

**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN TOURISM DEVELOPMENT:
A case study of the Himalayan Ski Village (HSV) project in Manali, India**

By

Yangji Doma Sherpa

A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies of
The University of Manitoba
In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Natural Resources Management

Natural Resources Institute
Clayton H. Riddell Faculty of Environment, Earth and Resources
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Winnipeg, Manitoba

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ABSTRACT

The Himalayan region of India is experiencing rapid development in tourism, agriculture, highway construction and hydroelectric development. This research describes and evaluates the role of public participation in tourism development projects in these high mountain environments, using the proposed Himalayan Ski Village (HSV) development in Manali as a case study. Qualitative data collected through semi-structured interviews, document reviews and participant observation revealed that there have been formal and informal opportunities for public participation in project development. The findings suggest that local people have been involved in project development activities, such as training for skiing, but not in the decision-making process related to the project. The majority of the participation activities were, in fact, instigated by the public including activities such as protests and court challenges. The findings also show that involvement in the participatory activities undertaken by the public and project proponent fostered instrumental and communicative learning outcomes.

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to late Sir. Edmund Hillary “Burra Sahib” for your eternal love of the mountains, dedicating your life to its people, and for the inspirational humanitarian efforts.

The life you have lived continues to inspire all of us

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LIST OF LOCAL TERMS USED

- *Devta* - God
- *Devbhumi* – the land of God or abode of God
- *Gur* - the shaman believed to have spiritual power to go into a trance, and mediates between the God and the devotees
- *Hartaal* – a kind of protest that involves stoppage of work by employees
- *Jagati* - the flat triangular slab of rock preserved in the courtyard in Nagar castle
- *Jagati Pooch* – religious congregation of village Gods in the Kullu Valley held at Nagar castle
- *Janal Jalash* – village meeting called by the village *Panchayat*
- *Kardaar* - a person who serves as the caretaker of the village deity
- *Mahila Mandal* - the women's group
- *Nau gaun* - nine villages
- *Panchayat* - the local government authority
- *Pujari* - a person who is in charge of performing religious activities

ACCRONYMS

AD	Allain Duhangan
BJP	Bharatiya Janata Party
CBEA	Community-based Environmental Assessment
CWP	Civil Writ Petition
DPR	Detailed Project Report
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
EPA	Environmental Protection Act
EU	European Union
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
HPRLA	Himachal Pradesh Tenancy and Land Reforms Act
HSV	Himalayan Ski Village
IA	Implementation Agreement
IPH	Irrigation and Public Health
JJVS	Jan Jagaran evam Vikas Sanstha
MoEF	Ministry of Environment and Forest
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NGOs	Non-governmental Organizations
NOC	No Objection Certificate
PIL	Public Interest Litigation
PPP	Preliminary Project Report
SWOT	Strength, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threat
UNCED	United Nations Conference on Environment and Development
WCED	World Commission on Environment and Development
WTO	World Tourism Organization

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

The tourism industry is becoming one of the largest and fastest growing economic sectors of the 21st century (WTO, 2000). Tourism represents a “massive and complex interaction of people, who demand a wide range of services and facilities, and inputs” (Price et al., 1997, p. 251). Being a multi-sectorial economic driver, tourism development has been perceived and promoted as a critical part of economic development and revenue generation, especially in the least developed countries. The tourism industry has, however recently been confronted with many challenges, complexities and issues, largely due to the potential negative impacts of tourism on the environment and the society. Tourism once thought to be a ‘smokeless industry’ is thus being questioned in relation to its negative environmental and societal impacts, which are not as benign as predicted (Berno & Bricker, 2001). The concept of sustainable development or sustainability, has also gained increasing attention in the context of tourism development. The notion of sustainable tourism development has emerged to describe development that strives to contribute to the sustainability of the environment, socio-cultural resources, and overall socio-economic development (McCool, 1996; Neto, 2003). Sustainability in tourism development is especially pertinent in the context of mountain environments due to the fragility and vulnerability of mountain ecosystems, which makes them susceptible to degradation (Price, 1992; Colin & Inbakaran, 2002). Moreover, relatively marginalized populations who are susceptible to impacts and changes from rapid tourism growth inhabit the mountain regions.

Tourism crosses multiple sectors and includes a diversity of stakeholders. Thus, sustainability in tourism requires holistic planning that integrates multiple sectors and incorporates meaningful public participation in decision-making (Timothy, 1999; Choi & Sirakaya, 2005). Public participation can be described as the process of engaging the public in political, economic, or management decisions. It is an approach to promoting grassroots level involvement in governance and decision-making process. The seminal Brundtland Commission Report, “Our Common Future” (1987), formally called for greater public participation in environmental decision-making in order to promote sustainable development in the face of rapid global development (WCED, 1987). The traditional form of top-down governance is not dynamic enough to cope with the world that is getting more complex by the day (Fischer, 2006). Given the complexity of factors, public involvement in the decision-making and governance process is highly recommended in the literature (Renn et al., 1993; Palern, 2000; Kapoor, 2001; Webler et al., 2001; Fitzpatrick & Sinclair, 2003; Sinclair & Diduck, 2009).

There are multiple justifications and advantages for public involvement in development decisions that have the potential to impact natural resources and the environment management: involving multi-stakeholder participation in decision-making process, incorporating local socio-cultural, economic and environmental issues and knowledge into consideration, transparency in decision-making processes, and increasing social acceptability of policies, etc. (Renn et al., 1993; Webler et al., 1995; Kapoor, 2001; Fitzpatrick & Sinclair, 2003; Sinclair & Diduck, 2009). Further, public participation in project decision-making can also initiate individual and social learning processes, which

transform alienated individual actions into collective actions contributing to sustainability of environmental and natural resources (Webler et al., 1995; Sinclair et al., 2008).

This research took place in and around Manali in Himachal Pradesh, a northern mountainous state of India. India is a land of great diversity endowed with rare natural and cultural heritage. The Indian Himalaya offers many forms of tourism characterized by pilgrimage, adventure tourism, and wilderness tourism (Singh, 2001). Thus these mountain regions are attracting great attention from domestic as well as foreign tourists. Himachal Pradesh is one of the major national and international tourist destinations located in the Northern Himalayan Region of India, as it is known for its scenic natural beauty and cultural-historic qualities (Gardner et al., 2002). The number of domestic tourists within India is higher as compared to foreign tourists. The total number of domestic tourists recorded in 2008 in India was 562.92 million whereas foreign tourist inflow was estimated at 14.11 million for the same period (Government of India, 2008). The state government of Himachal Pradesh is promoting tourism exclusively as an instrument for economic development in the area through various incentives and concessions.

1.2 Research Context

The opportunity for exploring the natural environment and rich cultures has made the mountains a prominent global tourist destination. The opportunities of tourism that lie in the mountain areas, including the Himalaya, have attracted various profit motive investors including foreign corporations, who invest in large scale development projects like ski resorts and large luxury hotels. Such developments are often presented as eco-tourism initiatives with the aim of improving livelihood opportunities for the local people

(EQUATIONS, 2008), but sometimes the reality of these developments turn to be different, and they actually end up threatening the economic and environmental viability of the place (Singh, 2008).

The Indian Himalaya has the potential to offer the best mountain-based adventure tourism in the world. Being one of the largest sources of revenue generation, both the central and the state government are making efforts to promote tourism development in this region. To achieve this, efforts are being made to diversify principal source markets, improve the tourism infrastructure and amenities, and promote new forms of tourism like rural tourism, adventure tourism, and cultural tourism (Government of India, 2007). With the aim of creating a world-class tourism infrastructure, the government of India is acting as a catalyst for promoting private initiative and investments in large-scale tourism infrastructure development. The gigantic Himalayan Ski Village (HSV) project - proposed in Manali with the intention of attracting a new generation of Indian and foreign ski enthusiasts - is a typical example of such commercial tourism ventures in the Indian Himalayan context (Singh, 2008).

1.3 Purpose and Objectives

The purpose of this research was to describe and evaluate the role of public participation in tourism development projects in high mountain environments in India, using the proposed Himalayan Ski Village (HSV) development in the Manali area as a case study.

The objectives of the research were:

1. To describe the process of public consultation and participation, both formal and informal, followed in the HSV development;

2. To establish the potential project impacts that residents have communicated or would like to communicate to project decision-makers;
3. To ascertain the perceptions of residents, particularly women, regarding their role in the decision-making process; and,
4. To determine the individual learning outcomes of participants as gained through their participation in project decision-making.

1.4 Research Design

I adopted a critical social science paradigm, as the proposed research seeks to address the issues of public participation in tourism development that will affect marginalized people. The research was qualitative in nature, and a case study strategy of inquiry was chosen to narrow down the research into a more specific place, time and event. The field research was conducted in and around Manali in northern India. A case study of the proposed HSV project to be built in Kullu-Manali was chosen for this research, as it provides a good platform to examine whether such a project has been conceptualized and implemented by taking public opinion into account.

Data collection procedures chosen were suited to understand the issue of participation in real social and historical context. Semi-structured interviews, participant observations, reviews of secondary data, and transect walks were used as the data collection tools. Participant observation in the proposed study site basically helped in rapport building, and to gain an intuitive understanding of the actual social structures and issues bounded in it. Transect walk provided an in-depth knowledge on the physical and social aspects of the locality and the project site. Interviews and secondary documents provided information on people's perceptions, feelings, historical context and evidences,

etc. Data collected from interviews were corroborated by undertaking transect walks and participant observation in the area. These methods were appropriate for critical social research as they reveal the realities, problems and circumstances associated with participation in tourism development in the particular case under study. The methods are discussed in detail in Chapter 3.

1.5 Significance of the Study

Tourism, in particular sustainable tourism, has become an increasingly popular field of research. Sustainable tourism strives to meet the needs of the host community, the tourists, and the investors while ensuring environmental protection. A great deal of recent research on tourism has focused on small-scale sustainable tourism approaches like ecotourism, rural tourism, and alternative tourism (Liu, 2003; Kent, 2005). However, as Liu (2003) and Butler (1999) suggested, in addition to promoting small-scale environmentally sound tourism ventures, it is also equally important to ensure sustainability of existing mass tourism. This is relevant, particularly in developing nations like India, where tourism is promoted widely as a driver for economic development. While tourism development is taking place rapidly, the issues of public participation, especially the local or community participation in tourism development process is pertinent. A greater level of community participation in tourism planning and decision-making is viewed as a prerequisite for sustainable tourism (Liu, 2003), yet few have considered this need in the developing world context. Such participation is deemed to ensure benefit sharing, create transparency, develop positive attitudes towards tourism development, minimize the potential negative impacts on the local community and

environment, and facilitates implementation of principles of sustainable tourism development (Tosun, 2006).

Participation in tourism development refers to the involvement of the residents in decision-making about the types of tourism development that might occur in their region, and the involvement of residents in the tourism activities developed in order for them to gain economic benefits from tourism (Timothy, 1999). Much of the recent research on tourism in developing nations focused on community based tourism development, which considered the sharing of tourism benefits. Local participation in tourism planning and decision-making in tourism development process is often ignored, and research to determine the significance of local people's input in the decision-making level is limited. Provisions of public participation in decision-making and planning in tourism development projects are ensured at the policy-level in the case of developed nations (Butler, 1993). However, such policy frameworks for ensuring public participation in tourism development are still largely absent or poorly implemented in developing nations like India. In this regard, my findings about the role of public participation in tourism development projects in high mountain environments in India, using the case of Himalayan Ski Village (HSV) development has the potential to help reveal ways that local people might be more effectively involved in decisions that impact them directly. I believe that the outcomes of the research will provide a deeper understanding and wider perspectives on the need for public participation in decision-making in tourism development projects and the importance of learning through these decision processes for ensuring sustainable outcomes.

1.6 Organization of Thesis

This thesis will be organized into six chapters. Following the introduction, Chapter 2 consists of the literature related to various topics pertaining to the study, including sustainable tourism development in the context of mountain environments, tourism planning, public participation with a focus on tourism development in context of India. This chapter also describes the connection between learning and public participation in project decision-making. Chapter 3 outlines the research design and methods including the research paradigm, case study strategy, data collection procedures, and the process of data analysis. Chapter 4 provides a detailed description of the study area and the proposed project, along with local tourism development parameters. Chapter 5 presents the detailed findings regarding the types of public participation local people engaged in relating to the HSV project, their concerns about the project, and the learning outcomes of participation identified. Chapter 6 provides a summary of research findings, conclusions, and recommendations.

CHAPTER 2: PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AND LEARNING FOR SUSTAINABLE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

2.1 Tourism and Sustainable Development

The World Tourism Organization defined tourism as “the activities of persons travelling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business and other purposes not related to the exercise of an activity remunerated from within the place visited” (WTO, 2000, p.1). Tourism emerged as one of largest and fastest growing industries in the world recently, with worldwide receipts totalling US \$ 944 billion in 2008 (Kent, 2005; Government of India, 2008). Tourism is a multi-sectorial activity which acts as an instrument for economic development and employment generation through creation of a wide range of activities including trades, businesses, shopping, lodging, catering, transport, art and crafts etc. (Rishi & Giridhar, 2007; Government of India, 2007).

The tourism industry is resource centric, and is highly dependent on a rich and diverse, natural or built environment for its economic viability (Horobin & Long, 1996). As McCool (1996) states the tourism industry not only encompasses economic development of the destined area, but also crosses intellectual, social, and environmental domains creating complexities, issues, concerns and challenges. The dual linkages between tourism and various components have been clearly depicted in Zurick’s model (for details please refer to Zurick, 1992, p.622), which proposes that opportunities exist for both positive and negative impacts. Zurick’s model of adventure tourism integrates

the positive and negative linkages between tourism and local culture, economy, and the environment, and calls for sustainability (Zurick, 1992).

The tourism industry can provide considerable benefits to host communities through economic development, infrastructures development, and as a medium for protecting the environment and culture (Andriotis, 2001; Rishi & Giridhar, 2007). However, there are also several problems associated with tourism, such as various social and environmental strains including environmental degradation, resources exploitation and conflicts, overcrowding, unplanned urban sprawl, waste management problems and acculturation (Andriotis, 2001; Gardner et al., 2002; Pradhan, 2008). These undesirable adverse impacts have fuelled the growing concern for conservation and preservation of natural resources, societal well being, and the long-term economic viability at tourist destinations (Choi & Sirakaya, 2005; Pradhan, 2008). An in-depth study by Singh (2008) in the case study region of Manali shows how tourism related development could betray the very purpose of tourism by bringing a number of associated problems, and recommended that environmentally and socially unacceptable development should be avoided to ensure the sustainability of the area. Butler (1991) suggested the tourism industry appears as a threat to the environment, in many parts of the world, causing a management problem in the destination areas. As a result, the notion of sustainable development or sustainability emerged as an alternative for tourism development, planning, and management that strives to minimize the adverse environmental and social consequences (Choi & Sirakaya, 2005).

The need for sustainability is critically felt in the case of tourism development, especially so in mountainous regions, as the growth rate of tourism is very high as

compared to other sectors of the economy. Being a resource dependent industry, there is urgency for tourism developers, including government, to recognize their responsibility to the environment, and considers the environmental and social domains in order to remain viable in the long run (Horobin & Long, 1996). According to Prosser (1994), there are several social factors such as the dissatisfaction with the existing products, growing environmental concern, cultural sensitivity, realization of vulnerability of the resources by the host communities accompanied with a changing attitude of developers and tourist operators, which have lead to a search for sustainability in tourism.

The concept of sustainable development was first defined by World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED) in the report entitled *Our Common Future* as “the development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (WCED, 1987, p. 8). Following the publication of the report, the concept of sustainable development became an internationally known term and, has been accepted worldwide as a universal solution to help to conserve resources and the environment (Choi & Sirakaya, 2005). The concept of sustainable tourism emerged and was accepted by the tourism industry to address the environmental and social complexities of the industry around the same time as the concept of sustainable development came into prominence (Kent, 2005). In the context of tourism, the concept of sustainability creates a linkage between the economy, environment and the society in such a way that it triggers benefits to the host population while maintaining the environmental and cultural integrity of those communities (Neto, 2003). The World Tourism Organization conceptualized the term sustainable tourism and defined it as development that meets the needs of the present tourists and host regions

while protecting and enhancing opportunities for the future. It is envisaged as leading to management of all resources in such a way that economic, socio-cultural and aesthetic needs can be fulfilled while maintaining cultural integrity, essential ecological processes, biological diversity and life support systems (WTO, 2001; Liu, 2003). A sustainable tourism framework ensures increasing economic development, environmental protection, viable and resilient community, and a tourism industry confined within the capability of environment (McCool, 1996). Based on the concept of sustainable tourism, many small-scale local tourism ventures are promoted worldwide, but as Butler (1999) argues, in the context of tourism, the problem with sustainable development is not ensuring small-scale, environmentally and culturally appropriate forms of tourism, but in making the existing mass tourism development sustainable.

2.2 Sustainable Tourism and Mountain Environments

Mountains, which occupy about one fifth of the continent of the world, are important source of water, biological diversity, minerals, energy, forest, and agricultural products, and serve half of the humanity (Ives, 1992; Price & Kim, 1999). Mountains hold significant values because of their rich biological diversity due to altitudinal and climatic variation. Mountain regions are also home to diverse ethnic communities having their own culture and traditions (Ives, 1992). Mountains were recognized as a global priority after the term Sustainable Mountain Development was first used in Chapter 13 of *Agenda 21* entitled ‘Managing Fragile Ecosystems: Sustainable Mountain Development’ (UNCED, 1992). The importance of the world’s mountains was re-emphasized further by the UN General Assembly in 1998 along with the declaration of International Year of Mountains in 2002.

Mountains are one of the most prominent global tourist destinations characterized by rich cultural, historical, linguistic and ecological diversity (Price, 1992). While marginality, fragility, steepness and inaccessibility often remain constraints for development in mountains, tourism appears as an obvious choice for development in spite of these complexities. Travel and tourism is gaining popularity in the mountains as mountain destinations often offer a clean and unspoiled environment, unique landscape and wildlife, scenic beauty, cultural and biological diversity, and recreational opportunities (UNEP, 2007). Tourism in the mountains, especially in the developing world, is gaining popularity because of the opportunities that lie within for exploring natural environments and rich cultural heritages, the availability of cheap labour, and liberal policies for tourism investments (Zurick, 1992).

Sustainable tourism is particularly important in the context of mountain environments due to the fragility and vulnerability of mountain ecosystems, which makes them susceptible to degradation from resource use and development, thus requiring an appropriate management (Berkes & Gardner, 1997; Kent, 2005). Moreover, mountain regions are inhabited by relatively marginalized populations, which are susceptible to social impacts and changes from rapid tourism growth, especially related to drug use and other illegal activities. As well, tourism impacts in the mountains are not only felt in the mountain communities, but also to the adjacent communities directly or indirectly, through water and air pollution, and by other means. Thus, as Price & Kim (1999) suggested, sustainable mountain development should concern both the mountain regions, and the populations living downstream or dependent on these regions. Any development

including tourism in the mountains should be done through proper planning giving due consideration to the fragile ecosystems and local communities.

2. 3 Public Participation and Sustainable Tourism Development

Sustainable tourism development is a multi-disciplinary and broad concept crossing wide range of issues such as environmental, economy, social and political (Tosun, 2001). As Berno & Bricker (2001) argue, the tourism industry is an integrated system in which the constituent parts are linked and often change in one-part affects the other parts. Moreover, the tourism industry includes diversity of stakeholders having different perceptions and interest in tourism development, which at times are often conflicting. Some of the major stakeholders in the tourism sector as identified in various literatures include: tourists (domestic and foreign); tourist businesses (investors, developers, operators, shareholders, management, employees, public and private); and, the host community and the concerned authority or governments. It has been argued that for a successful implementation of sustainable tourism practices involving this wide diversity of stakeholders is critical to success (Liu, 2003). Thus sustainability in tourism represents a wicked problem, where the problem is being influenced by not merely science but also by political and social values, and requires a holistic solution (Balint et al., 2006).

Effective tourism planning that incorporates meaningful public participation has been identified as a holistic approach for achieving sustainable development in tourism in many literatures (Timothy, 1999; Choi & Sirakaya, 2005; Kent, 2005). According to Timothy (1999), an effective tourism planning will maximize the economic benefits of tourism to the destination area, and mitigate the negative impacts on the local social,

economic, and physical environments. Brohman (1996) noted that an appropriately planned tourism development is needed not only to ensure quality of life but also to develop positive attitudes of residents towards tourism development. Kent (2005) point out that sustainable tourism development begins with tourism planning and an effective tourism planning must incorporate a meaningful public participation. Public participation is one important factor for a successful search for sustainability in tourism industry. Balint et al. (2006) suggested that effective public participation that incorporates new insights, attitudes and approaches is essential to ensure sustainable development in tourism. Choi & Sirakaya (2005) in their study on sustainability indicators noted that tourism planning is a necessary condition to achieve the goals of sustainable tourism development. The study further emphasized that it should be planned and managed by community stakeholders, and all the participants should be well informed about the pertinent issues by providing them with complete and relevant information. As none of the business or government can operate in isolation, tourism planning must be integrated with other planning as well (Gunn, 1988). An integrated tourism planning as pointed out by Hall (1999) is an 'interactive' or 'collaborative' approach requiring participation and interaction between different government agencies having responsibilities for various tourism related activities; and between responsible organization and various stakeholders. Coordinating among different government agencies, the public, the private sectors and various stakeholders in tourism, however, is a very challenging task (Jamal & Getz, 1995).

Tourism planning must be accountable and should facilitate participation of various stakeholders. Perceptions of various stakeholders including operators, local

people, and regulators must be incorporated into tourism planning, as tourism impacts and interacts with all these stakeholders (Hardy & Beeton, 2001). Brohman (1996) emphasized that tourism planning should respect the desires and needs of residents, as various researchers suggested that positive resident attitudes, supports and inputs are essential for a long-term sustainability of tourism industry. The need for greater community involvement and environmental sensitivity in tourism planning has been emphasized throughout the literature (e.g., Inskoop, 1991; Brohman, 1996; Timothy, 1999; Tosun, 2000; Saxena, 2008). Community participation in planning and decision-making level for tourism development is vital as “the people who enjoy or suffer the main impacts of tourism are those who live in the communities in tourist destination areas” (Tosun, 2000, p. 616). As Murphy (1988) emphasized, tourism relies on the cooperation and goodwill of local people; therefore, any development and planning must fit within local aspirations and capacity for successful implementation. Thus, the success of any plan in tourism depends upon the degree of community participation in the decision-making level.

Tourism planning in developed countries is found to be more comprehensive, integrative and environmentally sensitive for sustainable development. Such approaches to planning are also required in developing nations for sustainability, but as Tosun (2000) noted adopting these approaches in developing countries requires considerable effort, financial resources, and expertise. Few educated and elite groups often do planning in developing countries with little involvement from grassroots people. In the context of developing nations, participation of stakeholders in decision-making has not been properly recognized in the planning documents or in practice (Tosun, 2001). A study

done by the World Tourism Organization (1994) on 25 case studies of tourism planning in developing world shows that only the Sri Lanka tourism plan considered community consultation or indirect participation. Tosun (2000) argues that the cases of participatory tourism development examined in developing nations represents a manipulative participation or passive participation as per Pretty's typology, and there is no evidence that shows that participation moves beyond community consultation or manipulative participation. Timothy's (1999) study on tourism planning in developing countries suggested that, as compared to Western paradigm, it appears that community participation in decision-making in developing nations is very weak or does not occur at all. He suggested that tourism planners should consider local constraints and conditions before imposing foreign ideologies into traditional societies. However, it might not be always accurate to state that local involvement does not occur at all in developing nations. In some parts of the world, some communities have strong local cultural institutions and decision-making traditions that require grassroots participation in the decision-making level for local matters (Tosun, 2005).

2.3.1 Public Participation in Sustainable Tourism Development

In developing nations tourism development refers to initiating plans and programs through the development of various forms of infrastructures. This type of development is perceived as a means of generating wealth, creating jobs, enhancing living standards and increasing national economic security (Saxena, 2008). However, development also uses the environment for commercial purposes that destroy its values and generate conflicts within the communities who depend on it for subsistence living (Saxena, 2008). Development will trigger dissimilar effects on different social groups depending on the

interests and the role they hold in the society. As Saxena (2008, p. 354) argues “each social group tends to interpret development in terms of how its interests can be served and how the distribution of benefits would affect it.” In reality, development in most developing nations often serves the interest of dominant social and economic groups. Therefore, development should advocate inclusive participation in decision-making so that those who are adversely affected will also have a say.

Participation has been found to be crucial to the success of development as it increases efficiency, build trust and understanding at the local level, and create transparency and accountability (Pretty, 1995; Kapoor, 2001; Webler et. al, 2001). It is also a fundamental right that will initiate collective action, empowerment as well as institutional building (Pretty, 1995). Theoretically public participation in any development is done with an objective to minimize the impact of such development on the society or the general public. However, in reality an effective public participation is still lacking, especially in developing nations, because of the bureaucratic barriers that usually originates from the existing traditional top down approaches (Briffet, 1999).

The growing concern over the need of public participation in decision-making has been attributed to several factors. Some of the factors identified in various literature includes the growing gap of understanding between the public and officials, legalized provision of public participation, the complex and uncertain nature of the problems, uncertainty of risks associated with development, and the recognition that any kind of decision should consider the inherent social and political values rather than being purely scientific (Balint et al., 2006). Sitikarn (2002) suggested that opportunities for public participation in tourism should be ensured at the planning stage, implementation and

evaluation stage, and in sharing the benefits. He identifies involvement of local people in decision-making level to be crucial as it directly affects them. Meanwhile, empowerment of the local people through training, workshop, and awareness program are also thought to be essential to ensure effective participation at all levels of development. Public participation allows various stakeholders to identify their needs and bring these needs into the realm of decision-making (Sitikaran, 2002). Sharing these needs enable various stakeholders to influence and share control over development initiatives, the decisions and resources, which affect them (Evans and Percy, 1999; Sitikaran, 2002).

Tourism development must respect the needs of the local communities and should be done for triggering benefits to the communities where the development occurs. Tourism development done without considering the benefits for local communities will provoke conflict and hinder development in that destination. This is evident in the powerful movement of *Adivashi* (tribal) communities against the establishment of a popular Indian chain hotel in Nagarhole National Park in southern India, as it displaced the tribal communities and restricts access to resources (Shekhar, 2003). The government's approval of a tourism development proposal from outside investors without giving due consideration to local needs has provoked conflict and protest within the local communities. Shekhar's (2003) studies on the local people's attitude toward wildlife tourism in Sariska Tiger Reserve in India also shows that 63% of the residents were unhappy with the inequalities of tourism, and expressed that their involvement in tourism development is not adequate.

It has been argued that community participation in tourism development is highly essential in order to provide equitable distribution of local economic benefits.

Community participation in tourism development will ensure benefit-sharing, transparency in development activities, and minimize probable negative impacts on the local community and environment. As Kapoor (2001) suggested public involvement is as an important tool for developing ownership, partnership, understanding, and commitment. Thus a participatory development approach creates income-generating opportunities for local people, develops positive attitudes towards tourism development, and facilitates implementation of principles of sustainable tourism development (Tosun, 2006). Tosun (1999) developed a typology for community participation for tourism development. He classified three types of community participation designed specifically for tourism development and also compared with the two other models: Arnstein's typology (Arnstein, 1971) and Pretty's typology (Pretty, 1995) as shown in Table 2.1.

Spontaneous participation in Tosun's typology represents an ideal model for community participation in tourism development that provides full managerial responsibilities and authority to the host community. It corresponds to the highest rungs of Arnstein's model and highest level of participation in Pretty's typology. The induced type of participation represents a top-down, passive and indirect type of participation. This type of participation allows the general public to voice their opinion, but their opinions are often not taken into account by other powerful interest groups like the government, tour operators, multinational companies etc. This type of participation in tourism is more prevalent in developing countries (Tosun, 2006). Coercive participation in tourism corresponds to the lowest rungs of Arnstein's model, and passive and manipulative participation in Pretty's typology. Instead of enabling the local people to participate in the tourism development process, this type of participation is directed

towards fostering and developing tourism with a vested interest of the power holders (Tosun, 2006). Community participation in tourism development, however, is confronted with operational, structural and cultural barriers (Tosun, 2000). Stewart & Sinclair (2007) argues that participants often criticize public participation processes as dissatisfying, time consuming, costly, and inefficient.

Table 2.1: Normative typologies of community participation

7. Self-mobilization 6. Interactive participation	←	8. Citizen Control 7. Delegated power 6. Partnership	Degrees of citizen Power	→	<u>Spontaneous Participation</u> Bottom-up; active par; direct participation; par. in decision-making, authentic participation; self planning
5. Functional participation 4. Participation for material incentives 3. Participation by consultation	←	5. Placation 4. Consultation 3. Informing	Degrees of Citizen Tokenism	→	<u>Induced Participation</u> Top-down; passive; formal; mostly direct; degree of tokenism, manipulation; pseudo-participation; participation in implementation and sharing benefits; choice between proposed alternatives and feedback
2. Passive participation 1. Manipulative Participation	←	2. Therapy 1. Manipulation	Non-participation	→	<u>Coercive Participation</u> Top-down, passive; mostly indirect, formal; participation in implementation, but not necessarily sharing benefits; choice between proposed limited alternatives or no choice; paternalism, non-participation, high degree of tokenism and manipulation.
Pretty's (1995) typology of community participation		Arnstein's (1971) typology of community participation			Tosun's (1999) typology of community participation

Keys: Corresponding categories in each typology *Source: Adapted from Tosun (2006, pp. 494)*

The most common governance tool used in tourism development that can incorporate public participation is Environment Impact Assessment (EIA). EIA is a forward-looking process aimed at identifying potential project impact before a project is undertaken (Sinclair & Diduck, 2009). EIA is only used for particular tourism components including mega tourism development project like resorts, hotels, ski hills and other infrastructures, and does not replace the need for broader strategic planning. The need of impact assessment for sustainable tourism development has also been emphasized by the UN Guidelines on Integrated Planning for Sustainable Tourism Development (1999, p. 11) as follows:

“There is a definite need for impact assessment of tourism development proposals. The capacity of sites must be considered, including physical, natural, social, and cultural limits and development should be compatible with local and environmental limits. Plans and operations should be evaluated regularly with adjustments as required.”

Kent (2005) in her research on adventure tourism, however, suggested that for a small-scale tourism development project, a community-based environmental assessment that implements and monitors the plans involving all the potential stakeholders as a suitable option for impact assessment. Though EIA has been a pre-requisite for large-scale tourism projects in developed countries, many developing nations still lack the provision of EIA for tourism projects (Butler, 1993). Public participation is an essential element at several stages of EIA process like screening, scoping, report preparation and decision-making (Wood, 1995). The benefits of EIA public participation includes providing access to local and traditional knowledge, identifying wide range of potential solutions that leads to more effective, timely and cost effective decisions (Webler et. al, 1995; Palern, 2000; Sinclair & Diduck, 2000; Sinclair et. al, 2008). In his study on public

participation in EIA, Wilde (1998) emphasizes that a multi-stakeholder approach to EIA with a strong public participation component is necessary for achieving sustainable development in the tourism industry. Though EIA is an effective tool for potential stakeholder participation in developed countries as Paliwal (2005) argues, such an effective participation might be difficult to attain in developing countries, because of the societal and economic reasons. Inaccessibility to information, lack of proper knowledge on EA process, and lack of institutional capacity are identified as the major barriers for effective public participation in EIA in developing nations (Sinclair & Diduck, 2000).

2.4 Glimpse of Public Participation in India

2.4.1 Provision for Public Participation in Development Activities in India

Provision for public participation in development projects in India is provided under the Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) legislation which was enacted in 1994, and is currently made mandatory for 32 highly polluting projects like mining, industries, hydroelectric plants, thermal power plants, atomic power plants, ports and harbours, rail, roads, highways, bridges, airports and communication project (MoEF, 2006). Under this legislation, any kind of development project having potential for major environmental consequences must have an impact assessment and acquire clearance prior to the project development. Such legal provisions should allow local participation, but the effectiveness of such provision depends solely on how it has been implemented.

The study about the environmental assessment of hydro development in Uttarakhand by Diduck et al. (2007) revealed that public participation in planning and implementation of hydro development in those rural areas was not meaningful. The study noted that there are serious problems regarding the sharing of information, fair and open

hearings, and considerations of public comments. Study of micro-hydro development in the Kullu district shows similar result where the local people are not consulted prior to project development, and the local people are not benefited from such development projects (Sinclair 2003). These studies show that despite legal provisions for public participation in development project, the role of local people in planning and implementation is still not fully addressed in India.

A SWOT analysis of EIA process in India conducted by Paliwal (2005) identified inadequate public participation as one of the weaknesses of EIA system. Unlike developed countries, public hearing in India is conducted just before making decisions and people's input during public hearing are not taken into account in the planning and decision-making (Paliwal, 2005; Dhutta, 2009). Dhutta (2009, p. 9) criticizes the provision of public participation in current EIA system as being "guided by the 'investor friendly' approach rather than a pro-people and pro-environment emphasis." Paliwal (2005) suggested a number of improvements in the Indian EIA system including: increasing accountability, proper management of baseline data, improving monitoring and implementation, building stakeholder capacity, and integrating environmental concerns in plans and policy.

In context of tourism industry, EIA has been mandatory for large-scale tourism projects in different countries including Canada and other EU countries. However, in case of India, EIA is limited to few categories of projects, and is not mandatory for tourism development projects despite the potential for profound environmental and social strains. However, due to the potential negative impacts of development in high mountain areas, tourism project between 200m to 500 metres of High Tide Line or located at an elevation

of more than 1000 metres and with costs of development exceeding Rs. 50 million requires an environmental clearance from the Central government (Government of India, 1994).

2.4.2 Protest as a form of Public Participation in India

Public disorder is “incivility, boorish and threatening behaviour that disturbs life, especially urban life” (Kelling & Coles, 1996, p. 14). Public disorder ranges from the individual-level (drunken disorderly conduct, graffiti etc.) to group-level public events (industrial strike, communal or religious conflicts, public protest etc.) (Kumar, 2009). The characteristic of public disorder events or protest varies according to the type of event, level of violence, location, time period, and levels of participation (Kumar, 2009). In the Indian context, Baylay (1969) classifies three forms of public disorder: 1) Violence of remonstrance - done by participants to bring certain issues to the attention of the authorities, in most cases the government; 2) Violence of confrontation - occurs due to disagreement between two parties over some issues mainly religious conflict; 3) Violence of frustration - individual-level public disorder occurs as a result of frustration.

Protest is a form of group-level public disorder prevalent in every society, developed or underdeveloped (Kumar, 2009). In Indian context, coercive protest, which is similar to Baylay’s category of ‘violence of remonstrance’, appears as a feature of public disorder. Under this category of public disorder, Baylay (1962) further classified six primary forms of protests – 1) processions and public meetings, 2) *hartals* (stoppage of work by employees), 3) fasts, 4) obstruction; 5) courting of arrest; and 6) riots. These forms of protests are then categorized into two general categories: the legal and the illegal as shown in the Fig. 2.1. The non-violent form of protest, also known as *satyagraha* or

non-violent civil disobedience, is one of the most popular forms of protest used by Mahatma Gandhi, and is still very much a part of Indian political scene (Baylay, 1962).

Environmental protests are among the various social movements encountered in the Indian society, which have grown in frequency and intensity in recent years (Swain, 1997). Such protests are often sparked off by the introduction of new development policies that create conflict over the use of communal natural resources (land, water, forest etc.) between the developers and local users. The Chipko (Hugs the Tree) protest, in response to saving trees from commercial exploitation in Northern India, is an example of one such movement. Moreover, conflicts and protest over the use of natural resource management are also frequently seen in opposition to development activities including hydropower development, large dams' development, tourism development, mineral exploration etc. (Swain, 1997; Sinclair & Diduck, 2000; Shekhar, 2003; Saxena, 2008; Nayak, 2010) In this way protest has become a common part of the public participation landscape in India, especially in relation to development projects, including tourism development.

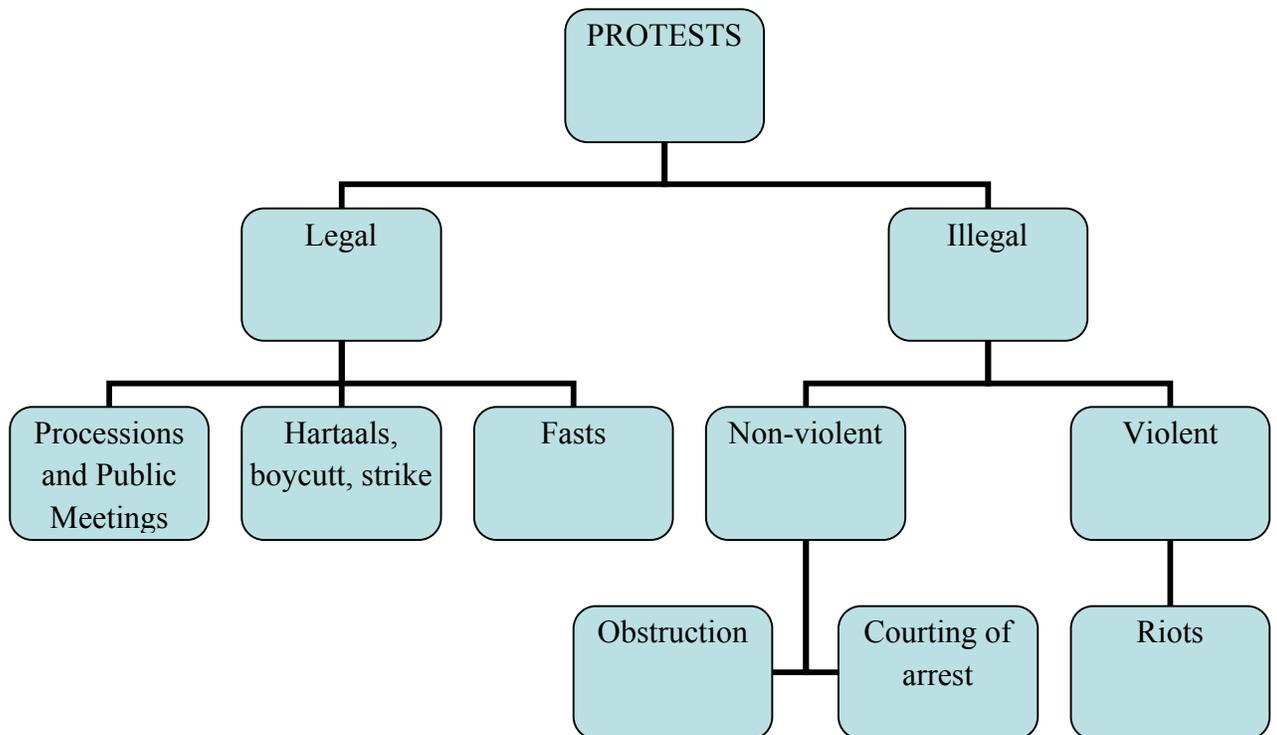


Fig. 2.1: Different forms of public protests in Indian context

Source: Adapted from Baylay (1962, pp. 664)

2. 4.3 A Glimpse of Women’s Participation in India

The relationship of women to the environment, and the role of women in regard to natural resource management, has been discussed by numerous authors (e.g., Agarwal, 1992; Davidson-Hunt, 1997; Berkes et al., 1998; Upadhyaya, 2005). Upadhyaya’s (2005) study on the role of women in natural resources management in rural areas of Nepal and India suggested that women are significantly involved in the use and management of natural resources including water, agriculture, livestock and fishery. He further argues that women are often underrepresented in natural resource decision-making and programmes despite the fact that women outdo men in terms of involvement in resource management. Schmink (1999) put forward similar arguments, saying that though the role

of women is evident at the grassroots project level, their role is not yet reflected in institutional, organization and policy level of development.

Women's participation in India is apparent through involvement in wide range of activities including social movements and actions (protests), and meetings connected with various issues like dowry, labour, domestic violence, alcoholism, environmental protection, etc. (Patel, 1998). Patel (1998) asserts that the women's movement in India is one of the most promising movements in developing countries challenged by a caste, class and gender inequalities. The role of women in environmental protection is most apparent in India from the Chipko movement. This movement sparked off during 1970s in villages of North West India protesting against the commercial exploitation of Himalayan forests (Agarwal, 1992). Agarwal (1992) further argues that the active involvement of women in Chipko movement went beyond environmental protection, and highlighted the potential for a movement against gender related inequalities like oppression, domestic violence, alcoholism etc.

Like the Chipko movement, the *mahila mandal* - a local women's organization -, is also prominent throughout India. These grassroots level organizations are formed to provide platform for women to act collectively in addressing gender issues, draw rural women into the mainstream of development, and help them to bringing social change to their communities through capacity building (Davidson-Hunt, 1997; Das, 2000). The role of such organizations in resource management, and addressing other social and political affairs is found in a number of papers, such as Davidson-Hunt (1997), Patel (1998) and Das (2000). According to Das (2000), group formation is a representation of democratic action, which provides a forum for dialogue and discussion for finding solutions to

different issues or problems. Moreover, formation of group will provide mechanism to set agendas and a means to transform individual weakness into collective strengths. These groups have the potential for participatory development at the grassroots level in which participation; initiative and active involvement of people forms the core of development.

However, previous studies have suggested that upper caste women often dominate *mahila mandals* across India, and the lower caste or marginalized women of the society are suppressed and are not included in the leadership and decision-making level (Das, 2000). Similar situations were found in the Kullu Valley, where Davidson-Hunt (1997) pointed out that the upper class Rajput caste women who have strong economic position and greater political and social control in village affairs dominate the *mahila mandals*.

It is evident from various studies that women in tourists' destinations have economically benefited though their role differs as that of their male counterparts. Cukier et al. (1996) suggested that tourism related employment has resulted in greater autonomy and interdependence in women. However, he argues that, women have been inhibited from acquiring leadership due to cultural barriers and the lack of government and organizational support. In developing nations, the tourism industry often restricts access to common resources or depletes natural resources, which will directly affect the women most, because of the roles they play at household level (EQUATIONS, 2008). However, research in context of role of women in tourism development is still limited. The presences of women already engaged in tourism activities and the strong presences of women's groups in the study region underscores further the importance of focusing on women in this study.

2.5 Learning through participation in project decision-making:

Natural resource and environmental management issues are generally non-linear and associated with complexities and uncertainties requiring a wide range of public participation in decision-making process (Renn et al., 1993; Diduck, 1999). Learning, either individually or collectively, through participation is considered an important outcome of public involvement programs, as it enhances knowledge of the social dimension of resource management and helps achieve a sustainable future in resource use (Webler et al., 1995; Sims & Sinclair, 2008; Diduck, 1999). Various authors have discussed the learning outcomes of public participation in environment decision-making (e.g., Webler et al., 1995; Palerm, 2000; Sinclair & Diduck, 2001; Fitzpatrick & Sinclair, 2003; Sims & Sinclair, 2008; Marschke & Sinclair, 2009). This research will focus on individual learning as described in transformative learning theory and its application in the context of project decision-making, since the study will be focused on individuals.

2.5.1 Theoretical Framework

Transformative learning theory provides a theoretical framework for adult education within different cultural contexts (Mezirow, 1994, 2000; Sinclair & Diduck, 2001; Sims & Sinclair, 2008; Marschke & Sinclair, 2009). According to Mezirow (2000, p. 4), transformative learning explains the processes central to adult learning that include: “formulating more dependable beliefs about our experience, assessing their contexts, seeking informed agreement on their meaning and justification, and making decisions on the resulting insights”. Transformative learning describes a process where people gradually transform their frames of reference to a more inclusive, reflective perspective

and become open to change to generate more justified beliefs and views (Mezirow, 1994, 2000; Sims & Sinclair, 2008).

A frame of reference provides the results of interpreting experiences and includes two dimensions: a habit of mind and points of view (Mezirow, 2000). A habit of mind is a broader, generalized and underlying cultural, psychological, moral and ethical assumption whereas the point of view is the results of expressed habits of mind through set of specific expectations, beliefs and feelings. Transformation of the frames of reference occurs through critical reflections on the assumptions upon which the habits of mind and points of view are based either through one major event in one's life or through a series of related transformations (Mezirow, 1994; Montes, 2008). Such transformations are often prompted by external circumstances whereby recognition of the resulting changes will heavily rely upon individual's cultural background.

Transformative learning comprises of two primary domains: instrumental and communicative learning. Instrumental learning relates to learning to control or manipulate the environment whereas communicative learning deals with understanding what someone means when they are communicating (Mezirow, 1994; Sinclair & Diduck, 2001; Sims & Sinclair, 2008). Normally learning occurs through any of the four ways: elaborating the existing frame of reference; learning new frames of reference; transforming points of view; and transforming habits of mind (Mezirow, 2000). The following ten steps are often followed in transformative process (Mezirow, 2000, p. 22):

- (1) A disorienting dilemma
- (2) Self-examination with feelings of fear, anger, guilt, or shame

- (3) Critical assessment of assumptions
- (4) Recognition that one's discontent and the process of transformation are shared
- (5) Exploration of options for new roles, relationships, and actions
- (6) Planning a course of action
- (7) Acquiring knowledge and skills for implementing one's plans
- (8) Provisional trying of new rules
- (9) Building competence and self-confidence in new roles and relationships
- (10) A reintegration into one's life on the basis of condition by one's new perspective.

2.5.2 Transformative learning through EIA

Public participation is an important aspect of EIA, as outlined above. EIA- public participation- and-the education/learning nexus has been discussed by several studies. Sinclair & Diduck (2001, p. 115) use Mezirow's ideal conditions of learning 1) accurate and complete information; 2) freedom from coercion; 3) openness to alternative perspectives; 4) ability to reflect critically upon presupposition; 5) equal opportunity to participate and; 6) ability to assess arguments in a systematic manner and accept a rational consensus as valid, and developed operational definitions to assess the educational component of public participation in Canadian EIA. Based on these criteria, the study revealed both the positive and negative aspects of the process and identified room for public participation reforms within EIA process to facilitate mutual learning. Diduck & Mitchell's (2003) case study on EIA public participation in hog processing facility in Manitoba examined both instrumental learning (e.g. obtaining knowledge and information, learning about legal/administrative/political procedures, and being aware of the potential risks and impacts), and communicative learning (e.g. understanding interest

and personal thoughts, understanding others' opinions, learning communication strategies, and social mobilization). Further more, Fitzpatrick & Sinclair (2003) also found the potential for critical education in EIA process, especially through public hearings, revealing transformative learning outcomes. Sinclair et al. (2008) developed a conceptual framework of learning for sustainable development, and use various case studies grounded on EA-participation-learning nexus revealing the linkages between meaningful participation and diversity of leaning outcomes in an EA context, and their congruence with sustainability criteria. The study observes that in the course of EIA, the participants recognize the importance of the environmental aspects and was able to create a linkage with their economic interests thereby contributing to sustainability of natural resources in the course of project development. Public participation in an EIA context can also initiate social learning processes which transform alienated individual actions into collective action to solve a mutual problem (Webler et al., 1995).

2.5.3 Protest as a platform for learning

Learning can be formal and deliberate (often acquired through planned session) or informal and incidental. Protest is a form of collective action with a certain level of organization, which can generate informal or incidental knowledge through sharing of information, creating dialogue on differing perspectives, critiquing and transforming into mutual understanding, and setting common goals to achieve through collaborative action (Anderson & Saavedra, 1995; Foley, 2001). New skills and knowledge have to be acquired by the protestors or campaigners while initiating any form of social movement (Foley, 2001). The acquired knowledge whether it's political, legal, administrative, scientific, technical, or cultural can be significant and empowering. Foley (2001, p. 78)

ascertains that “the experience of the campaign challenged, and significantly altered, the campaigners’ understanding of the world”, and results in ‘perspective transformation’ learning. Walter’s (2007, p. 260) study of adult learning in Clayoquot Sound protest in Canada examined that during the environmental protest, the protestors learned “to master, with their bodies, minds, and spirits, and realized their “ability and power” to bring non-violent social transformation from the grassroots level”. Moreover, it is also observed that learning within Peace Camp provoke individual and collective transformation not only in those who are participating as protestors but the general public at large (Walter, 2007). In environmental movements, both Foley (2001) and Walter (2007) noted that the protestors were able to acquire an in-depth understanding of the significance embedded within the rainforest that is worth struggled for. Thus protest related to tourism development such as the HSV can be a platform for creating awareness, acquiring knowledge and non-formal education on environmental issues, which provoke personal or collective transformation towards achieving sustainability.

2.6 Chapter Summary

Questions regarding the sustainability of the tourism industry and related development are currently highly relevant with burgeoning tourism development in the Northern mountainous states of India. Sustainable tourism development requires integrated tourism planning and sound tourism development that incorporates meaningful public participation. Such integrated tourism planning can increase economic benefits while minimizing the potential environmental and socio-cultural strains associated with tourism development. However, developing nations like India still lack an integrated tourism planning approach, and provision for effective public participation at the project

decision-making level are questionable. This has been evident through conflicts and protest that arises at the local level against large-scale tourism development projects like the Himalayan Ski Village (HSV) in Northern India. There is a need for further study into the types of participation that are evident in relation to these large tourism developments, and the learning outcomes that are occurring in support of sustainable solutions.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH APPROACH AND METHODS

3.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a description of the research methods that I used to obtain data pertaining to the objectives set for the study. This research is built around the critical social science paradigm. A qualitative research approach was chosen for the research under which a single case study of inquiry was selected for in-depth study of public participation in tourism development in mountain regions. The Himalayan Ski Village (HSV) project proposed to be built in Manali in the Northern mountainous state of Himachal Pradesh, India was chosen as a case study. Both primary and secondary data were collected during the study. Data collection procedures including participant observation, semi-structured interviews, and a participatory transect walk were used to collect primary data during the field visit. For the collection of secondary data, I reviewed secondary sources including research and academic publications, newspaper articles, legal and government publications, policy frameworks, documents, and journals related to the issues under consideration. After data collection, the primary and secondary data were organized using Nvivo software to facilitate the analysis and reporting of the research findings.

3.2 Critical Social Science paradigm

This research is based on critical social science paradigm, as I sought to address the issues of public participation in tourism development that impacts marginalized people. A critical social science approach is based on the philosophy of critical theory, first developed by the Frankfurt School in Germany in the 1930s (Dillard, 1991; Neuman

2000). Critical theory holds a political goal, and speaks about individual freedom that can be achieved through a free, rational and decent society (McGregor, 2003). Critical theory refers to the attainment of the desired improvement of human life, whereas critical social science is the process that directs us towards this desired outcome (McGregor, 2003). The basic tenant of critical social science is that it views society as a human construction, which keeps on changing. It focuses on improving the living conditions of people instead of accepting and coping with the existing situations (McGregor, 2003). The critical social science approach argues that people are the active agents for bringing about social transformation; however, they are often trapped in a web of societal myths, obligations and relationships (Neuman, 2000). In such a scenario, the critical researcher tries to unravel the existing problems of oppression, exclusion, biasness, power abuse etc. within a society, and target ways to bring social transformation through self-realization, emancipation and empowerment under the existing circumstances (Dillard, 1991). So, a critical social science approach always seeks to expose a hidden social oppression through self-realization and enlightenment in a society (Morgaine, 1994). As a person concerned about the human well-being and the environment, this research paradigm fits well with both the research objectives I have set and my personal outlook on development in fragile mountain regions.

As guided by the critical social science approach, this research analyzes and critiques the existing nature of public participation in the tourism development and the decision-making process in the proposed study site. The research outcomes will be shared with the local communities, in order to make them aware of the existing situation and the recommendations suggested by the study. This will hopefully help them to reframe their

thinking and may cause them to seek a more meaningful participation in the decision-making process for future development projects that may potentially affect them. Meanwhile, sharing of information with the government or the power holders from this research may help to re-address shortcomings in the participation processes that have already taken place.

3.3 Qualitative Research Approach

Adopting a qualitative research approach fits well with the proposed study for a variety of reasons. As qualitative research takes place in a natural setting where the actual events occur, this approach provides an opportunity for the researcher to actually explore and gain an understanding of a particular situation or events (Creswell, 2009). Qualitative research is an appropriate research method for researchers who are interested in insight, discovery, and interpretation rather than hypothesis (Noor, 2008). Moreover, qualitative research is well suited to address certain research problems where the researcher often has little knowledge or understanding on the topic (Morse & Richards, 2002). In a qualitative study, the researcher can choose one or more strategies of inquiry as a guide and can use multiple interactive and participatory data collection procedures. Qualitative research generally involves participatory methods of data collection giving an emphasis on participant's perceptions and experiences of a particular event (Creswell, 2009). As well, qualitative research is the most appropriate way to approach such subjects where the researcher needs to base the study on information that will be acquired from the local people and other stakeholders in the field, as is the case in this study.

3.4 Case Study Strategy

A case refers to an event, an entity, an individual or a unit of analysis, and is highly applicable to understanding contemporary phenomenon in its real-life context using multiple sources of evidence (Yin, 1981). It is also defined as a bounded system that narrows down a given case to a particular place, time, or components that comprise it (Merriam, 2002). A case study inquiry will give an understanding of “how and why” things happen, thus allowing the researcher to focus on a particular issue or feature in depth. The case study strategy was selected purposefully since it is suitable to understanding a situation or problem in depth within a real life context (Noor, 2008).

This description of case studies underpins the selection of this strategy of inquiry for this research as it helped me to narrow down the scope of the research to a more specific temporal and spatial scale, how and why questions were being asked, and the case is characteristic of others in the region. The Himalayan Ski Village (HSV) project proposed to be built in Manali was chosen as the case study for this research, as it is one of the recent mega-tourism projects proposed to be built in the northern mountainous state of India having a potential for profound environmental and socio-economic consequences. Moreover, this project has gained lots of attention in the locality and media as the local people have protested against it. Further, the selection of the HSV project was appropriate since it provided a good platform to examine whether such a project has been conceptualized and implemented within the context of a participatory decision-making process. As Merriam (2002) suggests, much can be learned from a particular case and can be transferred to other similar situations as well.

3.5 Data Collection Procedures

Qualitative research provides four basic types of data collection procedures including observations, interviews, documents, and audio and visual materials. Data collection procedures used for this research included: participant observation, semi-structured interviews, transect walks, and the review of secondary documents.

3.5.1 Participant Observation

Bernard (1988) identified participant observation as one of the data collection procedures that helps with rapport building within a new community, so that the researcher can be a part of the community and observes the daily activities. This method provides the researcher with a platform to observe the ongoing activities in natural setting, which facilitates data analysis (Bernard, 1988).

Living with a local homestay family for three months (September through December 2010) in the village of Goshal during my research helped me to be a part of the community from the initial phase of my study. As a part of the community, I got the privilege of attending village gatherings, festivals and to be involved in other daily activities in the village. My direct participation and observation in such activities facilitated my understanding of the dynamics of the location, the community settings, and building rapport with the local people. Direct observations in the community provided insights on the local livelihoods, the role of men and women in the community, and the role of the village deity. Apart from observation, I also got an opportunity to interact with the locals on a daily basis, which helped to improve my communication skills (most interviews were done in *Hindi*). I also made several visits to some of the major tourist spots in the area, where I observed different kinds of tourism activities, the level-of local

participation in such activities, the types of tourists, and the ongoing implications of tourism on the environment and the local communities.

Unfortunately, there were no decision activities going on related to the ski village project like protest, hearings, meetings etc. while I was in the field. However, I got to observe some local protests against the AD hydro project in the area. In addition, I also visited and observed some big development projects in the area like the AD hydropower project and a road tunnel project. Video of the public hearing event held in relation to the HSV was also provided for review. These observations helped me not only to understand the issues of a similar context, but also helped me to construct sensible questions for the semi-structured interviews. I kept a record of all my observations, feelings, concerns, and personal reflections in the journal on a daily basis, which formed a backup for my data, which was crucial for analysis purpose.

3.5.2 Semi-structured Interviews

I used semi-structured interviews in order to gain an understanding of stakeholder's views regarding the project impacts, their role in decision-making, and their perceptions about development activities like the HSV project. Moreover, semi-structured interviews was also used for understanding the public consultation and participation process used during project development, and the learning outcomes acquired by individuals through participation in project decision-making.

I developed three semi-structured interview guides designed for: a) HSV project participants, b) HSV project non-participants and, c) government officers and the project proponents. A sample of each of the semi-structured guide is included in Appendix I.

However, the guide was kept flexible while interviewing, allowing for questions emerging from the information that was being offered, and also depending on the type and level of participation of each informant in the project decision-making process. Keeping in mind the sensitivity of the subject matter and considering the comfort of the participants, most of the interviews were hand written rather than recorded. I reviewed and supplemented my notes after each interview, and began thinking about themes for analysis at this stage.

During the initial phase of the field study, I took ample time to understand the project, and the issues associated with it by tracing the news covered on the project. In addition, I took several interviews with the key informants to obtain more information about the project and decision processes. Key informants are those people who can be easily approached, have knowledge about the subject matter, and are glad to provide information (Bernard, 2002). In this case, the majority of the key informants interviewed were from Manali town. The information acquired through these interviews was crucial to understand the types of activities related to the project that happened over the years. A purposeful random sampling was done to identify the HSV project participants for interview accordingly. Then a snowballing technique (i.e., asking each informant to identify other people who have participated in some way in the HSV project decision-making) was used during the interview to identify other potential participants. Non-participants were selected in a similar way. The purpose of also talking to non-participants was to triangulate the data I was collecting from participants, find out why people decided not to participate, obtain their understanding of the project and its impacts since everybody knew about the project.

The selection of these local project participants for semi-structured interview was further restricted by geographical limitations. The majority of the project participants were from the nine villages locally referred to as '*nau gaun*', as all these villages fall under the umbrella of one village deity. The *nau gaun* include Goshal, Shanag, Buruwa, Majach, Kulong, Palchan, Ruahr, Kothi, and Sholang Naala villages. All these nine villages pray to three common Gods – *Maha Rishi Gautam*, *Maha Rishi Vyas* and *Kanchan Naag*. These three Gods are carried in the same palanquin whenever they have to travel and are equally revered by the people of *nau gaun* (Thakur, 2011). The participants were randomly selected from these villages because: a) these *nau gaun* or nine villages are located nearby the proposed project sites, and are considered to be the potentially impacted villages; and b) the majority of the residents from these villages have participated in the project decision-making, especially the public hearings. Some of the participants for interview were from other villages depending on their participation. The majority of the local project participants interviewed were women, which include few group interviews. Interviews were also conducted with the representatives of local NGOs, community groups and *manila mandals*, as these groups play an important role in the HSV decision-making process. Interviews were also done with the people who are associated with the HSV project. Government officials in Manali and Kullu district were approached for an interview; however, they were reluctant to speak on the subject matter as the case was in the court at that time. In total, 46 formal interviews were done with different stakeholders according to the breakdown shown in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1: Semi-structured interview participants

Respondent Types		Number of Respondents
Project Participants		
Local People	Men	11 (including 1 gr. interview)
	Women	15 (including 2 gr. interviews)
Groups (Organizations/NGOs)		5
Government Officials (State/District level)		4
Project Proponent		3
Non-Participants		8
Total		46

3.5.3 Transect Walks

Transect walks are a participatory tool involving a systematic walk for probing local in-depth knowledge on the physical and social aspects of the locality through visual and/or verbal interaction (Mukherjee, 2002). This method is used to provide a first hand learning-by-observing opportunity to the researcher, which helps to overcome the roadside bias associated with field visits (Mukherjee, 2002). During the field research, a transect walk was done in the proposed study site along with a local guide to gain an understanding of the project location, scale, the land-use pattern, physical and social aspects of the locality. Transect walks provided insights about the multiple land use pattern in the region and the vegetation and resources at the proposed tourism project site. Thus, the adoption of this method for this research facilitated my understanding of the local people's perceptions regarding the possible project impacts on the environment and livelihoods. In addition, it also helped me to confirm what I had been told about the site.

Information obtained through en route inquiry and direct observation during the transect walk was noted down in my field notes. Photos were taken during the walk in the proposed site to supplement the information.

3.5.4 Review of Secondary data

The research included review of the existing secondary information such as newspapers, reports, government documents, policies, complaint letter, court materials, detailed project report of the HSV project, etc. related to the research study prior to and during the field research. The documents also included photographs and video recordings of events like public hearing and rallies. The information obtained through these secondary sources was used to understand the proposed project, the issues related with it, and to identify the potential participants for interviews during the field research. The secondary information was also used to support or contrast the research findings.

3.6 Threats to Validity

In qualitative research, validity is important in order to check the accuracy of the research findings (Creswell, 2003). Given this, one strategy I used to validate the collected data is the data triangulation method, which helps in crosschecking the findings. For this, I used multiple sources of data collection procedures including interviews, observations, document reviews supplemented with video recordings and photographs. In addition, the study participants were purposefully selected to include project participants – both supporting and opposing the project -, and also non-participants with the aim of triangulating the data. Moreover, staying with a local home-stay family in the village for three months helped me to develop an in depth understanding of the people, the place and the culture that contributed credibility in the narrative account.

3.7 Data Analysis

According to Creswell (2003) data analysis follows several steps which include: a) organizing and preparing data for analysis; b) obtaining a general sense of information; c) coding and identifying the main themes; d) representing the main themes in a qualitative narrative; and e) interpreting data in relation to the literature or theories. Following these guidelines, I first transcribed the interviews, and field notes. Then, I developed general themes of my findings by going through all the transcribed data. Then the data were organized and categorized into different themes by coding using the Nvivo software. Nvivo made it easier to extract the coded information categorized into different themes. The analysis of public participation process in the HSV project was grounded in the tentative public participation framework shown in Fig. 3.1, developed from the existing literature on public participation (Sinclair & Diduck, 2009; Baylay, 1969) as outlined in Chapter 2.

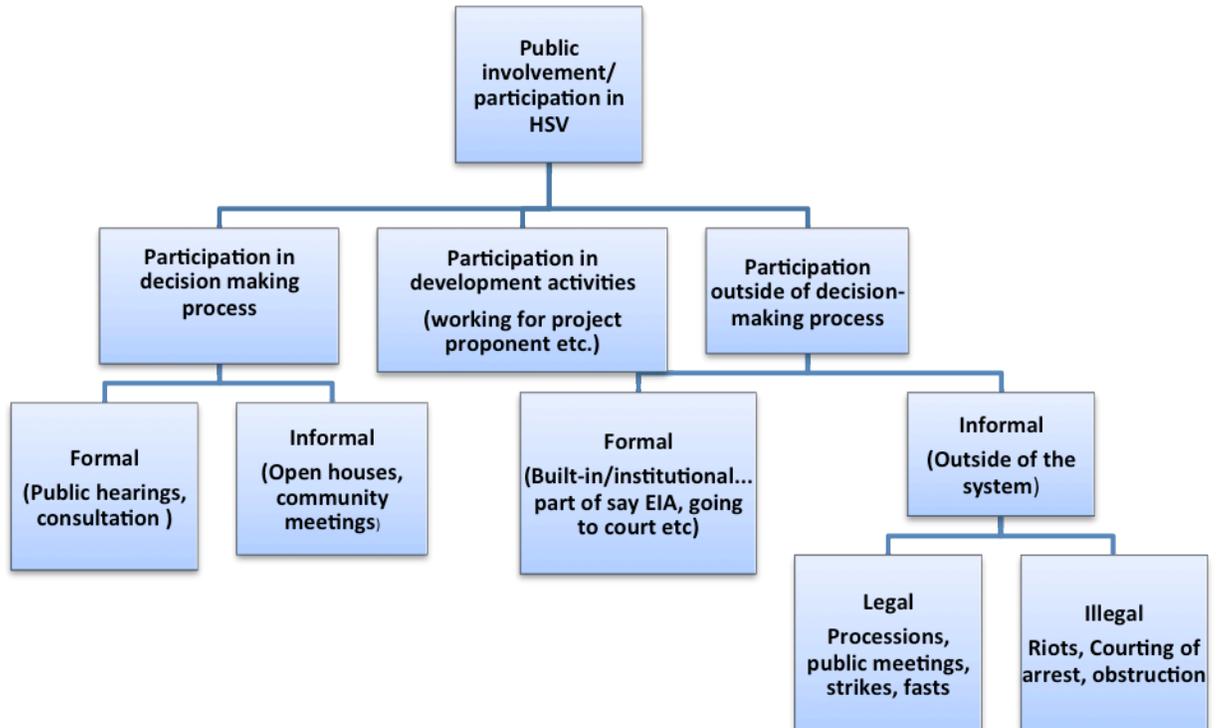


Fig 3.1: Framework for studying participation in HSV development
 (Baylay, 1969; Sinclair & Diduck, 2009)

CHAPTER 4: TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN MANALI: THE HIMALAYAN SKI VILLAGE (HSV) PROJECT

4.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a description of the study area focusing on the proposed Himalayan Ski Village (HSV) project. The chapter begins by providing a brief background on general tourism development in Manali followed by a detailed portrayal of the HSV project. The proposed project concept, its location, and the project history are discussed. The potential environmental, socio-cultural, and economic impacts of the proposed project as perceived or communicated by the residents are also detailed. Further, the environmental impact assessment and land transaction issues associated with the proposed project are examined.

4.2 The study area

This research took place in and around Manali located in the Kullu region, which is located in the state of Himachal Pradesh in the north-western part of India. Himachal Pradesh was established as an independent state in 1971 (See Fig. 4.1). This valley is nestled in the Pir Panjal range of the western Himalayas, and is located at the headwater region of the Upper Beas River with an altitude ranging from 1,300 to 6,000m (Cole & Sinclair, 2002). The Kullu region has a typical high mountain environment, and has characteristic semi-tropical forest vegetation composed of dense pinewoods, deciduous arboreum, rhododendron and evergreen fir, oak and spruce. The Kullu Valley is also known as '*Dev Bhoomi*' – the abode of Gods. Nearly every village in Kullu has a temple, and the faith in the village deity is still very firm within the local communities (Jreat,

2004). Moreover, the valley contains some religious monuments and places, which are of great significance in Hindu religion and culture. Because of these historic natural and cultural settings, Kullu Valley has continued to attract visitors and pilgrims throughout its history.

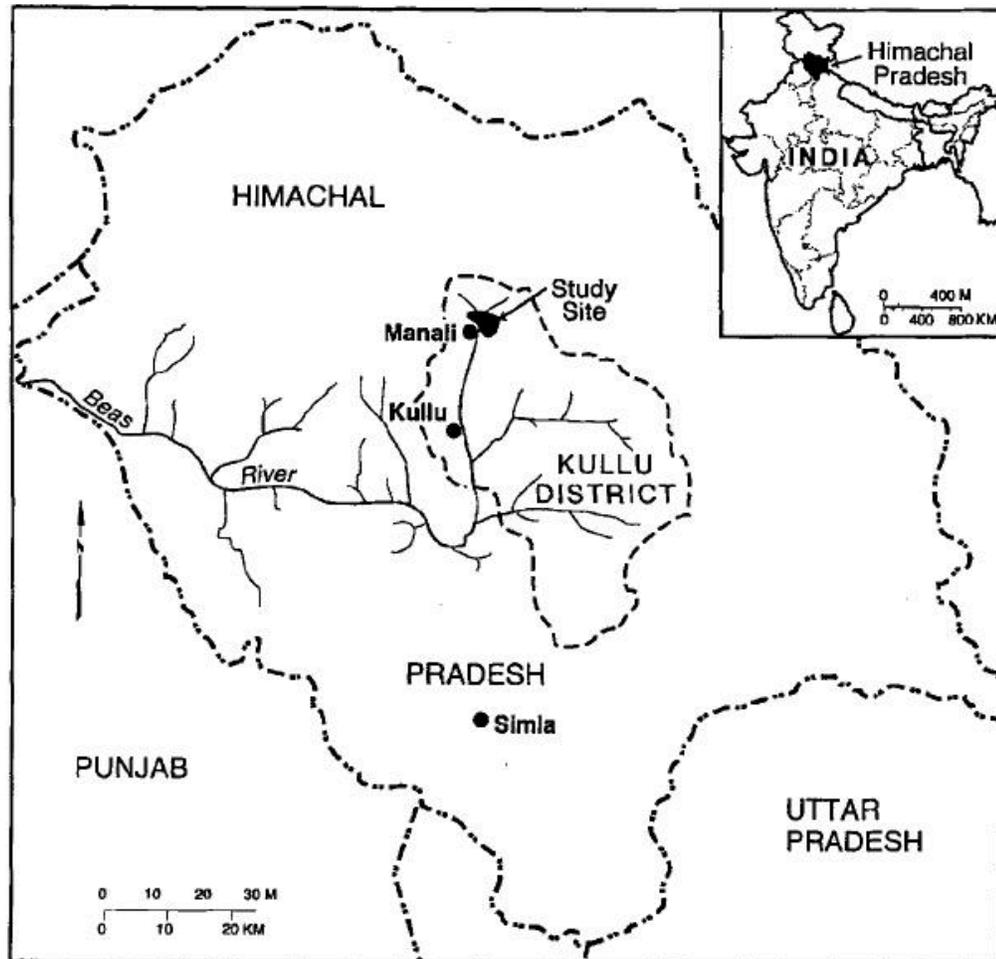


Fig. 4.1: Map showing study area (Adapted from source: Sinclair & Ham, 2000, p. 94)

Manali located at an elevation of 2050m is the prime tourist destination in the Kullu region. The village of Manali was originally known as ‘Dana bazaar’, which literally refers to ‘fodder’ since it used to be the halting stage for the traders to procure fodder for their mule, and other essential supplies before heading over the Rohtang Pass during late 1800s (Cole & Sinclair, 2002). The traditional livelihood strategy of the

residents living in and around Manali was based on subsistence farming (Berkes et al, 1998; Cole, 2000). This has, however, changed in recent years with the advent of tourism industry, and the substantial growth in the horticulture sector, particularly apples. Farming still continues to form a major part of the livelihood basket, but the majority of the residents are now also engaged in the horticulture and tourism sectors. People of the Kullu region are specifically referred to as '*pahari*' (Singh, 1998) and they speak the local dialect '*Kulluvi*'. However, Manali has now become a mosaic of different communities, castes, and religions. The opening up of the wide range of employment opportunities in tourism industry and horticulture sectors has attracted migrants from the neighbouring states and countries. Apart from the local *pahari* people, Manali's population comprised of Ladhakis, Lahaulis, Spitians, Kashmiris, Tibetans, Nepalese, and migrants from the plains of India.

4.2.1 A Glimpse of Tourism Development in Manali

The development of the tourism industry in Kullu valley has been discussed in various papers (Sandhu, 1998; Cole, 2000; Gardner et al, 2002). Pilgrimage tourism was noted among the earliest forms of tourism in the Kullu valley followed by the emergence of different forms of adventure tourism during the British colonial period prior to 1950s (Gardner et. al, 2002). During this time, the settlers established the first guest houses to serve the travellers – mainly foreigners who were seeking adventure tourism in this remote isolated mountain area. With the completion of Mandi-Larji gorge road in the post-independence period the valley became accessible to motorized vehicles, and the area saw an increased in the number of both foreign and domestic tourists, particularly for recreational purposes (Cole, 2000; Gardner et al, 2002).

Meanwhile, the potential of the tourism industry in Manali slowly began to be recognized in the area when Jawaharlal Nehru, independent India's first Prime Minister, visited this area in 1958, and received an exceptional proclamation for its natural beauty and serenity (Cole, 2002; Singh, 2008). From that point forward, major changes in tourism infrastructures and amenities began to take place in Manali. A marked change in the tourism industry occurred during the late 1970s, which saw improved tourist amenities including luxury accommodation and an increased number of tour operators. The Himachal Pradesh Tourism Development Corporation (H.P.T.D.C.) established the first medium-sized hotels in Kullu-Manali. In addition, the H.P.T.D.C. along with other tour operators organized package tours, and promoted it in other parts of India (Sandhu, 1998; Cole, 2000). The completion of the Highway 21 - the road that linked Lahul and Ladakh through Rohtang Pass - further enhanced the tourism industry in Manali making it a transition zone to explore the northern Indian Himalayas. Apart from the improved amenities and increased accessibility, the tourism industry in Manali flourished in the 1990s following the political unrest in the neighbouring state of Kashmir in the year 1989. With continuous political instability in the Kashmir area, the majority of international and national tourists continue to go to Manali, and now Manali is among the fastest growing tourism destination in the Indian Himalaya. The potential opportunities for the tourism industry in this small mountain town is thus attracting the national and international private investors willing to invest on large-scale tourism infrastructure development like the Himalayan Ski Village (HSV) project. In the meantime, the government of Himachal Pradesh is also extending its full support for such tourism development initiatives in the area.

Statistics on tourist arrivals in Manali over the years reveal that Manali town is experiencing a tourism influx. A study by Cole (2000) shows that tourism in Manali experienced a rapid increase with a record of 18,500 tourist arrivals in 1971 to over 300,000 tourists in 1995. The current tourist arrival statistics indicate that there has been a steady increase in tourist arrivals in Manali over the years, as evidenced by the following: over 1 million tourists visited Manali in 2001 – in 2010 there were over 2.5 million tourists (see Fig. 4.2). The breakdown of domestic and foreign tourists arrival in Manali shows that the domestic tourists by far outnumber the foreign tourists arrival in Manali (see Table 4.1). The flow of domestic tourists in Manali shows a rapid increasing trend from 1 million in 2001 to over 2.4 million in 2010, where as the foreign tourists arrival is also increasing, but at a much slower pace over the years.

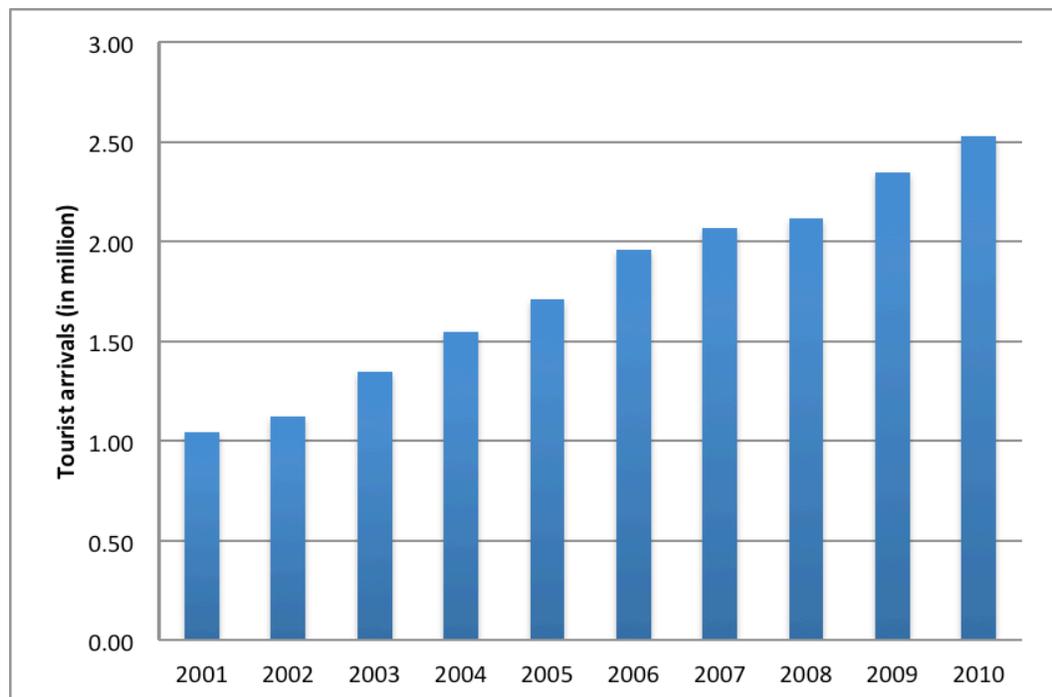


Fig. 4.2: Trends of tourist arrivals in Kullu-Manali (2001 – 2010)

(Source: District Tourism Development Office, Manali)

Table 4.1: Breakdown of domestic and foreign tourist arrivals in Kullu-Manali

Year	Tourist Arrivals (in million)		
	Domestic	Foreign	Total
2001	1.00	0.04	1.04
2002	1.07	0.05	1.12
2003	1.29	0.06	1.35
2004	1.48	0.07	1.55
2005	1.64	0.07	1.71
2006	1.87	0.09	1.96
2007	1.96	0.10	2.07
2008	2.00	0.11	2.11
2009	2.22	0.12	2.34
2010	2.40	0.13	2.53

(Source: District Tourism Development Office, Manali)

Major tourist attractions in Manali include natural scenic landscape, cool climate, diverse culture, and a wide range of adventure activities including winter sports. Table 4.2 shows the major tourists spots and available tourists activities in and around Manali. The inflow of domestic tourists in Manali is comparatively higher during summer time – as people from the plains travel to escape the heat. Moreover, Manali has now become a popular destination for shooting Bollywood movies that further continues to promote the region’s booming tourism industry. The tourism industry has been a boon to the local economy, but at the same time it has put the region under a grip of critical environmental degradation. In the year 1995, when the total tourist arrival was 382,569, the ecological footprint (EF) of Manali was found to be 25 times greater than its size (Cole & Sinclair, 2002). With more than 2.5 million tourists in recent years, the EF of Manali has likely increased drastically. Past studies have suggested that tourism development - which is

occurring in a rather chaotic and unplanned manner at an unprecedented rate - has created air pollution, water pollution, noise pollution, and waste management problem in this mountain town questioning its sustainability (Cole, 2000; Gardner et al., 2002; Kuniyaal et al., 2007).

Table 4.2: Important tourists spots in and around Manali

Major Spots	Altitude (m)	Distance from Manali (km)	Tourist Attractions/Activities
Rohtang Pass	3978	51	Snow view, view of the Kullu valley, view of snow clad peaks, gateway to Lahaul valley, skiing, paragliding, yak/horse riding etc.
Marhi	3320	35	Scenic, snow view
Kothi	2700	12	Snow and glaciers, last village of the Kullu valley, hang gliding
Palchan	2200	6	Scenic, apple orchard
Solang Nala	2480	14	Scenic, ski slope, view of snow and glaciers, paragliding, lifts etc.
Vashist	2050	3	Natural hot springs, temples
Manali	2050	0	Main tourist center, scenic, Hadimba Devi temple, monasteries, apple orchards, view of Beas river, river rafting etc.
Kullu	1219	39	Ancient town, trout fishing, temples, river rafting, Dussehra festival

(Source: Jreat, 2004; Kuniyal et al, 2007)



Plate 4.1: Tourist activities at Sholang Nala



Plate 4.2: Vehicle traffic on the way to Rohtang

4.3 The Tourism Policy of Himachal Pradesh

The tourism industry and related development has been accorded a high priority by the state government of Himachal Pradesh, as it is believed to have the potential to increase the overall development of the state. The national tourism policy in India is formulated and administered by the Department of Tourism at the Central (federal) level and is designed for a five year period. Each state government in India is responsible for developing, formulating and regulating their own policies, strategies and plans for tourism within their state. In Himachal Pradesh, the Department of Tourism and Civil Aviation is the main body for formulating and administering the tourism policy. In the year 2005, the state government announced a new tourism policy “to make tourism the prime engine of economic growth in the state by positioning it as a leading global destination by the year 2020.” The main objectives of the tourism policy 2005 were:

1. To establish Himachal Pradesh as a leading tourist destination in the country and abroad;
2. To make tourism a prime engine for economic development and prosperity of the State and as a major means for providing employment;

3. To encourage a strong and sustainable private sector participation in creation of tourism infrastructure especially through public private partnerships;
4. To promote sustainable tourism which is not only environmentally compatible but also leads to economic betterment of the rural people;
5. To attract quality tourists and to increase their stay in the State;
6. To safeguard the State's natural and manmade heritage;
7. To encourage civil societies & non-governmental organizations for promotion and the conducting of tourism related activities;
8. To position Himachal Pradesh as a one stop destination for adventure tourism.

(Source: Department of Tourism and Civil Aviation, 2005: pp. 15-16)

In order to achieve these objectives, one major emphasis of the state government is to develop and upgrade tourism infrastructures, especially through private sector investment in some of the major tourist destinations like Shimla, Manali, Dalhousie, Mcleodganj, Kasauli, and Chail. The strategy includes the attraction of private investors for tourism infrastructure development projects especially hill stations, ski resorts, tourist centers, multiplexes, 4/5 star hotels, etc.

The discourse of public-private partnership for tourism infrastructure development, however, was first brought out with the formulation of the state's tourism policy in the year 2000. The government had laid out some supportive policies and facilities to encourage the active participation of private, national, and international corporate bodies. Some salient features of the policy were:

- Creation of wayside amenities along the highways
- Single window clearance for all tourism related projects

- Special incentive package for development of satellite towns and cyber cities with investment of over US \$21.5 million by NRIs and foreign investors
- Declaration of 10 year tax holiday for entertainment units and deferred payment of luxury tax by hotels and tourism units.

(Source: India Brand Equity Foundation, 2005; pp.14)

Himachal Pradesh saw numerous tourism related projects in the years following this policy, and the state was ranked second in terms of total tourism projects sanctioned during 2001-2004 in the country (Asher, 2008). Another important transformation that attracted private investors is the relaxation in Land Policy, in particular, the section 118 of the HP Tenancy and Land Reforms Act (HPLRA), which had restricted the buying and selling of lands by non-Himachali and non-agriculturists. Now, a non-Himachali and non-agriculturalist private investor willing to invest in the tourism sector can do so by obtaining Essentiality Certificates from the Tourism department, and with special amendments made in section 118 of the HPLRA to acquire and transfer of private/government lands. The Himalayan Ski Village (HSV) project, which aims to provide a world-class skiing facility, accommodations and other tourism services, is a typical example of one such mega-tourism project proposed in the state with public-private partnerships and that involves land transfers.

4.4 The Himalayan Ski Village (HSV) Project

4.4.1 Project Summary

The Himalayan Ski village (HSV) is a mixed-use resort development project, which proposes to develop four ski villages in the foothills and ski slopes in the Manali

hills. The proposed mega-tourism project aims to provide a world-class tourism facility showcasing the local culture and the environment of the western-Indian Himalayas. The creators of this project believe that “the development would be the first of its kind in Indian context and would aspire to host the Winter Olympics when completed” (HSV, 2007, p.2). The ski village project that envisaged a world-class eco-friendly resort and ski facilities was touted to be India’s largest foreign direct investment (FDI) project in the tourism sector. As per the Detailed Project Report (DPR) of the HSV, the total project cost is estimated to be USD 328.4 million and the project will have several international investors, including Mr. Alfred Ford of the Ford motor family who maintains the largest share in the company.

The proposed project aims to provide a world-class skiing facility, accommodations, and other tourism services for approximately 4,500 people. Proposed facilities in the villages include an array of hotels, restaurants, shops, recreation, and cultural facilities fronting pedestrian streets and plazas. All these facilities were supposed to be widely spread in four mountain villages: upper Kothi, lower Kothi, Khanora village, and Whispering Rocks located north of Manali town in the Kullu region. The villages were to be interconnected by gondolas and ski lifts, which were also to provide direct access to extensive ski slopes in the mountain areas. The promoters laid out a plan to develop the project on 93.1 hectares of land, of which 16.3 was government or forestland (GoHP, 2009). The state government made an agreement to lease out the required government/forest land to the HSV Pvt. Ltd for 99 years with a provision of revenue sharing through royalty payment, and yearly contribution to the HP Tourism Development Board. The project extends from villages located at 2200m to upper

stretches of mountain ranges at a height of 4144m above sea level. As described in the project DPR, the proposed HSV project will have four major components:

- a) **Chalets:** The HSV proposed to develop 130 chalets spread across different villages: in lower Kothi village, upper Kothi village and Khanora village area. These super-luxury accommodations will be available for lease to prospective clients.
- b) **Hotels:** The HSV proposed to develop six hotels with 475 rooms. The six hotels will be of varied luxury types. International or domestic hoteliers will manage these hotels, which will be built in Lower Kothi village, Whispering Rocks and Khanora village.
- c) **Gondolas:** A gondola with a carrying capacity of 2000 passengers per hour will connect the villages and ski slopes. The proposed gondola transportation system will be 7.2 km long journey comprised of three sections with its main base located at Khanora village development area.
- d) **Village attractions and amenities:** As a part of mixed-use hospitality development, the project proposes to offer visitors with a variety of entertainment, dining, and shopping options. Village attractions include entertainment centers, retail shops, cultural village and craft bazaar, ice-skating rink, and parking facilities. One major attraction will be the proposed world-class ski slopes spread over 6,000 acres of mountain slopes. Village amenities include a small 12-bed clinic, a primary school with residential facility, and a training institute with a commitment to train and hire staff from local communities.



Plate 4.3: Site of the proposed Himalayan Ski Village (HSV) project



Plate 4.4: Village areas nearby the proposed HSV project site



Plate 4.5: Pasture and forest areas near the HSV project site

4.4.2 Environmental and Socio-economic Strategies of the Project

The Himalayan ski village (HSV) project is proposed with a vision to “set new social and environmental standards for 21st century responsible tourism.” The project DPR outlines the environmental and socio-economic strategies of the project as a commitment towards environmental protection and community development. The DPR mentioned that the proposed project would adopt precautionary principles in order to maintain a balance between social equity, environmental quality, and economic viability. The DPR identifies potential environmental impacts likely to occur during the construction and operation phase, and outlines strategies to minimize these impacts. The DPR also provides some strategies for addressing the environmental issues related to the project such as waste management problem, air pollution, water pollution, noise pollution, soil erosion, felling of trees, and loss of biodiversity.

The project proponent believes that the proposed project will benefit the community at local *Panchayat* level, district level, and the entire state through employment generation and revenue sharing. The project committed to offer 70% of the employment opportunities to Himachalis, in particular the locals from the affected *Panchayats*. As a part of their rural development initiatives, the HSV proposes to stimulate local handicraft production, organic farming, and community-based tourism. In addition, the proposal proposes to provide educational services, health facilities, and vocational trainings to local communities. With the aim of implementing these proposed environmental and socio-economic strategies, the project proposes to set up a Department of Sustainable Practices responsible for their undertaking.

4.4.3 Project History

A project proposal for the HSV was submitted to the government of Himachal Pradesh on 19th March 2004 through the HSV Chairperson Mr. Alfred Ford. With the approval of the Preliminary Project Report (PPR), the Himalayan Ski Village (HSV) project and the Congress-led government of Himachal Pradesh signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) about the project on 9th December 2005. However, some of the clauses in the MOU became the key reasons for controversies and protests against the proposed project (Asher, 2008; Gopinath, 2008). Some of the clauses of concern to the local people are that the Himachal government is obliged to:

- Lease forestland to the project for 99 years as per the applicable rules of the Revenue/Forest department.
- Grant suitable exemption to the company from the provisions of section 118 of the HPLRA for sale of up to 300 defined units to non- Himachalis.

- Grant an irrevocable license for the use of ski trails and making of snow/ice, retention ponds, etc.
- Grant water rights in the project area including tapping of unused *nallas*/groundwater
- Assist in acquiring up to 60 hectares of private land at a fair price and obtaining other statutory clearances from the concerned departments.

The project has been facing objections from the local people, local deities, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and politicians from time to time ever since the MOU was signed. The then opposition party - Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) - initiated the initial uproar against the project in the State Assembly right after the MOU had been signed (The Tribune, 27th December 2005). Their concerns were supported by a group of local intellectuals from the Kullu region, who later contributed in the formation of an NGO - *Jan Jagaran evam Vikas Sanstha* (JJVS). Meanwhile, the company registered its office in Soham, village-Shuru in Tehsil-Manali. A report dated on 2005, which has been made available by a local school, suggests that the project has done a village profile survey to understand the socio-economic and cultural issues of Shuru and Prini villages under its Department of Sustainable Practices. The survey was done in coordination with the students from the local school in Manali as a part of their environmental education.

On 5th June 2006, the two parties entered into a Detailed Implementation Agreement (IA) according to which the HSV project was required to submit a Detailed Project Report (DPR) within six months. The HSV started extensive investigations on the original proposed project site at the Potato Farm above Shuru village – located on the eastern side of Beas River south of Manali town. The investigation team consisted of

local people who were trained and hired by the project proponents. Respondent 25 (15/11/10) shared his experience while working with the project:

“We were the first employees when the survey began, and we studied the locations, avalanche, and snowfall in Hamata area above Shuru village. They even took a hotel there in advance. Later on they changed their location in the upper area of Palchan above the pasture area. We studied the whole study site up in the mountains in wintertime. There was a huge snowfall and we got stuck there for 3 days.”

As reflected in the above comment the project location has been shifted from Hamata area to Palchan area located north of Manali town, despite the extensive exploration of mountain slopes and village survey conducted in the original proposed site. The local people perceived the uprising of the protests, especially in the initial proposed location as the main reason behind the shifting of the project location; however, as mentioned in the project DPR, the shift in project location occurred since the Potato Farm near Shuru village was not available for the project because of the Allain Duhangan (AD) hydropower project. Respondent 35 (01/11/10) said that the change in location was, “... *because the AD hydropower destroyed all the serenity of Prini area, and serenity is the only Unique Selling Proposition (USP) for any tourism project.*” Considering these circumstances, the project proponent requested the government to provide a 3-month extension for submitting the DPR. With an extension in the time period, the project proponent submitted the project DPR to the government of Himachal Pradesh on 3rd March 2007. On the 5th June 2007, the government of Himachal Pradesh approved the project DPR subject to various conditions including a prerequisite environmental clearance EIA/EMP, a clearance from the Forest Department for using forestland, No Objection Certificate (NOC) for water use from Irrigation and Public Health (IPH)

department/local *Panchayat*, and a clearance from Defense Ministry considering its location in sensitive areas. The Environmental Impact Assessment and Land Transaction issues associated with the HSV project will be discussed more in detail in section 4.6 and 4.7 consecutively.

Meanwhile, protests against the project continued in the Kullu region, and two Public Interest Litigations (PILs) were filed against the project in the High Court consequently after the approval of the project DPR. In 2008, the BJP party, who initially raised concerns about the project MOU signed by the Congress, came into power in Himachal Pradesh, and the new government pledged to look into the project due to the lack of transparency in decision-making (My Himachal, 11th February, 2008). In the same year, the High Court ordered the government of Himachal Pradesh to form a committee to review the matter of the HSV project in response to the PIL filed by Sanjeev Sharman - a local hotelier from Vashist. Accordingly, the committee led by the Secretary of Tourism to Himachal Pradesh held a public hearing at Kothi on 6th June 2009 to collect public views regarding the setting up of the HSV project, in which the locals openly rejected the project (GoHP, 2009). The final report submitted to the High Court by the high-powered committee revealed that the project proponent failed to get the EIA clearances, and thus the government has the right to terminate the Implementation Agreement. The BJP-led state government then issued a show-cause notice to the company regarding this issue. In pursuance of this show cause notice, the HSV project filed a case against the government of Himachal Pradesh in the High Court of Himachal Pradesh. Currently the matter has been sub-judice (under the consideration of the court), and nothing has been heard from the High Court on this matter till this date. The major

events related to the HSV project that have happened from the year 2005 till 2010 in chronological order are listed in Fig. 4.3. Some of these events will be discussed more in detail in the next sections.



Fig. 4.3: A chronology of major events related to Himalayan Ski Village (HSV) project

4.5 Perceptions of the residents on the proposed HSV project

The proposed HSV project is well known within the local communities of Kullu-Manali as the 'ski village' or 'Ford project', because of the wide range of activities that have happened over the years. Local people mentioned that they acquired information pertaining to the proposed project through different sources such as news media, NGOs, and local agents working for the HSV project. Here, the local agent refers to those people who are working for the company at the local level, particularly for developing public relations. The majority of the local participants mentioned that they heard about the project from either the local NGO-JJVS or the HSV local agents.

“We came to know about the ski village from the middlemen who were working with the project. They were saying that the HSV project is planning to build a school and hospital in our area, and provide jobs to the locals. But it was just a verbal saying, they haven't given any written commitments to the locals about whether they are really going to do it or not.” (Respondent 16, 24/11/10)

“The NGO people came to our village, held meetings, and talked about the project. These are the people who are opposing the project. They were asking whether we should allow the project in our area or not. The ski village people never came to us.” (Respondent 12, 14/11/10)

Interestingly, the information coming from both the NGOs and the HSV local agents were directed towards highlighting their own point of view. On one hand, the HSV local agents were trying their best to entice the locals by emphasizing on the potential economic and social benefits of the project. While on the other hand, the NGOs were revealing the downsides of the proposed project within the local communities. Needless to say, the majority of the local respondents still do not know about the real facts of the HSV project, despite the wide range of information dissemination and participation

opportunities. For instance, there is confusion within the residents regarding the project and its location, as reflected in the following comments.

“I heard that the project extends from Rohtang to Chandrakhand. I heard the project is a big one.” (Respondent 21, 19/11/10)

“In the earlier plan, the project was proposed from Rohtang to Nagar area. The project proponent has, however changed their plan, and the project is now proposed only in Rohtang area because of the huge public outburst against the project.” (Respondent 40, 27/10/10)

“I heard the project is proposed near Brigu Lake. But I am not sure because the project proponent never came to us and shared any information, so how would we know what it is actually about.” (Respondent 12, 14/11/10)

Based on the limited information provided by the NGO-JJVS and the HSV local agents, the residents were able to comprehend the potential implications of the proposed project. Interestingly, the majority of respondents weigh the potential implications of the project on the arena based on how they will be benefited or affected by the proposed project. Often at times, these perceptions determined their decision about whether to support or oppose the project, and participate in the project decision-making process. In a response to why people are supporting or opposing the HSV project, respondent 1(17/11/10) said,

“ I think the main reason why people support this project is because they have good facilities, for instance, some do have hotels, some are educated, and some have good skills. As a result, they see some opportunities for them in such project. However, talking about us, we don't have anything of that sort. We are not educated and we don't have good facilities. So there is no point in supporting the project.”

Thus, the understanding of these perceptions is important not only from the sustainable

tourism development point of view, but also for understanding the nature of public participation in the decision-making process. The following section explores the potential environmental, socio-cultural, and economic impacts of the proposed HSV project, as perceived or communicated by the residents.

4.5.1 Environmental Impacts

“The main impacts will be on our environment. Everything is connected with the environment. We are dependent on our environment for our livelihoods. We get oxygen from our environment. We get fodder, timber from the forest... We take our animals to the pastures. Once the environment is destroyed, everything will be destroyed. That’s why this project is not beneficial for us.”(Respondent 12, 14/11/10)

The above statement of the respondent shows not only her concern about the potential impacts of the project on the environment, but also the importance of the environment, particularly natural resources for local livelihoods. It is important to note that the way in which one looks at the potential environmental implication depends on where one stands in terms of resource use. As in many Himalayan regions, livelihoods of the local people in and around Manali are heavily reliant on natural resources (Bingeman et. al, 2004). The majority of the local people acknowledged their symbiotic relationship with the natural resources, and expressed their concern over threat of resource exploitation, risk of soil erosion and landslides, and the likelihood of detrimental environmental impacts like pollution that might occur, as a result of the proposed project. Table 4.3 summarizes the potential positive and negative environmental impacts of the proposed HSV project as perceived or communicated by the residents.

Meanwhile, the foremost concern of the environmentalists/activists is the sheer magnitude of the project proposed in the alpine region. They perceive that the mega-tourism project proposed on the high mountain ranges will be a major threat to the rich and unique biological diversity of the mountain environment and will destroy the fragile mountain ecosystem. While on the other hand, a small group of study participants felt that the proposed HSV project was an ‘eco-friendly’ venture incorporating good environmental management practices that can possibly change the current chaotic tourism development occurring in the region.

Table 4.3: Perceived environmental impacts of the HSV project

Perceived Environmental Impacts of Himalayan Ski Village (HSV) Project	
Negative Environmental Impacts	Positive Environmental Impacts
Pollution <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Water pollution ▪ Air and noise pollution ▪ Solid waste management problem ▪ Sewage ▪ Aesthetic pollution 	Development with careful planning
Impact on Natural Resources and Landscape <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Deforestation ▪ Water scarcity ▪ Extensive pressure on local resources ▪ Slope destabilization, landslides and soil erosion ▪ Siltation in agricultural fields 	Improved environmental management practices with regulatory measures
Impacts on biodiversity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Alteration of ecosystem e.g. Habitat fragmentation ▪ Disturbance to wildlife species like snow leopard ▪ Loss of flora and fauna ▪ Loss of medicinal plants 	Raising environmental awareness
Production of green house gases Increase in Ecological footprint	Financial contribution to environmental management programs

4.5.2 Socio-cultural Impacts

The potential socio-cultural impacts of the proposed project are of particular importance to the residents. Table 4.4 outlines the potential positive and negative socio-cultural impacts of the proposed project as communicated by the local study participants. Of particular concern for the residents residing in and around the proposed project site is the loss of grazing rights, loss of access to local resources, and conflicts over use of resources like water and energy resources. Livelihoods of the local people residing in and around the proposed project area, especially in the *nau gaun* (nine villages) are heavily reliant on self operated tourism business such as paragliding, photography, coat-boot shops, horse riding, yak riding, etc. operating on the way or at the region's popular snow points, such as Sholang Naala and Rohtang pass. Thus, one of the main criticisms is the threat of losing locally operated tourism business as a result of the proposed large-scale multipurpose tourism project. Some people also condemned that the HSV project is more of a real state development project, which will grasp the business of local entrepreneurs. Contradicting this point, the project proponent and the project supporters argue that the proposed project has the potential to generate around 3000 employment opportunities, and promised to provide over 70% of the jobs to Himachalis. Nevertheless, the residents contend that the locals would possibly get only low-paid jobs in the project, considering their low educational qualification and skills. Giving more insights in this context, some study participants gave the following comments.

“We are independent and free now. We can do whatever we feel like, and nobody puts a restriction. We want to remain same in future too. We don't want to work under others. We are happy with whatever we have right now.” (Respondent 1, 17/11/10)

“Our people will never work as a porter for other people. They want to be a supervisor of their own work.” (Respondent 31, 7/12/10)

Table 4.4: Perceived socio-cultural impacts of the HSV project

Perceived Socio-cultural Impacts of Himalayan Ski Village (HSV) Project	
Negative Socio-cultural Impacts	Positive Socio-cultural Impacts
Impacts on local livelihoods <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Loss of locally operated business like coat-boot shops, horse riding etc. ▪ Loss of business to local hoteliers ▪ People will become landless 	Generate employment opportunities
Conflicts over common pool resources <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Loss of grazing rights ▪ Loss of community rights over forest resources ▪ Conflict with traditional land use ▪ Resource use conflict such as conflict over water sources, energy sources etc. 	Skill and capacity development through training Contribution to local clubs and cultural programs
Impacts on local culture and sentiments <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Pollute the sacredness of the Valley of Gods ▪ Invades cultural and sacred spaces ▪ Culture deterioration 	Contribute in infrastructure development programs like school, health facilities etc. Create livelihood opportunities like handicraft production, organic farming, and rural tourism
Social Issues <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Job level friction ▪ Overcrowding and associated problems 	
Endanger national security at border	

Since the belief in village deity is very firm within the local communities, local people are very much concerned about the possible impacts of the proposed tourism project on the local traditional culture. Residents believe that the HSV project will invade the sacred spaces they have that are located in high mountain areas, pollute local culture, and hurt the local sentiments. Responding to a question, respondent 38 (27/10/10) lucidly explained the significance of the village deity in the local communities and expressed his concern over this issue:

“The village deity is the cementing force. We are so much attached to our faith and deity... The ski village project is taking up the upper mountain slopes, where our deities reside. It is like stepping on our God’s head.”

4.5.3 Economic Impacts

An important positive economic impact of the project, as perceived by the project promoters and supporters, will be its contribution on the economy of Himachal Pradesh through sharing of revenues, increase in tourist numbers, and generating direct and indirect employment opportunities in the state. However, on the contrary, the residents are sceptical about its positive impact on the local economy. Respondent 1 (17/11/10) - who works at Rohtang pass like many other women - provided her opinion on why the HSV project will not benefit the local economy.

“During the last tourist season, we heard that the ski village people had brought some guests to Rohtang pass. They were on a package tour and they didn’t use any of the services that our locals provide there, as they have all organized facilities. This is the case of just few of their tourists, and it’s already seen that it is not benefiting the local people at all. So, imagine what will happen in future if their project comes here. None of our locals will benefit from this project.”

Like her, many people indicated that all the profits from such a big project usually remain within the hands of a few elite people, and do not trickle down to the people at the grassroots level. Such problems in tourism are also prevalent in other developing countries and incur as a result of development, which is enclave in nature with no or little multiplier effects (Mbaiwa, 2005; Singh, 2008). Moreover, being a mega-tourism project with large foreign investment, people are also concerned about the possible economic leakages associated with it. Table 4.5 shows the lists of potential economic impacts of the proposed HSV project as perceived or communicated by the residents.

Table 4.5: Perceived economic impacts of Himalayan Ski Village (HSV) project

Perceived Economic Impacts of Himalayan Ski Village (HSV) Project	
Negative Economic Impacts	Positive Economic Impacts
Monopoly – Benefits go to single person/company	Contribution to government revenues (sharing of revenues, taxes and levies)
Economic Leakage – all benefits go to outsiders	Boost local economy
Enclave tourism (vertically integrated development with no multiplier effects)	Make the state economically strong
	Attract high quality tourists (high paying tourist)
	Takes Manali to international tourism market
	Increase tourism influx in Manali

4.6 Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) of the project

Environmental Impact Assessment is a management tool used to evaluate the potential environmental and social impacts of the proposed project, and propose remedial measures to minimize the overall impacts prior to the implementation of the project (Dutta, 2009). In India, large-scale development projects are subject to EIA requirements under the Environment Impact Assessment Notifications, 2006 issued by the department of Environment and Forestry. The EIA Notification, 2006 also provides an opportunity for public participation in environmental decision-making through public hearings. Public hearings, which need to be done at the project site to incorporate the opinions of the impacted communities, are mandatory prior to obtaining environmental clearance in some of the projects listed under EIA notification, 2006 category (Dutta, 2009). As per the EIA notifications (2006), the Himalayan Ski Village project falls under the B1 category under 8(b) Township and Area Development projects. Any project under the

category B1 is subject to EIA along with mandatory environmental clearance public hearing (MoEF, 2006).

Interview findings show that there is confusion among the local people as to whether the project has completed the EIA environmental clearance step or not. While interviewing the local people, the majority of the informants were unaware of such environmental clearance requirements for the project, whereas some of those who were aware that the project has to obtain EIA clearance were under the impression that the project proponents might have already completed the EIA. The HSV local agents based in Manali were also of the opinion that the proposed project had already acquired environmental clearances.

“I think the project proponent did EIA in this case. In my opinion the outsiders are more environmental friendly than us.” (Respondent 23, 24/11/10)

“The project has permission from the Himachal government. They already submitted the DPR, MOU and EIA ... I heard that the EIA has some weaknesses for which the Himachal government asked them to review it again to get a clearance.” (Respondent 25, 15/11/10)

“The project proponent claimed that they did EIA and EMP, but the department of Forestry in Kullu district hasn't receive a copy of it.”(Respondent 30, 6/12/10)

On the HSV project website, it is stated that the EIA for the project will be jointly prepared by Indian Institute of Forest Management (IIFM) and The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI). However, the project proponent has not acquired an approved EIA so far, and there have been no EIA related public hearings. The department of Tourism in Shimla, which is currently the main body looking after the case of HSV project, provided the following clarification on the project's EIA:

“As far as the environmental clearance from the Government of India is concerned, the company applied for the Environmental clearance, however, such clearance has not been granted by the government of India till today.”

A senior representative at the HSV project also confirmed that the project has not got environmental clearance, but reiterates that the project will do all the environmental clearances prior to project construction.

“The government is taking EIA as the main issue. We did a preliminary EIA for the project, but we haven’t reached that stage of doing an EIA. EIA is usually done before the construction begins, and we haven’t started it. We will definitely do all the Environmental Clearance once we are about to begin the construction.”

The committee - constituted by the government of Himachal Pradesh on the direction of the Honourable High Court to review/examine the HSV project – also clearly stated in their report that the Detailed Project Report (DPR) submitted by the company to the government is without approved EIA and EMP.

4.7 Land transactions issues of the project

One of the most controversial clauses in the MOU signed between the government of Himachal Pradesh and the Himalayan Ski Village (HSV) project is the granting of exemption to the company from the provisions of section 118 of the Himachal Pradesh Tenancy and Land Reforms Act (HPRLA), 1972. This section of the Act restricts the buying and selling of lands by non-Himachali in Himachal Pradesh. It is believed that the implementation of this Act was quite successful in past, but there were some cases seen over the years where the government has subverted the law, and some of the respondents are indicating that this is occurring in the case of HSV project. Currently, the policy on new township development in Himachal Pradesh specifically provides a

provision for relaxation in the acquisition and transfer of government/private lands, particularly in favour of private investors in Himachal Pradesh. While this amendment in Section 118 had opened the doors for many private investors in the state, local Himachalis fear that such an exemption might have serious implications on the land ownership pattern existing in the state so far (Asher, 2008). Moreover, the local people condemned that such exemption will put the small local tourism entrepreneurs at a major disadvantage.

The Himalayan Ski Village (HSV) project development will require 16.3 hectares of government/forest lands. As per the information provided by the District Forest Office in Kullu, the transfer of any forestland for private purpose under the Ministry of Environment and Forest (MOFE) is subject to The Forest Conservation Act (1980), which restricts and regulates the use of forestland for non-forest purpose. Under the provision of this Act, prior approval from the state government (in this case the Forest Department) is necessary for the diversion of forestland for any private usage. So far, the HSV project has not acquired clearance from the Ministry of Environment and Forest to use the forestland for development purposes, as reflected in the following interview with the representative of District Forest Office based in Kullu.

“The project has to follow a set of procedures to acquire forestland. So far they haven’t submitted any request form for diversion of forestland as per the prescribed procedure according to the Forest Conservation Act 1980.”

According to the project DPR, private lands will be acquired directly from the private landowners, and later it will be submitted for Essentiality Certificates, which will allow the use of such private lands for tourism development purposes. The company

already procured some private lands in the proposed project site at Whispering Rocks and Kothi village through the company's local agents based in Manali town. In interviews and discussions with the residents from the *nau gaun*, it seemed that the procurement of private lands through the local agents has created resentment within the local people. The local people indicated that the process of land procurement was not transparent and fair considering the disparity in land prices. As revealed in the following comments, the local people are not happy with the process in which the company is acquiring lands in their area, particularly through local agents locally referred to as 'middleman' or 'land mafia'.

“The project sent some middlemen from Manali to buy lands in our village. They just came and talked with individuals. The middlemen did not clear whether they are buying the land for the ski village or not. Some people were saying that they are buying these lands for themselves. (Respondent 44, 30/10/10)

“Our people are selling lands to the middlemen at whatever rates they offer. Nobody knows what is the exact rate set by the company. Some people are getting less, while some people who are their relatives are getting more money. All the benefit in the end goes to these middlemen.” (Respondent 17, 24/11/10)

4.8 Summary

As in other parts of India, the state government of Himachal Pradesh is widely promoting multinational and international investments in large-scale development such as hydropower, transportation, and tourism projects. Amidst the range of large-scale projects sanctioned in Himachal Pradesh, the HSV project proposed in Manali has received tremendous attention within India and throughout the world. The proposed mega-tourism project, which got a green signal from the state government at the end of 2005, was expected to be ready for full commercial operation by 2011 (Gopinath, 2008).

The project, however, ran into controversy because of the objections from the local people and NGOs, despite the support from the then Congress-led state government. Particular concerns for objection of the project were the decisions of the state government to grant exemption from section 118 of Land Act and grant rights over common property resources, and the potential threat imposed by the project on the local livelihoods and the environment. Because of these concerns, the proposed HSV project proponents have had to face obstructions from the local communities through various protest actions and court cases. These activities that happened over the years not only delayed the project but also put pressure on the state government to re-examine the issue and respond adequately. A committee constituted under the direction of the Honourable High Court of Himachal Pradesh re-examined the proposed HSV project in the year 2009, and concluded that the so called 'eco-friendly' tourism project for the 21st century has failed to acquire the statutory environmental clearance from the government of India. As of now, the matter of the ski village project is in the High Court of Himachal Pradesh to hear the last word.

CHAPTER 5: PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN DECISION-MAKING RELATED TO THE HIMALAYAN SKI VILLAGE (HSV) PROJECT

5.1 Introduction

Over the years, there has been an extensive public participation associated with the HSV project in Manali. Such participation has resulted in a number of formal and informal actions in response to the project such as court cases, village meetings, religious congregation, rallies, public hearing, etc. The majority of these public involvement activities have occurred as a result of local protest against the proposed project. Meanwhile, actions often involving the project proponent represent an attempt to involve the local people in a number of aspects associated with the HSV project including education, training and workshops. The findings on public participation process in the HSV project were presented in three different categories depending on the nature of participation: public participation in project decision-making processes, public participation outside of the government and project proponent decision-making processes, and public participation in project development done by the project proponent alone. Fig. 5.1 provides a list of public participation activities related to the HSV project that have occurred over the years.

Firstly, this chapter explores all the formal and informal public participation activities followed in the HSV development so far. Then the role of the public in the HSV decision-making process is contrasted against the various models of public participation derived from the literature. Lastly, individual learning outcomes of the local participants associated with the participation in the HSV development is provided.

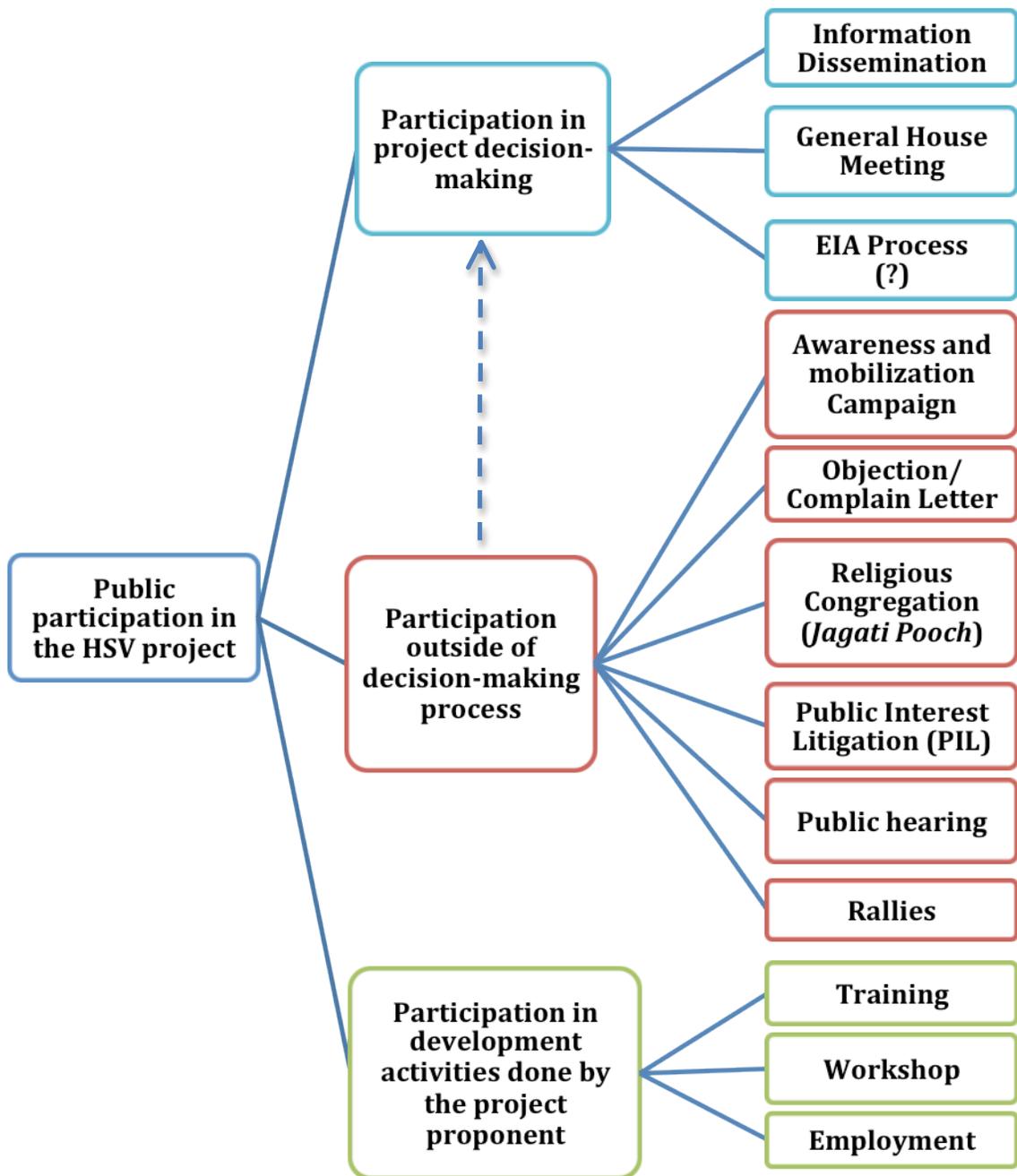


Fig. 5.1: Public participation related to the Himalayan Ski Village (HSV) project

5.2 Public Participation in the Himalayan Ski Village (HSV) project

5.2.1 Public Participation in the project decision-making processes

This section describes public participation that has happened over the years in relation to the HSV decision-making processes done by the government or the project proponent. As Fig 5.1 shows, this does not include numerous activities undertaken by the public such as Public Interest Litigation (PIL) that may impact the final decisions, which is described in section 5.2.2.

5.2.1.1 Information Dissemination and Consultation

Unlike many other large-scale development projects in the state, the findings reveal that the HSV project developers made some efforts to disseminate information about the project at the local level. The project proponent claimed that they distributed pamphlets containing information about the project in the impacted communities. However, only a few of the study participants responded that they had read the pamphlet distributed by the project proponent. While asked about the information shared by the project proponent in the pamphlet, respondent 32 (14/11/10) said, *“Ski village people provided the pamphlet in the village, but it’s only a few pages from the project DPR which gave information on the project and its location. They gave it to some influential people in the village. They shared this information to the villagers last year.”* Interviews with residents also revealed that the project proponent held village meetings and shared information about the project. While I was inquiring about the effort of the project proponent to involve the residents, respondent 24 (24/11/10) said,

“They did some activities to involve the general public. They had several discussions with the locals regarding environment and job opportunities... They were asking

support from the locals in the case of land transactions. They were telling us that they will build a school and a hospital and will also provide employment opportunities to the local people. They also confirmed 70% of the job opportunities to Himachalis giving more priorities to the locals in this area.”

Nevertheless, the majority of the local respondents noted that the information disseminated by the project proponent via meetings, pamphlets, and newspapers was just an attempt to create a positive impression of the project within the local communities. Some people also argued that the information disseminated by the project proponent was neither substantial nor convincing. Respondent 17 (24/11/10) said,

“They did come to our village and talked with the villagers. But it is not like a consultation...they basically shared what benefits they are going to provide for us.”

On the other hand, some of the local people in the community, particularly the women mentioned that they never got any information about the project from the promoters' side. One main reason behind this barrier is the lack of education within the community and especially among women. Being a patriarchal society, women are often excluded from meetings. When asked whether she attended any meeting organized by the HSV project proponent, respondent 2 (17/11/10) said,

“There was a meeting at the hotel, but only men from our village were invited. We women were not invited there...”

The majority of the informants complained that the project proponent did not make any effort to hold consultations with the residents. While interviewing, it was found that any serious consultation regarding the proposed project has been limited to only a few influential individuals in the area. When asked about whether there was an approach from the project proponent for village level consultation, respondent 38 (27/10/10) said,

“The project proponent never came for consultation at the village level. But they did approach individuals to develop public relations with the locals. They also came to me, as I am associated with NGOs. They were also trying to become a member of the NGOs so that they can convince the locals.”

Respondent 1(17/11/10) also expressed similar opinions on consultation regarding the HSV project.

“Nobody from the company came for consultation. They never asked for our opinion... No one asked for our views before the public hearing. Maybe they might have called the men from our village, but they didn't ask our Mahila Mandal...”

5.2.1.2 General House Meeting (Janal Jalaash or Gram Sabha)

With the aim of incorporating the views of the local stakeholders, the government of India made No Objection Certificate (NOC) a necessary requirement for any project before it proceeds. The project proponent has to apply for NOC from the village *Panchayat*. The *Panchayat* is the local government body elected democratically for a five-year term. The concept of *Panchayat* Raj system was introduced in India in 1957 as a means for involving the local representatives in development programs of the government (Hirway, 1989). The *Panchayat* has a key role in decision-making in large-scale development projects like the HSV project, especially in issuing the NOCs. Upon the request of the project proponent for an NOC, the *Panchayat* will evaluate the project, and put the matter into discussion in a general house meeting (*Janal Jalaash or Gram Sabha*)- in which all the villagers are invited to express their opinion on the matter. Then, the *Panchayat* will make a final decision on whether or not to issue NOC to the project proponent, which allows them to proceed with the project.

The HSV project is subject to obtaining NOCs from the impacted village *Panchayats* before it proceeds. The *nau gaun* is administratively divided into three village *Panchayats*: Palchan, Buruwa and Goshal. The representatives of these three potentially impacted village *Panchayats* were approached for inquiring about the issuing of NOC to the HSV project. While inquiring about the issuing of NOCs, the President or ‘*Pradhan*’ of Buruwa *Panchayat* responded that the project proponent has not approached the *Panchayat* for NOC so far, but claims that the *Panchayat* had already issued an objection letter through a general house meeting. When asked whether the Palchan *Panchayat* issued a NOC to the project, respondent 18 (23/11/10) gave the following explanation.

“...Initially, they applied for NOC in our village (Palchan) Panchayat. We didn’t reject it straight, instead we asked for more information about the project. But they didn’t provide any information. Then, we put this matter in the general house meeting (Janal Jalash)... With everyone’s agreement we denied to issue NOC to the project. Afterwards most of the Panchayat including our village Panchayat had issued an objection letter.”

However, villagers from the same *Panchayat* were suspecting that the *Pradhan* might have issued NOC to the project, as he personally supports the project. These findings revealed that the local *Panchayat* made some effort to communicate with the residents regarding the HSV matter and held a general house meeting to ascertain public opinion on this issue. However, this does not necessarily mean that the local concerns have been taken into consideration, because the power of making the final decision still lies within the hands of a few local representatives of the ‘*Gram Panchayat*’. For instance, it was discovered that the Goshal *Panchayat* had issued NOC to the project, despite the

objection letter issued through the general house meeting earlier. Commenting more on this issue, respondent 14 (10/11/10) indicated the following.

“Ski village came to me and asked for NOCs, but I didn’t give them one because we had called a meeting and the public had rejected it before. Later on, I found out that one of the members within our Panchayat issued NOCs to the project using my fake signature. After that I raised this issue in Panchayat meeting, but everyone alleged that it was me who issued it as it has my signature on it.”

Meanwhile, the local people are well aware of these situations from past experiences, and they have many doubts regarding the effectiveness of outcomes of such general house meetings held by the village *Panchayat*.

5.2.2 Participation outside of the government and the project proponent decision-making processes

This section describes the public participation that occurred outside the formal project decision-making process, either initiated by the people as protest actions against the project or occurred as a response to public protest like court hearings.

5.2.2.1 Public Hearings (PH)

Public hearings are usually a mandatory part of an environmental clearance process for large-scale development projects like the HSV project, which have the potential for considerable environmental and social consequences. According to the Environment Impact Notification (2006), public hearings are part of ‘public consultation’ during the EIA process, which is to be done at the project site or in its close proximity in order to ascertain the concerns of the local affected communities. As per the procedure, the State Pollution Control Board/District Administration is responsible for conducting

the public hearing for the project upon the request of the HSV project proponent. However, the HSV project proponent has not yet done statutory environmental clearance; as a result, there has so far not been a public hearing under the EIA notification.

There has, however been a public hearing as of the HSV project, instigated by the High Court order, as noted earlier. In response to a Public Interest Litigation (PIL) filed by a local hotelier Sanjeev Sharman, the Honourable High Court ordered the Government of Himachal Pradesh to form a committee in order to facilitate the review/examine of the matter of the HSV project on the 29th April 2008. On the direction of the Honourable High Court, the government of Himachal Pradesh formed a twelve-member committee headed by the Secretary of Tourism and consisting of revenue, legal, forest, and other officials. One of the main issues of deliberation of the committee was to conduct a public hearing near the project location to ascertain the public views regarding the setting up of the Himalayan Ski Village project. Initially the committee issued a notice of public hearing scheduled on 17th March 2009 at Kothi, but it was postponed and conducted on the 6th June 2009 at the PWD rest house in Kothi.

While interviewing, the public hearing turned out to be the most talked about event regarding the ski village in Kullu-Manali region among the study participants. Many said this was because it was the first time in the area where the majority of the locals had turned up at the public hearing and raised their voices against a project. Residents said that this happened because of the extensive efforts of the NGOs and some influential local people in creating awareness and mobilizing the general public. The local *Panchayat* and the *Mahila Mandal*, particularly in the impacted communities, also played a significant role in coordinating with the NGOs and mobilizing the residents. When

asked about how it happened, respondent 15 (08/10/10) who was active in protesting against the ski village said,

“Our people are uneducated. They don’t know about such a big project, its impacts, or about public hearings. So, those among us who knew about it decided to aware the local people. We informed all the local people of the nau gaun about the ski village project, and also informed them about the public hearing. It was good that a big crowd of people turned up and raised their voice against the ski village project.”

Meanwhile, the majority of the study participants shared their recollection of the immense public outburst that occurred at the public hearing leading to the breakdown of the meeting. As it has been established in the following comments, the situation at the hearing turned out to be tense, and the police had to intervene and rescue the project proponents from the outraged crowd at the hearing.

“At the public hearing, everyone from the nau gaun was against it. There were around 300 women in the meeting. One woman from every household came for the meeting. I just sat and listened to what others were saying... One woman from the ski village side intervened in the meeting and said, ‘We will build the ski village here no matter what...you can’t stop it’. After she said that our women were outraged and started beating her up and the situation turned out to be tense. (Respondent 1, 17/11/10)

“The director’s wife was beaten up by the crowd because she spoke something, which she shouldn’t have in the crowd. Firstly, I think they shouldn’t have come there. Secondly, she shouldn’t have spoken like that in the crowd. The crowd was so outraged that the project proponents had to be rescued from the crowd. The police saved them. We also tried to calm down the crowd saying that it’s not good to get into such an outburst.”(Respondent 9, 09/10/10)

It was reported that approximately around 400 people attended the public hearing including the project proponent, local Panchayat members, representatives of NGOs, *Mahila Mandal*, local organizations, government officials, and a large number of residents, particularly from the *nau gaun* (nine villages). The video recording of the public hearing reveals that the hearing started with massive public protest chanting anti-ski village slogans. The most common catchphrase used was “We don’t want the ski village”. The Secretary of Tourism addressed the crowd and shared the purpose of the public hearing. Participants were then allowed to express their opinion about the setting up of the ski village verbally, as well as in written form. The Committee report recorded a wide range of concerns of the local people against the project considering the potential threat to the local environment and livelihoods. The report submitted to the High Court stated that the local people openly rejected the project, despite all the assurances made by the project proponent.

People have different opinions about the public hearing. Some people think that the public hearing was a mere formality and pre-planned, whereas some argue that it was informative and a good platform for the local people to have their say. Giving his opinion about the public hearing, respondent 21 (19/11/10) said,

“The whole system was not good. There should be a Question and Answer session. The people started protesting against the project. They didn’t allow other people to speak. Nothing happened. The committee recorded whatever happened on paper and it was over.”

The representative of *Pratibha Mahila Sangh*, a women’s NGO based in Kullu and the only NGO to openly support the ski village project, expressed similar opinions. She said

the hearing was not fair, as the local people who support the project did not get an equal opportunity to express their opinion; she expressed her concerns regarding the public hearing.

“We had written arguments about why we support the ski village, but we didn’t get a chance to speak about it at the public hearing. Even the project proponent didn’t get a chance to speak. However, we managed to submit a supporting letter for the project to the Secretary of tourism.”

Meanwhile, respondent 20 (17/10/10) has a different impression about the public hearing for such large-scale projects in the region. He argues,

“The public hearing is good. It will make the public aware about what is happening. If there was no public hearing, we won’t know anything while staying at home. Public hearings are for the people and are needed.”

The majority of the residents who are opposing the project believe that the concerned committee heard their voices at the public hearing. A couple of respondents who are of such opinion also believe that the project has stopped because of their objections at the public hearing. On the contrary, some people still have doubt about whether their opinions have been taken into consideration or not. Thus, the residents are unaware of what happened to the project afterwards or whether their concerns have been addressed or not, as reflected in the following comments.

“We are assuming that the project has stopped. But we are not sure what the government will do. Nobody from government or the project came here after the public hearing. We want the project to stop, but we don’t know what our government will do next.” (Respondent 21, 19/11/10)

5.2.2.2 Religious Congregation (*Jagati pooch*)

The religious congregation locally known as '*Jagati Pooch*' or '*Dev Samsad*' is perhaps the most distinguishing feature of public participation in the decision-making process regarding the HSV project. Kullu Valley, popularly known by the name of *Devbhumi* – the land of Gods -, has more than 365 village deities. Each deity has its own representatives: *kardar* (the caretaker of village deity), *pujari* (the religious performer), and *gur* – the shaman believed to have the spiritual power to go into a trance and mediates between the God and the devotees. *Jagati* refers to the flat triangular slab of rock preserved in the courtyard in Nagar castle at Nagar, Kullu. Oral history reveals that this slab of rock is from the cliff in the upper ridge of Bahang village, carried miraculously by *devtas* in the form of honeybees to Nagar to comfort the queen who felt homesick. *Jagati Pooch* is the religious assembly of all the deities of the Kullu Valley at Nagar Castle organized to make a major decision, especially in the case of natural calamities or other major unresolved issues. The traditional King of Kullu- currently Maheshwor Singh, who is the head of *kardar* has the power to call *Jagati Pooch*.

When the congress-led government of Himachal Pradesh and the HSV project signed MOU in the year 2005, it attracted the attention of the opposition BJP party, local interest groups, and also local deities, in particular the *Jamdagni* or *Jamalu Rishi* of Battar village. Interestingly, it is this same village that started the formation of a local NGO-JJVS to protest against the HSV project. With a special request from *Jamadagni Rishi* and other deities like *Lord Vishnu* from Sajla village, King Maheshwor Singh called for a *Jagati Pooch* on 16th February, 2006 to decide the fate of the proposed Himalayan Ski Village through divine power. In the religious assembly, the local deities

unanimously gave a verdict to reject the proposed HSV project in Kullu region. The assembly was attended by *gurs* from the villages nearby the initial project site, local people, and media persons. Giving more details about the *Jagati Pooch* event, respondent 31 (07/12/10) - a representative of *kardar* association asserts,

“On this occasion, the King of Kullu sent a traditional invitation including petals of flowers, uncooked rice, and an invitation letter to all the representatives of deities in all the villages. More than 100 deities’ representatives (gurs) attended the Jagati Pooch... The final decision of Jagati Pooch regarding the ski village was that the deities did not agreed to give permission to the ski village project, as it will destroy the sacredness of our Devbhumi – the land of Gods.”

He further added that the deities were concerned that the proposed project will destroy the sacred religious spaces in the upper mountain areas, pollute the local traditional culture, and hurt the local sentiments. In interviews with the local people, the majority agreed with the concerns raised by the village deities at the *Jagati Pooch*. Most of them also, however, questioned the relevance of *Jagati Pooch* in case of the project. People were of the opinion that such a religious assembly happens only on rare occasions, particularly in the case of natural calamities. They noted that it was rather a political stunt as King Maheshwor Singh was a former MLA of the opposition BJP party. Meanwhile, newspapers have reported that the project proponent was astounded when the goddesses who initially gave permission to the project decided to go with the majority and turned against them at the *Jagati Pooch* (Varshney, 2006). Nevertheless, for those people who are opposing the proposed project, the verdict of the *devtas* has become a strong supporting factor to defend their stand.

5.2.2.3 Local protests against the Himalayan Ski village (HSV) project

When the MOU of the HSV project got leaked and hit the media, it provoked a group of residents against the proposed mega-tourism project in the Kullu Valley, particularly the residents in and around the initial project site nearby Hamata area. They feared that the proposed project would destroy the local environment, threat local livelihoods, and pollute the sacred mountain sites. The group under the leadership of Lal Chand Katuch and Pushpalaal Singh Thakur decided to take up the issue of the HSV project in their first meeting held on 10th January 2006 (Asher, 2008). Since then the group has spearheaded a number of protest actions against the proposed project. The main strategy of the group was to start extensive local mobilization programs against the proposed project in the Kullu valley. For this, the group organized village meetings in every village *Panchayat*, shared information about the project, and obtained objection letters against the project. It is reported that 10 out of 12 *Panchayat* in the Kullu Valley have issued objection letters against the project, which was submitted to the government of Himachal Pradesh. The representatives of the three village *Panchayats* within the *naugaun* informed that they had issued objection letter against the project at that time. Giving more details about the local mobilization programs, respondent 34 (12/11/10) said,

“We went to all the village Panchayat 3-4 times, and took the objection letter in the year 2006 when we were just starting our campaign. We first went to each Panchayat in different villages, gathered the locals, and mobilized them...We did it, because the locals were uneducated and awareness is very important...”

In the year 2007, the group that started with the name of *Jan Jagaran Manch* (JJM) registered itself as an NGO and renamed it as *Jan Jagaran evam Vikas Sangh*

(JJVS). With the new identity, the group stepped up their protest action and filed a Public Interest Litigation (PIL) against the project in the High Court on 6th June 2007 raising the issues of environmental and livelihood concerns. Similarly, a local hotelier from Vashisht *Panchayat*– Sanjeev Sharman also filed a PIL on the same matter on 16th August 2007 in the High Court. With due hearings and observations, the High Court disposed off the writ petition filed by the NGO-JJVS on 9th March 2008. However, the High Court ordered the government of Himachal to review and re-examine the matter of the HSV project after affording hearings for the concerns raised by Sanjeev Sharman on 30th March 2008. In the light of this notification, the government of Himachal Pradesh has formed a committee under the leadership of the Secretary of Tourism to re-examine and review the matter of the HSV project. In the meantime, the work of the project has been put on hold, because the High Court had issued a stay order for the project while the matter was being resolved in the court.

Meanwhile, environmental groups like the *Him Niti Abhiyan* (state level coalition of people's groups and activists) and EQAUTIONS (Equitable Tourism Options) expressed their solidarity with the struggle and joined the campaigns against the project. On the 23rd February 2008, these three groups jointly submitted a memorandum to the Ministry of Environment and Forest Expert Advisory Committee (EAC) outlining the local concerns regarding the HSV project and demanding public consultation. A study conducted for the coalition of these three groups concluded that the proposed HSV project is “unsuitable, incongruence, and detrimental to the lives of the local community and environment of the region” (Asher, 2008: pp. 10). It further stated that the proposed project was approved without any public consultation, and reiterated that the local people

will continue their campaign against the project to get apt response from the government and the company regarding their concerns.

In the course of campaigning against the proposed project, a network of 24 local NGOs under the name of *Jan Hith Sangarsh Samiti* was formed under the leadership of S.R. Verma to strengthen support for the campaign. With a wide range of support from the local communities and NGOs, a massive rally against the HSV project was organized in Manali on 18th June 2007. The rally headed by famous environmentalists and social activists Sunderlal Bahuguna, who led the popular Chipko movement in Uttarkhand, gained much attention in the Valley and in the media. The rally attended by a large number of local communities, representatives of NGOs, and environmentalists was considered as one of the largest environmental rallies in the region.

The effectiveness of the campaigns against the HSV project has been evident at the public hearing organized by the High-powered committee on 6th June 2009 at Kothi, where the majority of the residents from the impacted communities turned up and created immense public outburst against the project. The NGOs started local mobilization campaign once again prior to the public hearing, specifically to create awareness amongst the residents about the public hearing and encourage participation to raise a voice against the project. With support from some of the influential local people and the *Panchayat*, several village meetings were conducted in the *nau gaun* encouraging participation from each household. It was found that the campaign has strongly encouraged the participation of local women through the women's group- *Mahila Mandal*. With the aim of making the protest actions much stronger at the public hearing, the protesters also submitted letters to the committee outlining livelihood and environmental concerns.

Thus, a wide range of protest actions against the proposed project has occurred over the years. The protest initially started with a small group of residents concentrated in the previous project location, but swelled to large numbers spreading throughout the Kullu Valley. Unlike other protest in the region, the pattern of the protest was much more organized from the beginning, and has gained much attention in the media. It is true that the NGOs, particularly JJVS, has played a significant role in all the protest actions against the project; however, the role of local people, the *Panchayat* and the *Mahila Mandal* cannot be overlooked in this struggle. In addition to the huge local support, the change in the state government from Congress to BJP government in 2008 has also facilitated the uprising of the public protests against the project. Another advantage for the protesters is that there was resentment within the local communities against the government and the project proponent regarding this issue, as they have been excluded from the HSV decision-making processes. The results of which, the local people joined the protest as an opportunity to express their concerns regarding the proposed project.

The protest actions have succeeded in bringing substantial changes in the traditional decision-making process and influenced the decision-makers to some extent. One of the significant outcomes of the protest was the order of the High Court to review and re-examine the HSV project, which included a public hearing where the residents were given an opportunity to have their say. Another impact was the decision to forfeit the bank guarantee and terminate the Implementation Agreement (IA) of the project taken by the High-powered committee after reviewing/examining the HSV project. And most importantly, as a result of all these protest actions, the much awaited ski village project that was envisaged to be in operation by 2011 has not yet turned into a reality.

5.2.3 Public Participation in project related development activities done by the project proponent

The HSV project proponent claims to have made an extensive approach to engage the local people in a number of aspects associated with the project including education, workshops, training, and employment opportunities. As envisaged in the project DPR, the project proponent set up the Department of Sustainable Practices with the main aim of community development, capacity building, and environmental protection. Under this department, the project proponent conducted training and workshops targeting the locally impacted communities and local NGOs. The project promoters were also involved in creating environmental awareness programs and initiating clean-up campaigns at the proposed project site. A local school representative in Manali also confirmed their collaboration with the Department of Sustainable Practices of HSV as a part of environmental education.

“At the initial phase, we also got involved in the project’s EA process. In the data collection period, our students were involved in conducting a livelihood-based survey for the company in Prini and Shuru villages.”

Another major contribution of the HSV project was indicated to be in the field of adventure sports. The HSV project representatives mentioned that the project proponent has provided extensive training on skiing, avalanche study and hospitality management to young local ski enthusiasts in Manali, Ali (Uttarkhand) and Finland. Respondent 11 (17/10/10) shared her experiences during the training session with the HSV project.

“Initially, ski village gave us training on hotel management for a month. Then they trained for another six months in Sethen, and took us for one month training in Finland. There are no facilities of lifts in our area. In Finland, there are good

facilities and equipment for skiing. So, those who went for ski training got a good opportunity to learn skiing.”

This approach to engaging local people in the project started during the initial phase of the project development following the signing of MOU in 2005. On completion of the training, the company also hired some of the locals to work with the project to study the ski slopes. In addition, the project has also made contribution to the local festivals, sports clubs, and ski competition. However, many of these activities slowed down in the later year, as the company was struggling with court cases, and was facing the global economic recession. The majority of the local employees were given retention quoting the company’s struggle period, and later on they were laid off work. Currently, the agitated ex-employees of the HSV project have filed fifteen individual cases against the project in the Labour Court for terminating their jobs, and demanding appropriate compensation.

5.3 Examining the role of residents in the HSV decision-making processes

5.3.1 Evaluating current resident’s participation in the HSV decision-making

Section 5.2 outlined the public involvement activities that were initiated around the ski village concept and the project proposal. In this section, I provide an evaluation of the formal decision-making process and opportunities for the public to be involved. It also evaluates the role of the state government, the district government, the local *Panchayat* and the residents in formal decision-making related to the HSV project. The decision-making process in case of the HSV project followed a traditional top-down approach. As depicted in Fig. 5.2, the state government of Himachal Pradesh plays an ‘active role’ in project decision-making, and the information and decisions pertaining to

the project flow from the state government via district and local *Panchayat* to the local communities. The state government of Himachal Pradesh based in Shimla is the major decision-making body responsible for taking all major decisions regarding the project from the initial phase of signing MOU with the project proponent to the approval of project DPR. The data show that the state government has been the sole decision maker regarding the HSV project, including some making significant amendments like exemption from section 118 of Land Acquisition Act and granting water rights to the project, without any consultation with other departments, local *Panchayat*, community organizations, and local communities.

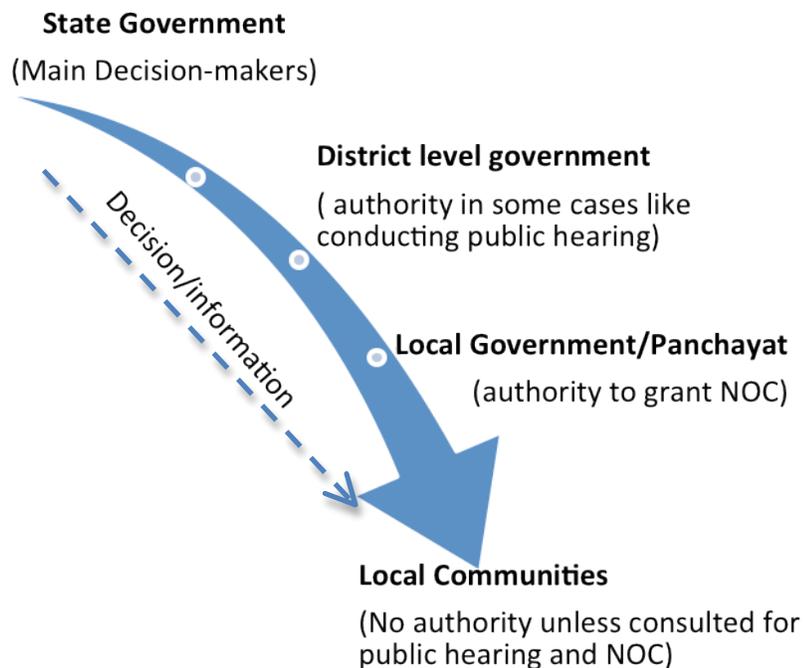


Fig. 5.2: The top down decision-making process in case of the Himalayan Ski Village (HSV) project

Meanwhile, the role of district-level officials in project decision-making appears to be more confined in the later operational stages. For instance the Pollution Control

Board/District Administrator will be responsible for conducting the public hearing, which is a part of the project EIA when they occur. The district level government officials, however, did not seem to have a significant role in the HSV project decision-making so far according to the documents and interviews. The government officials based in the Kullu district were of the opinion that the issue of the HSV project is treated as a state level matter by the government of Himachal Pradesh. When asked about the role of district level government officials in the HSV project decision-making, respondent 27 (05/12/10) said,

“The matter is sub-judice. So, I can’t comment on this matter. Moreover, this issue is handled at the state level. The district officer provided some support to organize public hearings, other than that, we don’t have much of a role in this issue.”

Usually in a top down decision-making system, the state government delivers information to local government and the local government is responsible for informing the residents. However, some of the local *Panchayat* representative mentioned that they initially heard about the HSV project through the NGOs, not from the state government or from the project proponent. In a response to a question, respondent 21 (19/11/10) said, *“the NGO-JJVS, who were against the ski village, was first to approach our Panchayat to request for an objection letter.”* This suggests that the local government has been excluded from the HSV project decision-making process. It is also evident that there was lack of interaction and information sharing between different levels of government authorities. It was clear from the data that the village *Panchayat* did not have much power in the overall HSV project decision-making except in issuing NOC to the project.

In case of the HSV project, the provision for residents’ participation is provided in

the general house meeting conducted by the local *Panchayat* for issuing NOCs. However, there have been serious questions about how this step of the process was carried out locally. It is believed that this stage of the project will give full scope for public participation in project decision-making; however, it solely depends on how effective the local government is in implementing such activities and the information that they have about a project on which they can base their decisions. Past studies have suggested that the local government has not played the expected role in project decision-making, such as the issuing of NOCs (Hirway, 1989; Lozecznik, 2008). While interviewing, the majority of the residents mentioned their mistrust in their local government and argue that it is often the local representatives who create a barrier for the residents to participate in the decision-making process. They complained that the *Panchayat* often fails to maintain transparency and were unable to perform their role as a mediator between the company, the government, and the villagers. They were frustrated that some village *Panchayats* issued an NOC to the project without even notifying the villagers, while by procedure the *Panchayat* is responsible for disseminating necessary information and seeking community support through a general house meeting for issuing NOC. Respondent 33 (14/11/10) commented,

“Panchayat is the supreme body at the local-level. But if there is an issue of a project related to the village, it is the Panchayats’ duty to call a general house meeting, where they can consult with everyone and make a decision for issuing NOC. That will be valid. However, at present the Pradhan issues NOC without any notifications to the villagers, which is legally wrong.”

The reality is that the village *Panchayat* fails to execute the expected role and some study participants contend that this has resulted in the misuse of power to a certain extent. One

reason for the failure of the *Panchayat* might be due to the lack of mutual consensus among the members within the *Panchayat* body. Throughout the interview with the representatives of *Panchayat*, it is seen that some members of the *Panchayat* are strongly opposing the project, whereas some are standing firm in favour of the HSV project. The following are the opposing and supporting opinions of two representatives from the same *Panchayat*.

“We don’t want the project. So, we were not willing to have any consultation with the project proponent in future too.” (Respondent 18, 23/11/10)

“I think the ski village regardless of its negative effect will increase foreign tourist especially in winter time, because winter is usually off season in Manali. If the ski village is developed giving due consideration to the potential impact on the environment, there will be more benefits than loss.”(Respondent 24, 24/11/10)

The residents perceived that they have a very insignificant role and practically no decision-making authority regarding any type of development occurring in their region. The residents indicated that both the state government and the project proponent failed to disseminate information and hold consultation with the residents in a timely way. The residents were of the opinion that the project proponent spent most of their time consulting with people at the higher level in Shimla and elsewhere, whereas completely ignoring the affected residents.

5.3.2 Applying a public participation framework

The participation by residents in this case was considered in relation to the frameworks of public participation presented in Table 2.1 in the literature review in Chapter 2. The first two typologies, Arnstein’s ladder (1971) and Pretty’s typology (1994) of community participation are developed in context of development in general,

while the Tosun's typology of community participation is designed specifically for the tourism context. In order to provide broader interpretation of public participation all three typologies of community participation were used to consider the current participation of residents in the HSV project development.

In comparing the level of residents' participation in the HSV project with the Arnstein's (1971) typology of community participation, it can be argued that participation is currently in the 'informing' phase of Arnstein's Ladder. This phase of community participation is considered as a degree of tokenism, in which some information is shared with the local community; however, the community does not have power over making decisions (Arnstein, 1971). The decision-making authority lies in the hand of external authority; in this case it is the government or the project proponent. In the case of the HSV project, the data show that the project proponent and promoters have made some efforts to disseminate information about the project to the residents through pamphlets, newspapers, and village meetings. Basically, there is a one-way flow of information from the project proponent to the residents – with no opportunity for consultation or providing feedback options. The project proponent maintained a high level of control over the type of information they were sharing with the residents, the types of discussions they were willing to hold with residents, and sharing of project information and local discussions occurred at a late stage of project development when the external authorities had already made the major decisions.

In addition, there are some elements that suggest that limited 'consultation' might have occurred. Leksakundilok (2006) argues that the external authority often does consultation with the purpose of informing the local people about the project and making

the development process more legitimate. Upon the request of the project proponent for NOC for the HSV project, the local *Panchayat* did hold a general house meeting in Palchan village to discuss the issue with the villagers. This one action provides evidence of actually having involved ‘the residents’ while making a decision regarding the HSV project. In addition, a high court public hearing was conducted; however, the residents complained that they are not provided with any sort of information about the project before the public hearing. The notice for the public hearing was disseminated through newspapers, but the date of the public hearing was postponed time and again creating more confusion. Meanwhile, considering the significant proportion of illiterate people, many noted that print media is not an effective way to communicate with the impacted communities. Some people also argue that the committee scheduled the public hearing in peak tourist season and at the PWD rest house located in the northern-most (very last village) of the Kullu Valley. Past studies have indicated that the public hearing process regarding large-scale development project have often not been effective as the responsible body for conducting public hearing fails to share sufficient information and provide notification about the public hearing to the impacted communities on time (Sinclair & Diduck, 2000; Diduck et al, 2007; Dutta, 2008; Lozecznic, 2008).

According to Pretty’s (1995) typology of community participation, the type that best describes the current resident’s participation in the HSV project is ‘participation for material incentives’. In this type of participation, local people participate in development by contributing time and resources in return for some material incentives (Pretty, 1995). In the case of the ski village project, the project proponent has made efforts to involve some residents in the project development through training, workshops, and employment

opportunities. In the course of participation, the participating locals likely have acquired some skills and knowledge, but their participation does not have any influence on the project decision-making, other than their influence on family and friends about the acceptability of the project. The data revealed that the project promoter highly encouraged such participation in the project in order to develop public relations, create positive impression, and gain community support for project development.

Tosun's (1999) typology of community participation classifies community participation in tourism context in three categories: spontaneous participation, induced participation, and coercive participation. Tosun (2006) suggested that induced participation is the most common type of community participation seen in developing countries. This has been found to be the case of the HSV as well, making the current level of community participation induced participation. This type of participation is associated with a top-down decision-making approach, where the local community will have a voice in tourism development, but lack the power to make sure their opinions have been taken into account by the powerful interest groups (Tosun, 2006). It is indeed true in the case of the HSV project that decision-making followed a traditional top-down approach in which the state government possesses much of the power. The residents are involved in project development, but not in the HSV project decision-making. To a certain extent there has been a sharing of information and consultation at the local level relating to the ski village; however, the external power holders do not necessarily take the views of the local people into consideration. For instance, it has been found that a member of *Panchayat* in one of the impacted villages has issued NOC to the project, despite the wide range of objections from the local communities in the general house

meeting. This suggests that even though the residents are being informed and consulted at a certain level during the project development, the power of making the decisions ultimately lies in the hands of a few power holders. Interestingly, however, participation against the proposed HSV project can be considered as ‘spontaneous participation’ as people from all over the Kullu region joined forces to ensure that the proposed project was not implemented.

5.3.3 Evaluating women’s participation in the HSV project decision-making

Women in and around Manali are increasingly being engaged in tourism activities directly and indirectly, apart from the usual household responsibilities and farming activities. In particular, women from the *nau gaun* are directly involved in locally operated tourism business, as they are located nearby the region’s popular snow points – Sholang Naala and Rohtang pass. A few of the young women enthusiasts are also being trained and engaged in trekking, skiing, and mountaineering. However, the number of women directly involved in tourism industry is still small compared to men according to the residents. Many researchers have argued that the role of women in decision-making processes is also comparatively very low (Schmink, 1999; Upadhyaya, 2005; EQUATIONS, 2009), but it is evident and can have a profound impact through protest actions, especially in relation to environmental movements (Agarwal, 1992).

In this case, both men and women study respondents felt that the presence of women in the HSV project decision-making processes, particularly in the public hearing, were very strong. Given the lack of participation of both men and women in the formal decision-making process, as outlined above, this case corresponds well with the literature that indicates that women’s participation is often associated with protest actions related to

environmental issues (Agarwal, 1992). Respondent 9 (09/10/10) expressed lucidly why the presence of women in protest actions especially associated with natural resource management issues is strong, as reflected in the following comments.

“... It is because the women are very much connected with natural resources. They are the ones who go to the forest to collect fodder and timber on a daily basis. They will be affected most by natural resource related decisions. That’s why the role of women is strong especially in protest. Comparatively, women in the mountains are strong and more forward and more involved in natural resource management than women in the plains.”

She also said that, *“the role of women is still very weak in decision-making. Say for example, in our village all the women work equally in the fields and in horticulture like men. However, the men don’t ask the women when they are selling the apples.”* In a response to why the involvement of women in decision-making is still weak, respondent 19 (17/11/10) said, *“Because of the tradition, only the men are the mediator and decision-makers in the house and in society; that is why the women are still lagging behind in the decision-making process. I think it will take years to break this tradition in our society.”* The strong patriarchal society prevalent in many developing countries has been a major obstacle to bringing women into the realm of decision-making (Agarwal, 1992; EQUATIONS, 2009). Such is the case of women in and around Manali. Whenever there is a village meeting, the social norm is that the man of the house is the one who supposedly will attend the meetings, not the woman. While interviewing, it was observed that most of the women were more comfortable to provide their views when men, especially their ‘husbands’, were not around. It was also observed that even the women holding a position in the community like in the *Panchayat* were not comfortable in their

role. However, the majority of the women indicated that the role of women in the decision-making processes is comparatively strong at present. The emergence of *Mahila Mandal* – the women’s group in the region has been the major platform for empowering women and bringing them in the forefront, as reflected in the following comment:

“Now it has changed a lot. Those women who understand more are coming forward. I am the president of Mahila Mandal of this area. Whenever I come to know that there is a meeting, I will tell every woman in our group, and then we will go together for the meeting. Our group works for reforestation and cleaning up programs. We have a biweekly meeting. Last year we coordinated with other Mahila mandals from five neighbouring villages and we did the Rohtang cleaning up campaign.”
(Respondent 1, 17/11/10)

Many of the respondents also noted that education and self-employment opportunities are some of the supporting factors for bringing change in the traditional male-dominated society.

“... Once a woman is self-employed and educated, she has the ability to stand on her own and make decision for herself. I think, particularly in the Kullu valley, it is much easier for woman because of the tourism industry, which provide self-employment opportunities. People are now aware of the place of woman in a society. People are changing and they are more acceptable. It is very difficult for women in other parts of India, as I have seen.” (Respondent 30, 06/12/10)

Interestingly, in the case of the HSV project, the majority of the women participants responded that the *Mahila Mandal* representative informed them about the HSV meetings and they decided to go as a representative of the *Mahila Mandal*. In some villages, it was also found that women decided to join the protest actions during the public hearing after discussing the issue in their local internal meeting. Thus, the role of

Mahila Mandal as a mediator for encouraging participation of the women in the village meetings and public hearing is very evident in the case of the HSV project. Women felt strongly about the strength of the *Mahila Mandal* for bringing about change in society in the coming days too.

“... Everyone got together and opposed it. That’s how we stopped that project. Now in future if such project came up again, we especially the Mahila Mandal will come together, share all the information, and make a decision.” (Respondent 4, 23/11/10)

5.3.4 Residents’ expectations of participation in project decision-making in future

The residents in and around Manali are largely involved in tourism sector; however, the data show that they have not been practically and directly involved in tourism decision-making and planning so far. This might have occurred due to the lack of opportunities for the residents to be involved in decision-making processes or may be because there is no need to be a part of it, as they are not being affected personally. Local people perceived that they are not given an opportunity to participate in the decision-making process because the government or the project proponent in this case thinks the residents are in ‘subordinate position’ – having no capability or power - to influence the decisions. Whatever is the reason, it is now evident from the case of the HSV project that if the residents are not given an opportunity, they are ready to take action to get involved in the formal decision-making process so their voices are heard. The perceived environmental and livelihood impacts of the proposed HSV motivated local people to get involved and bring their views into the traditional decision-making system.

Residents’ attitude towards tourism development is a critical component for the long-term sustainability of the tourism industry (Brohman, 1996; Timothy, 1999).

However, the data revealed that the residents' attitude towards the HSV project has become increasingly negative over the years. As such, the project has been facing subsequent resistance especially in the form of protest. Local people believe that the negative attitudes about the project within the local communities are a direct result of the lack of transparency and low level of local involvement in the project development and decision-making. Research findings suggest that the residents strongly perceived that they should be a part of the decision-making process, and their participation should influence decisions regarding tourism development in general and for the HSV project in particular.

Residents' expectations of participation in the project decision-making concur with 'people-centered' approach as identified by Michener (1998), which aims to recognize the rights and will of the people. Residents strongly felt that the decision-making process should shift from the existing traditional top-down approach to a more participatory bottom-up approach, ensuring the residents have some rights in the decisions about development occurring in their region. While interviewing, the residents emphasized four levels of participation in the tourism development project, which included information sharing, village level consultation, decentralization of power, and benefit sharing as depicted in Fig. 5.3. These components for successful residents' participation in tourism development established by the interviewed respondents correspond well with many of the elements identified in context of other developing countries as established in the literature (e.g. Timothy, 1999; Sitikarn, 2002; Tosun, 2001; Dalton, 2005; Marzuki, 2009).

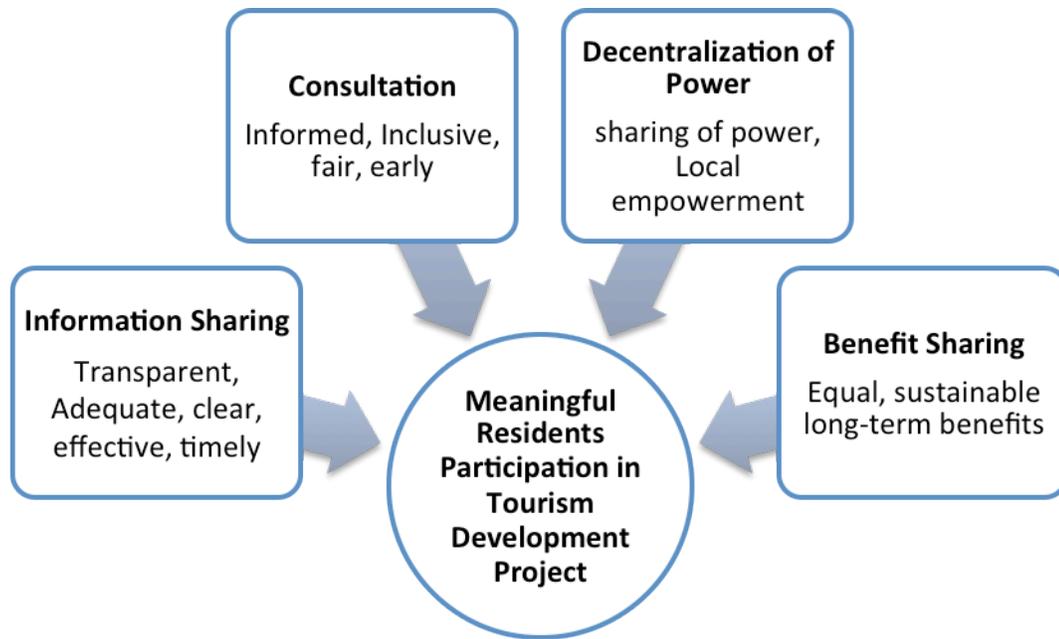


Fig. 5.3: Four components of participation identified by respondent residents for achieving meaningful residents participation in tourism development project

5.3.4.1 Information Sharing

The study participants complained that both the state government and the project proponent failed to provide clear, adequate, and timely information in this case. The NGO-JJVS informed that the Department of Tourism in Shimla denied to provide them the project IA, DPR and EIA report quoting ‘commercial confidentiality’ according to the Right to Information Act 2005. Respondent 15 (08/10/10) also shared similar opinions. “... *We approached the government to provide information about the HSV project as we heard that the project proponent already signed MOU, but they refused to provide it saying that it is a confidential matter.*” Meanwhile, as revealed in the following comments, the majority of the study participants noted the information disseminated by the project proponent was not substantial and timely to win the local support.

“There were lots of weaknesses associated with the project. Firstly, the ski village never took the locals seriously. They were never transparent about the project; some of the information was kept secret... Most importantly the people who are associated with the project, they don’t have good connection with the local people. The company always talked about the positive aspects of the project...If the project has been transparent with the locals regarding their rights, opportunities and potential negative impacts, they might not have faced such a problem.” (Respondent 25, 15/11/10)

“The main problem with the company is that they were never clear about the project. They know we are uneducated. They have lots of documents like the MOU, but it is all written in English. Why can’t they translate the MOU in Hindi and share with us? That way we all would have understood exactly what is the issue. Just by letting us know the benefits of the project that too verbally! How can we support them?” (Respondent 16, 24/11/10)

The lack of transparency in the project development created confusion within the local communities. The residents very strongly felt that they should be provided with sufficient information about the proposed project in a timely way. Literatures have identified adequate, quality, and accessible information as key factors for encouraging and improving public participation in decision-making process (Sitikarn, 2002; Stewart & Sinclair, 2007). Arnstein (1971) argues that ‘informing’ citizens is the first step towards legitimate citizen participation. Further, people also felt the need for awareness building and educating local people regarding their rights, the decision-making system, and the proposed project. A number of residents alluded to the importance of using an effective mechanism for disseminating information, which includes considerations of language, illiteracy, and social structures. Some of the local people suggested that a proper committee should be formed at the local level, which can act as mediator between the

project proponent and the local people. A few of them also advocate that rapport between project promoters and community can influence the effectiveness of communication between the two bodies.

“The government should also think about advertisement in that particular area. The information dissemination channel is not so strong. Knowingly, the project won’t advertise. They do some, but just to show the court or for government obligations.” (Respondent 40, 27/10/10)

“50% of the locals are uneducated, because of which they don’t know what is it, and where it is going to be built. There is confusion among these local people. There should be a proper committee from the locals so that they can communicate with the project proponent, and also with the local people.” (Respondent 33, 14/11/10)

5.3.4.2 Consultation

Residents noted that the next key step toward successful residents participation is consultation i.e., ascertaining the views of the residents. The majority of respondents felt very strongly that local people should be consulted before taking any kind of decision that would ultimately affects them. Consultation has been identified as integral part of the decision-making process and has also been included as a requirement for large-scale development projects like the HSV project. For instance, public hearing done as a part of EIA is a form of consultation done to ascertain the views of the residents. However, the respondents who are aware of such provisions felt that consultation exists only in planning, but is not implemented as captured in the policies.

“It is not that there is no provision for public participation in such a project. There are laws for public consultation like the public hearing. But it exists only on paper and is not practiced in reality.” (Respondent 9, 09/10/10)

“There is a full scope for public participation in planning like the project has to take No Objection Certificates (NOCs), and an individual can file their objections. There are guidelines, but the government and the private investors usually have a good nexus. So, they usually biased the existing rule, because if they follow the rule they know that there would be lots of objection. Sometimes the project proponent will contact the Panchayat and get the NOCs, and the local people will not be even aware of such a project.” (Respondent 40, 27/10/10)

The majority of the study participants stressed that the local *Panchayat* should issue an NOC to the development projects only through a village level consultation, as reflected in the following comments. The residents also stressed that consultation should be informed, inclusive, and fair. Most of the women respondents emphasized that the *Mahila Mandal's* – the women's group should be included in the overall decision-making process. A handful of people also noted that consultation is often confined in the later stage of development, and stressed the importance of early involvement in the project development. The local respondents believe that consultation provides a platform for sharing knowledge, dialoguing, and designing an appropriate plan for the project based on mutual consensus.

“Consideration of public consent is very important. The people are living here for ages. If the development affects their survival, it is not fair at all. Moreover, the local Panchayat, they issue NOC without consulting the villagers. As a consequence the people have to suffer in the end. There should be public participation. The Panchayat should call a village meeting and involve the local people. They should think and discuss the pros and cons of the project in the village meeting, and then they should issue NOC to such a project.” (Respondent 34, 12/11/10)

“Village level consultation is very important. Usually the outsiders come with some kind of project, take NOCs from the village Panchayat. In the end we – the local

people- will have to bear all the consequences. So, they should have a meeting at the Panchayat level and then a village level meeting should be done to make a final decision about the project.” (Respondent 2, 17/11/10)

Meanwhile, the residents also alluded to the importance of being consulted and involved in the project design and development, as reflected in the following comments. Interestingly, the majority of the participants were of the opinion that the issue of the HSV project may have been completely different if the project proponent had informed and consulted the local people on time.

“We have been living here for ages, we know what is the benefits of forest, river, etc. Any project should be designed in such a way that the local people were consulted initially about the appropriate location for the project...This type of project should be totally stopped in the mountains, forest, and nearby river, because it will destroy the whole environment.” (Respondent 33, 14/11/10)

“There was lack of communication between the project proponent and the local people. If they have approached the local people and consulted with them, the issue of the ski village project would have been totally different.” (Respondent 30, 06/12/10)

5.3.4.3 Decentralization of power

“The project proponent approach the Panchayat, and the Pradhyaan will issue NOC to the project without even letting the public know about it. So, when the project starts and it affects us what do we do? Even though we raised our voice against the project, the project proponent will say that they already got permission from the village Panchayat. And we can't do anything about it.” (Respondent 2, 17/11/10)

The above statement of a respondent revealed that the residents were neither informed nor consulted, despite being directly affected by the decision. And most importantly, they lack the power to make decisions and their actions cannot influence the

decisions made by the power holders. The residents were quite clear on the fact that the traditional top-down approach will not change until and unless there is devolution of power to the residents in the decision-making process. Informing and consulting the residents will encourage resident's participation, but delegating power to the residents ensures them that their concerns are taken into consideration by the power holders, and that their input has influenced the decisions. Researchers have identified power inequality in decision-making, often prevalent in most of the developing countries, as major constraints and challenges for achieving meaningful public participation (Timothy, 1999; Tosun, 2001; Tosun, 2005). This is evident in the HSV project too, in which the state government and the project proponent hold supreme power in project decision-making. However, decentralization is not an easy task considering two major constraints: limited capacity of residents and unwillingness of power holders to delegate power (Leksakundilok, 2006). From the experience of the HSV project, the residents strongly felt the need of developing an appropriate mechanism for empowering the residents in tourism development for being capable of taking the role as decision-makers in the future. One respondent expressed that one possible way for decentralizing power in the project decision-making is delegating power to the local leaders/village *Panchayat*, to which all the residents might not necessarily agree considering past experiences with the local leaders.

“In future, in my opinion, the democratic system is very strong in India. If there is only one clause that says that any project proposed in the area should be approved by the local leaders. Then I think the local leaders will definitely ask the local people in the area before giving an approval, because the leader will have a political connection. So, the leader will favour the local people because they need vote from

the people. People fear to talk with the administrator.” (Respondent 40, 27/10/10)

5.3.4.4 Benefit Sharing

Residents also stressed the importance of participating through benefit sharing in tourism development in general and the HSV project in particular. Residents perceived that the benefit of such a large-scale tourism project should not be limited within few elite people, instead it should trigger down to the majority of the people at the grassroots level. Benefit sharing has been identified as an important aspect for successful tourism development, as it will make the residents feel that they are part of the development and will develop positive attitude towards tourism development. It is interesting to note how the respondents prioritized gaining long-term sustainable benefits through partnership rather than obtaining immediate short-term benefits from the project, as reflected in the following comments.

“If possible the benefits should have a shareholder system, and the project should be given to the local people not to the outsiders. There is corruption everywhere. Public interest should be a priority... Local involvement/beneficiary is a must for any sort of project. Resident should be an active partner for such a project.” (Respondent 34, 12/11/10)

“They come to us to lure us towards the short-term benefits. They should have come with different provisions... Instead of buying lands from the locals, why can't they make an agreement with the locals in such way that the project can use the local people's land, and in return provide them with a certain percent of sharing of the project? That way the locals can benefit continuously in future and not just at one time.” (Respondent 16, 24/11/10)

5.4 Learning through participation in the HSV project activities

The data show that a wide range of public participation in various activities related to the HSV project as portrayed in Fig. 5.1 have resulted into individual learning outcomes. Individual learning outcomes varied from person to person depending on their involvement in the project participation activities. For instance, people who are involved in protest actions against the project have experienced much deeper understanding of the context than those who attended just the public hearing. The protesters reported to have learnt networking, trust building, and dialoguing in the course of participation as outlined below. The learning outcomes were examined based on the two domains of transformative learning theory - instrumental and communicative learning - as discussed in the literature section in chapter 2. Table 5.1 summarizes the transformative and communicative learning outcomes of the HSV development.

Table 5.1: Instrumental and communicative learning outcomes of the HSV development

Primary Categories	Grounded themes
Instrumental Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Information related to proposed project, location, its potential impacts and issues associated with it - Understanding of existing acts, policies and regulations - Obtaining legal, technical and organizational skills - Information of local rights - Developing effective strategies to work in groups and organize mobilization campaigns - Understanding cause-effect relationships
Communicative Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Recognizing local dependence on the environment and its resources - Recognizing the value of land and forest - Recognizing the power of unity and collective action - Overcoming fear and lack of confidence - Critically reflecting on the existing decision-making system - Being judgmental about their own competences and weaknesses in finding opportunities in the project

5.4.1 Instrumental Learning

Instrumental learning refers to learning how to successfully achieve desired ends e.g., how to negotiate legal and administrative procedures regarding decision processes. It often involves acquiring information and skills to achieve technical success. It also involves using appropriate methods, as well as determining cause-effect relationship to improve task-oriented performances (Mezirow, 2000). Research findings suggest that the respondents have experienced some instrumental learning in the course of participating in the HSV project participation activities. The vast majority of the respondents that participated in the involvement activities reported that they had gained some information pertaining to the ski village project, and understood the potential project risks and impacts on the environment and local livelihoods.

Consistent with Lozecnik (2009) case study findings, protest has become a continuous platform for engaging the participants in different forms of learning throughout their participation. As reflected in the following comments, there are several processes that the majority of the protesters followed before deciding to either initiate or join any protest action against the proposed project. The initial step was finding more truthful information about the project through different sources that was followed by analyzing and understanding the real issues. Once they realized that there were some problems with the project, they decided to take action.

“We read about the project in the newspaper. We thought we should know about this project, and we also looked up on the Internet about the experiences of ski resorts in other parts of the world...The project has lots of issues with their DPR. They were taking up lots of lands, and making big hotels. Then they also started buying private lands. Initially, we studied more to understand the project, and realized that this

project is not good for us. After we came to know that there is a problem, we started the awareness program.” (Respondent 9, 09/10/10)

The information people obtained was not just limited to the HSV project, but related to different policies, acts, and regulations. Among them are the Himachal Pradesh Tenancy and Land Reforms Act (HPRLA), Forest Conservation Act (1980), Right to Information Act (2005) and Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA). While initiating and participating in various protest actions, people reported having acquired different sets of legal, organizational, and technical skills, such as writing a complaint letter, issuing objection letter and filing public interest litigation. On the other hand, the study participants who have participated in the project development like in training and jobs reported having gained better skills and experiences. Respondent 35 (01/11/10) said, *“We being from a small place like Manali got training from international skiing experts and avalanche experts. We got an exposure at an international level because of the training opportunity in Finland. Two of the local boys also went to the Olympics; it is all because of the project.”*

People also learned about approaching the like-minded people, setting common goals, and developing strategies for organizing public meetings and rallies. While asked about whether he learned anything, respondent 15 (08/10/10) who had filed a case against the HSV project said,

“Yes. I learned a lot. Now we know about the implication of such a project and what processes we need to follow. I had to spend a lot of time and had to suffer during all this agitation. But, now I know the legal process, I know the people. We have developed a connection so it will be much easier if we come across such a project in the coming days too.”

Interestingly, even though the project has not yet started, the majority of the residents were able to comprehend the potential environmental, socio-cultural, and economic impacts of the proposed project by looking at the implications of already existing large-scale development projects in their region, as captured in the following comments.

“...Some people say that it will be beneficial, but how can it be. Look at the Prini village; the AD hydropower project took all the lands. See now they have to take permission to go to their own area. They sold their lands to the project, and were also employed for some years. But now the project has thrown them out of a job. Now the locals were always protesting against them. What can they do now? We also have the same fear about the ski village here. The benefits will be only for short-term. We will lose our land and later on they will not even let in our area like they did in the Prini Village now.” (Respondent 13, 23/11/10)

“In case of the gondola in Solang Nala and the micro-hydro project nearby our village, they took the land and fenced the area. Now, they were not allowing us in these areas. Initially, people didn't know that, but now people have realized it. Since all these things are happening in front of us, people now realized what would be the impacts of such a project in our area.”(Respondent 1, 17/11/10)

5.4.2 Communicative Learning

Communicative learning involves trying to understand others and be understood when communicating with them, and it engages the learner in negotiating meanings, intentions and values (e.g. resource conflict resolution). Participants of the HSV decision-making processes experienced some level of communicative learning outcomes. Participants were being introduced to ideas like sustainable tourism, environmental sustainability, stewardship towards the environment and the society. With the introduction of new concepts, some of the participants were able to critically reflect on

their values, thinking and the issues at hand. Interestingly, some of the learning outcomes were directly related to environmental protection.

“We understood our dependency on the environment and our role for the environment... While we are talking about promoting rural tourism and eco-tourism, a project like the ski village is not necessary at all. If the government promotes rural tourism instead of the ski village, the money will come directly to the local people and to the village.” (Respondent 9, 09/10/10)

“We come to know about development, which are detrimental to the environment. A man can be killed, but not defeated. People will support the protest against such development. Young people are joining the ski village protests too. It is going to have some effects. You start the journey then people will follow and make a caravan. It all depends on how you start it. There must be a person who should come forward, and that person must be spotless.” (Respondent 38, 27/10/10)

Some of the participants also reported their understanding of the value of land, and their responsibility for protecting it for future generation, as reflected in the following comment.

“The main important thing I learnt is the value of our land. In the past, we make our living from our lands, but now we buy everything from outside -every food items - that’s why people sell land for money. They don’t know its value, but what if something happens in the future. We might need our lands to make our living again by farming. Now, we know about its value. So we won’t sell an inch of our land to the company...” (Respondent 16, 24/11/10)

While the participating residents have acquired the project information by being directly involved in the processes, the non-participating respondents reported that they have acquired the information through other people who have participated. The cultural setting of Manali is as such that it provides an opportunity for continuous exchange of

information between the local people. As respondent 19 (17/11/10) reported, *“It is our tradition that if someone in the village came to know about something new, he/she will tell the other villagers and discuss about such a subject.”* Another significant learning outcome was recognizing the power of unity and utility of working together for achieving a collective goal. In doing so, participants commented on the fact that they not only felt a sense of satisfaction for being able to contribute to society, but also were equally inspired and motivated to continue to do so, as reflected in the following comments.

“What we learn is that our land and forest are protected because we -the local people- got united and protest against the project. The public forms the politicians and the government. So, public has a power. If something else comes in the future, we will get together again and do the same.” (Respondent 20, 17/10/10)

“We learned a lot. We formed a link with the national level NGOs. We got a mental satisfaction, because we were able to do something for our area. To do such a social service is very difficult too, because we have to suffer a lot...Moreover, there is pressure on the personal level for taking such an initiative.”(Respondent 34, 12/11/10)

Some of the local participants who are leading the protest expressed that they felt responsible for taking a lead and informing the local communities regarding such a development project and its impacts on the environment and the society. In addition, the representative of the local NGO-JJVS informed that through their active involvement in protesting against the ski village project, they were able to win local trust and support, which made it easier for initiating other similar campaigns in the area.

“One of the most important things we gained is winning the trust of local people. It is difficult to win the people’s confidence and trust, because people can be sold at anytime. When we initially started our campaign against the ski village, people had

many doubt and questioned us. But now it has become easier for our NGO, because people believe us. For example, we are now fighting against this micro-hydro project nearby a river channel in our village. Now, it has become much easier to convince people, because they think that we weren't sold in a big project like the ski village and this is just a small one."

Moreover, participants critically reflected on the existing traditional decision-making system, and expressed their discontent for being overlooked by the external power holders through protest actions. In doing so, the participants realized their power to challenge the decisions made by the power holders and bring change in the existing decision-making process through protest actions. So, there is a change in perception in the residents that the collective voice of the public can actually make a difference.

"In the past people used to think that the government is the supreme authority. If they took a decision, we thought that is the final decision and the public cannot do anything about it. But now people realized that the government's decision is not the final one. There are people in our community who can raise voice against it, and can bring a change." (Respondent 34, 12/11/10)

As reflected in the following comments, the local Panchayat also reported to have realized the power of collective public voice in the case of the HSV project.

"If the public got together and made a decision, we (the Panchayat) cannot do anything." (Respondent 18, 23/11/10)

I also found that the participants were able to judge their potential competences and weaknesses in terms of finding opportunities in the HSV project. Participants have also learned to reassess the short-term and long-term benefits based on the existing development projects. For instance, one major issue brought up was the trend of local people selling lands to the project for short-term monetary benefits, and end up landless

in the long run, as reflected in the comments. Some participants reported to have actually seen people facing a similar situation in the case of other projects in the area.

“People are looking for short-term benefits. They are selling lands for monetary benefits now, but we are more worried about the future because our people will become landless. Moreover, money will be over soon, so what about our future generation and what will our children do in future?” (Respondent 16, 24/11/10)

Meanwhile, the wide range of protest actions from the local communities has forced the project promoters to critically reassess and reflect on the original project concept, as revealed in the following comments.

“We involved the locals from the initial stage. But one thing that we learned and was unaware before is that we should have started the project at the local level with a smaller project and then should have expanded it to a larger scale. We are trying and we might consider this idea in future.” (Respondent 37, 15/12/10)

Moreover, the women participants reported that the opportunities for attending meetings related to the HSV project decision-making has facilitated them to overcome their fear and lack of confidence instilled by their traditional male-dominated society.

“I got more courage to do something after attending the meeting. If we stayed at home, we wouldn’t know anything. I got courage to go to more meetings and other places. We get to learn new information. Then we also shared it with other women in the village and they might have got some courage too... Every time we attend such meeting we hear, see and learn a lot of new things.” (Respondent 10, 10/11/10)

5.5 Summary

This chapter is a comprehensive presentation of the results on public participation activities related to the HSV project and the learning outcomes facilitated through participation. Results revealed that there has been an extensive public participation

related to the HSV project right from the signing of project MOU in the year 2005 till 2010 – when this research was conducted. However, there has been very limited public participation within the formally sanctioned decision-making process i.e., either done by the government or the project proponent as a part of the decision-making process. Results show that most of the participation related to the project was instigated by public protest. The project proponent made efforts to involve some local people in the project development (e.g. workshops, training, employment etc.), but failed to incorporate the general public in their project decision-making processes. For their part the government has involved the public in two ways, through the High Court hearing and the signing of NOCs. The other activities such as protests were left to the public to initiate. Thus, public participation in the HSV project development was categorized in three forms based on the findings: participation in the project decision-making, participation outside of decision-making process, and participation in the HSV project development.

The second section of the chapter evaluates the public participation followed in the HSV project, in particular the role of residents in the decision-making processes. Results revealed that the formal decision-making process for the HSV project followed a traditional top-down approach, in which the role of the residents in formal decision-making process was very limited or non-existent. Residents who would be the first to bear the consequences of the proposed project were neither consulted nor properly informed about the proposed project. This resulted in residents building a strong resentment against the government and the project proponent for excluding them from the decision-making process. The result of which there was a wide range of public protests against the HSV project in the region, resulting in obstructions in project development.

The final section of this chapter captures the instrumental and communicative learning outcomes facilitated through participations in various activities related to the HSV development and reveals that both instrumental and communicative learning occurred as a result of participation.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMENDATIONS

6.1 Introduction

The mountainous state of Himachal Pradesh – the land of snow - is a major tourist destination in India with a great potential for tourism development because of its scenic natural beauty and cultural-historic qualities. The area has been attracting domestic and foreign travellers and tourists for decades. Recognizing the region's potential for increased tourism, the government of Himachal Pradesh has been promoting tourism development as the prime engine for the economic growth in the state. One strategy of the state government to fulfill this is to facilitate large-scale tourism infrastructure development through public-private partnerships. The Himalayan Ski Village (HSV), which is a portrait of a world-class ski development project proposed in north of Manali town, is an example of such a project sanctioned by the state government of Himachal Pradesh. Developments such as HSV in the mountain region have the potential for significant environmental and socio-economic impacts. In such a scenario, it is critical to examine whether such a large-scale project has been envisaged and implemented by taking in account the views and concerns of local people and other concerned parties.

The purpose of this research was to describe and evaluate the role of public participation in tourism development projects in high mountain environments in India, using the proposed HSV development in Manali as a case study. The objectives of this research were to: 1) describe the process of public consultation and participation, both formal and informal, followed in the HSV development; 2) establish the potential project impacts that residents have communicated or would like to communicate to project

decision-makers; 3) ascertain the perceptions of residents, particularly women, regarding their role in the decision-making process; and 4) determine the individual learning outcomes of the participants as gained through their participation in project decision-making.

Data for this research were collected through fieldwork conducted in and around Manali town from September 2010 to December 2010. In total, 46 participants were interviewed. They included different stakeholders consisting of local people, local representatives of NGOs and community organizations, community leaders, project proponents and government officials. In addition, the research relied on an extensive review of secondary data and information related to the HSV project. Data analyses were based on the conceptual framework of public participation process developed from the existing literature. Conclusions specific to the research objectives are presented in the following sections.

6.2 Public participation followed in HSV project development

Public participation in decision-making is a critical component of sustainable tourism development. Past studies on public participation have revealed that there is a very limited scope for such participation in decision-making related to large-scale development projects in India (e.g. Sinclair, 2003; Diduck et. al, 2007; Dutta, 2009). Dutta (2009) argued that the law and practice in India, in general, does not encourage public participation, and it is among the most neglected aspects of the decision-making process. In the context of tourism development in India, the framework for public participation is provided by the EIA notification of 2006 under the provision of public hearing requirements. Nonetheless, EIA is pre-requisite only for limited tourism

development projects and activities. Considering the potential for considerable social and ecological impacts, the proposed HSV project is subject to EIA, including mandatory public hearings. In the case of HSV, the environmental clearance public hearing, which is the primary avenue for public participation in the project approval decision-making process, has yet to be undertaken by the project proponent. The project proponent did make efforts to involve some selected residents in the project development through training, workshops, and job opportunities but did not succeed in engaging and winning the local support.

The data indicate that the scope of residents' participation in the formal decision-making process was low and was provided by the government at general house meetings held at the *Panchayat* level and a High Court induced public hearing. Results revealed that the residents have largely objected to the project at all these events due to the potential impacts of the project on the environment, local livelihoods and the traditional culture. Furthermore, in the case of the HSV project, these formal decision-making activities evolved more as a result of local protest actions as opposed to government or proponent action. The lack of effective communication and opportunities for residents' participation in the HSV project consultation and decision-making processes served to direct public opinion against the project and resulted in a variety of protest activities ranging from issuing an objection letter, holding public rallies, to filing court cases against the proposed project. It is evident from the case of HSV project that if affected people are not given an opportunity to participate, they are ready to take action by other means so that their voices are heard.

Several factors motivated the residents to participate in protest actions. Firstly,

there is a strong resentment among the residents for not being consulted in the HSV project development process. Of particular concern was the state government's decision to grant local rights to the project and provide an exemption from section 118 of Land Transaction Act to the project. Secondly, the uneven distribution of the project benefits among and within local communities in which only a few people benefited directly caused concern. Thirdly, and most importantly, the threat imposed by the proposed project on existing tourism-based local livelihoods and on the surrounding environment raised the alarm. Initially started by a group of residents, the protests spread across the Kullu District and gained much attention in the media. As a consequence of the range of public protests, the current status of the HSV project which was envisaged to be completed by 2011 is currently tied-up in the High Court of Himachal Pradesh.

A number of lessons can be learned from the experiences of the HSV project. The HSV case study demonstrates: that the success of any tourism development project depends, in part, on public support and residents' participation in project planning and decision-making; that residents' have power to bring change to the traditional decision-making system; that the benefits of a large-scale tourism development project should be equitably distributed; and that the proposed project should be environmentally sound and socially acceptable. These findings echo those of previous research that has concluded that meaningful public participation is a fundamental ingredient for achieving sustainable and acceptable tourism development (Brohman, 1996; Timothy, 1999; Tosun, 2000; Sitikaran, 2002; Shekhar, 2003; Tosun, 2004).

6.3 Perceived impacts of the HSV project

The tourism development industry has both positive and negative impacts on the destination areas. As discussed in section 4.5, the HSV project is bound to have some impacts on the environment, society, local culture and the economy. The perceived positive and negative impacts of the proposed tourism project are consistent with the findings of many other tourism studies (e.g., Butler, 1991; Andriotis, 2001; Gardner et al, 2002; Kent, 2005; Rishi & Giridhar, 2007; Asher, 2008; Gopinath, 2008; Singh, 2008). A majority of people weigh the potential implications of the project from the viewpoint of how they will be benefited or affected. Thus, most of the local people are apprehensive about the consequences of the project for the existing tourism and natural resource-based livelihoods in the region. Perceived impacts of the proposed HSV project varies among stakeholders: project supporters, residents, village deities, hotel owners, and social activist.

The project proponent and supporters note that the HSV project will create employment opportunities, generate revenues, and increase quality tourists in the region. To the young local ski enthusiasts, the proposed world-class ski resort translates into an opportunity to improve their skiing skills and obtain winter employment. However, to the hoteliers in Manali town, the mixed-use resort development project emerges as a competitor in the existing tourism business, placing the local tourism entrepreneurs at a major disadvantage. As for the majority of the residents, the proposed project means the potential loss of locally operated tourism businesses, loss of grazing rights and conflict over common pool resources. To the village deities, the project translates into the

pollution of sacred sites on the mountain slopes, deterioration of traditional local culture and erosion of the sacredness of *Devbhumi* – the valley of Gods.

6.4 Revisiting the roles of residents in decision-making process

The formal decision-making process of the HSV project follows a traditional top-down approach, in which the residents were in the ‘subordinate position’ having no decision-making authority. The state government is the major decision-making body in the case of the HSV project. It was found that the role of district-level officials and the local *Panchayats* in decision-making process were confined to the later stages of project development. Results also revealed that there was fragmentation and lack of information dissemination among government officials at the state, district and local level. Moreover, within the *Panchayat* system, it was found that decisions were made without mutual consensus among the members within the same body.

Local residents are among the first to be directly affected by locally proposed projects and they were neither well-informed nor consulted by the state government or the project proponent in this case. Moreover, they were not provided with timely, accurate and adequate information regarding the proposed project. At the local level, the information regarding the proposed project was provided by two main sources: a local NGO and the HSV local agents. It was found that the information coming from both the HSV local agents and the NGOs were directed towards skewing the residents’ perception for or against the HSV project. The majority of respondents contended that the information provided by the project proponent was not adequate and transparent enough to convince the residents of the project benefits. While on the other hand, the information disseminated by the NGO, despite being not always accurate and truthful, appeared to be

more timely and credible enough to influence the residents' opinions. An important finding of this research is that majority of the residents expressed apprehension towards the existing top-down decision-making system, and called for a more participatory bottom-up approach, allowing for more decision-making input by the residents.

6.4.1 Role of the residents in protest actions

Over the years, the residents of the Kullu District have participated in a wide range of protest actions against the proposed HSV project. The local NGO-JJVS spearheaded most of the protest actions that have occurred to date. However, several other NGOs, local organizations, local *Panchayat*, *Mahila Mandal*, and the residents have extended their support to the struggle, especially in creating awareness and mobilizing the general public to raise their voice against decisions about projects that affect them. The role of women was very apparent in the HSV protest actions especially at the public hearing, as noted in earlier research (Agarwal, 1992; Patel, 1998). It was found that the *Mahila Mandal* played a significant role in mobilizing and bringing the local women into the involvement activities. Through various protest actions, the residents have challenged the power holders and influenced the decisions regarding the proposed project. One significant outcome was the verdict of the High Court to re-examine and review the project in response to a writ petition filed by a local hotelier. As a result, the HSV project is currently sub-judice i.e., under the consideration of the High Court of Himachal Pradesh.

6.5 Learning through participation in the HSV project decision-making

Results revealed that the HSV project decision-making fostered both instrumental and communicative learning outcomes among the project participants. Instrumental

learning outcomes included obtaining new information related to the HSV project, the project proponent, the existing acts and policies, and the potential implications of the proposed development project. In the course of participating in the HSV actions, some of the participants have acquired technical, legal, and administrative skills. Meanwhile, the participants also were able to comprehend the potential risks and impacts of the project by looking at the implications of the existing development in their region.

HSV project participants have also experienced some communicative learning outcomes. In the course of participation in the HSV project, the participants have understood the value of land, forest, and the environment. In the meantime, participants were also critically reflecting on their roles and responsibilities towards protecting the land and forest for future generations. Another important learning outcome noted by the majority of participants was the understanding of power of unity and utility of working together for achieving collective goals – in this case the common goal being challenging the power holders and raising their voices against the lack of participation in project decision-making. Meanwhile, the informal education obtained through participation is empowering the residents to fight for their rights and raise their voice against environmental and social injustice.

6.6 Recommendations

At a time when India is adopting a public-private partnership strategy to achieve economically oriented goals, the experience of the HSV project delivers an important message to decision-makers regarding the importance of appreciating and incorporating meaningful public participation into project decision-making and development for the successful implementation and viability of a project. The lessons learned from the HSV

project are also relevant in the context of other developing countries where public participation is still the most neglected aspect in project planning and decision-making. Based on the lessons learned from the case study of HSV project, the following recommendations are made for achieving sustainable tourism development.

6.6.1 Adopting a framework of sustainable tourism - Linking environment, economy, and society

The tourism industry makes a significant contribution towards the economic development of tourist destinations but also faces challenges and criticism related to the associated adverse environmental and social impacts. Being a resource-dependent industry, it is urgent that tourism developers and government regulators recognize their responsibility towards the environment and consider the environmental and socio-economic impacts in order to remain viable in the long run. Thus, the need to promote sustainable tourism has become important. Though several countries have adopted the framework of sustainable tourism development in their policy, India is still lagging behind. The existing tourism policy of Himachal Pradesh is aimed exclusively at tourism growth for economic development of the state with little thought for the environment, culture, and the needs of the local communities. Even though the Himachal tourism policy tries to address the economy, environment and socio-cultural aspects of the region in some way, there is a lack of linkages among these four fundamental aspects of sustainable tourism within the policy framework.

The tourism industry in Manali is growing, but its long-term viability and sustainability is questionable. The HSV project, in particular, is bound to have potential negative impacts on the environment, society, and local culture as discussed in section

4.5. Thus, the need for developing and adopting a framework for sustainable development is critically felt in the case of tourism development in Himachal Pradesh. Further, any proposed large-scale development project should be subject to strategic environmental assessment to ensure the long term viability of economic benefits to a region given the other activities going on and with due consideration to environmental protection and social well being.

6.6.2 Involving the stakeholders in tourism planning

Sustainable tourism development begins with tourism planning, and effective tourism planning must incorporate meaningful public participation (Kent et. al, 2011). In a democratic country, for any policy to be effective, meaningful public participation in a decision-making process is a must. The present Himachal practice represents a traditional ‘top-down approach’; thus, it should be made participatory through effective consultation and coordination with local people, trekking associations, tour operators, and other service providers. Moreover, tourism is one industry that is linked with different sectors and departments including the transportation, forestry, art and culture, urban development, horticulture, the energy sector, land, and other service providers. Thus, a strong and systematic collaboration among all the concerned stakeholders and departments is a must when formulating and implementing policy for a balanced and sustainable tourism development in Himachal Pradesh. Moreover, the level of cooperation between the central (federal), state (provincial) and local level government should be strengthened to develop a clear policy and strategies for tourism development to achieve the collective goal. Policy should be developed in such a way that it will embody and compliment policies existing at the national level as well as is compliant

with international frameworks such as the sustainable tourism. And most importantly, the government should uphold and strictly implement the existing laws and policies – not subvert them to support economically-oriented private investment that alienates access to natural resources and jeopardizes existing livelihoods.

6.6.3 Involving the residents in tourism development

The Himachal tourism policy fails to address the need of residents' participation in tourism development, which is one of the key factors of a sustainability tourism industry. It is evident from the case of HSV project that participation of the residents is a critical component towards success of any tourism development project. Residents' participation in tourism development can be in two forms: participation in project decision-making process and participation in benefit sharing. The current residents' participation in tourism decision-making process is very weak or non-existent. The framework of public participation in project decision-making is provided by the Environment Impact Assessment notification 2006 under the environmental clearance public hearing, but it is limited to only a few categories of tourism development project. Meanwhile, such environmental clearance public hearing is often not implemented, as evident from the case of the HSV project.

Therefore, the need for residents' participation is needed in the decision-making process in tourism development. As expected by the residents, participation in the decision-making process should be informed, timely and meaningful. It is equally important to educate and empower the residents to enhance participation in tourism decision-making. Moreover, the residents should be granted with the right to provide input to tourism development occurring in their region, as they would bear the

consequences in the end. In general, the decision-making process should follow a participatory ‘bottom-up’ approach, instead of the traditional ‘top-down’ approach in order to achieve a meaningful public participation. Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) should be formulated as a prerequisite for all tourism related developments that will minimize the possible negative impacts on the environment, society, and avoid unintended outcomes.

One of the major focuses of sustainable tourism is to distribute and/or retain some tourism benefits within the host or local community; however, in the current tourism policy, major importance is given to the tourism infrastructure development especially through private sector investment. Thus, the investment should not only be directed towards large-scale private developments but towards small scale, low impact facilities and services, especially local ventures, by means of financing or other incentives. Higher participation of local investors in tourism development will trigger benefits at the local level through employment generation and reduce economic drainage from future developments (Andriotis, 2001). The opportunity for sharing long-term tourism benefits will also develop positive resident’ attitude towards tourism development. Smaller projects would also not require land deals to be successful.

6.7 Concluding Remarks

Tourism has continued to emerge as one of the drivers of economic growth and societal change in mountain communities in developing countries. This study has added tremendously to my understanding of issues related to tourism development in mountainous regions. As mountain regions across the world continue to open up for tourism related activities, it will be a challenging task to maintain and preserve the

traditional environmental, socio-cultural and economic norms and practices unless a conscious and concrete effort is put in place during the initial phases of planning tourism development in a particular region. Following this study, I believe that one of the most critical components of ensuring the sustainability of a place, its culture, societal values, environmental integrity, and economic well-being is the empowerment of local communities to provide meaningful input to decisions related to any developmental activities occurring in their region, be they small or large. Further, enabling the local communities to look after their welfare and not imposing the will of external agencies or authorities is crucial for preserving the integrity of a place and its people.

This case study research has revealed to me the complexity of decision-making systems for major tourism projects in the high mountain environments of India. It has shown me that people can empower themselves outside of formal decision-making processes in an attempt to influence the decision makers. Project proponents can also take many types of action to work directly with impacted communities and government as shown in this case, including taking court action of their own. The final outcome related to the HSV project is yet to be determined, there is an outstanding EIA, one court case which was brought by the project proponent against the government of Himachal Pradesh in the High Court for project delays, and there are fifteen outstanding court cases against the project proponent filed by the ex-employees of the HSV project in the Labor Court demanding compensation for terminating their jobs. Decision-making is far from done.

Coming from a mountain area in Nepal, which has opened for tourism, I believe this study will go a long way in allowing me to inform our community people on the need to have a proper mechanism that ensures development projects are subject to local

approval. As respondent 33 (14/11/10) quoted, *“If you are going to build anything, even a small hotel, you have to think about the people living in the surroundings and the environment.”* Further, this study enabled me to inform our community people about the need to develop a framework that requires project developers to involve local communities in project design and decision-making processes at an early stage of any proposed project. Finally, this study has allowed me to gain a deeper understanding and appreciation of protests as a vehicle for ensuring meaningful public participation as well as a platform for learning and empowering residents.

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Appendix - I: Sample Interview Schedule for Semi-structured Interview

A. Himalayan Ski Village (H.S.V.) Project Participant Interview Schedule

1. What do you think about the different types of development occurring in the Manali Region (for example roads, hydropower, tourism infrastructures etc.)?
2. Have you been involved in the community meetings, hearings, protests, employment, etc. relating to the H.S.V. project?
 - If Yes. Continue with Question 3.
 - If No. Go to Non-participant survey.
3. What is your understanding of the types of public participation process used by proponents or government in this case?
 - Can you describe the level of community involvement in the project decision-making process from your perspective?
 - Is there any focus on women or other vulnerable groups?
 - What is your perspective on the level of women's participation in the project decision-making process?
4. How have you been involved in the decision-making process related to the H.S.V. project?
 - Was it a meeting, public hearing, community gathering, protests, employment, or other events?
 - a. Can you describe the activity/ies?
 - b. Who conducted or initiate the event? (The government, the proponent, community leaders or other groups)
 - c. Who participated in the event? (Women or vulnerable groups)
 - d. What happened in these events?
 - e. Did the proponent or regulator present anything or just listen?
 - f. How was the information shared in the meeting? (The language used, medium of presentation, etc.)

- g. Was there any dialogue or discussions during the meetings? How it is promoted?
 - h. How did you participate in these events?
 - i. Did you speak during the event? Did people listen to you?
 - j. What do you think of such activity/ies?
 - k. Did you feel your opinions/needs were looked after in the decision-making process?
5. Was the process used for involving public in the H.S.V. similar to past or different?
- How is it different from the past?
 - Has there been any improvement so far? In what way it has changed?
 - What changes/improvement do you expect to see in the future?
6. What do you perceive as being the potential impacts of the H.S.V. project?
- Any social or environmental impacts that you would like to communicate to the decision-makers?
 - Why do you think these are relevant?
7. What new knowledge have you obtained through participation in the H.S.V. decision-making process?
- Have you learned anything new about the project, the impacts, the region, the environment, or the people while participating in the HSV decision-making process?
 - How did you gain this?
 - Did your participation in H.S.V decision-making change your perceptions on such projects in the area?
 - How do you think has this learning contributed to your understanding of the H.S.V.; of sustainability in the region?

B. Himalayan Ski Village (H.S.V.) Project Non-Participant Interview Schedule

1. What do you think about the different types of development occurring in the Manali Region (for example roads, hydropower, tourism infrastructure etc.)?

2. Have you heard about the community meetings, hearings, and protests etc. relating to the H.S.V. project?
 - Why have you not participated?
 - Were you informed about such activities in the area? Did you feel ignored?
3. What do you know about the H.S.V. project?
4. What do you think of the participation processes for such development in the region?
5. What do you perceive as being the potential impacts of the H.S.V. project?
 - Any social or environmental impacts that you would like to communicate to the decision-makers?
 - Why do you think these are relevant?
6. How did you come to know about the project and its possible impacts?
7. Did those who were involved in the project decision-making process share any of their experiences with you?
 - What did they tell you?
 - Have you learned anything new about the project, the impacts, the region, the environment, or the people through them?
 - Did this change your perceptions on such projects in the area?

C. Interview Schedule for Project Proponent and Government Officials

1. Describe public participation processes/programs followed in the case of H.S.V. project.
2. Please provide any special events and how they were undertaken? (Public hearings, consultations, etc.)
3. Please explain the major goals of organizing such public consultations, hearings, meetings, etc. for this project?
4. Please explain how each event was conducted?
 - Are the public informed prior to the public hearings, meetings, etc.? How?

- Who in the community is approached to become involved? Are marginalized individuals approached (women, vulnerable groups, etc.)?
 - How is the information shared and presented in the meetings, hearings, etc.?
 - In what ways do you encourage active participation of the communities in the decision-making process?
5. What types of input did you receive about the HSV through such participation process?
 6. How are the communities' interest/values as reflected in this input taken into account in project modifications? Does this public participation process reflect their needs?
 7. How are the communities shown that their input was used?
 8. Did you hold consultations separate from public consultations with the elected community leadership? If so, why?
 9. How successful do you think public participation processes/programs was in the case of Himalayan Ski Village Project (H.S.V)?
 10. What have you learned through the public participation processes in the case of H.S.V. project? How did you learn?
 11. Do you think other institutions or organizations have learned through this process? Have any discussions with these groups resulted?
 12. How are you trying to incorporate what you have learned into future public participation processes?

Appendix - II: Ethics Approval



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APPROVAL CERTIFICATE

October 12, 2010

TO: Yangji Doma Sherpa
Principal Investigator

Henley
SSHRC

FROM: Brian Barth, Chair
Joint-Faculty Research Ethics Board (JFREB)



Re: Protocol #J2010:110
"Public Participation in Tourism Development: A Case study of
Himalayan Ski Village (HSV) Project, Manali, India"

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

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

Please note:

- If you have funds pending human ethics approval, the auditor requires that you submit a copy of this Approval Certificate to the Office of Research Services, fax 261-0325 - please include the name of the funding agency and your UM Project number. This must be faxed before your account can be accessed.
- If you have received multi-year funding for this research, responsibility lies with you to apply for and obtain Renewal Approval at the expiry of the initial one-year approval; otherwise the account will be locked.

The Research Ethics Board requests a final report for your study (available at: http://umanitoba.ca/research/ors/ethics/ors_ethics_human_REB_forms_guidelines.html) in order to be in compliance with Tri-Council Guidelines.