

Exploring motives

Unfolding the conflict over Kharun Riverfront Development

By

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May, 2016



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1. Acknowledgement

This case study is a result of internship opportunity provided to me by the ‘Forum for Policy Dialogue on Water Conflicts in India’ (hereafter Forum). Firstly, I am grateful to the farmers and villagers who are a part of this conflict and also local intellectuals who honed and improvised the report with information from ground zero. I express my profound gratitude to K. J. Joy for having confidence in me and allowing me to work with utmost autonomy on this case with his guidance, thereby availing myself a chance to contribute to Forum’s ongoing work on Mahanadi river basin. I would also like to extend my gratitude to Seema Kulkarni and Shripad Dharmadhikari. I specially thank Craig Dsouza, Sarita Bhagat, Neha Bhadbhade, Sneha Bhat, Pratima Medhekar and Tanaji Nikam. They all heeded my smallest of the doubts; guided me and ensured that my work went on smoothly throughout my internship period. My fellow interns kept my morale up by sharing their perspectives.

I extend my gratitude to the Minister for Environment of Chhattisgarh state, Mr. Rajesh Munat, for devoting his time for inputs as a respondent on behalf of the Government of Chhattisgarh. I also extend my regards to the Chief Engineer of Raipur Development Authority, Mr. G.S Bhatia, for his valuable inputs on the project. My immeasurable thanks to Mr. Priya Sharan Tripathi, President of Rashtriya Kisan Kranti Morcha, who largely facilitated my field visit in Raipur city and villages coming under purview of the project. He acquainted me with activists and villagers who are a part of the movement and also otherwise. His inputs as a respondent have been very helpful which constitute of insights and secondary data.

I am thankful to Gautam Bandopadhyay, Convener of Nadi Ghati Morcha, for sharing his perspective on the issue. Moreover, I extend my grateful thanks to journalists from local bureaus of two news agencies, Manish Singh and Anuj Saxena. They cover the story of conflict over Kharun Riverfront Development for their respective agencies and shared their views for this case study regarding the same. I also appreciate the suggestions and inputs of all those I met during my field visit, including those who chose to remain anonymous. Thanksgiving can’t be complete without mentioning my faculty at TISS, Mumbai, Pranjal Deekshit and Dr. Nirmalya Choudhary who encouraged me to work with the Forum and facilitated the same. I am thankful to my beloved parents for fully supporting me in my first internship work.

2. Introduction

Riverfront development projects are gaining momentum all over India after the path setting feat of Sabarmati Riverfront project (SRP) in Ahmedabad, which is considered as the so called pioneer city in urban transformation. Kharun Riverfront Development Project (KRDP) was initiated by the Government of Chhattisgarh (GoCG) in association with Raipur Development Authority (RDA) on lines of SRP in early 2015. Authorities consider it as need of the hour for Raipur city and surrounding urban agglomeration. It is primarily and largely meant for recreational, housing, tourism and ecological purposes, as conceded by the authorities.

Preliminary feasibility report made by Water and Power Consultancy Services Limited (WAPCOS), suggest that 1192.97 hectares (ha) of land, which is highly fertile, will be required for development of this project.¹ Even before the report was out, when the survey was underway, villagers from villages situated near Mahadev Ghat on Kharun River bed started protesting against the project under the banner of *Rashtriya Kisan Kranti Morcha* (RKKM) led by its president Priya Sharan Tripathi.

The series of protests by RKKM were also manifested in the regional news media. These protests subsequently brought the project to a halt. The aggrieved parties are protesting against the prospective acquisition of land which will lead to loss of livelihood and cause drastic impact on the socio-economic conditions of the villagers. They also posit their protests for protection of the river bed from proposed dredging and construction of promenade on the bed, thereby harming the fluvial environment of Kharun. The issue is embedded with social, political, economic and cultural aspects, all of which will drastically change after changes are made under the proposed project plan.

Apart from land acquisition, pollution of Kharun is another cause of protests. It has bearing on the livelihoods of people who are dependent on the river. Since reduction of pollution is one of the aims of the project, villagers are demanding fulfillment of this aim without their displacement. These two issues are the broader sources of conflict over KRDP.

¹ Government of Chhattisgarh, Raipur Development Authority, *Preparation of Master Plan and Preliminary Feasibility Report for "Kharun River Front Development" on the Downstream of Mahadev Ghat, Raipur, Chhattisgarh*, Raipur: WAPCOS Limited, December 2015, p. 6.

3. Research methodology

a. Research questions

i. Central research question

- What are the motives of conflicting parties over the KRDP and what scope for a dialogue is there between them?

The aim of this case study is to explore and understand how motives are at play in a conflict leading to incompatibilities, which in turn can determine space for dialogue between the conflicting parties with a view to mediate. The focus of central research question has been converged on to motives of conflicting parties as they are important elements which can help in determining the roots of incompatibilities within a conflict. Further, it will help in understanding commonalities between two parties' interests on the basis of which space for dialogue can be identified. This question has also been framed to validate the later mentioned 'Mediator's Iceberg' tool in a different setting.

ii. Sub research questions

- What is the broader background of the prospective impact area?
- What are the manifested positions, interests and needs of the conflicting parties involved?
- What are the shared interests of the parties and scope for mediation through dialogue?

b. Empirical field and unit of analysis

In order to acquire information from stakeholders from both the conflicting parties, a field visit was made to the villages in the Kharun river basin as well as offices in Raipur cities where different respondents were located. The following were the sites covered so as to get a deeper understanding of topics revolving around research questions –

i. Prospective impact villages

Three villages namely, Bhothali, Amleshwar and Khudmuda, all abutting Kharun river located near southwestern fringes of Raipur city, were covered with a view of purposive sampling. These are the villages which are also mentioned in the scope of study of WAPCOS report and are being considered as a part of the first phase of project. Only three villages were covered considering time constraints, manifestation and participation in protests from these villages and aim to cover stakeholders according to the framework. The units of analysis were villagers in this field.

- **Bhothali** is most probably the only village which completely falls in proposed project area. It is settled on government land abutting Kharun just below Bhathagaon anicut, the point from where Kharun looks polluted. It is also the village where the protests began and were intensely manifested.
- **Amleshwar** is located adjacent to Bhothali abutting Kharun just above Bhathagaon anicut. It is also the village where one of the important stakeholder, the leader of the protests and the president of RKKM, Mr. Priya Sharan Tripathi owns land abutting the river. It is the most beautiful stretch which is not polluted, as intake wells for drinking water supplied to Raipur are located just in front of Tripathi's land.
- **Khudmuda** is also located between Ghugwa and Bhathagaon anicuts, which is a perennial stretch and hence beneficial for farmers throughout the year.

ii. **Official buildings**

- **D-8, Civil Lines** is the bungalow which houses Chhattisgarh's Minister for Environment and Housing, Mr. Rajesh Munat, in Raipur city. He was considered as the unit of analysis representing the state government and ruling party.
- **Raipur Development Authority office** located in New Rajendra Nagar in Raipur city where the office of Chief Engineer of the authority is located. He was considered as the unit of analysis representing the state authority.
- **News agencies' offices** of local bureaus of Patrika news (Aamnaka, Raipur) and Naidunia (Sai Nagar, Raipur) news were included, which accommodates journalists who cover the story of conflict over KRDP, for respective agencies. They were considered as the unit of analysis representing the media.
- **Coffee House, Civil lines** located at new Circuit House in Civil Lines area in Raipur city was also included, which is the meeting point of activists and politicians who are active in Chhattisgarh's politics. They were considered as the units of analysis to understand more about the civil society and politics behind the project.
- **Rashtriya Kisan Kranti Morcha's office** for urban area located at Avanti Vihar in Raipur city was included which also houses its President, Mr. Priya Sharan Tripathi. He was considered as unit of analysis representing the leadership of one of the conflicting parties and civil society organisation.

- **Nadi Ghati Morcha's office** (a civil society organisation) situated in Anupam Nagar in Raipur city, also houses its convenor, Mr. Gautam Bandopadhyay. He was considered as the unit of analysis representing one of the conflicting parties and civil society organisation.

c. Data collection and methods

Both Primary and Secondary data were used for this study.

i. Primary data collection

In-depth **semi structured interviews** were conducted so as to encourage the respondents to pitch in their views and concede detailed information regarding the semi-structured questions. These interviews lasted for time ranging from 15 minutes to one and half hours. Different open-ended questions were framed for different respondents keeping in mind the sub-research questions. **Focused group discussions** (FGD) were conducted with prospective actors for 20 minutes regarding KRDP to delve deeper into the issue and know more prospective impacts. Thirdly, **participant observation** was done while accompanying the President of RKKM for three days to know more about the interests of the actors involved, which wouldn't have been possible otherwise.

ii. Secondary data collection

Secondary data was acquired from the website of Raipur Development Authority (RDA); RDA's official letters and documents related to KRDP; journal articles; news paper articles and WAPCOS' preliminary feasibility report on KRDP.

4. Background

a. Background of Kharun River in context of Raipur

River Kharun originates near Petechuwa village in Balod district of Chhattisgarh state. It flows through Balod, Dhamtari, Raipur, Durg and Bemetara districts for a stretch of about 129 km. Its average width is of 100 metres. It forms a natural boundary between Durg and Dhamtari district; Durg and Raipur district and Raipur and Bemetara district as it flows towards north to meet Seonath river (Shivnath river, a tributary of Mahanadi) near Sahgaon village in Bemetara district. Being a seasonal river with an average annual yield of 1802 million cubic metres (MCM), it mainly carries discharge during monsoon, thus flowing during monsoon and two to three months

after monsoon.² The river's catchment area is of 4112 km² with an average annual rainfall of about 1022 mm in the basin.

Kharun is the main source of drinking water for Raipur city.³ Two anicuts, namely, Bhathagaon and Ghugwa reserve water, which is meant to be conveyed to Raipur city for drinking purpose. The stretch of Kharun between these two anicuts is located toward south-west of Raipur. Water from Ravishankar Sagar Dam (Gangrel Dam) is diverted to this stretch through Mahanadi branch canal to cater drinking water needs of Raipur city during the lean season. Two intake wells are located upstream of Bhathagaon anicut in Bhathagaon; right in front of Amleshwar Mahakaal temple which is on the opposite river bed of Bhathagaon. It is considered as the most picturesque stretch of Kharun.

Figure 1: Photo of Kharun's perennial stretch taken in May, from bridge near Amleshwar.



The river floods for two to three days during monsoon as conceded by villagers in FGD and interviews. According to hydrology report of WAPCOS the flood peak discharges with return periods of 25 years, 50 years and 100 years are 1281 m³/sec, 1328 m³/sec and 1368 m³/sec,

² Government of Chhattisgarh, Raipur Development Authority, *Hydrology Report for Kharun River Front Development on the Downstream of Mahadev Ghat, Raipur, Chhattisgarh*, Raipur: WAPCOS Limited, December 2015, p. 4.

³ Staff reporter, Raipur bureau, "RIVER KHARUN TO GET A NEW LIFE," *The Pioneer*, February 28, 2014. <http://tinyurl.com/zmjd7kx> (Accessed: May 25, 2016).

respectively. In 2013, a major archaeological finding of 2000 years old ‘Kharun valley civilisation’ near Tarighat added to the historical importance of the river.⁴

Figure 2: Kharun river’s background in context of Raipur, Source: Google earth



Kharun is polluted due to release of the industrial effluents and sewage, especially downstream of Bhatagaon anicut. There are eight main sewerage outlets which release sewage directly into Kharun at different places near Raipur, namely, Bhatagaon anicut, Mahadev Ghat, Kathadih, Raipura and Sarona, etc.⁵ Of these, the ones near Mahadev Ghat and Bhatagaon anicut are close to the intake wells. The river is covered thickly with water hyacinth downstream of Mahadev Ghat, which indicates high level of eutrophication, thus having a negative impact on the fluvial environment due to facets like lowered dissolved oxygen, and so on. This may be caused due to

⁴ Staff reporter, Raipur bureau, “Kharun river valley civilisation’ remains found near Raipur,” *The Pioneer*, June 6, 2016. <http://tinyurl.com/zmmj99x> (Accessed: May 21, 2016)

⁵ Raipur bureau, “खारून को प्रदूषित कर रहे आठ नाले, ट्रीटमेंट करेंगे सिर्फ एक का,” *Patrika*, March 3, 2016. <http://tinyurl.com/hc2wd89> (Accessed: April 5: 2016).

stimulation of primary producers by effluents released by the industries and sewerage outlets, thereby enriching Kharun with excessive nutrients.⁶

Figure 3: From left, (a) showing Kharun River covered with water hyacinth downstream of Bhatagaon anicut and (b) showing Kharun's polluted water covered with water hyacinth



The whole area around Kharun, near Raipur is being gradually transformed into urban agglomeration. Even the city of Naya Raipur which is being envisaged as the new capital (administrative and institutional) of Chhattisgarh is being planned 15kms southeast of Raipur.⁷

b. Kharun Riverfront Development Project

The KRDP project is being planned on lines of Sabarmati Riverfront Project of Ahemadabad in different phases.⁸ Sabarmati riverfront project was planned to transform the river banks of Sabarmati to leisure space, protection of river from sewer pollution and flood management. However, it is not clear which specific aspects of Sabarmati riverfront project will be derived.⁹

⁶ United Nations Environment Programme, Division of Technology, Industry and Economics, *Water Quality: The Impact of Eutrophication*, Lakes and reservoirs, Volume 3, Newsletter and technical publications, UNEP.

⁷ Read more about background of Raipur city – Raipur Development Authority, *Request for Proposal: Consultancy Services for Preparation of Master Plan and Preliminary Feasibility Report for “Kharun River Front Development” on the Down Stream of Mahadev Ghat, Raipur Chhattisgarh*, March 17, 2015, pp. 48-51. <http://tinyurl.com/huh7ctd>

⁸ Chief Executive Officer (Letter no.: 2737/ त.शा./2015 / खारुन /01/विप्रा/15), Raipur Development Authority, *खारुन नदी विकास योजना के संबंध में*, March 1, 2015.

⁹ Navdeep Mathur, “On the Sabarmati Riverfront: Urban planning as Totalitarian Governance in Ahmedabad,” *Economic & Political Weekly*, VOL. XLVII NOS 47 & 48, December 1, 2012, p.66. <http://tinyurl.com/hc8a7a3> (Accessed: May 7, 2016).

Presently the project planning is underway for the first phase, which will be developed on 20 km of stretch of the river with an estimated cost of around Rs. 2000 crores.¹⁰ Streamlining of river course and reclamation of land; promotion of recreational amenities to encourage tourism; plan housing and commercial complexes, risk reduction of erosion and flooding and making river pollution free by preventing direct flow of sewage, are the larger aims and objectives of this project.¹¹ One of the proposed aims is the construction of stop dam, which will be located about 10 km downstream of the Mahadev Ghat near Pataridi, so as to maintain sufficient water levels for recreational purposes.¹² But, the source from where the water will be diverted and amount is not yet clear. It seems plausible that Mahanadi's water will be diverted from Ravishankar Sagar dam, because this project is based on Sabarmati riverfront project's lines where one of the goals was to divert the water from Narmada river through canals.¹³

KRDP is being proposed to be a Public Private Partnership (PPP) project which will be taken forward as a PPP only after its feasibility assessment.¹⁴ The decision to avail loan will be taken only if funds are not granted by the GoCG, and option for foreign financial assistance has been knocked out.¹⁵ In alternative option assessment it was recommended, *"The river front can be developed for public and recreation facilities only. However, we believe it would not be financially viable."*¹⁶

WAPCOS was selected as the consultant for this project which came out with preliminary feasibility reports in December 2015. Initially, for this phase, proposed area was of about 20 km in length downstream of Mahadev Ghat and 500 metres on either side in a section explaining detailed scope of work in the request for proposal by RDA.¹⁷ However, WAPCOS's report mentions the breadth on either side of 300 metres and the length remained same of 20 km downstream of Mahadev Ghat for its study area.

¹⁰ Op. cit., *Preparation of Master Plan and Preliminary Feasibility Report for "Kharun River Front Development" on the Downstream of Mahadev Ghat*, p. 2.

¹¹ Op. cit., *Request for Proposal*, p.52. <http://tinyurl.com/huh7ctd>

¹² Ibid., p. 52.

¹³ Op. cit., Navdeep Mathur, p.65. <http://tinyurl.com/hc8a7a3>

¹⁴ Op. cit., *Request for Proposal*, p. 62. <http://tinyurl.com/huh7ctd>

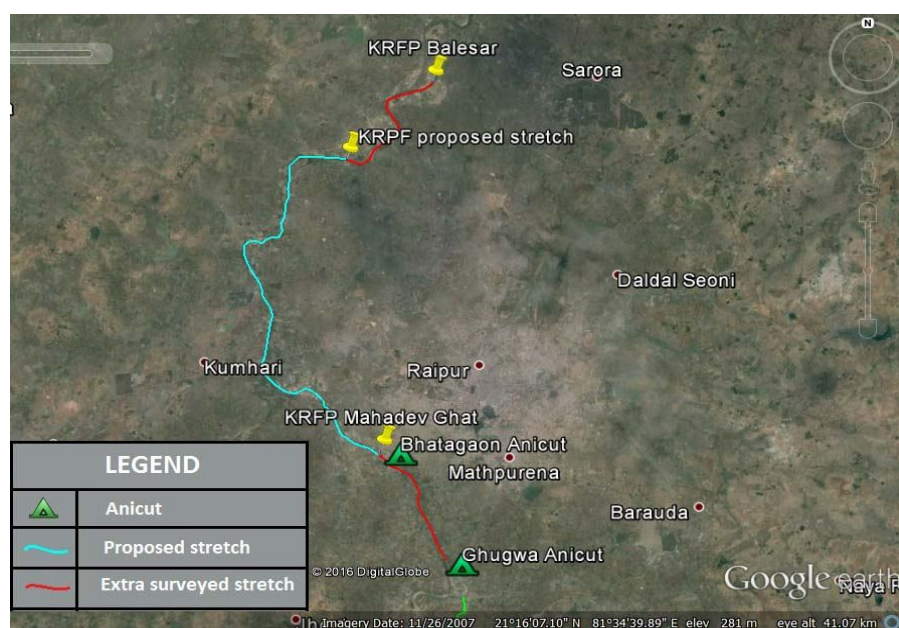
¹⁵ Raipur Development Authority, *Pro forma for proposed expenditure for new services*, p. 3.

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 3.

¹⁷ Op. cit., *Request for Proposal*, p. 54. <http://tinyurl.com/huh7ctd>

This area is mentioned as the ‘special area’ according to RDA and the ‘green belt’ according to Durg district’s master plan. This delineated area is proposed to be administered by Special Area Development Authority (SADA), which will also execute implementation of this project. The plan for first phase of the project is proposed to be divided into two main stages comprising of seven tasks to be completed within 20 months.¹⁸ Formation of SADA is scheduled under second stage of the project proposal.¹⁹ Subsequently, preparation of phase wise development plan and its implementation; Environmental impact assessment, Social impact assessment, etc procedures are planned in line.

Figure 4: KRDP’s proposed area along with extended area surveyed by WAPCOS



Source: Google earth.

Continuance of SADA in absence of contiguous and consolidated special area would have created structural challenges and complexities in terms of governance and legal standings of the local self governments around the prospective project area. It would have also asserted state government’s power at local levels in the wake of arguments over decentralization in India when development authorities’ are centralized agencies under state governments creating impediments to the provisions of 73rd and 74th amendment acts of the Indian constitution.

¹⁸ Raipur Development Authority, *Minutes of the Meeting*, June 30, 2015, p. 275.

¹⁹ Op. cit., *Preparation of Master Plan and Preliminary Feasibility Report for “Kharun River Front Development” on the Downstream of Mahadev Ghat*, p. 2.

c. Special Area Development Authority

RDA had proposed formation of Special Area Development Authority (SADA) under section 64 (1) of the Chhattisgarh Town and Country Planning Act, 1973 in order to execute, manage and implement the project and co-ordinate with the consulting agency for preparation of phase wise development plans for the delineated notified land falling in Raipur and Durg districts.²⁰ RDA will administer the project till SADA is formed. SADA will also co-ordinate with the agency for subsequent tasks. In the project's preliminary feasibility assessment report, it was mentioned that SADA's authority will prevail from Kharun's origin till its confluence point with Seonath river, which is indicative of a plan to gradually extend this urban river front agglomeration throughout the river of 120 km stretch even if it is not clearly mentioned.²¹

Schedule eight of the aforementioned Act contains sections with detailed provisions for SADA. Clauses (c) and (d) of section 69 of the Act confers SADA with powers for the purpose of municipal administration and taxation. This may lead to overlaps between powers of existing local governments. Similarly, this may raise question of legal standing of powers of Gram Panchayats and Gram Sabhas, which is defiant toward the move of decentralization and the whole idea of empowering local self governments.

The delineated special area proposed to be brought under SADA for the first phase of development, according to 20 km length and 300 m on either side of the river, includes 16 villages from Raipur and Durg districts. Parts of Bhathagaon, Raipura, Sarona, Chandandih, Atari, Hathbandh, Gomchi, Guma and Bana from Raipur district, whereas Khudmuda, Amleshwar, Bhothali, Magarghata, Kumhari, Kapasda and Akola from Durg district are delineated for proposed SADA.²² So, the total delineated area is 1192.97 ha, of which only 288.34 ha is government owned land and 904.36 ha is privately owned land.²³ This amounts to 24.17% of government land and 75.83% of revenue land, making the project unviable considering Chief Ministers' assurance that the project will be developed exclusively on government owned land. However, GoCG and RDA were compelled to halt the formation of

²⁰ The act is also known as Chhattisgarh Nagar Tatha Gram Nivesh Adhiniyam, 1973 adopted from Madhya Pradesh Nagar Tatha Gram Nivesh Adhiniyam, 1973, when Chhattisgarh was a part of Madhya Pradesh before 2000.

²¹ Ibid., p.2.

²² Op. cit., *Preparation of Master Plan and Preliminary Feasibility Report for "Kharun River Front Development" on the Downstream of Mahadev Ghat*, p. 3.

²³ Ibid., p. 6.

SADA after series of protests by farmers in January 2016. In May 2016 the GoCG planned to scrap the idea of SADA and prioritize tourism development and making river pollution free exclusively on government owned land.²⁴

d. Socio-economic highlights of the special area

Out of the 16 delineated villages for the special area, three villages, namely, Khudmuda, Amleshwar and Bhothali, in Durg district were part of the empirical field. It would not be a plausible idea to generalize the socio-economic background of these three villages and extrapolate it to the entire special area. This is so because, these two out of the three villages, namely, Amleshwar and Khudmuda, are located abutting the perennial stretch of Kharun. The stretch adjacent to Bhothali, immediately downstream of Bhatagaon anicut is also perennial, but fully covered with water hyacinth. So, it won't be reasonable to generalize the social composition unless it is verified so in other villages too. Following are the socio-economic highlights of the special area to get a broader understanding, based on the primary data, second hand information from the empirical field and the secondary data.

Sonker (farmers), *Sahoo* (farmers), *Kurmi* (farmers), *Dhimar* (fisher persons), *Nishad* (fisher persons), *Kewat* (fisher persons), *Kumhar* (potter), *Koshta* (weavers), *Dhobi* (washer persons) are some of the communities largely found in this area. Of these, except Sonker, others belong to socially vulnerable categories of SC and OBC. This shows their dependency on Kharun for their livelihoods. The respondents consisted mostly from Sonker and Nishad community. Though *Nishads* and *Dhimars* were traditionally involved in fishing activities, over the period of time, they have shifted to farming or have become landless labourer due to increasing pollution of Kharun. Some of them even continue fishing in farm ponds. *Rohu*, *Katla* and *Tulsi* are some of the fishes caught by the fishing communities. Gangaprasad Nishad, Sarpanch of Bhothali belonging to *Nishad* community conceded that couple of generations ago their family left their fishing job and turned toward agriculture due to perennial nature of Kharun near their village. Another respondent from the same community, named Tameshwar, said that he recently left fishing and shifted to housekeeping job as the catch is decreasing day by day due to pollution of Kharun.

²⁴ Chhattisgarh reporter, Raipur bureau, "प्राधिकरण गठन के बिना सरकार खारुन तट को करेगी विकसित," *Chhattisgarh newspaper*, May 22, 2016.

Figure 5: Fishing activities in Kharun river



This area is highly fertile which produces a bumper crop of vegetables. According to Manish Singh, a journalist from Patrika news agency who covers the news over KRDP, this area supplies most of the vegetables to Raipur city followed by Arang block area. But, except this stretch of area, no other area has perennial source of water and can ensure continuous supply to Raipur. According to him, the project will lead to loss of livelihood on large scale and it will affect this well run economy of farmers. Another journalist namely, Anuj Saxena from Naidunia news agency who covers the same issue, had a slightly different view. He opined that though there is a considerable chunk of vegetable supplies coming from this area, it has been declining due to mass exodus of farmers selling their lands to people from cities, who purchase land as investment. Bhuvaneshwar Sonker, a farmer belonging to *Sonker* community owns 12 acres of farm land just 100 metres away from Kharun river in Khudmuda village, where he grows vegetable crops for three seasons round the year. He said that in April 2016 cultivation of tomatoes on 1.5 acre of land earned him about Rs. 2.5 lakh. This indicates the quantum of prospective loss if the project involves acquisition of such lands.

Figure 6: Farm lands belonging to Sonker community farmers in Khudmuda, abutting Kharun.



Bhuvaneshwar also conceded that since the project has been announced, fearing acquisition nobody is now willing to buy land in the delineated area even though the rates are around Rs. 45 lakhs for an acre of land. One of the inputs from P. S Tripathi and Gangaprasad Nishad regarding the land market of this area unravels the grim picture of land deals where buyers are buying lands from farmers by paying them token amount of around Rs. 2-3 lakh by making an agreement on stamp paper, but they are not paying the farmers the entire amount for five to ten years together. P.S Tripathi also points out land-liquor-acquisition nexus where many of the people in Raipur, especially farmers also from the special area are addicted to liquor. An anonymous source conceded that people of this area are heavily addicted to countryside liquor, *Pahua* and *Aadhi*, which is also used to mobilize people for social and political events. Their attachment to liquor increases their need for money to buy liquor over a period of time. And this dependence forces them to sell their valuables and even their land eventually. According to P.S Tripathi, addiction has made land acquisition easier. He further concedes that farmers become landless labourers, and landless labourers become downtrodden and poor over a period of time. He is of the view that farmers of this area may also meet the same fate due to this project.

Bhothli, a village with a population of around 1100, is most probably the only village which completely falls in the delineated area and settled on government land called as *Kabil-kasht* land.

It is a type of class II land occupancy where the land is inheritable, but not transferable, except with prior permission of the collector.²⁵ These lands (*Kabil-kasht*) were distributed among the landless people under ‘Grow more food Scheme’ in 1948.²⁶ Probably, this is why it is the most active village in the protests along with Khudmuda and Amleshwar.

5. Conflict over project viewed through Mediator’s iceberg tool

Interestingly the conflict began in preliminary stage of the project itself, shortly after the work for preliminary feasibility assessment. Usually at such a stage most of the envisioned plans are in ad hoc. Similar was the case in this project too. This indicates acquisition as an issue has become so conventional that civil society organisations are taking preemptive actions, like in this case. Conflict started conceiving when the consultancy firm WAPCOS, which was appointed to do the preliminary feasibility assessment for the project, had begun its survey work between mid and late 2015. Some Gram Panchayats were informed about the survey while some were not, like the Bhothali’s Gram Panchayat. So, they protested by lodging FIR in police station against unknown entity for trespassing and surveying their village without prior information. Villagers also removed markings set up by the WAPCOS in protest. Gradually as the KRDP plan was being consistently manifested in local media, both print and electronic, villagers started mobilising fearing acquisition. Rashtriya Kisan Kranti Morcha (RKKM) played a pivotal role in organizing concerned villagers from Raipur and Durg districts. Its President, Priya Sharan Tripathi decided to take on the state authorities and mobilise people. They began with series of protests based on Gandhian principles of Satyagraha and non-violence. These protests included *Jal Satyagraha*, peaceful marches and sloganeering.

The main focus of this case study is to understand how motives play a role in conflict, and how to identify a space for further dialogue on the basis of commonalities between the conflicting parties. So, to analyse the conflict, the Mediator’s Iceberg tool was used.²⁷ The tool seek to

²⁵ Sudhakar Rao Joshi, *Functional review of the Maharashtra state departments: A step towards Good Governance (Detailed report II: Revenue Department)*, Research and Documentation Centre, Yashwantrao Chavan Academy of Development Administration (YASHADA), Pune, March 2006. p. 44. <http://tinyurl.com/isazg26> Accessed: May 31, 2016.

²⁶ Read more. Ibid., p 44.

²⁷ Lambrecht Wessels, *Conflict Analysis: A practical tool for adding a conflict map to written analyses NWO COCOON 2016*, CCMCC annual meeting 2016. pp. 12 and 13. Same tool on University of Oregon’s blog, <http://tinyurl.com/zflaggp>

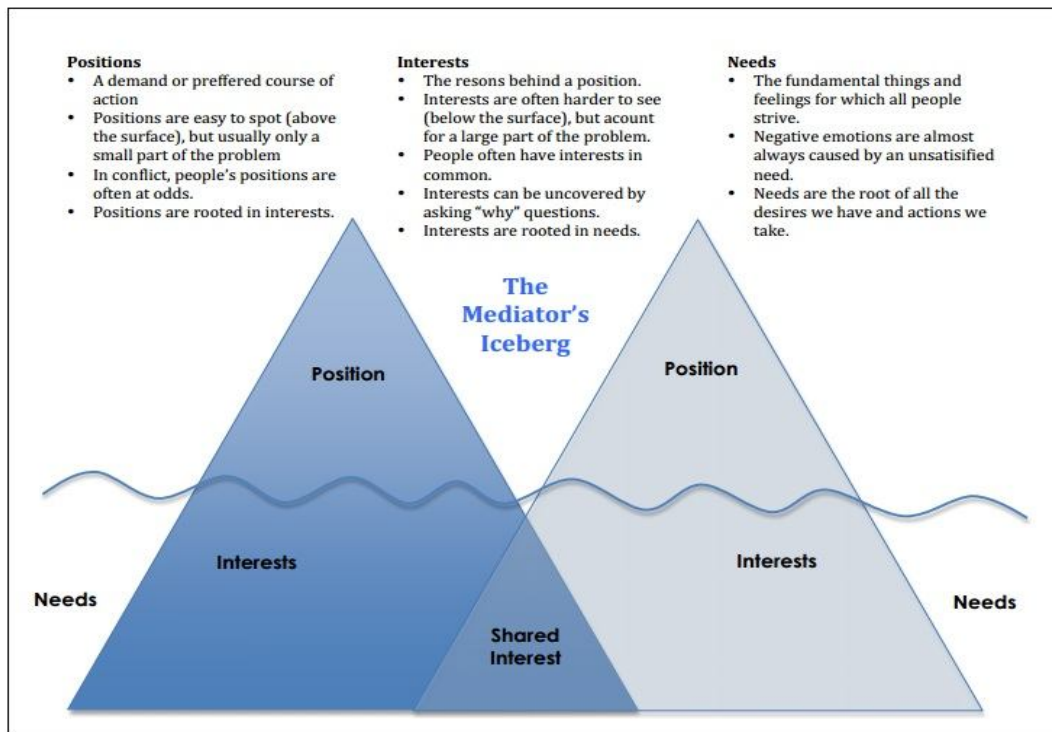
identify four components- positions, interests, needs and shared interests of the conflicting parties. For each conflicting party these were metaphorically put onto the shape of an iceberg wherein, positions are like the tip of an iceberg/conflicting party which is overtly visible and manifested above the waters (see figure 4). Likewise, positions of the conflicting parties are the manifested arguments of the parties which they put forth in front of the society. It is the narrow and limited version of what their motives are. So, in order to know more, one needs to delve deeper toward the broadening base of the icebergs.

Secondly, these overt positions are rooted in the interests of conflicting parties, which is cumulative interests of the actors involved of that party. To know more about interests, one need to focus on ‘why’ type questions. Further, these interests are rooted in the needs of the conflicting parties which are the basic fundamental needs of the actors that drive their interests. As one delves deeper and identifies the interests, one may find that there are commonalities between the conflicting parties with shared interests. Sometimes the two tips of the iceberg may be the same iceberg beneath sharing the same broader base, likewise the needs of the conflicting parties may be the same at times. Similarly, these may not be easily identified or clearly visible like ice berg’s base due to rift caused between the parties leading to communication gap as it usually happens in such a situation. So, this tool seeks to identify the scope for dialogue between conflicting parties by identifying the shared interests on the basis of which a way ahead can be sought.

a. Manifestations of the conflict

The conflict was manifested through media, mostly by the regional agencies. Several news reports by print media agencies like Patrika, Naidunia, Chhattisgarh newspaper, Khabardar covered this conflict consistently from its inception. Electronic media and regional news channels also covered the protests and developments of this conflict in details. But, the conflict was intensely manifested at ground zero in form of protests led by RKKM. RKKM’s first meeting against the KRDP was conducted on 28 December, 2015 in Amleshwar, when it was formed and meetings were held consistently till early January 2016.

Figure 4: Thematic diagram of iceberg mediator's tool²⁸



From 12 January, 2016 onwards the protests started with *Jal Satyagraha* where they began with a *Gherao*²⁹ at Sub-Divisional Magistrate's (SDM) office of Durg district demanding more information regarding land acquisition and status of the project. During the same time, a protestor named Sudesh Tikar went on for 45 days Satyagraha by partially submerging himself in Kharun river. The protests were closely monitored by the police wherein few youths were arrested in the initial phase of the protests, and later released on P.S Tripathi's intervention.

In late January villagers protested by removing the survey markings set up by WAPCOS and held a funeral march of those marking poles in protest. Simultaneously, there were statements from the government officials that the project will be exclusively developed on government land and no private land will be acquired. But, protestors demanded an official statement. Congress party's MLA, Bhupesh Baghel had questioned the Chief Minister of Chhattisgarh over government's clear stand. Around the same time in late January 2016, Chief Minister had

²⁸ Op. cit., Lambrecht Wessels, <http://tinyurl.com/zflaggp>

²⁹ A *Gherao* is a way of protesting where protestors encircle buildings or individual(s) and protest by sloganeering; putting forth their arguments and demands and giving ultimatum for demands at times.

assured that private land won't be acquired in one of the zero hours of the state assembly.³⁰ This led to dissipation of the intense protests and the project has been suspended since then. However, in an interview for this study, the Environment Minister of Chhattisgarh, Rajesh Munat, said that they want to go ahead with this project by developing it on government land as far as possible. But, he also agreed that in few cases the need for acquisition of private land at certain extent may arise, and then rehabilitation will be done with an appropriate plan to ensure that the resettled get a proper compensation and rehabilitative facilities.

Figure 7: Priya Sharan Tripathi (first from right) directing villagers of Bhothali to initiate protest against plan of 'green belt' in Durg district's master plan



“Urban waterfront regeneration projects are not just examples of new governance styles and policy targets, but also objects of intensive local planning debates and even conflicts. The citizens and various interest groups have been widely interested in how the urban waterfronts are planned. What are the real reasons and targets? For whom are the plans made? What kind of environmental or social effects do the plans have?”³¹

³⁰ Editorial team, Raipur bureau, “खारुन रिवर फ्रंट: सीएम के बयान के बाद किसान आंदोलन स्थगित.” *Patrika*, January 20, 2016. <http://tinyurl.com/zddzu7q> (Accessed: April 5, 2016).

³¹ Rauno Sairinen and Satu Kumpulainen, “Assessing social impacts in urban waterfront regeneration,” *Environmental impact assessment review* 26, Elsevier, January 2006. p. 122 <http://tinyurl.com/h23gs2v> This is a comprehensive narrative of the emerging policy trends in urban governance in context of waterfront development paradigms, apart from its core focus on social impacts on the same. It gives insights on changing paradigms in waterfront development along with concepts like urban densification, waterfront regeneration, etc.

b. Conflicting parties, their actors and their broader positions

The following are broader positions which are in form of excerpts from the interviews of actors belonging to either of the conflicting parties.

i. Party in favour of the project

State government of Chhattisgarh (GoCG): Primarily includes the executives of the state. Minister for Environment and Housing, Rajesh Munat's views were taken into consideration as a representation of positions of GoCG. He is also the minister for Commerce and Industry. The following are the positions as conceded by the Hon. Minister –

- KRDP will be the face of Raipur. It will be largely meant for conservation of river, development of Ghats, public utilities, tourism, gardens, community halls and hotels.
- The future of Raipur depends on this river and thus it needs to be conserved and made pollution free.
- It will be a recreational hub considering the absence of any noteworthy recreational facilities in Raipur city.
- In fact, many farmers have sold their land over the period of time and presently most of the farmers have no land in the prospective area. The conflict is being escalated by land mafia.
- There is no problem if land use pattern changes, especially with regards to farmers, provided that they are included in the development process and benefit from shift in their livelihood pattern.
- Rehabilitation is important and we are not in favour of land acquisition, and obviously not against the farmers. Their consent will be taken and private land will not be acquired as far as possible. Rehabilitation will be given due priority where at certain extent acquisition of private land is required.
- Proper zone wise development plan is the solution to address all the issues along with a comprehensive rehabilitation plan.
- The project is in its preliminary phase and nothing is fix as of yet. Precise information can be given only after the preparation of detailed project report. But, we will surely proceed with this project considering its importance for Raipur city.

Raipur Development Authority (RDA): Apart from the objectives of the project from official documents as aforementioned in 4.b., the following are the broader positions as conceded by its Chief Engineer, J. S Bhatia, who represented the authority as a respondent in context of KRDP

- It is a good development spot for parks and also for entertainment.
- There is a need to address the issue of Kharun's pollution by setting up sewage treatment plants (STP) and integrating them with agriculture by using the sludge produced from the treatment process.
- The above point is important considering Kharun as the source of drinking water.
- During the preliminary stage of the project it was found that the project is not feasible, and hence the work has been stopped. The estimated cost for development of 1 km stretch is roughly between Rs.100-150 crore. Even formation of SADA has halted.
- Housing is ecologically difficult. There is a need to change the land use pattern if the project has to proceed.
- It is very important project for Raipur city. The decision making is in the hands of state government's executives. We cannot comment further on this.

ii. Party against the project

Rashtriya Kisan Kranti Morcha (RKKM) and Priya Sharan Tripathi: P. S Tripathi has put forth several arguments against the KRDP as he has actively led the movement under RKKM's banner. The following are the broader positions conceded by him and identified through different manifestations –

- Entertainment at the cost of livelihoods of farmers is not plausible. Already 80% of the farmers are unemployed due to acquisition of land on which their livelihoods were based. Whatever is written in the constitution, these 80% are deprived from its constituents. This has left the 'rice bowl of India' (Chhattisgarh) with merely a bowl and no rice in it. Those settled on *Kabil-Kasht* land will be severely affected as their compensation is doubtful. We will lay down our lives, but won't give an inch of land.
- Component of housing in this project cannot be justified in the wake of development of Naya Raipur city in Raipur district, and present potential capacity of Raipur city to accommodate more people. It is a plan meant for the elite class.
- Like most other projects, this project is a big conspiracy of the government. The liquor-land acquisition relation is strong. Many people are addicted to liquor. Once they

become heavily dependent on it due to their addiction they sell their lands eventually. The government has vowed to reduce liquor sale, but excise collection records show a contrary picture. So, a parallel movement against liquor is run by us as it is the root cause of easy development of such exploitative projects.

- The present government has aims to churn out money for the forthcoming assembly elections. So, there are financial electoral aims in this too, even if certain components are not required in this project.
- Local governments should be decision makers. Consent of Gram Sabha should be taken which is not being done and is a violation of constitutional provisions.
- Flood aversion and setting up of STPs for making river pollution free can be done separately instead of KRDP, and while villagers are settled. There is no need for acquisition and displacement. This means that pollution free and flood-averse Kharun is not being planned for farmers, but for elite.
- Social equity is being neglected completely. Weaker sections of this area are considered as dirt in front of the upper class. Class is nothing as compared to a life. Social equity will grow with agriculture and not with commercialisation or industrialisation in this particular area. Land can be inherited but jobs can't be after making changes in land use pattern or offer of jobs as compensation to land based livelihood. Government has been skewed in delivering a just and equitable execution of plans and thereby exploiting farmers. So, a criminal can never distribute justice. You ask for justice, justice has become costly. Thus, we took to protests. I am a communist by action, not by thought.
- Overall demands are- no displacement of villagers, no acquisition of private land, consent of Gram Sabha in every stage of proceedings of the project, embankment for flood aversion and STPs for reduction of pollution, etc.

Nadi Ghati Morcha: The following are its positions as conceded by its convener, Gautam Bandopadhyay.

- Real estate and hotel economy is not riverine economy. River has its own economy.
- My agenda is to save river.
- Government cannot say that riverine land is solely theirs. It is a common property resource, a pooled resource. And hence, it is important to seriously consider the views of all those who are dependent on Kharun in the light of their rights.

- Why can't state acquire riverine land for the sake of river itself, for its treatment? If river needs proper treatment then acquisition is reasonable and should be done.
- The preliminary feasibility assessment done by WAPCOS is not fully focused on river. It has a different agenda. WAPCOS also studies other things apart from river and water, now it has become commercialised.
- I am against KRDP as river belongs to commons and it acts as a drain. Disturbance to its natural flow will lead to its death. It is a conspiracy. The stretch of Kharun between Bhatagaon and Ghugwa anicuts has already converted to into a tank like structure. This project will convert rest of the river into tanks.
- Land holding structure near Kharun has gone in the hands of land mafia.

Villagers from the special area: Positions of villagers as conceded in the interviews in empirical field –

- We won't give away even an inch of land.
- Our protests are peaceful for conservation of river and against the project as it is harmful for the river as well as our livelihoods.
- We don't want compensation how much ever lucrative it is offered.
- Flood control and pollution control is the need of the hour. Floods are not devastating as the river floods last only for 2-3 days. But, pollution remains a bigger issue.

c. Conflicting parties, actors and their broader interests and needs

The following are the identified interests and needs of the conflicting parties -

i. Interests of parties in favour of the project

- **GoCG:** Following are the interests of GoCG which were identified from the interviews and cross verification from the actors from opposite parties.
 - Attracting big industries and facilitating their projects by changing land use pattern.
 - Electoral interests for forth coming elections (accusation made by opposite party)
 - Making river pollution free so as to facilitate entry of tourism and hotel industry.
- **Raipur Development authority:**
 - Setting up of STPs to control pollution.
 - Extension of urban agglomeration and urban riverfront areas to boost infrastructure projects.

- Increasing housing stock to cater to growing population needs.

ii. Interests of parties against the project

- **RKKM and P. S Tripathi:** The following are the identified interests of the conflicting organisation -
 - Empowering farmers and mobilise them in the movement and making river pollution free.
 - Political interest of garnering mass base so as to enter the political arena. P.S Tripathi desires to form a strong third front opposition against the existing ruling party. He even desires to garner mass base and become a leader in the centre stage of Chhattisgarh's politics to play a larger role as it was admitted by him in the interview.
 - Personal interest: P. S Tripathi's 25018 m² of land in prospective project area may be considered as one of the driving interests. His land in Amleshwar is located just in front of the intake wells abutting the river. It is a very scenic place. Amleshwar Mahakaal Dham temple is also situated on the same land.
 - Cultural and religious interest: P. S Tripathi is a famous astrologer and a *Pandit* (priest) by profession. So, the land with the temple is of religious importance to him.
- **Villagers from the special area:**
 - Emotional attachment to their land and place, especially of the older generation as they have toiled over it.
 - Rapidly rising land prices because closely located to the state's capital.
 - Making Kharun pollution free.
- **Nadi Ghati Morcha:**
 - Conservation of river.
 - Research and activism interests by virtue of being the convener of an organisation working on rivers in Chhattisgarh.

iii. Broader needs of the conflicting parties

The following are the broader needs of the conflicting parties where their interests are rooted which drive their positions -

- **Needs of parties in favour of the project:**
 - Revival of the river and drinking water.
 - Electoral needs considering forthcoming elections.

- Recreational and cultural needs.
- Commercial needs to attract industries and increase GDP.
- **Needs of parties against the project:**
 - Societal needs of identity and traditional social village setting.
 - Livelihoods like farming, fishing, pottery, brick making, priesthood, etc., which is directly or indirectly dependent on the river.
 - Cultural and historical needs.
 - Need to maintain riverine ecology and natural flow.

6. Way ahead: Current status, possible changes in KRDP and space for dialogue on basis of shared interests

Presently, all the activities of the project have been suspended. The plan for formation of SADA has been scrapped according to a recent news report.³² According to the report the project will include botanical gardens and tree plantation exclusively on government land, to conserve Kharun. This, in itself can be considered as a short term success for the parties opposing the project. But, according to Hon. Environment minister's assertion that they will continue with the project on government land, does not knock out the possibility of renewed contestations and incompatibilities between the conflicting parties. He also admitted in the interview that the work on project's Detailed Project Report (DPR) is underway, which is one of the tasks of stage II of the project. This confirms the potent of further incompatibilities.

Considering the interests of actors in both the conflicting parties, the broader areas of shared interests are conservation of river and development of cultural hubs. Taking into account these broader shared interests and party level interests, agro-tourism including fisheries and local boating can be a possible option for the project. Another add on to this space for dialogue can be sought by planning for employment generation through a redevelopment plan only for those holding private lands and who are willing to participate in the project. This can be done by including them in the decision making process, and by making them capable to cater to the needs of housing and hotel industry. Instead of cluster or consolidated development on a contiguous

³² Chhattisgarh reporter, Raipur bureau, "प्राधिकरण गठन के बिना सरकार खारुन तट को करेगी विकसित," *Chhattisgarh newspaper*, May 22, 2016.

stretch, a confederation of small parks and recreational hubs can be planned on government land, which will integrate the existing village settlements and provide them with complementary source of income there by boosting village economy along with the economy of urban agglomeration.

7. Conclusion

The identified components while understanding the nuances of motives of conflicting parties namely, positions, interests and needs, are highly overlapping. Understanding actual interests is a difficult task and may not give the expected information in limited time period in which this case study was conducted. This can be seen as shortcoming of this study and hence may be one of the reasons why the findings depict more of positions over the interests making it look like an inverted pyramid of iceberg with broader top and narrower bottom. Participant observation may be a better method to overcome this shortcoming, but one cannot totally ignore the overlaps, and should not consider this tool as the one with water tight compartments. It is possible that in actuality the positions may truly be the interests and needs of the parties.

Other perspectives from which one can look at this conflict are from the angle of customary rights, equity and riparian rights. It would be interesting to look at what bearings KRDP has on these aspects. Although there has been an initiation of advocacy demanding shift in riparian laws, one cannot ignore the existing law and cases over it. Riparian right can be traced to Section 7(b) of Indian Easements Act, 1882 provides for –

“The right of every owner of land that the water of every natural stream which passes by, through or over his land in a defined natural channel shall be allowed by other persons to flow within such owner’s limits without interruption and without material alteration in quantity, direction, force or temperature; the right of every owner of land abutting on a natural lake or pond into or out of which a natural stream flows, that the water of such lake or pond allowed by

other persons to remain within such owner's limit without alteration in quantity or temperature."³³

This can be read in context of state authorities' intrusion over Kharun river by intervening with the river's natural flow (building anicuts). It can also be seen from the lens of customary rights of various communities from time immemorial.³⁴ However, the legality of customary rights has remained a disputed issue within the Indian legal system, but one has to look into it in context of loss of livelihood in case of Kharun. Social equity in sharing of water resource and common property resource of riverine land is yet another aspect which needs to be emphasised.

The aforementioned components depict how motives play an important role and how this tool can play a role of ice breaker on basis of shared interests. There is no denial that improvements are needed considering the unique setting of the case in context of India and state of Chhattisgarh. But, it is clear that exploring motives is a complex complexity which also involves exploration of background in details and the web it creates having implications on actors and vice-a-versa. Heraclitus' contribution to the theory of impermanence gave us a quote – "*No man steps in the same river twice.*" Likewise it is challenging to keep a track of impermanent dynamics of this conflict and motives involved.

³³ Tony Puthucherril, *Riparianism in Indian Water Jurisprudence*, Book Chapter in *Water and the Laws in India* (Ramaswamy R. Iyer ed.), Sage Publications, 2009. This narrative gives crucial insights on the riparian laws in Indian context which is applicable in Kharun's context to delve deeper into it.

³⁴ Kamala Sankaran, *Water in India: Constitutional Perspectives*, Book Chapter in *Water and the Laws in India* (Ramaswamy R. Iyer ed.), Read more to gain insights on cases related to customary laws in India. One of the crucial cases are on customary fishing rights of the Dhimar community from Chhattisgarh.

8. Appendices

a. Questionnaire

Since the nature of interview was semi-structured the questions were directives for the interviews. Questions for FGDs are similar ones asked in the questionnaire for villagers. Various other follow-up questions were asked on the spot. The following are the sets of questionnaire prepared before field work. -

i. For Environment minister

- Why is the KRDP being planned?
- What is the importance of KRDP for Raipur and the government?
- Why does the government want to proceed with this project?
- What are your views on the conflict over KRDP?
- What are the plans for prospective affected parties who will be resettled if acquisition is done?
- What all components from Sabarmati river front's model will be adopted in KRDP?
- What is the current status of the project?
- What are the alternatives considering project's plan exclusively on government land?
- Why are the components of tourism, housing and hotels required in KRDP?
- Why has the conflict escalated and what are the interests of aggrieved parties?

ii. For Chief Engineer of RDA

- Why is the KRDP being planned?
- What is the importance of KRDP for Raipur?
- What measures are being taken for conservation of the river?
- What is the current status of the project?
- What is RDA's take on the project?
- What are the alternatives for this project?

iii. For members and heads of civil society organisations who are against the project

- What is your stand on the project?

- On what all points do you oppose the project?
- What are your demands?
- Why has the conflict escalated?
- How and when were the protests conducted?
- What are the interests of parties who want the project to proceed?
- Which aims and objectives of the project are required for the river?
- What is the social and economic background of the prospective project area?
- How will the project affect the prospective affected villages?
- What is your view on land acquisition, compensation and rehabilitation plans in context of this project?

iv. For journalists

- What is your stand on the project?
- What is the socio-economic background of the special area?
- What is the background of the conflicting parties and the actors involved?
- Why has the conflict escalated?
- How and when were the protests conducted?
- What are the interests of parties who want the project to proceed?
- How will the project affect the prospective affected villages?
- What is your view on land acquisition, compensation and rehabilitation plans in context of this project?

v. For villagers

- What is the social background of your village?
- Which crops are cultivated / fishes caught (or other occupations accordingly)?
- What is the source of irrigation?
- How much is the crop produce?
- Are you dependent on Kharun River? How and why?
- What are your views on the KRDP?
- Why do you support or oppose it?
- Why has the conflict escalated?

- What are your demands from the authorities?
- How important is Kharun for you in social, economic and cultural aspects?
- What are your views on acquisition, compensation and rehabilitation?
- How will this project affect your livelihood?

b. Key Respondents

- i. Rajesh Munat, Minister for Environment and Housing, Chhattisgarh.
- ii. J. S Bhatia, Chief Engineer, Raipur Development Authority.
- iii. Ajit (name changed), Junoir engineer, Raipur Development Authority.
- iv. Priya Sharan Tripathi, President, Rashtriya Kisan Kranti Morcha.
- v. Gautam Bandopadhyay, Convener, Nadi Ghati Morcha.
- vi. Anuj Saxena, Journalist, Naidunia, Raipur Bureau.
- vii. Manish Sharma, Journalist (Urban news division), Patrika news, Raipur Bureau.
- viii. Gangaprasad Nishad, Sarpanch, Bhothali Gram Panchayat, Durg district, Chhattisgarh.
- ix. Bhuvaneshwar Sonker, member of Rashtriya Kisan Kranti Morcha.

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