

REDD+ in India: social costs of climate change mitigation

Sudheesh Ramapurath Chemmencheri

Year V, Integrated Master of Arts in
Development Studies

IIT Madras

IN STORE

- background
 - tenure and community rights
 - indigenous rights – history of marginalisation
 - continuing marginalisation – the forest rights act
 - devouring mineral wealth – and tribal lands
 - women – the immediate losers
 - corruption
 - conclusion
-

BACKGROUND

- Deforestation and degradation contribute to 14% of greenhouse gas emissions
 - Birth of REDD at CoP13 in Bali: transfers funds to avoid deforestation and grants carbon credits
 - REDD+ : conservation, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of forest carbon stocks
 - UN-REDD launched in 2008 in 29 countries with \$51.4 million
 - National Action Plan on Climate Change in 2008: National Mission for a Green India
 - Enhancing carbon sinks, afforestation of 6 million hectares, revival of degraded forestland
 - Implementation through JFM, forest departments
 - REDD plan presented at CoP15 in 2009 and accepted by India at CoP16 in 2010
 - India joined the Oslo Forest and Climate Conference in May 2010
 - \$3 billion to be transferred
-

TENURE AND COMMUNITY RIGHTS

- Vulnerability to mitigation schemes increased when secure tenures are absent
 - REDD+ not aimed at securing tenure: exclusion from decision-making
 - Advantages of community management (e.g. Ostrom)
 - In reality, de facto devolution of control of forests varies from state to state; obscured in officialse
 - Forest dwellers could be given unproductive patches smaller than traditional lands for conservation
 - Illegal logging, state support and community rights
-

INDIGENOUS RIGHTS –HISTORY OF MARGINALISATION

- 80% of forests community owned at the end of 19th cent. Today state owns 80% (Global Forest Coalition, 2009)
 - Colonial Forest Act, 1865: forests as state property
 - Revised Forest Act, 1878: forests classified as reserved, protected, village
 - Only village forests, limited in extent, granted for community ownership
 - Colonial Indian Forest Policy 1894: consolidation of state control and denial of rights
 - Forest Policy 1952: increase economic revenue from forests, revised in 1988
 - 1951-1980: 4.3 million hectares of forests lost
 - Wildlife Protection Act 1972: blanket ban on all human activities except tourism
 - Joint Forest Management, 1990: inefficiency in governance
-

CONTINUING MARGINALISATION – THE FOREST RIGHTS ACT

- Scheduled Tribes and Other Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act 2006
 - Promised tenure, rights to live, cultivate, extract forest produce, access fish and graze
 - Conversion of forestland to revenue villages for mapping, conservation and protection of traditional knowledge
 - Panchayat to monitor through Forest Rights Committees
 - Drawbacks: Ministry of Tribal Rights, 2010: Only 1.6% of 2.9 million community claims granted
 - Access to Minor Forest Produce like mahua, tendu leaves, sal, resins denied. MFPs nationalised in many states
 - Chhattisgarh: 60% of forest dept. revenue from tendu (Mahapatra et. al.2010)
 - Jharkhand: MFPs form 10-31% of family income
-

DEVOURING MINERAL WEALTH – AND TRIBAL LANDS

- 1950-1991: Mining displaced 2.6 million, only 25% rehabilitated
 - For every 1% to GDP, mining displaces 3-4 more people than other development projects
 - An estimated 164,000 hectares diverted for mining (CSE, 2010)
 - MoUs with states. E.g. Vedanta and the future of 8000 Dhogria Kondhs
 - REDD+ would thus transfer only symbolic rights. Fundamental forest rights would continue to be ignored.
 - Situation worsened by armed rebellion and counter attacks
-

WOMEN – THE IMMEDIATE LOSERS

- Exclusion of women from decision-making in JFM committees – less than 10% membership (Agarwal, B. 2001)
 - Women members not allowed to speak or their opinions ignored
 - Women's agency and experience with the forests not utilised for effective patrolling
 - REDD restrictions - firewood shortages , consequently more time/energy expended in collection/cooking, leading to adverse health effects, fodder shortages, erosion of livelihoods, fines if caught stealing firewood
 - Women traditionally denied land titles – addressed by REDD+ ?
-

CORRUPTION

- Big money, big corruption
 - Agricultural expansion, illegal logging, demand for biofuel – triggers of corruption
 - Lack of effective mapping and estimation of forest densities – fuel corruption
 - Corruption in setting of baselines of deforestation and later afforestation
 - When projects and national REDD targets need to be integrated, bureaucrats could slip into corruption (Brown, M.L, 2010)
 - Restriction on timber production could escalate timber prices, increasing illegal logging and thereby corruption
-

MACRO-LEVEL ISSUES

- REDD linked to international carbon market and therefore susceptible to speculation and unpredictable funding
 - Allows industrialised countries to continue polluting thereby diverting attention away from the real causes of deforestation,
 - prioritises least cost measures which increase the likelihood of environmentally and social damaging activities and push liabilities of failed projects onto local communities, and flood carbon markets thereby reducing the price of carbon and in turn stalling other climate change mitigation programmes (Hall, 2008).
 - Leakage, shifting of deforestation from one corner to another
 - No sufficient data on degradation
 - Plantations included under REDD+
 - Additionality issues
 - Monitoring, Reporting and Verification costs
-

CONCLUSION

- REDD+ primarily a project to mitigate change and not to secure tenure or provide livelihoods
 - Current institutions have participated in the marginalisation
 - Change unlikely due to path-dependence and size of investments
 - Stakeholder consultations need to be carried out
 - Justice denied, India could become a pawn in the global carbon bargains
-

SELECT REFERENCES

- Aggarwal, A., Das. S and Paul, V. 2009. *Is India ready to implement REDD plus? A preliminary assessment*. New Delhi: The Energy Resource Institute. Available at <http://www.indiaenvironmentportal.org.in/content/is-india-ready-implement-redd-plus-a-preliminary-assessment>
 - Agarwal, B. 2001. "Participatory Exclusions, Community Forestry, and Gender: An analysis of South Asia and a Conceptual Framework." *World Development*, Vol. 29, No. 10, pp. 1623-1648
 - Blaser, J. and Robledo. C. 2007. *Initial analysis on the mitigation potential in the forestry sector*. UNFCCC. Available at [http://unfccc.int/cooperation and support/financial mechanism/financial mechanism_gef/items/4054.php](http://unfccc.int/cooperation_and_support/financial_mechanism/financial_mechanism_gef/items/4054.php)
 - Boucher, D. 2008. *What REDD can do: The economics and development of reduction of emissions from deforestation and forest degradation*. Washington D.C.: Tropical Forests and Climate Initiative. Available at <http://redd-net.org/resource-library/what-redd-can-do-the-economics-and-development-of-reducing-e>
 - Brown, M.L. 2010. Limiting corruption incentives in a global REDD regime. *Ecology law quarterly*, 37/237, pp. 237-268
-

- Dickson, B. et. al. 2009. *Carbon markets and forest conservation: A review of the environmental benefits of REDD mechanisms*. UNEP World Conservation Monitoring Centre. Directly downloadable from internet.
 - Global Forest Coalition. 2009. *REDD Realities*. Available at <<http://www.indiaenvironmentportal.org.in/category/publisher/global-forest-coalition>>
 - Guha et. al. 2006. Salwa Judum: War in the heart of India: Excerpts from the report by the independent citizens' initiative. *Social Scientist*, 34 (7/8), pp. 47-61
 - Harvey, C.A. Barney, D. and Kormos, C. 2010. Opportunities for achieving biodiversity conservation through REDD. *Conservation Letters* (3), pp. 53-61
 - Hayes, T. and Persha, L. 2010. Nesting local forestry initiatives: Revisiting community forest management in a REDD+ world. *Forest Policy and Economics*, 12, pp. 545-553
 - Larson, A.M. 2010. Forest tenure reform in the age of climate change: Lessons for REDD+. *Global Environmental Change*, Available at Science Direct <[doi:10.1016/j.gloenvcha.2010.11.008](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.gloenvcha.2010.11.008)>
 - Lyster, R. 2010. REDD+, transparency, participation and resource rights: the rule of law. *Environmental Science and Policy*, Available at Science Direct <[doi:10.1016/j.envsci.2010.11.008](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.envsci.2010.11.008)>, pp. 1-9
-

- CSE. 2010a. Mining overview. New Delhi: Centre for Science and Environment. Available at <<http://www.cseindia.org/node/384>>
 - Ostrom, E. 1990. *Governing the Commons: the Evolution of Institutions for Collective Action*. New York: Cambridge University Press
 - Sahu, G. 2008. Mining in Niyamgiri forest hills and tribal rights. *Economic and Political Weekly*, April 12, pp. 19-21
 - Sikor et. al. 2010. As quoted in Larson, A.M. 2010. Forest tenure reform in the age of climate change: lessons for REDD+. *Global Environmental Change*, Available at Science Direct <[doi:10.1016/j.gloenvcha.2010.11.008](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.gloenvcha.2010.11.008), pp. 1-10>
 - Thompson, M.C. Baruah, M. and Carr, E.R. 2010. Seeing REDD+ as a project of environmental governance. *Environmental Science and Policy*, Available at Science Direct <[doi:10.1016/j.envsci.2010.11.006](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.envsci.2010.11.006), pp. 1-11>
 - UN-REDD. 2009. About the UN-REDD Programme. UN-REDD. Available at <<http://www.un-redd.org/AboutUNREDDProgramme/tabid/583/Default.aspx>>
 - Viana et.al. 2009. *The costs of REDD: lessons from the Amazonas*. London: International Institute for Environment and Development. Available at <<http://pubs.iied.org/17076IIED.html>>
-