallah of Badin said he was also working in Thar. People over there were facing lot of problems especially there is an increase in the number of diseases after coal mining. Number of suicides is increasing after an increase in the poverty but nobody is listening them. Livestock is dying in a larger number, which has increased problems of the people depending on livestock.

Mustafa Mirani said that Thar is beautiful and known for beautiful peacocks but due to increase in diseases after coal mining, thousands of peacocks have also died along with people. Due to construction of Gorano dam, people have become homeless, it would further damage the beauty of Thar. People are being suppressed because of nearing border and being non-Muslims. No organization is allowed to work and it is a big challenge to Pakistan Fisherfolk Forum to save people and environment of Thar.



Following decisions were taken with the consensus of all participants.

- 1- Online meetings, seminars and press conferences of Pakistan Fisherfolk Forum should be continued.
- 2- Online rally will be held on 15 July on Zoom platform
- 3- A conference will be held in Karachi on Social Distance and SOPs, which will be attended by affected people of Thar coal and others. Around 200 people will attend it. Hyderabad and Karachi's civil society will be appealed to participate in larger scale.

## Agenda 2: Formation of strategy on water scarcity and grabbing of lakes

Ramzan Mallah of Sanghar said that there is water shortage in dams while lakes were occupied by influential people. Fisherfolk Forum had struggled a lot but lakes were not freed fully from the grabbing. So, there is a need to continue the struggle.

Rasool Bux Mallah said they have already been part of the struggle. Now, Sanghar district will again welcome struggle call of the centre. However, people had lost livelihood due to shortage of fish stocks but campaign against the lake grabbing should be continued. Ishaq Mirani said that some grabbings were freed after decision of Sindh High Court while some new licenses have been issued on some lakes. Poor fishermen avoid in front of influential lords but struggle should be continued.

Majeed Mallah said that due to coming in tail-end several lakes were facing dryness, thus, strategy should be formalized against water shortage.

Muhammad Mallah said several lakes were occupied in Jamshoro district due to political support and fisheries department was not working independently, so keep the struggle continued.

## Decisions:

- 1- Through press conference, Sindh government will again be appealed to get the lakes freed from grabbing.
- 2- District leaders will meet each concerned deputy commissioner and pursued to implement decision of the High Court.

## Agenda 3: central election

General Secretary Saeed Baloch informed that the current body had completed its constitutional term but due to some issues and continuous work election was not conducted. So, members should suggest what should be done regarding election.



Majeed Mallah said that election would be fine but if there are issues then selection could be done.

Umer Mallah said that election was being done on time in some districts and delay in election at the centre could cause negative impacts, so election should be conducted on time.

Muhammad Mallah said election was a democratic process, which should be held in anyway.

Ayub Mallah said election should be held but if there is any problem there was no harm in the selection.

Ishaq Mirani said election was necessary.

# SINDH PEOPLES CARVAN

## Demanding End of Coal Power Plants, Coal Mining and Coal Import

(August 20-October 2, 2019)

### Introduction:

Pakistan Fisherfolk forum (PFF) planned different weeks of action for climate justice. Strategically the PFF formed steering committees on provincial level and climate justice forum that comprised on experts and members from civil society, political parties, media and relevant stakeholders from ministry of food, fisheries, agriculture, livestock, revenue, social welfare, PDMA, planning and development department, EPA and health department and other. These committees and forums become instrumental in discussing the climate change and other environmental issues. In addition to this, the PFF carries out various public actions to projects and ventures (coal-fired power generation) that pose threat to environment. Coal is a dirty energy, its demand and use is expanding in Pakistan. The major factor behind this shift to coal

include; Pakistan's increasing demand for energy especially for electricity, its narrative of using coal as cheapest source for energy generation and availability of local coal resources in Tharparkar, part of early harvest projects of China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) involving investments of approximately US\$13.520 billion for numerous joint energy ventures for coal mining and power generation. Pakistan has a potential of more than 300,000 MW of wind energy. However, the present electricity generation from wind resources does not exceed 500 MW including large potential of solar energy. PFF took out a big Sindh peoples caravan under the theme of the **Ending the killing coal**.





## **Mobilization phase :**

In order to make caravan successful and meaningful, PFF initiated mobilization and awareness raising first phase started from 20 August that continued till September 19, 2019. This month-long phase included sensitization and political education with regards to the need of a socially organized movement for the strong resistance against the use of coal. Around 6,000 people from fishing communities, coal affectees, political and social activists, academia, media and other members of civil society were sensitized throughout the Sindh province. The people were motivated to participate in the caravan and highlight the issues and raise the public's demands to stop coal in Sindh.

PFF conducted many novel activities under the phase I. It aimed to educate and sensitize the public and other stakeholders about the social, environmental and cultural impacts of the coal-fired power plants, imported coal and coal mining. PFF believes that it is very important to mobilize regarding the issues and demands of the caravan that were highlighted and demanded through the 10 days long struggle of the caravan action. Most of these coal projects are settled in the coastal belt and in Tharparkar and these places belongs to the indigenous communities.

Mobilization took place into different districts of the Sindh including Karachi, Thatta, Badin, Sujawal, Mithi, Umerkot, Sanghar and Hyderabad.



## **SINDH PEOPLES CARAVAN-THE CAMPAIGN PHASE:**

### **Overall Objective:**

Demand end of coal import, mining and coal power generation in Pakistan

### **Specific Objectives of Sindh Peoples Caravan included:**

- Formation and of renewable energy policy in Sindh
- Implementation of renewable energy policy in letter and spirit of the law
- Highlight the social and environmental issues resulting from coal import, coal mining and coal power generation in Tharparkar and coastal areas
- Organize and mobilize all concerned stakeholders especially the fishing, pastoralist of Thar and peasant communities affected due to coal import, mining and coal power generation
- To explore the factors damaging health, life, environment and livelihoods of fishing and peasants communities affected by coal mining, coal import and coal power plants.

## RALLY

### “Social and Environment Impacts of the Coal”

On 16 March 2019, PFF organized a grand rally in the connection to protect the environment. The aim of the rally was to protect the water bodies from the dumping the power plants waster and construction the coal power plants near by the coastal belt.

Hundreds of women, children from fishermen community of Karachi thronged into the streets, marched against the environmental impacts of coal power plants. Rally took place from Arts Council of Pakistan to Karachi Press Club. Carry placards and banners against negative impacts of coal on environment, ecology and communities, while women chanted slogans and demand government to immediately shut the coal based power plants in order to save environment.

In front press club, chairperson Mohammad Ali Shah leading the rally started his speech with bold highlighted words "A

full stop to all Public finance to coal related projects".

The affected community of coal expressed serious concern over degradation of environment and livelihood of local people and demanded the government to protect rights of local population. They underlined the need to adopt alternative energy sources like wind and solar instead of coal. Transportation, lifting and dumping of coal in the absence of any measures had badly affected the areas PFF chairman briefed the rally participants about threats of coal power plants on environment and biodiversity and In the last, Mohammad Ali Shah demanded that there is a need to mobilize public finance to alter democratic renewable and cleans energy system for people and marginalized communities as soon as practicable and stop excessive energy consumption by corporation and Ilc.

#### Gallery:



#### Media:

[https://dailytimes.com.pk/366468/fisherwomen-march-against-environmental-impacts-of-coal-power-plants/?fbclid=IwAR2S6v5scFeGOaJio2KXBj9g\\_CODE004U1VOElp92782yM7lkv2Y94iOeKA](https://dailytimes.com.pk/366468/fisherwomen-march-against-environmental-impacts-of-coal-power-plants/?fbclid=IwAR2S6v5scFeGOaJio2KXBj9g_CODE004U1VOElp92782yM7lkv2Y94iOeKA)

<https://www.infokhazana.com/2019/03/17/rally-demands-minimization-of-harmful-impacts-of-coal-projects/?fbclid=IwAR078NOsZE8N52DPSOjTjLO8U6XMWGmJ9MyXgj0XFyy3AzWg8wPj-GIK0koo#.XI-0v7hIDIV>



## Social and environmental impacts of Thar coal power project

December 13, 2018. Hyderabad

Speakers at a seminar organised by the Pakistan Fisherfolk Forum (PFF) at a local hotel on Thursday demanded a ban on all coal-powered electricity generation plants in the country, especially those being installed in Tharparkar.

They also vowed to launch a movement against use of coal for power generation.

PFF chairman Mohammed Ali Shah told the seminar titled 'Social and environmental impacts of Thar coal power project' that a forum was being established to resist the use of coal in power generation at Thar in the larger interest of the desert region's population.

Their lives, livestock, fertile land and environment all are at stake, according to him.



Sindh Agriculture University (SAU) Prof Dr Mohammad Ismail Kumbhar called for an environmental impact assessment (EIA) to address the issues highlighted by the PFF chief and the media regarding the hazards involved.

Mr Shah said that coal-powered plants must be banned across the country. Instead, he stressed, government should focus on renewable sources of energy.

"There are four prominent types of coal used around the world [for the purpose] — lignite, bituminous, sub-bituminous and anthracite — and lignite discovered in Thar and known as brown coal contains less amount of carbon and a greater amount of water. It's the dirtiest and worst kind of coal," he said.

He claimed that emission from this category of coal was considered to be responsible for premature death.

He pointed out that the Thar coalfield was divided into 12 blocks. Initially, block I and II were leased out to a private corporate firm for mining. It was in block II where practical work for surface mining and installation of 660MW power plants was started in 2015.

"The lignite coal of Thar will produce dirtiest energy in Pakistan," he claimed.

The other issues that needed to be looked into were land disputes, dewatering of the Gorano reservoir, cost of land estimated at a lower side, absence of a resettlement policy for the affected Thari villagers etc.

Sindh Environmental Protection Agency (Sepa) deputy director (technical) Muneer Abbasi said that ecological conditions should be restored without any compromises on sustainable development. He said that major environmental issues which were arising out of the proposed activity related to solid waste, air emission and occupational health safety. He stated that the issues pertained to emission of gases, smoke and ambient air quality.

"We are addressing the issues in the light of possible effects after the project is put into operation," he said.

A resident of Gorano village, Mr Bheemraj, said that Tharis fretted about the saline water reservoir as it was taking its toll on the entire environment and ecology of the region. He said the court of law had also been moved over it.

Asim Nawaz Khan, Suleman G. Abro, Pushpa Kumari, Dastagir Bhatti, Bukshal Talho, Nazeer Qureshi, Ishaq Mangrio and others also spoke. (Courtesy: DAWN)

# Consultation on Water Schemes for Thar Coal

July 21, 2020 (Tuesday) Umerkot

**Stakeholders Consultation on Water Schemes for Thar Coal organized by Pakistan Fisher Folk Forum at Sami Foundation office Umerkot, Sindh, Pakistan**



Syed Muhammad Ali Shah Chairman Pakistan Fisher Folk Forum highlighted the fresh water requirements for Thar coal power plant at Thar Coal block 1 and 2 and added that the people living in thar area are deprived from fresh water at their door steps. He further said that Makhi Farash canal water would create the havoc situation in District Umerkot and 200 to 300 cusecs of water will be taken from the main Nara canal which reduces the capacity of other tail end minors/distributaries and small and marginalized farmers will face and bear this terrible situation

Agriculture expert Dr Professor Muhammad Ismail Kumbhar said that local elected representatives had not played their role to protect interests of the local people.

He said that Thar coal authorities had told the protesting communities that Gorano dam water will be used for fish farming, vegetables and grazing lands but it was so saline that it would be harmful for people as well as animals.

Mr Ali Akbar Rahimoon CEO Aware Thar briefed that without stakeholders' consultation the Environment

and Social Impact Assessment of Thar coal water was carried out by Sindh Environmental Protection Agency. He added that this the EIA would further create the food insecurity in thar.

Mr Mir Hassan Arisar, a well-known activist and CSSP leader, said multinational companies have their own mind set and they only believe in their own business and there is need to develop street power and build a road map to save Thar and Thar ecology.

Mr GM Bhaghat highlighted the water history during One Unit and compared the current situation and said that already farmers of Makhi Farash canal are facing water scarcity due to tail end of Nara canal. He further said that the approval of 200 cusec of canal water from Makhi Farash to Nabisar Thar has not been taken from Irrigation Department.

Mr Bansi Malhi, Dr Aziz Kumbhar, Abdullah Khoso, Muhammad Ramzan Mallah and others also spoke on the occasion followed by SOPs due to pandemic situation. In last the conference participants unanimously resolved various resolutions.





## 'TDH ACTIVITIES'









